

1

WITTGENSTEIN AND PHILOSOPHY

WITTGENSTEIN AND PHILOSOPHY

By

BORYS MYROSLAW KOWALSKY, M.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

September 1982

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (1982)
(Philosophy)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Wittgenstein and Philosophy

AUTHOR: Borys Myroslaw Kowalsky, B.A. (University of Toronto)
M.A. (University of Toronto)

SUPERVISOR: Professor E. Simpson

NUMBER OF PAGES: vi, 108

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine certain key aspects of Wittgenstein's later teaching regarding philosophy in both its traditional form and its proper, Wittgensteinian form. The primary reason for choosing the later teaching is Wittgenstein's clear indication that this is his best, most mature and, hence, most authoritative account of the matter. The thesis draws, so far as his own works are concerned, exclusively on his later writings, especially the Philosophical Investigations. The discussion proceeds as follows. In the first chapter, an attempt is made to expound systematically the substance of the later Wittgenstein's critique of traditional philosophy, particularly the 'skeptical' side of traditional philosophy as well as the conceptions of 'language' and 'meaning' on which it is founded. The second chapter consists in an attempt to illuminate, in the light of this critique, Wittgenstein's later understanding of proper philosophical inquiry. In the third and final chapter, some of the problems or questions pertaining to Wittgenstein's later teaching concerning philosophy are examined. Special attention is given to the question of whether or not Wittgenstein's later thought is historicist in essence (and therefore contains an essentially historicist teaching about philosophy).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are a number of individuals who have contributed in one way or another to the completion of this thesis and to whom, therefore, I owe a certain debt of gratitude.

I am grateful first and foremost to Prof. E. Simpson, my thesis supervisor. He brought to bear on the thesis a keen appreciation of the fundamental tenets of Wittgenstein's later teachings and an ability to locate and articulate in a clear and concise way the inadequacies of any given philosophical argument. Moreover, he showed towards me a patience and considerateness bounded only by a prudent awareness that more of the same would very likely have harmed, rather than benefitted, me. Thus, the merits of this thesis, and indeed, its very completion, owe much to him.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Professors D. L. Hitchcock and S. Ajzenstat, the other two members of my thesis committee. Prof. Hitchcock, in fulfillment of his responsibilities as the second reader, provided insightful criticisms of, and comments on, earlier drafts of the thesis. Prof. Ajzenstat served as the third reader and posed some interesting fundamental questions during my oral defense. In fact every member of the committee contributed to making the defense both enjoyable and illuminating.

Furthermore, I would like to thank Messrs. P. Malcolmson and J. Knippenberg, two friends and very able fellow-students of

political philosophy at the University of Toronto, for indulging my need to engage them at times in discussion of some perplexing, basic issues raised in the thesis.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to my wife, Petrusia. She spent many an hour going through the manuscript with me, pointing out obscurities in the arguments and giving me keen and helpful suggestions as to how the thesis might be relieved of some of them. She is also responsible for all of the typing connected with the thesis, including the final typescript, for which I believe she deserves the highest praise. All in all, her assistance has been invaluable and my debt to her remains very great.

Finally, a heart-felt thanks goes to all family, friends and colleagues who, in giving me their encouragement and moral support, made the task of completing this work easier and still more pleasant.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
I. WITTGENSTEIN'S LATER TEACHING REGARDING TRADITIONAL PHILOSOPHY	4
II. WITTGENSTEIN'S LATER TEACHING REGARDING PROPER PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY	39
III. PROBLEMS REGARDING WITTGENSTEIN'S LATER VIEW OF PHILOSOPHY	63
Wittgenstein: 'Historicist' or 'Naturalist'?	63
Concluding Remarks	100
BIBLIOGRAPHY	107

INTRODUCTION

It is widely held among students and scholars of philosophy that Ludwig Wittgenstein, in the course of his rather brief life, put forward two very different, in many ways highly incompatible, yet highly original sets of philosophical 'teachings'. Much of this view is directly borne out by utterances made by Wittgenstein himself, not the least important of which are to be found in various passages of the Philosophical Investigations.¹ For example, in the preface to that work he explicitly indicates that there is a marked contrast between his old thoughts, as articulated in, for instance, the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,² and the new thoughts, those expressed in the Investigations itself. In fact, according to him, the former contain grave errors which are entirely absent in the latter. This would seem to imply that in his view the teachings expressed in the later work, the Investigations, surpass or supercede those expressed in the earlier writings, especially the Tractatus (the only philosophical book besides the Investigations which Wittgenstein ever sought to publish). Insofar as each work contains

¹Henceforth in the body of the text this work is cited as the Investigations.

²Henceforth this work is cited as the Tractatus.

a teaching about philosophy, we may surmise that the later teaching is for him the more authoritative of the two, regardless of how similar or different they may be.

The main topic of discussion in this thesis is Wittgenstein's later teaching regarding philosophy in both its traditional form and its proper, Wittgensteinian form; our primary reason for choosing the later teaching is the above-mentioned implication that in Wittgenstein's view this is his best, most mature and, hence, most authoritative account of the matter. At the same time, we cannot hope to undertake a methodical comparison of the Tractatus and the Investigations here; in our attempt to elucidate this teaching, we must remain content with relying, so far as his works are concerned, on the later writings only, especially the Investigations. Accordingly, our procedure will be as follows. In the first chapter, we shall attempt to expound systematically the substance of the later Wittgenstein's critique of traditional philosophy, particularly the 'skeptical' side of traditional philosophy as well as the conceptions of 'language' and 'meaning' on which it is founded. The second chapter will consist in an attempt to illuminate, in the light of this critique, Wittgenstein's later understanding of proper philosophical inquiry. In the third and final chapter, we shall examine some of the problems or questions pertaining to Wittgenstein's later teaching concerning philosophy. Attention will be given primarily

to the question of whether or not Wittgenstein's later thought is historicist³ in essence (and therefore contains an essentially historicist teaching about philosophy). There is good reason to devote so much attention to this question. This is evidenced in the fact that a number of prominent thinkers in this century, among them E. Husserl, A. Gurwitch, K. Lowith, L. Strauss, G. P. Grant, E. Fackenheim and S. Rosen, have delved into the possible connections between historicism on the one hand and skepticism, nihilism and/or the decadence or sickness of European civilization on the other.

³By 'historicism' is meant here the view that there are no absolute, permanent truths accessible to the human understanding or intellect, and that all human thought and knowledge, therewith all philosophy and science, are essentially determined by or relative to changing, historical conditions. Historicism thus understood is perhaps most fully and profoundly articulated in the writings of thinkers like Nietzsche, Heidegger and Max Weber. To the extent that for Hegel human thought is capable of transcending the movement of history and apprehending the absolute, eternal truth about things (even if only at the end of history and in the form of Hegelian science), Hegel himself cannot be said to be a historicist in this sense. Whether or not Marx can is, I believe, a more difficult question to answer.

I

WITTGENSTEIN'S LATER TEACHING REGARDING
TRADITIONAL PHILOSOPHY

According to the later Wittgensteinian view,¹ the teachings of past philosophers are almost invariably 'skeptical'.² That is to say, they consist virtually exclusively in theses or claims which conflict with our 'common sense' beliefs about things.³ The explanation for this conflict cannot be that the (past) philosopher's uses of words are all thoroughly 'technical' and therefore have nothing in common with their ordinary uses. Otherwise we would simply have to admit either that the things the philosopher talks about neither belong to, nor have any bearing upon, the world of everyday life, or, if they do, that how he sees them cannot be

¹Throughout this thesis I have endeavoured as far as possible to ground my claims about the later Wittgensteinian philosophy in Wittgenstein's own writings. However, I have at times also drawn on other thinkers inspired by Wittgenstein, e.g., Austin, Cavell and Wisdom, where these have developed lines of thought which are only hinted at or implied in the Wittgensteinian texts but which are pertinent to my discussion.

²By the term "skeptical" I mean "contrary to common sense". This use of the term was inspired by S. Cavell, Must We Mean What We Say (henceforth referred to as MWM), pp. 59-61.

³See L. Wittgenstein, The Blue and Brown Books (henceforth referred to as BB), pp. 58-59.

The possibility of a non-skeptical transcendence of common sense in Wittgenstein's later philosophy is briefly discussed below in chap. III, Concluding Remarks, pp. 103-106.

critically or evaluatively contrasted with how they ordinarily look to us. And as a result no sense could be made of the age-old conflict between philosophy and common sense.

Indeed, take the following claims:⁴

- (a) The many particular things are located somewhere between being and not-being.
- (b) The perceptions of the senses do not teach us what is really in things.
- (c) Sensible objects do not exist apart from the minds or thinking things which perceive them.
- (d) We can only conjecture and not know the true causes of the things we perceive.
- (e) We have no knowledge of the existence of an external world.
- (f) We have no knowledge of personal identity.
- (g) We can have knowledge, not of the nature of things in themselves, but only of their appearances.
- (h) The notion of an incorporeal substance is absurd; all substances or real entities are bodies.

Surely the words used in these statements at least seem to mean what we mean by them ordinarily. Were this not the case, the point of advancing such theses, which is in part to deny what the philosophers putting them forward regard as their

⁴From top to bottom, in alphabetical order:

- (a) Plato, The Republic of Plato, 478e-479d;
- (b) R. Descartes, The Philosophical Works of Descartes, I, 255;
- (c) G. Berkeley, A New Theory of Vision (and other writings), p. 114;
- (d) J. Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, (henceforth referred to as the Essay), II, 259;
- (e) D. Hume, An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding, pp. 266-268;
- (f) Ibid., pp. 300-301, 306-307;
- (g) I. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, pp. 84, 88;
- (h) T. Hobbes, Leviathan, pp. 107-108, 689.

common sense antitheses, would be lost.

Evidently, therefore, a skeptical 'insight' or 'discovery' must at least appear to be expressible in terms of the everyday use of language.⁵ But then, it seems, the same must also hold for those considerations which 'propel' any given philosopher towards his skeptical 'discovery', for the reasons he adduces in support of his claims. It seems that ultimately at least some of these considerations or reasons would have to be of an everyday, common sense sort. For, as we indicated earlier, extraordinary considerations formulable only in a completely technical, extraordinary language cannot by themselves lead to insights that are immediately bound up with, or have a direct bearing on, the ordinary, pre-philosophic understanding of things.

In fact, as Wittgenstein and, following him, Cavell understand it, the history of philosophy bears this out. Philosophers traditionally do not, according to them, make their 'discoveries' by conducting scientific investigations, that is, by seeking out strange, extraordinary, hidden phenomena and new hypotheses with which to explain them.⁶ Rather, they proceed by way of reflection upon a whole range of facts which it seems nobody who can speak and is of sound mind would deny, and examples to which virtually every normal adult can

⁵See L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations (henceforth referred to as PI in the notes), Part I, par. 117.

⁶L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 89; L. Wittgenstein, BB, p. 59.

relate. They then end by drawing skeptical conclusions about what they take to be some of the most basic views and beliefs of the common man.⁷

At the same time it must be admitted that the past philosopher's uses of words cannot really (quite) be identical with their ordinary uses. Otherwise his 'reflections' on common sense facts, examples, and considerations would not yield skeptical conclusions.⁸

We cannot now attempt to give a later Wittgensteinian account of the paradoxical character of the utterances of past philosophers, of the fact that in making skeptical assertions they appear to, yet do not really, use words as we ordinarily use them. However, there is one possible explanation -- one which seems to justify their skeptical propensities -- which can be tendered at this point. The philosopher, in reflecting on the common sense view of a specific matter, invariably uncovers contradiction and inconsistency in it. On the basis of those facts and considerations of an everyday sort which he regards as relevant and decisive, he takes one side of that view to be the truth of the matter. This means, of course, that the opposing side, together with all the other common sense beliefs by which it is presupposed, must be judged by him to

⁷S. Cavell, MWM, p. 60.

⁸The preceding part of the discussion owes a great deal to S. Cavell, MWM, pp. 58-61.

be false. It is these 'insights' or judgments that are expressed in his skeptical theses. According to this account, then, the skeptical claims of the philosopher are simultaneously implied and opposed by common sense; this fact, that is to say, the contradictory nature of common sense, is what causes them to appear paradoxical.

"Yet", some might ask, "why are we non-philosophers not aware of all those inconsistencies and contradictions which philosophers purportedly uncover? Is it merely because we are so much less reflective? Perhaps. Nevertheless it does seem odd that we should be able to do all the things we normally do as part of everyday life, i.e., communicate, maintain common customs and establish new practices, work, play, govern and obey, etc., if, as they seem to be saying, the uses of language with which so many of these activities are bound up, are fraught with such basic anomalies. One cannot help wondering whether there is not something defective about the philosopher's way of looking at things which disposes him to see contradictions and inconsistencies where none really exist."

In response to this question we note that, as Wittgenstein sees it, the traditional philosopher's mode of reflection is rooted in a misleading and inadequate notion of 'meaning'. The (traditional) philosopher typically assumes that the meaning of a word is some kind of entity or thing -- be it subjective or objective, real or ideal, universal or parti-

cular -- which is referred to whenever the word in question is (correctly) used.⁹ Thus for him each word has a fixed, invariant, strictly demarcated meaning; put in Wittgensteinian terms, there is a unique, simple, categorical, and precisely specifiable rule which can be said to encompass all instances of its correct use. But this misleading notion of 'meaning' goes hand in hand with an equally misleading picture of the relationship between word (language) and reality. According to this picture, the basic terms in a language function as labels for or names of entities in the world, whatever their characteristics.¹⁰ Given that the mind of the philosopher is captive to this image, his quest for knowledge inevitably takes on the form of a search for definitions, i.e., abstract formulations depicting what it is in general that all the individual things denoted by any given word have in common. Approaching in this biased and misleading fashion the meaning of a particular term in the language, he derives from certain features of its ordinary use what he takes to be a common general opinion about the essential nature of the thing which he assumes the word designates. As Wittgenstein would put it, he isolates a certain aspect of a particular word's 'grammar' and sees in it a law, namely, a unique, precise, categorical rule, which he believes may be the one governing

⁹L. Wittgenstein, BB, pp. 1, 5, 17-18; L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 1-3.

¹⁰L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 1; L. Wittgenstein, BB, p. 18.

all of the word's correct uses. He of course discovers upon further reflection that not all of what he sees as common sense beliefs about the nature of the thing (or again, as Wittgenstein would put it, that not all everyday uses of the word) in question are consistent with the opinion (law) apprehended by him initially. This leads him to conclude that the common sense view of the object is self-contradictory and that he must determine which aspects of that view are true and which are false.¹¹ For Wittgenstein, therefore, it is the traditional philosopher's characteristic adherence to the 'label-object' view of the connection between language and reality, together with all the misleading notions of meaning connected with it, which induces him to 'find' anomalies in ordinary language where none exist and therewith to advance skeptical theses.

So far our exposition of the later Wittgensteinian account of traditional philosophy has remained somewhat abstract. We shall now attempt to illustrate it with an example.

Frequently situations arise wherein someone claims to know that one thing or another is the case, and the assertion made is afterwards found to be false. In such circumstances we often respond by saying of such a person that he

¹¹See L. Wittgenstein, BB, pp. 18-20, 25-27.

According to Wittgenstein's later thought, one important reason for the disagreements among the teachings of the various philosophers in the past would seem to be that the philosophers disagreed regarding those aspects of the everyday use of language which they took to be correct or valid.

did not know what he said he knew.¹² This sort of response seems to indicate that in everyday speech knowing something about a particular subject means at least in part being able to say something about it that is true. Further, we ordinarily do not even allow that a claim made by someone passes for knowledge if we have sound reasons for doubting its truth and our doubts have not been allayed. Nor do we ourselves normally profess to know anything regarding a given matter unless we are certain that what we have to say about it is true.¹³ Such facts as these testify to the existence of a necessary connection between "knowing" and "being certain" in the common sense understanding of things. But along comes a philosopher who, like all past philosophers, is captive to the 'label-object' view of the 'meaning of a word', and who for some reason is preoccupied with the question of what 'knowledge' is. After having reflected for some time on the meaning of the word "knowledge" -- which reflection would have required a more or less explicit recollection of such facts as those just cited -- he comes up with the following definition: knowledge is the apprehension of absolutely certain and timeless truths.¹⁴ (We can easily see

¹²See L. Wittgenstein, On Certainty (henceforth referred to as OC), par. 549; this is also suggested by Wittgenstein at PI, I, 323.

¹³L. Wittgenstein, OC, pars. 272, 356, 357, 360, 549.

¹⁴This definition seems to capture some of the most essential points in, for example, Locke's account of knowledge; see J. Locke, Essay, II, 135, 235, 253.

why he finds this definition so plausible. He too, like all of us who speak the language, is thoroughly familiar with the facts of everyday speech mentioned above,¹⁵ and it is on them that he purportedly bases his formulation.) He then notes that we also employ expressions like "I know that..." often in connection with claims about 'matters of fact' of which we have no direct experience (for example, those in the future or most of those in the past), claims of which many are subsequently either falsified or cast into doubt. However, here the conflict between himself and 'common sense' begins to surface. "We are", he says, "incapable of discovering by means of experience and observation the causes of or necessary connections among empirical phenomena of different kinds. Yet whatever knowledge of matters of fact is within our reach derives solely from experience and observation. Consequently, it is not possible for us to attain to absolutely certain and timelessly true apprehensions of causal relationships among empirical phenomena, whether general or particular. Nor are we ever capable of making indubitably true claims about matters of fact of which we have no direct experience (e.g., those in the future or most of those in the past), because all judgments about such matters

¹⁵See *ibid.*, II, 253, where he says: "What we once know, we are certain is so; and we may be secure that there are no latent proofs undiscovered which may overturn our knowledge or bring it in doubt."

depend upon at best only probable beliefs concerning causal relations among empirical phenomena."¹⁶ Having gone this far, he is thereby compelled to adopt one of two skeptical positions. The first maintains that about all matters of fact lying outside the reach of our sense-experience and about causal connections among empirical phenomena we can have, not knowledge, but only opinions, which, qua opinions, are never without an element of uncertainty.¹⁷ The second maintains that knowledge of such matters does exist, but that, unlike knowledge of, for example, mathematical truths, this knowledge is only of a probabilistic sort, hence is not indubitable.¹⁸ Assuming that the difference between these two positions turns on more than mere words -- an assumption that is indeed hard to defend --, both positions have at least one thing in common. Each rests in part on an (apparent) acceptance of some, and a consequent rejection of other, ordinary uses of the word "know". (Why this acceptance is only apparent will become clear further in the discussion.)

The question arises as to why the 'label-object' picture of the relationship between language and the world

¹⁶This is, I believe, a somewhat simplified, although essentially faithful, exposition of skeptical arguments found in Locke; see J. Locke, Essay, II, 162-164, 232-234, 255-256, 259.

¹⁷Ibid., II, 232-234, 255-256, 259.

¹⁸Ibid., II, 164.

has exercised such a powerful hold on the thought of past philosophers. Is it because of some "craving for generality"? I do not think that Wittgenstein would answer in the affirmative (although some of Wittgenstein's commentators seem to think that he would¹⁹). For it is difficult to see how any philosopher could have such a craving were he not already possessed by this distorted view. He wants to know the definitions of words only if he thinks this is the right way to do philosophy. And he conceives his task in these terms only if he has already presupposed that words, insofar as they are meaningful, have, indeed cannot fail to have, all-encompassing definitions.²⁰ Perhaps, then, there is something about language itself which induces a philosopher to look for unique, simple, categorical, comprehensive, exact rules of language usage where no such rules are to be found, which is the source of his being thus mystified.

Granted that Wittgenstein himself never offers any simple causal explanation of this phenomenon, it is possible to glean from his writings a number of suggestions as to what that "something" could be. As he points out, every word maintains the same appearance and is the same word whenever and wherever it occurs, whether in print or speech.²¹ This

¹⁹See H. Pitkin, Wittgenstein and Justice, p. 89.

²⁰See L. Wittgenstein, BB, pp. 17-18, 19-20.

²¹See L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 11.

could induce one to think that each word has a single meaning; for no word looked upon in isolation shows any signs of having a multiplicity of meanings. Suppose also that in reflecting upon the 'meaning of a word' one were to rely almost exclusively on substantive terms and proper names for one's examples of meaningful words. One would almost inevitably be led to construe meaning in language by means of the following schema: one word \rightarrow (corresponds to) one meaning. Indeed, one could hardly resist interpreting the connection between the word and its meaning in terms of the 'label-object' relation.²² There are still other external features of language which can lead to our having similarly confused notions about its nature. For example, many a word possesses a surface grammar²³ partially resembling that of yet another; that is, it frequently appears in linguistic contexts where some other word is often used as well -- albeit in its stead and, perhaps, though not necessarily, with some difference in meaning. (To illustrate, we say "You think I'm wrong" as well as "You say I'm wrong", or "I know what you are thinking" as well as "I know what you are saying".) Further, in the case of each of a large number of these word-pairs, both its members often appear together in the same utterance, and in a manner indi-

²²Ibid., I, 1; L. Wittgenstein, BB, pp. 1, 5, 18.

²³For a brief discussion of Wittgenstein's use of "grammar" and especially his distinction between 'surface' and 'depth' grammar, see below, chap. II, pp. 50-53.

cative of some degree of symmetry or parallelism of meaning between them. (For instance, we say "You must have thought about what you've said, surely!", or "Say what you think!") These features of language's exterior can induce one to press such grammatical similarities even further than is warranted by normal use. More specifically, if one of the words in the pair is taken to stand for some sort of entity, then the other, the meaning of which may have appeared more problematic at first, also comes to be regarded as denoting some kind of entity, one with properties analogous to those of the former. ["Speaking", a philosopher might say, "is an activity which we perceive via our senses as consisting of the movement of lips, tongue and larynx. It is thus a modification of extended substance. Concomitantly (as the facts of the everyday use of language, e.g., those cited above, would seem to suggest), thinking too, like speaking, is an activity of sorts, one which frequently takes place alongside the latter. Hence it too must occur somewhere, though not in the same place as the latter. Where then? In the brain, perhaps. However, this presupposes that thinking is a physical activity. Yet if it is in principle impossible to apprehend it with our senses, then thought cannot be anything material. And we must conclude that it belongs elsewhere, to some non-corporeal substance. But what other, non-corporeal substances are there? Mental substances, those queer things commonly referred to as souls or minds.

Thinking is, therefore, an activity of the soul."²⁴] Moreover, many expressions in the language are classifiable on the basis of the syntactic features they share in common. In addition, a large portion of the resulting classes is such that membership in a given class is significantly correlated with the performance of some one function. This can deceive one into thinking that the correlation is perfect. For example, ordinarily, when a person makes a statement like "I am six feet tall", he is often regarded as giving information about himself. Indeed, there are many sentences of the form "I am such-and-such" which we use to make claims about ourselves. But one can thereby be misled into presuming that the same holds for all first-person utterances, including utterances such as "I am happy" or "I am angry".²⁵

We need not look for any more illustrations. Suffice it to say that visible, exterior aspects of language like those just mentioned encourage the tendency to look for identities or similarities of meaning where none exist.²⁶ It must be kept in mind, however, that the exterior aspects of language would not have these confusing, bewitching effects on the understanding were the latter not at the same time

²⁴See L. Wittgenstein, BB, pp. 7, 16, upon which most of my way of developing the example here is based; cf. also L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 36.

²⁵See L. Wittgenstein, PI, part II, sec. ix, pp. 187-189.

²⁶See L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 90, 94, 664.

captive to the 'label-object' picture of meaning in language. The misrepresentations which they facilitate build on this picture and could therefore not arise without it.

However, what we have said so far does not suffice to explain the past philosophers' steadfast adherence to the 'label-object' view of meaning, since now another question has arisen which has yet to be answered. Why have virtually all past philosophers committed the error of relying, in the course of their reflections on meaning in language, exclusively on substantives and proper names for their examples of meaningful words? It seems that this latter fact cannot be completely explained simply on grounds of the mystifying external appearance of language. There must still be other aspects of language, and perhaps of the learning and use of language, which are such that only an adequate and explicit awareness of them could prevent one from committing this error and being mystified by the clothing of language. At the same time these other aspects must be such that the philosophers, precisely because of something intrinsic to the traditional manner of philosophizing, or even to the nature of the philosophical enterprise per se, would have been very unlikely to take adequate cognizance of them.

Part of the answer to this question is indicated by Wittgenstein's statement that "we²⁷ do not command a clear

²⁷That by "we" Wittgenstein means "we philosophers and non-philosophers alike" is amply demonstrated in the brief account immediately following.

view of the use of our words."²⁸ But for the sake of making more accessible the reasons for this lack of perspicuity of 'grammar' we shall first give a brief account of language and meaning as seen from the perspective of this most elusive of 'grammarians'.

Suppose, following Wittgenstein's injunction,²⁹ we were to look closely and attend to the phenomena of language carefully, not demanding their conformity to whatever requirements we believe a priori that they should meet, but instead allowing them to disclose themselves on their own terms. We would see that an everyday language does not essentially tend towards a well-defined calculus comprised of a set of signs functioning as names of things in the world, a handful of exact rules whereby names are combined into propositions, and propositions are grouped into arguments, and so on.³⁰ In fact, Wittgenstein claims, there is no single visible reality which corresponds to the word "language".³¹ (Hence the traditional philosopher's inclination to believe that the 'essence' of language, since it must exist, is something hidden from view.³²) Rather, what we call

²⁸L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 122.

²⁹See *ibid.*, I, 51-52, 66, 340.

³⁰See L. Wittgenstein, BB, p. 25.

³¹L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 65.

³²See *ibid.*, I, 65, 92, 101-102.

language is nothing more than a collection of distinct sorts of utterances and inscriptions which are meaningless in themselves and each of which acquires meaning only in connection with the sorts of language-games of which it is part. (Wittgenstein uses the term "language-game" to designate any whole consisting of language and the actions with which it is interwoven.³³ Examples of different kinds of language-games are: giving orders and obeying them, reporting an event, asking, thanking, greeting, expressing pain.³⁴) These language-games can combine in various ways to form practices which give human life shape and direction. But, according to Wittgenstein, in themselves they do not share anything essential in common. Indeed, they can be compared, grouped, classified, etc. only on the basis of different lines of resemblance running through them in different directions, like those one can trace in families by studying the physical features of their members. As is the case in families, the over-all resemblances among language-games are sometimes very great and sometimes not so great. And the respects in which language-games are similar can differ from one group to another, although the similarities displayed in any given set often overlap and criss-cross with those shown in others.³⁵

³³Ibid., I, 7.

³⁴Ibid., I, 23, 142.

³⁵Ibid., I, 65-67.

Yet despite the resemblances it may bear to others, each language-game remains a distinct and separate whole, that is, none is reducible to any of the others. Furthermore, Wittgenstein points out, the kinds of language-games we play with any given word or expression in the language, the ways in which it is ordinarily used, are often many and varied.³⁶ Thus, were we to realize all these things, our whole understanding of language and meaning would, according to Wittgenstein, be radically different from that of the traditional philosopher. We would recognize how inadequate the understanding of all language solely or even primarily in terms of the activity of discourse about things (which understanding is precisely what underlies the view of ordinary language as a crude approximation to the well-defined calculus mentioned above) really is. Concomitantly we would see that what a word means is determined by all the language-games in which the word is normally employed, hence, that its meaning consists in all the things we ordinarily do with it, not in any one thing or object which it may denote.³⁷ It is worth noting here that this point regarding 'meaning' seems to capture much of the sense of the following enigmatic but famous remark by Wittgenstein:

³⁶L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 4.

³⁷See *ibid.*, I, 1-12, 23.

For a large class of cases -- though not for all -- in which we employ the word "meaning" it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language.

And the meaning of a name is sometimes explained by pointing to its bearer.³⁸

At any rate, in the end we could not fail to regard as misleading and erroneous both the 'label-object' conception of meaning in language and all attempts to comprehend the meaning of any given word or expression by means of a unique, simple, categorical, precise, fully exhaustive rule, formula, or definition.

We are now in a better position to understand why the grammar of language lacks perspicuity and how this lack is connected with the problematic character of traditional philosophy.

Firstly, it is a fact that no part of language points to the sorts of linguistic and practical contexts in which we normally use it. That is to say, words, phrases, sentences, etc., do not themselves reveal when, where, or in general, how they are ordinarily used. This is something we learn in the course of our development as members of a human community. We begin to acquire an understanding of a word's meaning by being directed to employ the word in the different kinds of situations which normally warrant its use. This is accomplished with the aid of someone who already knows its

³⁸Ibid., I, 43.

meaning, who can set examples for us to follow and make reinforcing gestures of approval or disapproval, depending on whether we have followed them correctly or missed their thrust entirely. And the learning process continues until we are able to use the term correctly independently of direction by others.³⁹ But after we have mastered a part of language, its employment becomes so habitual for us that we seldom, if ever, stop to draw explicitly the connections between any particular use we make of it and the sorts of circumstances which shape that use into the kind of use it is. We normally just say what we've been taught to say whenever we do what we are doing as a matter of course.⁴⁰ Moreover, our memories of our childhood years -- especially those years when we possessed no, or were just beginning to acquire some, command of the language -- are very poor, if they exist at all. Hence, we find it difficult, perhaps impossible, to remember how we ourselves first began to learn the uses of words, a vivid and adequate recollection of which would no doubt help shed much light on the relationships between practical context and meaning.⁴¹ This difficulty is further

³⁹See *ibid.*, I, 143, 208.

⁴⁰See *PI*, I, 238, for an example of a very similar use of the expression "matter of course" by Wittgenstein.

⁴¹See *ibid.*, I, 5-10, 26-32, 33-35. These passages, I believe, indicate that, according to Wittgenstein, a vivid and adequate recollection of how one first began to learn the uses of words would show to what extent it is a mistake to identify acquiring an understanding of a word's meaning

compounded by the fact that later in our lives we frequently learn the meanings of words by asking for ostensive definitions of them. For this procedure can deceive us into thinking that attaining an understanding of what a word means, particularly in the earliest stages of the learning of language, amounts to nothing more than having the word defined ostensively, and thereby recognizing the kind of thing the word betokens and establishing a mental association between the two. We can come to believe that no other method of teaching or training is necessary, that nothing else needs to have been known or understood beforehand. (Imagine a person by the name of Bart Rustle, a mature, well-adjusted individual of average intelligence who, due to some quirk in his upbringing, had never seen any aardvarks and, indeed, was not even familiar with the word "áardvark". Suppose also that a friend of his, Harris Tottle, took him to the zoo one day and showed him a few, each time pronouncing the word "aardvark" while pointing to one. Assume Bart understood him -- as their subsequent trips to the zoo demonstrated. The fact that this procedure enabled Harris to teach his friend what "aardvark" refers to might have

with being made to see, simply by means of ostensive definitions, the sort of thing which the word betokens, and establishing a 'mental association' between the word and some general, mental image or picture of the thing. It would show how erroneous Augustine's account of the early stages of that learning process really is. Nevertheless, evidently Wittgenstein himself is, to say the least, skeptical about the possibilities of such recollections in one's own case (see PI, I, 342-344).

deceived Bart into concluding that nothing else was required for him to be able to learn the word's meaning. All he had to do, he could have told himself upon reflection, was to be shown, by means of a few examples, what sort of thing the word "aardvark" designates and to 'pin' the word in his own mind, like a label, onto some sort of general, mental image or picture of the thing.) We are thus well on the way to interpreting, if we have not done so already, meaning in language on the model of the 'label-object' relation. [Of course if we are misled by this procedure, it is at least partly because we forget that we know most of what there is to know about the word's meaning (and about a lot of other things as well) even before asking for it to be explained. Bart could have benefitted from an ostensive definition only if he was already familiar with many of the crucial generic features of the class of things examples of which Harris was later to show him, hence, only if he was capable of making the relevant distinctions. This means that he had to have mastered beforehand the relevant sets of concepts. (Had he been asked to think out loud during the moment of his first and successful introduction to aardvarks at the zoo, he would have had to be able to express a train of thoughts very much like the following one: "Harris is trying to point something out to me, something called "aardvark" . . . what, though? that funny-looking tree over there? (some weird kind of palm tree, maybe) . . . oh, wait! there's a strange little animal

curled up under it! . . . oh, there's another one just like it! . . . now he's pointing to it and calling it an "aardvark" too . . . so that's what an 'aardvark' looks like: a funny little pig with a long snout . . .") Furthermore, he had to have already acquired a mastery or understanding of the language-game of 'ostensive definition', hence of the concepts "naming" and "pointing", none of which could he therefore have learned by means of ostensive definition.^{42]} Given all these facts, then, little wonder that we lack clarity about the grammar of language.

Now the philosopher, while philosophizing, divorces himself from the everyday activities and situations with which the ordinary uses of language are linked.⁴³ For being immersed in reflection on the 'meanings' of particular words necessitates abstaining from active involvement in any of the practices we normally engage in with them. Furthermore, like the rest of us, he too is apt to have little or no recollection of how he was taught the uses of language, hence to lack explicit awareness of the connections between a word's meaning and the various kinds of language-games played with it. And, as is readily evident, the assumption of a reflective

⁴²See L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 1, 6, 26-32.

⁴³I believe this is at least part of what Wittgenstein has in mind when he says that "philosophical problems arise when language goes on holiday" (PI, I, 38). See also L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 132.

stance is not by itself likely to help him remember these things (assuming for the sake of argument that it is possible for him to remember them).⁴⁴ Moreover, in reflecting he is, of course, employing language in its discursive capacity. Taking into account, along with all the above-mentioned facts, the uniform appearance of language, we should therefore not be surprised at the philosopher's strong inclination to regard discourse or speech about things as the essential function of language.⁴⁵ But because he tends to view all uses of language in the light of the language-game of discourse, he is bound also to rely virtually exclusively on substantives and proper names for his examples of meaningful words in his reflections on language and meaning.⁴⁶ We see, then, that it is almost inevitable that the philosopher fall captive to the 'label-object' view of meaning and hence be misled in his understanding of language by its deceptive exterior. It is as if the deck was stacked against him right from the very beginning.

We must nevertheless emphasize that to say that the traditional philosopher, in inquiring into and making claims

⁴⁴By now it should be evident that, for Wittgenstein, philosophical problems arise not because philosophers are somehow completely out of touch, insane, or freaks of nature (see L. Wittgenstein, BB, p. 59). The problems they raise are such as would very likely arise for virtually all of us were we as reflective as they are.

⁴⁵See L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 11, 46, 304, 514.

⁴⁶See *ibid.*, I, 1, 46, 304.

about the meanings of words, characteristically neglects to consider the relationships between them and the language-games in which these terms are normally employed, is not to imply that his uses of words bear no resemblances to their counterparts in everyday speech. Rather, as we have seen, some at least "prima facie" similarity must exist; otherwise, there would be no connection between them on the basis of which we could say that they conflict. We could not even compare the two sorts of uses, except to say that they bear no relationship to each other.

With this reminder, we are now ready to attempt a latter Wittgensteinian explanation of the seemingly paradoxical character of the traditional philosopher's utterances, of the fact that in making skeptical assertions he appears to, yet does not really, use words as we ordinarily use them. The (traditional) philosopher, while reflecting upon what a given word means, isolates a specific part of its grammar and, for reasons apparently rooted in other relevant aspects of everyday speech, sets it up as the term's only legitimate and genuine meaning. But he neglects to take notice of the various kinds of language-games with which the uses comprising this part are linked. Of course, he does not deem this necessary, for according to him the "meaning" of an expression is independent of all that we ordinarily do or accomplish with the expression itself.⁴⁷

⁴⁷See *ibid.*, I, 514.

He thus fails to appreciate the true natures of these uses, and to see that these uses are what they are only because they occur in certain types of practical situations and not others. As a result, what he regards as the word's real or correct meaning appears in his interpretation as something different, something abstract, devoid of all connections with the everyday life-activities of which the uses in question ordinarily form integral parts. We find evidence of this in the fact that the philosopher, with his attention focused on the different sorts of verbal patterns and relationships which constitute the outward shape of these uses,⁴⁸ derives from them an abstract definition of, or proposition about, the kind of thing he thinks the word represents. That is to say, he arrives at a unique, simple, categorical, precise rule which he supposes governs all of the word's correct applications, yet which acknowledges none of the kinds of language-games with which these particular uses of it are interwoven.⁴⁹ (Note, for example, the following definition: "knowledge" means "the apprehension of indubitable, eternal truths".) He, furthermore, performs the same sort of abstraction for all other uses of the word. Thus abstractly regarded, those which do not conform to this rule he rules out as untenable.

The account of the traditional manner of doing philo-

⁴⁸See *ibid.*, I, 664.

⁴⁹See *ibid.*, I, 116.

sophy given above should suffice for us to see why so many philosophical claims which conflict with many of the things we ordinarily say and think strike the average, unphilosophical person as being either simply unbelievable or, if he has heard the philosophers' 'reasons' for making them, paradoxical. Theses of this sort generally entail normative statements to the effect that a certain aspect of a word's grammar, shorn of its links with all everyday practices, is to be taken thus abstractly and regarded as the word's sole legitimate meaning (use), while the rest be deemed as having originated in common error or illusion. Therefore, insofar as any given philosopher uses words in ways which seemingly both agree and disagree with their ordinary uses, we non-philosophers cannot help but feel perplexed by him. That we do thus take his claims seriously rather than dismiss them as mere noises -- assuming, of course, that we are honest with ourselves -- is not surprising. For he certainly believes that he has made a genuine discovery; and what he says is after all not mere noise. The words with which he formulates his general theses still mean something, the sorts of linguistic patterns exhibited in his utterances are still familiar to us, even though we have difficulty believing him.

But suppose someone puts to us the following objection: "Fine. I will grant you that the skeptical philosophers' uses of words appear to, yet do not, cannot (quite)

agree with their uses in everyday speech. Indeed, every one of these philosophers -- or at least the greatest among them -- recognizes some difference between what he means by the words he employs and what they ordinarily mean, though none may have described it in quite the way you and Wittgenstein do. But Wittgenstein wants to go further and say that any deviation of this sort from ordinary usage culminates in one form of nonsense or another.⁵⁰ This I cannot see." And he might continue thus, "Let us return to your earlier discussion of 'knowledge'. There you stated that some philosophers have said or implied that we cannot have knowledge of causal relations among empirical phenomena or of matters of fact which we have not observed or do not now observe ourselves. (You will recall, of course, your earlier remark to the effect that this general skeptical thesis stems partly from their definition of knowledge as the apprehension of indubitable and timeless truths, a formula which, as you yourselves seem to acknowledge, appears to derive from the everyday use of 'know'.) According to this view then, regarding, for instance, all general empirical phenomena, all future matters of fact and all past occurrences or states of affairs lying beyond the reach of our own sensory experience we can legitimately make statements, not of the form 'I know that . . . because . . .', but only of the form 'I believe that . . . because

⁵⁰See *ibid.*, I, 116-119.

. . ., although I may be wrong' or 'It is probable that . . .'.
Now I accept that one might want to dispute the validity of this skeptical thesis and the normative claims about uses of words which it entails. But why would anyone want to go so far as to say that all of the skeptical philosopher's utterances are meaningless?"

In order to better see how Wittgenstein might have responded to our interlocutor's objection, we shall consider what would most likely happen if the relevant aspects of everyday life were made to conform with the normative implications of this skeptical thesis. Accordingly, let us first remind ourselves of certain conditions of everyday life and of the ways in which they shape or limit human conduct.

Firstly, the world human beings live in is such that a large part of their lives is affected by unpredictable events or by circumstances not completely within their comprehension and control. Concomitantly, each man is limited as to the amount of information he can absorb about things surrounding him. Therefore men often wind up in situations about which they are inadequately informed (although they frequently can realize that such is the case only after the fact), and it is not unusual for them to make what are from the standpoint of their aims mistaken judgments concerning the best particular courses of action pursuable in any of them. Yet many of the things a man does or the tasks he sets

for himself are such that he is compelled to rely on other men in order to see them through. Hence, given the generally imperfect character of human judgment and information, mankind is in need of some device whereby one man's confidence in the dependability of another's information and judgment can be bolstered to such a degree that he is willing to act on the strength of the other's claims. This function is performed by expressions containing the term "know". Imagine a situation wherein, given that I am undecided between staying home to read Wittgenstein's Tractatus and taking in a film at the cinema, say, Bergmann's "Cries and Whispers" (the major reason for my indecision being that I have heard nothing about this particular production), my friend Peter says to me, "I've seen it and I've read the Tractatus too. Knowing you the way I do, I know you'd enjoy the film more." By saying "I know" rather than "I think" or "I believe" or even "I am sure", he vouches for the truth of his claim. This is not to say that he cannot possibly be mistaken in the way that he could not be mistaken if, for example, he were to say, with justification, that he knows the proof of a particular geometrical theorem:⁵¹ it is possible for him to be right in saying "I know" and his prediction still be proven false.⁵² To be sure, he himself has no doubts about the truth

⁵¹See L. Wittgenstein, OC, pars. 563, 648-657.

⁵²Ibid., par. 549.

The justification for Peter's claim to know the proof

of his prediction. Yet the act of vouching for it which he performs in using the term "know" can amount to nothing more than an expression of his willingness, precisely in the face of the fact that we do make, and often cannot help making, mistaken judgments about such matters, to assume part of the responsibility for the final outcome of my decision, should I act on his recommendation. Nothing more is humanly possible. But this "nothing more" is not a mere nothing. For he thereby makes it easier for me to make my choice. On the other hand, imagine us sitting around one evening in his apartment, chatting and listening to some music. At one point in the course of thus idling the time away, we decide we both want something to eat. Together we walk into the kitchen, and Peter, noticing a piece of cheese on the table, turns to me and says, "I know there's some cheese on the table; have some." Even were I to accept his offer, I still would have been somewhat puzzled by his choice of words, particularly by his use of the expression "I know". For he certainly would not have told me anything I could not have easily learned by myself.⁵³

of a certain mathematical theorem, should he ever make such a claim, is his ability to present the proof. On the other hand, that Peter is right in claiming to know that I would prefer the movie stems largely from the following two facts: firstly, he has been a close friend to me for a long time, as a result of which he has acquired a detailed and intimate familiarity with my desires, tastes, moods, etc.; secondly, he is willing and able to accept part of the responsibility for the outcome of my decision, if I should decide to act on his word.

⁵³Ibid., par. 467; cf. also *ibid.*, par. 441.

Speaking generally, it is in contexts not of the latter but of the former sort, wherein one party possesses information which another does not have and cannot obtain readily enough on its own, which is nevertheless relevant to an undertaking the latter is contemplating, that expressions containing the word "know(s)" are employed, indeed, that there is a point to using them.⁵⁴

Similar considerations pertain to expressions such as "I'm not sure" or "I have my doubts". We need to have a way of distinguishing between claims which are, and those which are not, to be considered reliable. Otherwise, in circumstances where we are lacking in information relevant to our deliberations, we would have no way of determining how much we can base our decisions on other people's claims. And it is precisely for the purpose of marking off claims too shaky to provide a basis for reasonable expectations, that these expressions are used in such situations. Returning to our first example, suppose Peter responds to my dilemma in the following manner, "I think you'd enjoy the film more, but I'm not sure." In saying this, he gives me to understand that he could be wrong and I am not to make my choice on the basis of what he thinks, or that, if I do, he is not willing to bear

⁵⁴ See *ibid.*, pars. 483-484.

The above discussion of certain everyday uses of "know" and the everyday life-contexts of these uses has benefitted a great deal from J. L. Austin, Philosophical Papers (henceforth referred to as Papers), pp. 97-103; and H. Pitkin, Wittgenstein and Justice, pp. 85-90.

any of the responsibility for the results of my decision. He simultaneously indicates that, circumstances permitting, it would be better for me to seek out more authoritative information elsewhere. In the absence of such an alternative, should I decide to go, I know enough to keep a tight rein on my expectations. And should the film prove to be a disappointment, I would have no one to blame but myself.

This much having been said, we can now study some of the consequences we would have to face were we to adapt our everyday practices to the rules of language-use implied by the philosopher's skeptical theses. Given the way we ordinarily perceive and relate to things in the world, employing expressions such as "but I cannot be certain" or "it is probable" in conjunction with all general empirical claims, all claims about causal relations and all claims presupposing these (e.g., predictions and inferences about past occurrences) -- this clearly means an overwhelming majority of the kinds of judgments we make about everyday sorts of factual matters -- would lead to a cessation of their present way of functioning. Perhaps it would even result in their failure to function in any way whatsoever. For our ability to use them to distinguish between those ordinary empirical claims we can, and those we cannot, reasonably act on would thereby be undermined. And if, in compliance with the philosopher's rule, we should also terminate virtually all of our established ordinary uses of "know" in connection with everyday matters of fact, we would soon

evolve new expressions in place of the original ones and begin doing with them what we had previously been doing with the others. (This is a must. Otherwise, for obvious reasons, community life would become extremely difficult to maintain.) So, what would come of his linguistic reforms? Effectively, nothing.⁵⁵ Employing these expressions according to his rule would ultimately be tantamount to not using them at all, at least not in a manner that could make any difference to the way we live. Our ability to carry on with all of our established practices would in no way be affected by their presence in the language (assuming, of course, that they were to be put to no other use). And after a number of generations, they would cease to be more than mere noises, perhaps drop out of the language altogether.

The general import of this is as follows. In the Wittgensteinian view, we human beings are such that language is fundamental to our existence. That is to say, many if not all of our life-preserving and life-enhancing activities are bound up with the use of words. Consequently the various ways in which we employ language are far from being simply matters of arbitrary whim or caprice. Furthermore, according to Wittgenstein, the numerous functions which any given word performs,

⁵⁵Cf. J. Wisdom, Philosophy and Psychoanalysis, pp. 43-44. Regarding what the later Wittgenstein sees, from the standpoint of everyday life-conduct, as the ineffectual character of the normative implications of the traditional philosopher's uses of words, see also L. Wittgenstein, OC, pars. 338, 524.

the different things we do and accomplish with it, are precisely what constitute its meaning; and the character of each function depends upon the nature of the practical context to which that function is tied. But what happens when a philosopher, reflecting on a particular word's meaning -- which he views only in abstraction from all the language-games normally played with the word, 'derives' from a certain part of its grammar a formula he sees as giving the word's correct definition? Although his use of the term apparently agrees with the ordinary uses of it which comprise this part, he inevitably goes on to do one of two things: (a) extend the employment of this term to situations in which its employment would normally not be appropriate, that is, if the word were to continue performing the functions linked with the ordinary uses in question (recall the example of the skeptical philosopher's use of "but I have my doubts"); (b) discontinue the use of this word in situations in which its use is ordinarily appropriate (recall the example of the skeptical philosopher's use of "I know"). In either case, the word is, in his employment of it, deprived of its specific functions; there ceases to be any point in using it. No wonder then, that, taken literally -- which is of course the way they were intended to be taken, the skeptical claims made by philosophers beset by false pictures of meaning and language amount to little more than nonsense.

II

WITTGENSTEIN'S LATER TEACHING REGARDING PROPER PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY

In the previous chapter we attempted to reconstruct, from a standpoint within the spirit of his thought, the substance of the later Wittgenstein's criticism of the philosophical tradition as a whole. The question we are now faced with is this: What is for Wittgenstein the nature of philosophy in its proper form, the form presumably best exemplified by his own philosophic activity? The answer to which the foregoing discussion points most clearly is vividly expressed in Wittgenstein's own words, "Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our understanding by means of our language."¹ As we have seen, according to him, this bewitchment of our understanding (which is, in all of its various forms, perhaps most dramatically illustrated in the thought of past philosophers, but which is by no means peculiar to them) originates partly in the misleading pictures of the meanings of words urged on us by the outward appearance of language. It would seem, therefore, that if the 'battle' against this bewitchment is to be won, we must break the hold which these pictures exert on our minds. This would appear to be one of the principal

¹L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 109.

tasks of philosophy, at least of philosophy as it is supposed to be understood and done.

What we have said so far seems obvious enough. Yet there arises another, more difficult question: How does one go about freeing oneself from the grip of these illusion-engendering pictures of language? Here, as before, the answer has already been suggested by the discussion in the previous chapter. Above all, one must, according to Wittgenstein, attempt to set aside one's preconceptions regarding how things must be, and instead simply "look and see" how we actually use language in everyday life. This may be easier said than done, but Wittgenstein believes it is possible, and what is more, he provides his readers with many examples showing how it is to be done. He also offers numerous general remarks, instructions and maxims which help to clarify further what is involved in the kind of investigation he thinks philosophy should be. It is to a discussion of the most important and revealing of these that we now turn.

When Wittgenstein says that we must try to "look and see" how we ordinarily use language, he does not intend that we look anywhere and everywhere, randomly collecting facts about the everyday use of whatever part of language our gaze happens to light upon. Rather, we take as the point of departure for our inquiries the theses and arguments of the traditional philosophers. We choose them because they point to the potential problem-spots in our language, to those as-

pects of ordinary language which give rise to pictures which in turn can induce us to make paradoxical, nonsensical claims very much like those of past philosophers.² As has already been argued, although from the standpoint of Wittgenstein's later thought any given traditional philosophical thesis or claim is, strictly speaking, entirely lacking in sense, it is not mere noise. The fact that it has a paradoxical ring to it, that it is somehow simultaneously believable and unbelievable, implies that the philosopher advancing it must appear to mean, yet cannot really (quite) mean, what we ordinarily mean by the words, phrases or sentences used to make it. Pondering seriously the paradoxical quality of such a claim, we soon realize that we can account for this quality only when we have clearly grasped both the differences and the similarities between the given philosopher's uses of the words, sentences, etc. in question, and the corresponding uses of them in ordinary language. Accordingly, we begin to look and inquire into the kinds of everyday practices and language-games with which these uses are interwoven. Now there are various techniques³ some or all of which we necessarily employ in the course of our inquiry: recalling language-games we normally play⁴; imagining language-games we

²This seems to be what Wittgenstein himself does in the Investigations; see also L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 109.

³See *ibid.*, I, 133.

⁴For example, *ibid.*, I, 143.

could without any real difficulty be made to play, although we are not now disposed to play them⁵; trying to construct language-games we do not play and indeed would be unable to play unless certain very basic aspects of the weave of our life were very different.⁶ (At times we are even forced to search for ways of paraphrasing or analyzing⁷ certain philosophical claims before attempting to determine the sorts of everyday life-situations in which they may conceivably be made; for, left in the form originally given them by their author, they can have no meaning whatsoever in everyday speech.) Whichever methods we use, they all have one thing in common. They help us to understand better the ways in which the uses of words, sentences, etc. in the context of the given philosopher's skeptical thesis compare with their counterparts in ordinary language, while simultaneously shedding considerable light on the latter.

When some progress has been made along these lines, we proceed to do the same for all other, related ordinary uses of language which, according to the philosopher, compel one to draw the inferences culminating in his skeptical thesis. But we can expand our inquiry further yet by focusing on certain concepts which figure prominently in the thesis itself,

⁵For example, *ibid.*, I, 233.

⁶For example, *ibid.*, I, 312; see L. Wittgenstein, PI, II, xii, 230.

⁷See L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 90.

and attempting to discern still other everyday functions which they perform, other language-games of which they are part. We can compare these with the language-games already examined, noting various relations among them -- connections, similarities, dissimilarities, etc. -- and thereby rendering the latter as well as the former that much more perspicuous.⁸ By the time all of this inquiring, looking, comparing, and contrasting has been completed, large parts, perhaps entire regions, of the ordinary uses of language and their roles in our lives will have been put into some sort of order and more fully illuminated. Moreover, we will have located some of those aspects of language's exterior which give rise to misleading pictures, identified those pictures, and exposed some of the ways in which they pervert our understanding.⁹ We will thus have attained greater clarity regarding, not only the nature of a traditional philosopher's conflict with everyday speech, but also some of the factors, especially linguistic ones, which play an inadvertent yet crucial role in the shaping of his thought. And if we will not always be able to persuade him that his way is fruitless, at least we will be better prepared to prevent the philosopher-skeptic latent within ourselves from gaining the upper hand.

The foregoing brief exposition of Wittgenstein's

⁸See *ibid.*, I, 130, 122.

⁹See *ibid.*, I, 132.

later view of proper philosophical inquiry has been illustrated to some extent in the first chapter by our discussion, conducted in the spirit of his later thought, of a certain skeptical 'insight' into the nature of 'knowledge'. However, let us pursue this matter a little further. The 'insight' in question can be formulated thus: strictly speaking, knowledge of causal connections among empirical phenomena and, therefore, of matters of fact of which we have no direct experience is not possible. As we have already seen, this skeptical thesis presupposes the definition of knowledge as the apprehension of indubitable and timeless truths. Moreover, this definition, we will recall, has some basis in the ordinary use of language: "knowing" is grammatically related to "being certain" and to "being able to make true statements". And the philosopher who has put forth the definition may have done so because of the prominence in his mind of the fact that, for instance, geometry and other branches of mathematics are frequently spoken of both as bodies of knowledge and as systems of indubitably, timelessly true propositions. Indeed, that definition seems to describe quite adequately this aspect of the grammar of "know". But if one assumes, as does our philosopher,¹⁰ that the meaning of "know" is some one kind of entity -- perhaps a type of mental act or state of mind -- to which the word refers and the unique essence of which is described by the definition, then one is

¹⁰See, for example, J. Locke, Essay, II, 135.

bound, as we have also seen, to run into contradictions and anomalies. On the other hand, suppose one were to resist the inclination to interpret the meaning of "know" on the basis of the 'label-object' view of meaning in language and, instead, attempt to look and see just how the word is actually used, in which kinds of language-games it ordinarily occurs. One would then be in a position to recognize that there are many aspects of the grammar of "know" which cannot be construed simply in terms of such functions as reference or description. One would be able to see that sentences containing the word are seldom used solely for the purpose of making statements about oneself, of ascribing to oneself a certain kind of state or act, be it mental or otherwise.¹¹ We, it must be stressed, are not saying that such sentences are never used in these ways.¹² Picture the following situation: A highly reputed professional geometer is giving a lecture in the history of geometry to a knowledgable, although not expert, audience. At one point during his talk he makes a statement of the form "We now know that such-and-such is so-and-so . . ." and outlines a proof (i.e., indicates roughly how to show by demonstration the necessary, indubitable truth) of some difficult theorem about some property of triangles in non-Euclidean geometry. Assume

¹¹See L. Wittgenstein, OC, par. 230; see also J. L. Austin, Papers, p. 103.

¹²See L. Wittgenstein, OC, pars. 587-591.

also that this statement is part of his point that at last we have made some headway with respect to the acquisition of knowledge in a part of geometry that has until recently escaped or eluded us. It would, then, not be amiss to conclude that, in his use of it, the word "know" points to some condition, state, or ability which is being said of the geometric profession, if not of civilization as a whole. But the use of "know" in connection with matters of fact of the kind illustrated in the previous chapter can hardly be understood in this manner. To return to that example, when my friend says to me, "Understanding you as well as I do, I know you'd prefer the movie", it is not simply, perhaps not at all, the case that he is ascribing to himself a certain type of mental act or state of mind involving the apprehension of indubitable truths. Rather, the point of his use of "I know" is essentially one of signalling to me that I can rely on him and act on the authority of his word, or, as Austin suggests, that he is so certain in his judgment as to be prepared to assume some responsibility for my decision.¹³ Moreover, even if that use is justified, it does not mean, as does the correct use of "we know" by our imaginary geometer, that he cannot be wrong, or that, like the geometer, he can demonstrate the indubitable truth of his prediction. (This suffices to explain why the interpretation of Peter's statement as an

¹³J. L. Austin, Papers, pp. 99-100. Wittgenstein gives a similar, albeit more vague, account at OC, 561, 563, 575.

ascription to himself of a certain kind of act or state of mind involving the apprehension of indubitable truths is misguided. For on this interpretation, if what he has said he 'knows' will happen does not in fact happen, then he will not have 'known' what he has claimed to 'know', in which case, neither will he have been justified in making that claim.) That he can be wrong and that it is impossible for anyone to give such a demonstration is in fact brought out by our philosopher, albeit in a misleading and obscure way. Yet, as we have seen, given that we so frequently are, and often cannot even help being, imperfectly informed about such matters of fact, because so large a part of our everyday life-activities is bound up with them, it is a matter of great necessity that this further meaning of "know" have a place in ordinary language. As for the example of the geometry lecture, on the other hand, no question of decision or action arises there at all, much less a question of action on the strength of someone else's information. Hence, considerations of responsibility and authority do not arise either. What is at issue is what sorts of things there are about which we now have knowledge or about which we can now make indubitably true claims. In any case, once we understand these matters better, we are less inclined to be troubled by the fact that these two uses of "know", despite their kinship, are so markedly different, and that what is meant by "I know" in the former case cannot in the least be made to fit any 'label-

object', 'mentalistic' interpretation of the meaning of "know".

But we must still attempt to give at least a brief sketch of what constitutes, from the standpoint of Wittgenstein's later thought, a more complete explanation of why philosophers traditionally might have wanted to define knowledge as a state or activity of the mind involving the possession or making of indubitably, eternally true judgments about things. We have already noted the fact that they have invariably been captives of the label-object picture of meaning. Moreover, some of them might have learned geometry when they were young men and been impressed with its rigour, clarity, and certainty.¹⁴ This might have induced them to regard geometry as the standard or paradigm of all knowledge.¹⁵ But still other factors could have influenced their thinking as well. For instance, mastery of the science of geometry involves such seemingly 'mental' processes or activities as thinking, reasoning, contemplating, etc. In addition, the grammar of "knowing" is closely connected with that of words like "believing", "doubting", "being certain", "thinking", and "reasoning", which also seem to possess 'mentalistic' meanings. ("After all," any one of them might have argued, "believing, doubting, reasoning, etc., are states or activities of the mind.") We should, then, not be surprised if firmly embedded in a philosopher's mind is the following

¹⁴Descartes might serve as an example; see R. Descartes, The Philosophical Works of Descartes, I, 85.

¹⁵Ibid., I, 91-93.

picture: "knowing" means, i.e., refers or points to, a kind of mental act, and "knowledge", to a certain state or condition of the mind; nor should we be surprised if, whenever he makes a statement of the form "I know that . . ." an image of himself pointing as it were inwardly to some mental act or state occurs to him. Furthermore, we should hardly be amazed if he finds the image of someone's seriously claiming to know, to apprehend with absolute certainty, any given matter of fact patently ridiculous.

I cannot here attempt to give a more detailed and more compelling Wittgensteinian explanation of our philosopher's propensity to put forth what the later Wittgenstein would see as misguided, paradoxical, ultimately senseless claims regarding the meaning of "knowledge", "knowing", etc. To do so I would have to discuss more thoroughly, not only the grammar of "knowing", but also that of grammatically related words like "understanding", "believing", "doubting", and "being certain". I have in mind here all those words possessing grammars which Wittgenstein claims give rise to that whole illusory view of the mind, that maze of false pictures of 'mental acts' and 'inner processes' which have hitherto led virtually all philosophers astray in their reflections on these matters. Hopefully what I have offered suffices at least as a rough indication of what must, in Wittgenstein's later view, be done in order that we may render more perspicuous both the grammar of "knowing" and the pro-

blematic character of traditional philosophical claims about it. Certainly this much should have by now become clear. According to Wittgenstein, by taking the traditional philosopher seriously, that is, by treating what he has to say, not as mere unintelligible noise, but as a distorted yet honest expression of a real problem in the understanding of language, we learn to recognize those features of our language which pose formidable obstacles to that understanding. At the same time, we attain greater clarity regarding ourselves, what we normally do or say when, and how language really does function in our life. As Wittgenstein puts it, "What we are destroying is nothing but houses of cards [; but in so doing we are in fact] clearing up the ground of language on which they stand."¹⁶

Thus far there have appeared rather frequently in our discussion expressions containing words such as "grammar" and "grammatically". Wittgenstein himself at one point describes a remark of his as "grammatical", and he speaks of his inquiries as "grammatical" investigations.¹⁷ Moreover, the word "grammar" is employed throughout the Investigations. These facts would seem to show that the term "grammar" designates a key concept in his later thought. It is therefore important that we have some understanding of what he means by these words and the expressions in which they typically occur.

¹⁶L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 118.

¹⁷Ibid., I, 574, 90.

We note, firstly, that Wittgenstein uses the term "grammar" to refer to both a specific kind of investigation and its subject matter.¹⁸ The first sense of the term need not be explicitly addressed; given that for Wittgenstein there is no difference between "grammar" in its first sense and "grammatical inquiry", what is said of the latter further in the discussion applies ipso facto to the former as well. Let us therefore turn our attention to the second sense of the term.

The best way to approach an understanding of "grammar" in its second sense is through an examination of the meaning of the expression "grammar of a word". To begin with, by the "grammar of a word" Wittgenstein seems to mean simply the sum-total of the uses of a word in ordinary language.¹⁹ He indicates, however, that this notion can be refined further by introducing the distinction between the 'surface grammar' of a word and its 'depth grammar'. The former consists in the variety of ways in which a word relates to other words in all of the different kinds of sentences in which it can appear. In other words, 'surface grammar' embraces that part of a word's use which, as Wittgenstein puts it, ". . . can be taken in by the ear." By contrast, the 'depth grammar' of a word consists in the entire range of uses to which a word is

¹⁸P. M. S. Hacker, Insight and Illusion, p. 51.

¹⁹See L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 122, 370-371, 496.

put in everyday life, in the variety or types of language-games or practices of which it is part.²⁰ Included in a word's 'depth grammar', then, are all the rules specifying the natures of its different uses, at least wherever such rules can be found.²¹ (According to Wittgenstein, the ordinary use of a word is normally not everywhere circumscribed by rules.²²) Wittgenstein also points out that there exists typically a disproportion between these two aspects of a word's grammar: The surface grammar of a word very frequently veils and obscures its depth grammar.²³ As we have already seen, it is partly because the traditional philosopher characteristically takes his bearings primarily by the former that he ends up misunderstanding the nature of a word's ordinary use or distorting its true meaning. Thus, an investigation into the depth grammar of a word is what enables us to grasp its real meaning and solve the various philosophical problems that have arisen in connection with it. But inquiries into surface grammar are also very useful. For without a rich appreciation of the many analogies and similarities among the forms of language and how they obscure or cover over what are at times fundamental differences among the or-

²⁰Ibid., I, 664.

²¹See *ibid.*, I, 496-497, for an example of the use of the expression "rules of grammar" by Wittgenstein.

²²Ibid., I, 68.

²³Ibid., I, 664, 90.

dinary uses of words and expressions, we could never fully comprehend why or how these problems arise in the first place. Grammatical investigations properly understood are, then, in this respect twofold.

Proceeding further, let us recall Wittgenstein's exhortation to us to look and see what the phenomenon we are investigating actually looks like instead of judging a priori what it must be like. This exhortation, we note, seems to suggest that the later Wittgenstein is an empiricist of sorts. Yet he does also distinguish more than once between a grammatical remark or proposition and an experiential or empirical statement,²⁴ while at the same time insisting that his own inquiries issue in the former only.²⁵ He furthermore stresses that a grammatical investigation is not to be confused with a scientific inquiry.²⁶ Given, as I said, the empiricist tone of some of his utterances, all of this may at first sight seem bewildering. Those distinctions must, therefore, be clarified if we ourselves are to grasp more clearly the nature of proper philosophical inquiry as Wittgenstein sees it.

Empirical inquiries, we take it, have to do with particular phenomena or sets of phenomena occurring at particular times and places. An example of this type of investigation is

²⁴See, for example, L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 232, 251, 295.

²⁵See, for example, *ibid.*, I, 89-90.

²⁶See *ibid.*, I, 89-90, 109.

an inquiry into the events leading up to and surrounding the Bolshevik revolution of 1918, or one into the particular sport that has been most popular among young men over the last decade. Answers to the questions raised in the course of an investigation of this kind can be confirmed or falsified by looking at the particulars themselves, and sometimes also by doing statistical analyses of empirical data, as in the case of our second example. By contrast, a grammatical inquiry is directed, not towards actual, particular phenomena, but towards, to put it in Wittgenstein's own words, "the 'possibilities' of phenomena".²⁷ Take the following example of the kind of question that could arise in an inquiry of this type: "When or in what circumstances do we use the expression 'I doubt' to indicate doubt about something?" One might be tempted to say that answers to this question are simply generalizations derived from a survey of English people's actual uses of that expression. But that would be to misunderstand its intention altogether. The question being asked here can be reformulated as follows, "When or in what circumstances does a putative use of the expression 'I doubt' to indicate doubt about something constitute a real or genuine use?" Another, and for our purposes perhaps even more revealing, way of formulating it would be, "What sorts of things, i.e., actions, states, conditions, etc., are required by or implied

²⁷Ibid., I, 90.

in the possibility of a genuine or real use of the expression 'I doubt' to indicate doubt about something?" This last formulation of the question has a Husserlian ring to it. But Wittgenstein's own use of the phrase "'possibilities' of phenomena [the emphasis being his]" suggests similarities between his notion of "grammatical investigation" and the phenomenologist's concept of "eidetic science".²⁸ Be that as it may, the question thus understood calls for answers which can be construed in two ways. They can be read as normative claims establishing or declaring rules which govern the correct or genuine use of the expression in question to indicate doubt about something, in other words, rules which govern and delimit a certain kind of language-game, practice, institution, or custom. Or they can be read as general statements describing the character of that use or institution.²⁹ They are thus statements which express a type of non-analytic necessity which, because it is a kind of necessity, sets them apart from ordinary empirical generalizations. [We say "non-analytic" because they express necessary connections among 'words' (concepts, propositions, etc.) and 'world' (types of actions, events, objects, states of affairs, etc.), not

²⁸See, for example, E. Husserl, Ideas, pp. 5, 7, 55.

²⁹See S. Cavell, MWM, pp. 13-16, 21-22. Wittgenstein too seems to say that because a meaning of a word is "a kind of employment", that is to say, an activity or practice of a certain type, it can be expressed in terms of rules; see L. Wittgenstein, QC, pars. 61-62.

necessary, logical relations among 'words' only -- as would be the case were they 'analytic' in the traditional sense.³⁰ This, we note, is part of what is implied in saying that these statements describe, or express rules governing, language uses, games, or practices. But none of this means that such assertions do not or cannot imply propositions which are 'analytic' in the aforementioned sense.] To be sure, particular cases and examples are cited which can be said in a way to corroborate these statements. Yet this corroboration has nothing to do with induction in the empiricist sense. These cases corroborate such assertions only in as much as they illustrate the applications of the rules expressed in them, or provide in accordance with them instances of the kind of phenomenon a certain action must be if it is to count as a genuine case of indicating doubt about something by means of the expression "I doubt". What would falsify an assertion which purports to describe some aspect of, or express a rule governing, an everyday use of "I doubt" is a specific case of what we -- more precisely, we normal, adult, native speakers of the language -- should, and in general do, know to be the correct use of that expression which contradicts the assertion as formulated. And it is the nature of this everyday use that would be at issue here, not the proportion of those of us who have adopted it. Hence,

³⁰See S. Cavell, MWM, pp. 8, 13, 31.

the fact (if it is a fact) that the behaviour of the majority of English-speaking people agrees with this assertion does not suffice to make it true, as would be the case if it were merely an inductive statement, an assertion about actual, particular phenomena. The existence of this agreement merely indicates that the use or practice described by the statement is one that prevails among the English, whereas the truth or adequacy of that description is entirely independent of it. Indeed, as a description of a certain practice the statement could be wholly true or adequate even if no one in the world were to engage in this practice; under these circumstances, from the point of view of understanding present human behaviour, it would be, not false, but irrelevant. Furthermore, if assertions of this type were merely empirical generalizations, it would never be possible for us to assess any particular use of any given word or expression in the language as either correct or incorrect, genuine or spurious, etc. We could only say of it either that it differs from, or that it is identical with, other particular uses of that word or expression. Yet this is clearly not what we in fact do. All of these considerations, then, show that a claim of the form "Given such-and-such conditions, when we say (use the expression) 'so-and-so', we mean (imply, do, accomplish) such-and-such", which Wittgenstein terms "grammatical", simply cannot be properly understood as some kind of empirical generalization or inductive statement.

We are now in a better position to understand how a grammatical investigation differs in Wittgenstein's view from a scientific one. We have seen that the object of the former is the ordinary or everyday use of language. This is something of which all of us normal, adult, native speakers of the language have an intimate knowledge, but of which we find ourselves unable to give an account when one is requested of us.³¹ And, as we have also seen, part of Wittgenstein's explanation of this lack of perspicuity is that the outward appearance of language misrepresents the true nature of our ordinary uses of language. Yet, to repeat, these are in a sense known to us all; they lie open to view right before our very eyes. This implies that in conducting grammatical investigations we are simply trying to gain a clearer view of what is already open to view. Therefore, we are not required to hunt out new sets of facts; as Wittgenstein puts it, "it is of the essence of our investigation that we do not seek to learn anything new by it".³² Rather, what we do is remind ourselves of what it is we already know and clarify for ourselves why we frequently seem not to know what we know.³³ It follows, furthermore, that in carrying on a

³¹In one sense, we 'know' the uses of words if we have mastered them, but in another sense, we do not 'know' them if we are unable to give an account of them; see L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 89.

³²Ibid., I, 89.

³³See *ibid.*, I, 89-90, 109, 126.

grammatical inquiry, we do not put forth theses -- at least not in the usual sense of the word "thesis". (If we should wish to use that word, we would have to say, together with Wittgenstein, that the theses yielded by our inquiries are not of the kind we would ordinarily debate, for we would normally admit straightaway to their being true.³⁴) Nor, for that matter, does advancing explanatory theories or hypotheses form any part of our inquiry. As compared with scientific theories or hypotheses, grammatical theses or statements are purely descriptive. Doing science, on the other hand, entails invoking hypotheses to explain, i.e., establish causal connections among, empirical phenomena, many of which are new and alien to us. In the course of the testing of these hypotheses, new sets of puzzling phenomena are uncovered, some of which again cannot be explained by these hypotheses, for which, thus, new hypothetical explanations are sooner or later advanced -- and so the cycle continues. We need not detain ourselves with the question as to the accuracy of this description of scientific 'progress'. Suffice it to have pointed out the concern with generating new hypotheses and with uncovering new phenomena which is endemic to what we know as science, and by virtue of which it is, according to Wittgenstein, distinguished

³⁴See *ibid.*, I, 128, 599.

from philosophy.³⁵

We should, moreover, draw attention to Wittgenstein's statement that, when talking about language, one must use the language of everyday life.³⁶ The full import of and rationale behind this assertion or injunction will emerge in the course of our discussion in the final chapter. But one plausible explanation which can be offered presently is that if we use a highly technical language like that of formal logic or semantics, we run the risk of distorting the phenomena, of putting an interpretation on them which is altogether at odds with their natures. Since the phenomena in question here are the everyday uses of language, which are themselves established, transmitted, learned and explained by means of everyday uses of language, it is necessary to employ ordinary language to grasp them in their original and true significance.

But something more needs to be said lest we come away with the impression that, when Wittgenstein says that what we do in conducting grammatical inquiries is investigate how we ordinarily use words (language), he means that we are interested solely in words (language) and not also in things (the world). At one point, while discussing certain aspects of the grammar of "imagining", he explicitly denies this and also states that the traditional question as to the essence

³⁵See L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 89, 109.

³⁶Ibid., I, 120.

of imagination is just as much a question of how we use the word "imagination" as is his question. The reason he prefers his way of putting the question to the traditional way is that the latter induces one to seek the wrong kind of answer. For example, the question "What is the essence or nature of imagination?" disposes one to look for some one kind of entity, a type of 'inner process', to which we, as it were, point inwardly every time we say "imagine".³⁷ And, as Wittgenstein suggests,³⁸ since one does not, upon examining them, find anything common to all the phenomena which is visible in the phenomena themselves, one infers that the common attribute or essence lies hidden somewhere behind them. By contrast, to ask the question "How do we use the word 'imagination'?" is perfectly consonant with the recognition that everything lies open to view, that philosophers do not seek to explain anything, and that what is hidden is of no interest to philosophy properly understood. For the inquirer is encouraged by this question to stay with the phenomena themselves, in all of their heterogeneity, using comparison and contrast to throw light on them, and ordering and arranging them in various possible ways to render his understanding of them more coherent. Accordingly, a grammatical investigation alone supplies the true answers to the question so deceptively

³⁷Ibid., I, 370.

³⁸See, for example, *ibid.*, I, 369.

phrased by the philosopher who first asked, "What is it?", in relation to some phenomenon about two and a half millenia ago. As Wittgenstein says, "Essence [i.e. what was in the past somewhat confusedly understood by the word 'essence'] is expressed by grammar",³⁹ or, "Grammar tells what kind of object anything is."⁴⁰

Yet, there are objections one can make in connection with this last line of argumentation which point to some serious questions concerning the meaning and validity of Wittgenstein's later philosophical thought as a whole. Discussion of these objections is, however, reserved for the final chapter, where we attempt to step back, so to speak, and adopt a more critical, though not unsympathetic, stance towards Wittgenstein's later view of philosophy.

³⁹L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 371.

⁴⁰Ibid., I, 373.

III

PROBLEMS REGARDING WITTGENSTEIN'S LATER VIEW OF PHILOSOPHY

Wittgenstein: 'Historicist' or 'Naturalist'?

Wittgenstein is said by a number of thinkers¹ to have set forth in his later writings, even if only implicitly, what might be described as the doctrine of 'radical conventionalism', according to which all meaning, thought, knowledge, and truth are rooted in, and decisively shaped by, human volition and agreement. Of these thinkers the most interesting is Stanley Rosen, whose criticisms, although sometimes inspired by misinterpretations of the texts, cut deeper and deal with the basic issues more directly and more comprehensively than those of any other commentator. For this reason we shall begin our inquiry into some of the more problematic aspects of Wittgenstein's later teaching concerning philosophy with a restatement of some of Rosen's arguments. We shall, moreover, focus especially on those which he adduces in support of his

¹Examples are: P. M. S. Hacker, Insight and Illusion, pp. 178-179; W. W. Bartley III, Wittgenstein, pp. 159-161; M. Dummett, "Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mathematics", in G. Pitcher, ed., Wittgenstein: The "Philosophical Investigations", pp. 425-426; S. Rosen, Nihilism, pp. 5-17. E. K. Specht also gives an essentially 'conventionalist' interpretation of Wittgenstein's later teaching (albeit not without qualifications) in The Foundations of Wittgenstein's Late Philosophy, pp. 140, 141-184.

claim that the later Wittgenstein embraces a radically conventionalist, indeed an historicist understanding of things, including philosophy.

Rosen's arguments, then, can be summarized as follows.² According to Wittgenstein's later thought, there is no such thing as noesis, i.e., intuition of the things that are. Man's discourse or speech about things is not guided by a mental act the core or foundation of which is the immediate, non-sensuous, silent or non-discursive apprehension of unchanging natures, essences, or forms. Rather, all thought is completely dependent upon and determined by language as it is used in everyday life. Thus, to discern what a given thing is, one must look, not to the thing itself in abstraction from what is ordinarily said about it, but to how the word designating it is used in everyday speech. Yet all uses of words are in Wittgenstein's view inextricably bound up with language-games or Lebensformen, which exist solely by virtue of their having been accepted by the members of a given language community as part of their common way of life. (Lebensform, we note, is the Wittgensteinian equivalent of the nineteenth-century concept of Weltanschauung). This implies that for Wittgenstein all activities of the mind, e.g., philosophy, science, history, and poetry, are to a decisive degree shaped by convention, custom, and tradition.

²The following summary is based on S. Rosen, Nihilism, pp. 5-17.

Indeed, Wittgenstein would say that the Lebensform can never itself become the object of theoretical evaluation, for it is precisely what makes thought and discourse at any given time possible: we cannot undertake to examine critically our uses of words without falling back on those same uses and thereby presupposing their validity. The forms of life must therefore be accepted as given; and they express the particular Weltanschauungen which give rise to a community's ways of understanding and interpreting things, that is, from which spring the meanings things have for its members. Yet being in his view customary, these Lebensformen are continually undergoing change; new ones come into being while old ones are set aside or forgotten. From this it follows that according to Wittgenstein all knowledge, meaning, and truth, hence all scientific and philosophical thought, are, like all other aspects of human life, completely immersed in the flow of history. We can reasonably conclude, then, that Wittgenstein's later thought is rooted in an essentially historicist understanding of things, including philosophy.

To be sure, the word "nature" (traditionally understood as designating a realm of things which, at least in respect of their essential characters or ways of being, are permanent and fully knowable, and which exist independently of human willing and making) does appear, albeit infrequently, in the Investigations. But Wittgenstein uses it ". . . either in a sense actually equivalent to 'custom' -- what happens

normally in human affairs, what we habitually do -- or in the unexamined sense of 'natural science' and 'laws of nature'".³ And in connection with the latter sense it must be pointed out that in Wittgenstein's later view the meaning which attaches to the word "nature" derives not from 'nature' itself, but from convention. One cannot verify the manner in which natural scientists customarily speak of nature by recourse to the facts of nature themselves, because what counts as a fact of nature depends upon the manner in which men ordinarily speak of nature, upon the ways in which they use words and expressions such as "nature" and "facts of nature". Furthermore, Wittgenstein at times alludes to various 'natural' causes of the use of language, causes such as pain, joy, and desire, and therewith implicitly raises the possibility of a physiological explanation of certain aspects of linguistic behaviour. Yet even here he ". . . has altogether stepped outside of the skin of his own doctrine."⁴ An appeal of this sort to 'nature' has the consequence of rendering the study of ordinary language a part of natural science. But this is contrary to his own "pervasive and explicit teaching". For, as we have already remarked, natural science itself can be understood on Wittgenstein's view only as a linguistic convention or human construction. And he also states clearly

³Ibid., p. 12.

⁴Ibid., p. 15.

and openly that he is ". . . not doing natural science; nor yet natural history".⁵

Such, in brief, is the argument in which Rosen grounds his allegation that Wittgenstein's later philosophy is ultimately reducible to historicism.

One could respond on Wittgenstein's behalf that Rosen misconstrues his understanding of the significance of everyday speech for philosophy. As was indicated in the previous chapter, Wittgenstein explicitly stresses that the traditional question as to the essence of a thing is just as much a question as to the uses of words as is his question, and, conversely, that his way of putting the question is directed at the thing itself to no lesser an extent than the traditional way. But Rosen's rejoinder, I believe, would be that a response of this sort misses the point. Wittgenstein, he would say, denies the presence of a noetic or intuiting aspect in human reason and asserts instead that all thought is discursive and bound by particular, ever-changing languages. As Rosen sees it, this denial implies that we have no basis upon which to seriously or meaningfully inquire whether our ways of speaking about things are on the whole adequate to the ways of being of the things themselves. To be sure, Rosen does not claim that for Wittgenstein the truth or falsity of any statement whatsoever simply cannot be evaluated. Nevertheless, he would

⁵L. Wittgenstein, PI, II, xii, 230.

probably maintain that according to Wittgenstein's later view such evaluations are possible only in connection with factual or empirical statements, moreover only in accordance with the conventions which determine a priori both the range of possible facts and what counts as a statement of fact and its verification or refutation. This is to say, Rosen would add, that the criteria of truth and knowledge are in Wittgenstein's view ultimately conventional, therefore, that we can never really obtain access to things as they are in themselves. According to the old view, there exists an unconditional difference between things in themselves and things as seen by us; and it is precisely an awareness of this difference that lies at the root of such traditional philosophical distinctions as those between convention and nature, between opinion and knowledge. But radical conventionalism and historicism necessitates a rejection of the unconditional character of that difference. Such is in Rosen's view the price one must pay for denying the existence of noesis or intuition and asserting the dependence of all thought on, or its determination by, historically changing language.

It seems, then, that if we wish to defend Wittgenstein against the allegation that he is propounding a historicist teaching, we must adopt one of two possible strategies: (a) show that Wittgenstein really does not intend, and is not compelled, to abandon the traditional notion of noesis or intuition; (b) show that if he does, he is nevertheless, contrary

to Rosen's claim, still able to steer clear of the impasse of historicism.

On the face of it Rosen appears to be justified in agreeing with Strawson that the later Wittgenstein displays a certain "hostility to the doctrine of immediacy". At one point in the Investigations, Wittgenstein, while inquiring into the grammar of "following a rule", raises the question as to whether or not intuition is required for one to know what would constitute a case of 'following a rule' in any given situation. Supposing intuition to be an inner voice of some kind, he asks, "[How] do I know how I am to obey it? And how do I know that it doesn't mislead me? For if it can guide me right, it can guide me wrong."⁶ So as to better understand what exactly Wittgenstein is doing here, let us turn briefly to one of his other works. In the Blue Book he recommends that whenever we feel ourselves succumbing to the temptation to think of the meaning of a sign as "an image built up in our minds when we see or hear the sign,"⁷ we replace the mental image with a visual, outward object similar in appearance to the image itself, e.g., a painted or modelled image. Thereupon we shall see, he claims, that the image tells us neither more nor less about the meaning of the word than the external object itself, that it tells us nothing at all. He also makes it clear that

⁶Ibid., I, 213.

⁷L. Wittgenstein, BB, p. 5; see also L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 141.

we can, for similar purposes, adapt this method to different kinds of inner processes, and specifies as one of its applications the replacement of every process of speaking to oneself inwardly by one of speaking aloud or writing.⁸ Should we apply his method to the case of intuition (which, we should recall, is construed by him as an inner voice), we would, according to him, recognize that intuition is no more revealing regarding, to return to our example, what counts as my following a particular rule than a command or instruction, whether written or spoken. Whatever questions or doubts were to arise in connection with the latter would also arise in connection with the former. Thus if I should need 'intuition' to tell me how to obey the rule, then I would also need another to help me understand the first one, and so on ad infinitum. All of this is to say that an appeal to intuition could solve none of the problems it would originally have been intended to solve. Therefore, Wittgenstein concludes, intuition is "an unnecessary shuffle". We should stress that, given that his inquiry is here directed at intuition per se, not just the intuition of this or that specific object, his conclusion as to its superfluousness extends beyond knowing what it is to follow a given rule to knowing anything at all. We may, of course, be suspicious of his treatment of this issue. Perhaps his having concluded thus is merely a natural consequence of

⁸L. Wittgenstein, BB, pp. 4-5.

his having accepted in advance the assumption -- which either prompted, or was prompted by, his construal of intuition as an inner voice rather than the 'mind's eye'⁹ -- that, whatever else it might be, understood as the immediate, self-evident, purely intellectual apprehension of what is, intuition simply does not exist. Were this true, the case against intuition as the core or basis of human knowledge would effectively have been closed before ever really being opened. At any rate, this passage seems to indicate quite clearly that Wittgenstein does not look favourably upon any attempts by past philosophers to demonstrate the centrality of intuition to reason and knowledge.

If, as we appear to have shown, our conclusion is indeed justified, then the first of the two above-mentioned strategies for defending Wittgenstein against the charge of historicism, namely, showing that Wittgenstein does not completely abandon the traditional notion of intuition or noesis, is no longer available to us. We shall, therefore, attempt to take up the second one. In particular, the remainder of the chapter will proceed mainly in the form of a detailed examination and interpretation of the textual evidence which, I believe, leads one at least to have serious doubts about the validity of Rosen's imputation to the later Wittgenstein of other fundamental teachings attributable to historicists.

⁹L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 57.

Accordingly, the discussion will revolve especially around the following two views basic to Rosen's position: (a) Wittgenstein does not and cannot systematically distinguish between 'convention' and 'nature'; instead, he generally assimilates the meaning of "natural" to that of "customary" or "habitual". (b) According to Wittgenstein, human perception and thought, hence science and philosophy, are decisively shaped by language (which is historical and therefore constantly changing); consequently, they have virtually no access to things as they are in themselves or by nature.

Let us begin with Wittgenstein's own anticipation of, and response to, the suggestion that he is propounding a conventionalist epistemology:

"So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?" -- It is what human beings say that is true and false; and they agree in the language they use. That is not agreement in opinion but in forms of life.¹⁰

Among other things, he seems to be saying here that, although there is agreement among human beings regarding the ways in which they see and speak about things, this agreement, far from being the result of deliberate, arbitrary collective decision, is rooted in certain shared forms of life, hence is not a matter of mere whim or caprice. But although this response clears him of the charge that he is advocating the

¹⁰Ibid., I, 241.

cruder form of conventionalism manifest in a 'social contract' theory of knowledge, it does not show that his philosophy is incompatible with historicism, or even with conventionalism of a subtler kind. For no distinction is made here between language-games or forms of life which are essentially founded in nature and those which owe their existence to convention, custom, habit, or 'history'. If we put this fact together with Wittgenstein's statement that the variety of language-games is limitless and ever-changing, that new language-games are always coming into being while old ones become obsolete or are forgotten,¹¹ we may feel inclined to agree with Rosen that Wittgenstein's Lebensform is indeed the "historicist's decomposed version of the Kantian transcendental ego".¹² To add to that, however, Wittgenstein evidently does not deem it possible to give an account of language which would be valid for all times and all places, as logic purports to do.¹³ He also appears to hold that the permanent, universal and necessary order of the world posited by logic is an illusion,¹⁴ furthermore, to resist the notion that the possibility of meaningful speech presupposes the existence of an aspect or

¹¹Ibid., I, 23.

¹²S. Rosen, Nihilism, p. 11.

¹³L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 92.

¹⁴Ibid., I, 97.

sphere of reality which is permanent and static.¹⁵ When all these facts are taken into account, the inclination to accept Rosen's characterization of Wittgenstein's later philosophy as a species of historicism becomes very strong, if not irresistible.

But let us look at some other passages, beginning with a statement which occurs in the eleventh section of part two of the Investigations: "Our interest certainly includes the correspondence between concepts and very general facts of nature. (Such facts as mostly do not strike us because of their generality.)"¹⁶ Admittedly, Wittgenstein does not speak explicitly of human nature here. Yet the Investigations contains enough explicit mentions of facts of human nature (note, for example, the remark that crying is to us a natural expression of pain,¹⁷ or the statement that the equivalence of a double negative to an affirmative is connected with our nature¹⁸) to warrant the inference that Wittgenstein's philosophical interest extends to general facts of human nature as well.

Then there is remark number twenty-five in part one of

¹⁵See *ibid.*, I, 55-59.

¹⁶Page 230.

¹⁷L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 244.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, I, p. 147, note (a).

the Investigations:

It is sometimes said that animals do not talk because they lack the mental capacity. And this means: "they do not think, and that is why they do not talk." But -- they simply do not talk. Or to put it better: they do not use language -- if we except the most primitive forms of language. -- Commanding, questioning, recounting, chatting are as much a part of our natural history¹⁹ as walking, eating, drinking, playing.

¹⁹There are two different senses in which 'natural history' is viewed, hence, in which the expression "natural history" is used, in the Investigations. In its first sense, "natural history" refers to a discipline whose object of study is 'very general facts of nature' (PI, II, xii, 230). In its second sense, it denotes the subject-matter of 'natural history' (first sense). (See PI, II, xii, 230; PI, I, 25, 415.) Now consider the following two sets of facts about the text. Firstly, at PI, II, xii, 230, Wittgenstein implicitly refers to the subject-matter of 'natural history' (first sense) both as 'natural history' (second sense) and as 'very general facts of nature'. Secondly, he describes the 'natural history' (second sense) with which his investigations are concerned as consisting of those things ". . . which have escaped remark because they are always before our eyes" (PI, I, 415). He also describes the 'very general facts of nature' as facts which mostly do not strike us because of their great generality (PI, II, xii, 230; PI, I, p. 56, note). Yet both of these descriptions ultimately say the same thing, for what is very general or simple is what is always before one's eyes (PI I, 129). Together, these two sets of facts about the text seem to indicate that for Wittgenstein 'natural history' (second sense) includes or is identical with, or comprised of, 'very general facts of nature'. Thus natural science is (approximately) to laws of nature as natural history (first sense) is to very general facts of nature or natural history (second sense). And natural science is to natural history (first sense) as natural laws are to very general facts of nature or natural history (second sense).

Of chief importance to us here is the clear implication that Wittgenstein's use of the word "history" in the expression "natural history" does not in any way compromise the generality or ubiquity of the general facts of nature which that expression is meant to encompass. This should not be completely surprising; after all, such activities as eating, talking, and walking, which Wittgenstein describes as parts of our natural history, are characteristic of all human beings everywhere.

This passage is in some respects quite reminiscent of another which appears early in Aristotle's Politics:

Nature, according to our theory, makes nothing in vain; and man alone of the animals is furnished with the faculty of language. The mere making of sounds serves to indicate pleasure and pain, and is thus a faculty that belongs to animals in general: their nature enables them to attain the point at which they have perceptions of pleasure and pain, and can signify those perceptions to one another. But language serves to declare what is advantageous and what is the reverse, and it therefore serves to declare what is just and what is unjust. It is the peculiarity of man, in comparison with the rest of the animal world, that he alone possesses a perception of good and evil, of the just and the unjust, and of other similar qualities; and it is association in these things which makes a family and a polis.²⁰

Despite some obvious differences between them, the Wittgensteinian passage, like its Aristotelian counterpart, implies that the natural distinction between man and other species of animals rests largely, in the last analysis perhaps solely, on the fact that the former possesses the ability to speak or use language. That this is for Wittgenstein a natural distinction is indicated by his claim that language-games or forms of life such as commanding, questioning, etc., are as much, as persistent, a part of our 'natural history' as eating, drinking, and walking are. The use of language, far from being essentially unnatural and thereby putting what is unique to man, as it were, completely outside of the realm of nature, encompasses an integral part of what we humans are and do by nature. Thus it also grounds at least part of, or the substance of,

²⁰Aristotle, The Politics of Aristotle, 1253a.

man's uniqueness in nature.

The above citations from the Investigations, then, would seem to show that Wittgenstein at least implicitly both affirms the existence of a human nature and distinguishes between language-games or forms of life which are grounded in nature and those which are merely conventional, customary, or historically relative. However, were we to accept Rosen's analysis of Wittgenstein's use of the words "nature", "natural", etc., we would have to reject this interpretation. For, according to that analysis, apart from the "unexamined sense of 'natural science'", Wittgenstein uses the term "natural" in its deteriorated or secondary sense, i.e., in a sense equivalent to that of "habitual" or "customary". Admittedly, in a number of places in the text the meaning of "natural" can plausibly be interpreted in terms of custom or habit.²¹ There are, nonetheless, some explicit textual indications that Rosen's analysis is not altogether correct. For example, at one point, while discussing the grammar of words signifying states of mind, specifically that of "wishing", Wittgenstein makes the following statement, "By nature and by a particular training, a particular education, we are disposed to give spontaneous expression to wishes in certain circumstances."²² Among other things, he may be suggesting here that, circum-

²¹For example, L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 595-596.

²²Ibid., I, 441.

stances aside, both our inclination toward, or need for, such expressive behaviour and the most primitive forms of that behaviour are given by nature, while training and education are responsible for its derivative, verbal forms.²³ This interpretation is borne out by an observation Wittgenstein makes in regard to pain-behaviour elsewhere.²⁴ Crying, he says, is for humans, especially small children, a primitive, natural expression of pain. As the child begins to acquire a rudimentary command of language, it is taught by adults to supplement and eventually replace these natural, original forms of expressing pain with new, verbal forms. Henceforth, we take it, whenever the young boy upon having hurt himself exclaims, "Oh, that really hurts!", his disposition to engage in such behaviour and the circumstances of his behaviour may remain essentially natural, but not its form. Be that as it may, of chief importance to us here is the fact that Wittgenstein distinguishes between what is due to training or education and what is natural or due to nature. Given this distinction and the additional fact that we owe, not to nature, but to training and education all that is strictly habitual, customary, or conventional in our behaviour,²⁵ it also follows that he differentiates in some manner between nature and custom or

²³L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 649.

²⁴Ibid., I, 244.

²⁵This is suggested by Wittgenstein at: PI, I, 143; PI, II, xi, 201.

convention.

Take another example. In the midst of a discussion of the concepts of "representation" and "what is seen", Wittgenstein asserts that it is natural for us to represent what we see three-dimensionally, and that "special practice and training are needed for two-dimensional representation whether in drawing or in words".²⁶ Here too, Wittgenstein quite clearly points to a distinction between what is natural or due to nature and what is due essentially to training or habituation. Since according to him two-dimensional ways of representing the things we see are not natural to us we may infer that in his view they exist, not by nature, but by convention or custom. We thus have one more piece of evidence indicating that he does not simply blur the distinction between nature and custom or convention.

Taken together, the passages cited above seem to show that for Wittgenstein the term "natural" signifies, in the first place, that which is inherent or inborn, in contradistinction to the merely conventional or customary, which is wholly derivative, being acquired only through training or habituation. Still, I do not think that this tells the whole story. Let us return again to remark number twenty-five of the Investigations.

If Rosen were right, we would have to conclude that according to Wittgenstein it is just as much a matter of

²⁶Ibid., II, xi, 198.

custom or habit that parrots, for example, do not speak, give or obey commands, ask questions, etc., as it is that human beings do; we would have to allow that there may come a time when parrots learn to do these things. Yet it is hard to believe that Wittgenstein would want to say anything so manifestly ridiculous. Parrots do not speak, not because they have not yet chosen to do so, hence have not learned how, but because by virtue of something in their nature, e.g., a lesser cerebral capacity, they are simply incapable of ever speaking. To be sure, as Wittgenstein himself suggests by means of a slightly different example,²⁷ we could imagine God suddenly granting parrots the ability to use language in ways identical or very similar to our own. But it is an important fact here, just as it is in his own example, that imagining parrots chatting would necessitate imagining a deity; for, we may surmise, God is the sole Being endowed with the power to contravene nature and its laws in this fashion. If nature were essentially no different from what we mean by "custom" or "habit", contraventions of its laws could hardly be called miraculous. Certainly they would not be the prerogative solely of God, and we would not have to invoke the notion of a deity to imagine parrots engaged in conversation.

²⁷Ibid., I, 346.

My extrapolation from this example is justified by the fact that according to Wittgenstein parrots cannot speak to themselves precisely because they cannot speak in the ordinary sense of the word (PI, I, 344).

All of this implies that the term "nature", considered firstly in its application to the human realm, designates the sum-total of what we do or are which we can perhaps modify slightly, but not completely remake, change, or replace the way we revamp old habits and customs or replace them with wholly new ones. Even though man might be able to suppress or control certain aspects of his nature, he could never abandon it entirely, at least not without undergoing the most profound and possibly harmful alterations in his forms of life, his ways of dealing with things, other human beings, the world, etc. Indeed, it may be that any attempt to do so would ultimately endanger the very existence of the human species.

Clearly, what is merely customary or habitual is not so fundamental to man. At any rate, this part of the grammar of "natural" is one which Wittgenstein draws upon in the passages referred to above, including the twenty-fifth remark. Moreover, it is the broader conception of the 'natural' per se in terms of the ubiquitous, the fixed and unchanging, the inherent and non-artificial, the actuating and empowering, and the absolutely limiting or defining to which Wittgenstein appeals when he makes, in addition to the aforementioned remarks, such observations as the following:

- (a) pretending is a very special pattern in the weave of our lives; a dog cannot be a hypocrite, but neither can he be sincere;²⁸

²⁸Ibid., II, xi, 229.

- (b) only those who have mastered the use of language can hope; one can imagine an animal angry, frightened, unhappy, happy, startled, but not hopeful;²⁹
- (c) only of a living human being and what resembles (behaves like) a human being can one say: it has sensations; it sees; is blind; hears; is deaf; is conscious or unconscious;³⁰
- (d) one can find out what the natural expression of an intention is by looking at a cat stalking a bird or a beast when it wants to escape.³¹

It may be, however, that Rosen really did not intend to be interpreted as having claimed that, with the possible exception of cases like "law of nature" and "natural science", Wittgenstein never uses the word "nature" in anything like the sense just discussed. Perhaps he merely meant to say that if Wittgenstein ever uses it in this sense, he does so rarely, and to stress above all that this use of "nature" is inconsistent with his pervasive teaching, which ultimately renders the 'natural' indistinguishable from the 'customary' or 'conventional'. Yet, one could argue that it would be more accurate to say that the Investigations as a whole is guided no less than philosophy in its traditional garb by the question as to the natural, i.e., the universal or transcultural, transhistorical, non-artificial, etc., aspects or bases of things both non-human and human, including the human understanding. The putatively 'naturalistic' thrust of Wittgen-

²⁹L. Wittgenstein, PI, II, i, 174.

³⁰Ibid., I, 281.

³¹Ibid., I, 647.

stein's thought is perhaps best illustrated by such remarks as, "What we have to mention in order to explain the significance, I mean the importance of a concept, are often extremely general facts of nature",³² or, "What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of human beings".³³ Nevertheless, an anti-conventionalist and anti-historicist teaching can also be said to underlie such claims as, "Essence is expressed by grammar",³⁴ or, "Grammar tells what kind of object anything is."³⁵ To be sure, in themselves these statements are open to a historicist interpretation. Yet the context in which they occur suggests that Wittgenstein does not mean them to be interpreted in this manner. As was shown towards the end of the previous chapter, he makes these statements in connection with a criticism of the traditional philosopher's method of trying to comprehend any given thing by putting to it the "what is it?" question. The point of making them, we will recall, seems to be to underscore his claim that an adequate understanding of a particular thing's 'essence', or of what kind of 'object' it is, can be attained only by means of a meticulous examination of the everyday uses of words which express

³²L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, p. 56, note.

³³Ibid., I, 32.

³⁴Ibid., I, 371.

³⁵Ibid., I, 373 (emphasis is mine -- B. K.).

the relevant phenomenon or phenomena. That is to say, he seems to be critical not so much of the fact that traditionally philosophers were interested in the 'essences' of things as of the method they employed in searching for them and the picture of 'essence' linked to that method.³⁶ At any rate, nothing he says in this context suggests that he disagrees with their mode of inquiry because of its non-historicist, non-conventionalist, or non-relativist assumptions. He certainly gives no sign here that he wishes to be understood as showing us what anything is like from the standpoint of a particular Weltanschauung, say, that of the German language. Moreover, in section twelve, part two of the Investigations he indicates more clearly and explicitly than anywhere else that on his view our concepts do not dictate, but are themselves dictated by, "very general facts of nature".³⁷ This is not to ascribe to him the claim that things in nature are represented in exactly the same way in all languages. Wittgenstein is well aware that differences between cultures often reflect some important differences in ways of seeing and viewing things which are then reflected in divergences of linguistic usage. But he is not thereby committed to the opinion that all concepts and uses of language are culturally relative. Concomitantly, neither does

³⁶ See also *ibid.*, I, 92.

³⁷ Page 230.

the claim that grammar corresponds with, or is dictated by, nature imply that our concepts or uses of language simply cannot vary in some measure from culture to culture.

Let us take as an example the concept of negation. Wittgenstein does not say that 'negation' as we understand it is completely relative to our own, say, modern European Weltanschauung, or that it would or could be essentially different in Swahili, for example, or any other, very different family of languages. We can easily imagine a society for which negating a negative statement, for instance, means nothing more than the strengthening of the negative element in the statement, hence in which the conception of double negation as an affirmation has not been assigned its own field of application. The reason for this state of affairs may be supposed to be as follows. Negation is expressible there in only two ways: in writing, by running a line through, or crossing out, the main verb of the sentence, and in speech, by shaking one's head while saying it. But neither of these two ways is especially well-suited to the task of expressing the understanding of a double negation as an affirmation; for, as Wittgenstein says, a second shake of the head does not cancel or annul the first, just as, we infer, running a second line through the verb does not cross out the first. And the lack of a suitable means of expressing the use of a double negative as an affirmative may not make any difference to these people, especially if their way of

life does not include any practices requiring this use. Nevertheless, we are not thereby entitled to say that their concept of negation is altogether different from and unrelated to ours. If we wish to say that it is different because it does not go as far as ours, we must also be prepared to say that as far as it goes it is the same. For they still use, perhaps must use, whatever it is in their language that corresponds to our expressions of negation to make gestures of rejection or exclusion, just as we do with ours. (It is hard to see how they, or for that matter the people of any society, could do without this use of negation. If they could and did, we would have no reason to say that they have a concept of negation. But then should what they 'speak' be called a language?) Moreover, were they ever to acquire a richer or more complex understanding of double negation, it too would be the same as, or at least very much like, ours. As Wittgenstein himself clearly indicates, the best way to understand the difference between our whole concept of negation and theirs is to see that, compared with ours, their logic, hence their concept of negation, is more 'primitive' or less developed. However, such an assessment of their concepts, assuming that it is not merely true relative to our own standards only, therefore, that it is not ultimately arbitrary, is possible only insofar as there exists a natural standard by which any culture's understanding of these things can be measured. In any case, the fact that their conception

of negation necessarily agrees at least in part with ours suggests that there exists some natural dimension to logic and negation, hence some universal, non-man-made aspect of these things, which is expressed in the concepts of both cultures.³⁸

In fact Wittgenstein can plausibly be said to have at least implicitly attempted to show why it is necessarily the case, or why we cannot doubt, that many of our concepts and judgments are founded in or dictated by the nature of things and therefore apply to language communities everywhere. In remark no. 242 in part one of the Investigations he states, "If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definition but also (queer as this may sound) in judgments." That he has in mind here agreement, not among the members of a particular language community (say, the English-speaking world) only, but among, generally speaking, all members of all language groups can, I believe, be established without too much difficulty. In section eleven of part two of the Investigations,³⁹ Wittgenstein asks what it would be like for people generally to disagree completely in their judgments of colour. His answer seems to be that we could not even know it was the matter of colours on which we all disagreed, since there would be no shared concept

³⁸This discussion of negation is based on L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 550-556 [incl. page 147, notes (a) and (b)].

³⁹Page 226.

of colour or use of colour-words on the basis of which putative differences in colour-judgments could be discerned. Concepts such as "colour-blindness" and "differences in colour-perception" are possible, but only as betokening deviations from the norm, hence only against the backdrop of virtually complete agreement in colour-judgments among normal human beings. That the norm is grounded in nature and not in mere convention or arbitrary collective decision is attested by the fact that any attempt to reach a consensus on any question regarding colours presupposes an already existing agreement as to what they basically are. Only issues of colour nomenclature within a given language group, in circumstances where it is not clear what, for instance, a certain shade of blue is to be called, could conceivably be decided in this fashion. For essentially the same reasons, there is agreement in colour judgments even among different language-groups possessing very different colour-languages. To be sure, the differences among them are very likely more than verbal. In a limited sense it is probably true that these groups all see colours differently. However, the members of any one group would not be capable of fully appreciating these differences except if it were at least in principle possible for them to learn the colour-language of any other group and use it the way those belonging to the other group use it. Yet a full appreciation of these differences could be attained only after their recognition. And the latter

would not be possible for the members of any group if there were no already existing spontaneous, cross-cultural consensus as to what it is -- at least in general terms -- with regard to which these groups differ. Thus, in the end, the differences would seem to be ones of custom and habit, not of nature. Ultimately, then, the question whether it is possible for the colour-judgments of one language-group to differ wholly from those of another cannot seriously arise. That is why the statement that all normal human beings in general agree completely in their judgments of colour is, according to Wittgenstein, not a hypothetical empirical claim (a claim which can be confirmed or falsified by empirical evidence), but a (grammatical) statement characterizing the concept of "judgment of colour". Yet if, despite conventional or cultural differences, this basic, spontaneous, cross-cultural agreement in judgments of colour exists and indeed must exist, then it would seem to follow that there exists a natural basis or aspect to the judgment of colour, that our colour-concepts must at least in part correspond to, or be rooted in, some aspect of things as they are by nature.

Moreover, the same reasoning applies, Wittgenstein suggests, to mathematics as well.⁴⁰ To generalize, as he himself puts it elsewhere, "The common behaviour of mankind is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an un-

⁴⁰Ibid.

known language."⁴¹ If all things were completely lacking in natural aspects or foundations which, because of their universality and fixity, could at least to some degree dictate, or be reflected in, our concepts, therefore, if human behaviour and experience varied essentially from one language-group to another, understanding of foreign languages would not be possible. (But then neither would any group be in a position to say of any other that what it speaks may indeed be a language.)

However, it is true that Wittgenstein sometimes uses words such as "convention", "custom", and "institution" to describe uses of language which he at other times describes as parts or aspects of our natural history.⁴² While discussing the question of whether or not it is possible for us to be deceived by our sense-impressions, Wittgenstein says explicitly that all language is founded on agreement or convention.⁴³ Moreover, the term "convention" or "custom" is sometimes used by Wittgenstein to signify patterns of life whereby one society is differentiated from others.⁴⁴ Given that in the past philosophers tended to distinguish the 'conventional' from the 'natural', one wonders whether Wittgenstein is not ultimately either con-

⁴¹L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 206.

⁴²Cf. *ibid.*, I, 25 and 199.

⁴³*Ibid.*, I, 355.

⁴⁴See L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 556, and II, xi, 201.

tradicting himself or obfuscating that distinction when he claims both that language is founded on convention and that the use of language has a basis in human nature or natural history.

I believe that the solution of this difficulty lies in the following direction. Let us take those forms of life which he says are part of our natural history and are thus characteristic of human beings everywhere and always, for example, commanding or giving orders, making a report or recounting, questioning, eating and drinking. As far as can be seen from the text, he applies the words "custom", "convention", etc. only to those ubiquitous forms of life which are at least partly linguistic or could not exist if language itself were non-existent. He never speaks of the primitive, original expressions of such sensations as pain and pleasure, e.g., screaming and smiling, or to such forms of life as eating and drinking, as customary or conventional,⁴⁵ but he does on occasion describe them as natural. One plausible explanation for all of this is as follows. Although many uses of language are founded in human nature, actual languages themselves are unnatural. To put it somewhat differently, man may be naturally endowed with a capacity and inclination to ask questions, converse, give commands, follow rules, etc., but

⁴⁵See *ibid.*, I, 41, 198, 199, 205, 337, 540, 556, and II: ii, 175; xi, 201, 206 for Wittgenstein's uses of words like "custom", "convention", and "institution".

nature does not provide him with all the requisite means for carrying on these activities. The 'means' I have in mind here are the everyday languages, especially their external aspects, that is, the verbal signs in both their oral and written forms, together with the diverse forms of expression compounded of them. These men had to invent or create by themselves. The existence and external appearances of languages, and perhaps even the rules of language use to a limited extent, are, then, products of arbitrary decision and agreement -- a fact which, incidentally, helps to explain why there is so much variation in outward look and shape from language to language. It follows also that the various ways of employing language are modes of conduct which human beings can master only through training and habituation, even though they may be born with a capacity for, and want or need of, them. We can conclude, thus, that even those language-games which are rooted in capacities and inclinations natural to man are in a non-trivial way customary and conventional; perhaps it would not be amiss to call them "natural conventions". On the other hand, primitive expressions of, for instance, pain and pleasure are completely without admixture of conventionality, precisely because the means of expressing these sensations are supplied entirely by nature. We cannot change them; we can only abandon them and replace them with verbal means. Only if that occurs does pain-behaviour become conventional,

although the inclination to behave thus may remain wholly natural.

There is yet another problem which, however difficult it may be, cannot pass without receiving some of our attention. We may grant for the sake of argument that Wittgenstein intends for his investigations to be understood as having an essentially naturalistic underpinning. The question still remains as to whether the claim that the human understanding, consequently that philosophy, can never go beyond what men ordinarily say about things to the things as they are in themselves, can be correctly imputed to Wittgenstein, and if so, whether that claim is inconsistent with a naturalistic outlook. As we have already seen, Rosen's answer to this two-fold question is in the affirmative. Let us, therefore, return to this problem.

It is in a sense true that in Wittgenstein's later view the human understanding and therewith also philosophy cannot transcend everyday speech; but I am not persuaded that Rosen's interpretation of the import of this teaching is wholly accurate or consistent with what Wittgenstein took it to be. We will recall that according to Wittgenstein the philosopher who purports to disagree with some aspect of the everyday use of language necessarily does so (albeit in a biased and misguided way) on the basis of other aspects of it. Even the skeptic who argues that or-

dinary language as a whole is philosophically inadequate and is therefore to be replaced by an 'ideal' language (if only for philosophical purposes) must fall back on the everyday use of language in the course of both his criticism of ordinary language and his attempt to construct an ideal one.⁴⁶ These facts would seem at the very least to raise the possibility that the everyday use of language is basically sound and that the contradictions and anomalies which the traditional philosopher claims he finds in 'common sense' do not inhere in ordinary language itself, but arise out of his misunderstandings of it. That this is more than a possibility is according to the later Wittgenstein evidenced in the additional fact that the 'teachings' of all past philosophy are, from a practical point of view, completely futile. For him, many of our everyday uses of language -- especially those which express concepts corresponding to certain general facts of nature or are intimately bound up with forms of life grounded in human nature -- cannot be replaced by their extraordinary, philosophical uses. As we have also seen, if the traditional philosopher should ever attempt to bind our everyday life in accordance with his uses of words such as "know" and "doubt", then in Wittgenstein's view these words would cease performing their ordinary functions, indeed, would cease functioning altogether. The point of using them would

⁴⁶ See *ibid.*, I, 120.

be lost, and, given that we are by nature dependent on these uses, we would soon be compelled to invent or find new words to do the work once done by the old ones. Thus the claim that the human understanding and hence philosophy cannot transcend everyday speech can be said to mean no more for Wittgenstein than that the former cannot coherently and meaningfully contradict or oppose the latter; it certainly does not entail that man has no cognitive access to things as they are in themselves.

Pursuing this last point a little further, for Wittgenstein many of our concepts cannot be essentially different from what they are because, as has just been suggested, they correspond with very general facts or phenomena of nature. That is to say, they are dictated by the nature of things (including human things) in its most immediately and readily apparent, surface aspects. These general facts of nature, together with the connections between them and the everyday uses of words which express the corresponding concepts, are expressed in ordinary language. (If this were not the case, ordinary language could not be used to teach human beings ordinary language.) Moreover, most, perhaps all, of these everyday concepts and uses of words are more or less directly linked with, some even form essential parts of, language-games which are rooted in conditions, capacities and inclinations placed upon or given to man by nature; and, of course, the ability to play these language-games implies a mastery of those concepts. It follows, then, that there exists for Witt-

Wittgenstein a kind of minimal intimate acquaintance with or knowledge of the nature of things both human and non-human, at least in regards to its surface aspects, the possession of which is natural to all adult human beings. The attainment of that knowledge is not the result of an extraordinary, highly contrived and highly artificial effort of the kind involved in doing natural science; rather, it is the relatively spontaneous, natural outcome of the normal process of growth and maturation undergone by normal men and women. It also follows that in the Wittgensteinian view the recovery of this 'natural understanding' of things is a very large part of the over-all concern of philosophy. Yet because this 'understanding' is articulated and expressed in ordinary language, the philosopher must set his gaze in the direction of our everyday uses of language if he is to succeed in making the recovery. To the extent that in philosophizing he actively denies the validity of everyday speech and therewith the knowledge embodied in it, he puts himself at odds, not only with things as they are in themselves, but with himself as well. (This is evident from the fact that as soon as he stops philosophizing, his so-called 'skeptical doubts' and 'paradoxical discoveries' cease having any real meaning for him, and he is no longer tormented by them.⁴⁷) As such he cannot help cutting a perplexing, perhaps pitiable figure.

⁴⁷See L. Wittgenstein, BB, p. 45.

We should also point out and emphasize -- for we are now in a position to do so -- that although Wittgenstein appears to reject all the traditional philosophical claims regarding the centrality of intuition to human reason and knowledge, this does not imply that he is committed to the view that the human understanding has virtually no access to things as they are in themselves. At least it is not clear that he himself believes he is. To repeat, Wittgenstein indicates quite explicitly that many of our concepts correspond with or are grounded in very general facts of nature. Nowhere to my knowledge does he make anything resembling the statement that they are decisively or completely determined by the particular language we speak, or that language somehow makes it impossible for us to apprehend things directly. Perhaps what he objects to in the traditional account of intuition is not the talk of an immediate, direct cognitive access to things in themselves. Perhaps he finds unpersuasive only the talk of a certain kind of 'knowing' which is both purely intellectual and non-discursive or self-evident, or even just the idea of a kind of 'knowing' the content of which resists complete and adequate discursive explication. It may be, of course, that all these characteristics of intuition in the traditional sense are linked together inextricably, and that, as Rosen seems to say, Wittgenstein cannot consistently reject some of them without also rejecting all the rest. But even if such were the case

and Wittgenstein were in fact rejecting the whole lot, this could mean nothing more than that, to put it succinctly, his later thought bears a greater affinity to Kant's philosophy than to Plato's. We certainly would not be justified in concluding thereby that the Investigations contains an essentially historicist teaching. Whatever the case, I cannot hope to undertake a thorough, critical examination of this very difficult issue here. Suffice it to have shown that man's dependence on and use of language combined with his lack of the capacity for noesis or intuition apparently do not in Wittgenstein's later view render the human understanding incapable of directly apprehending things as they are in themselves.

Furthermore, nothing we have said so far must be taken as implying that according to Wittgenstein all aspects of our natural understanding are absolutely necessary. Wittgenstein does not attempt to demonstrate that concepts which are dictated by or grounded in the nature of things, yet which are fundamentally different from the existing ones, are simply impossible. He seems only to want to show that: either we ourselves cannot imagine what such concepts would be like; or perhaps we can to a limited degree, but we do not and perhaps cannot know exactly what sorts of changes our natural capacities, inclinations and habitat would have to undergo (as well as the mechanisms of these changes) were these concepts to have a place in our everyday life. In the end he does hold

that the concepts rooted in the existing general facts of nature are necessary only in a relative sense, i.e., necessary given that these facts are what they are; for there is, according to him, no rational explanation as to why these facts of nature, together with the corresponding concepts, should not have been of a very different character.⁴⁸ It is also worth noting here that, Rosen's arguments notwithstanding, this latter point about the 'givenness' of the general facts of nature seems to be virtually identical to, or at least to coincide very closely with, the one being made by Wittgenstein when he says, "What has to be accepted, the given, is -- so one could say -- forms of life."⁴⁹ Rosen himself gives no justification for his very clear suggestion that this statement can have only a historicist meaning, i.e., that "given" can mean only "historically given" and never "naturally given".⁵⁰ And after all, the statement does appear in the context of Wittgenstein's discussion of certain questions pertaining to the activities of mathematical calculation and colour judgment, two forms of life each of which, as he seems to indicate, possesses a basically transhistorical

⁴⁸These remarks are based on L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 142, 207, 282-284, 288, 312, 345, 346, and II, xii, 230.

⁴⁹Ibid., II, xi, 226.

⁵⁰See S. Rosen, Nihilism, p. 11. For another, naturalistically inclined interpretation of the meaning of this remark, see J. Danford, Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy, pp. 117-118.

and non-conventional character. At the very least it must be granted that this remark is just as accessible to a naturalist interpretation as to a historicist one.

Concluding Remarks

The chief purpose of this chapter has been to call into question Rosen's claim that in the later stage of his philosophizing Wittgenstein embraces an essentially historicist understanding of things, including science and philosophy. The overall strategy pursued has been one of attempting to demonstrate that there is much in the Philosophical Investigations which bespeaks a strong naturalistic bent in Wittgenstein's later philosophy, but to which Rosen fails to give sufficiently scrupulous attention. I do not claim to have refuted Rosen. There are in the Investigations a number of passages for which I am unable to find a fully adequate non-conventionalist and non-historicist interpretation.⁵¹ Furthermore, nowhere in that work will the reader discover anything approaching a more careful, explicit examination of the grammar of "nature", or of the distinction between nature and convention. Of course, in itself this latter fact does not imply that the teaching of the Investigations precludes the possibility of this distinction, or that Wittgenstein himself would deny its relevance to his later thought. Yet I am not even entirely convinced

⁵¹See, for example, L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 50-64, 292.

that all the textual passages upon which I have built my case do in fact support it unambiguously. It may be that Wittgenstein's later philosophy is at bottom characterized by a fundamental and irresolvable conflict between historicist and naturalist tendencies, and that he himself was not fully aware of it. Perhaps he was unable to extricate himself completely from the vulgar relativist and historicist academic prejudices of the day. Whatever the case, I do claim to have shown that the naturalistic tendency of his later thought is too strong to merit being viewed the way Rosen would have us view it, namely, as a minor aberration marring an otherwise fully and pervasively historicist teaching.

Before closing, I would like to address myself very briefly to two other issues which have some bearing on the main question discussed in this chapter.

Firstly, one might want to object that the claim that philosophy cannot meaningfully oppose ordinary uses of words is not convincing because it is in principle possible for philosophers to use evidence yielded by natural science to do just that. This objection raises a difficult and complex issue, that is, the issue of the nature of the relationship between natural science and everyday speech. Moreover, the difficulty of this issue is not significantly lessened by Wittgenstein's treatment of it; for Wittgenstein has very little to say about natural science -- I suspect, ultimately too little. Yet there are a few observations which can be made in this connec-

tion. When he speaks of or alludes to natural science or scientific inquiry in the Investigations, Wittgenstein never says anything which implies that scientific findings could ever come into conflict with ordinary uses of language, especially those founded in general facts of nature.⁵² Apparently, according to him the aim of science is to explain, i.e., establish causal connections among, phenomena, including those which are articulated or expressed in everyday speech. Wittgenstein's view, then, seems to be that the sciences can at best add to, complement, or deepen, but not contradict, our ordinary ways of understanding and seeing things.⁵³ It also seems to follow that for him the 'problems' which the philosopher purports to have uncovered in connection with common sense are such that science could not in any way contribute to their solution. Hence, if a philosopher were to invoke certain results of scientific inquiry to justify his disagreements with certain ordinary uses of language, it would not be because natural science itself has pointed him in that direction. Rather, it could only be because, having already been misled by false pictures of ordinary language, natural science, and

⁵²This is borne out, for example, by Wittgenstein's use of the 'ancient city' simile of language (PI, I, 18), in accordance with which he explicitly likens the symbolism of science to one of the city's suburbs and implicitly likens the language of everyday life to its old center: there is nothing in that simile to suggest that in his view a conflict exists between these two regions of language.

⁵³L. Wittgenstein, PI, I, 18; see also L. Wittgenstein, BB, pp. 6, 45.

the relationship between them, he mistakenly judges this kind of appeal to the sciences to be legitimate or appropriate. This, at any rate, is what I think Wittgenstein would be inclined to say, although, as I said, we cannot be sure, given the paucity of his direct treatment of this whole question. It is certain, however, that more cannot be reasonably said about the matter outside of an attempt to work out in detail the conception of science implicit in his later philosophy; and such an attempt, even if potentially fruitful, lies far beyond the scope of this discussion.

We now come to the second of the two issues. Could it not be argued, someone might ask, that the human understanding and therewith also philosophy and science are capable of reaching well beyond what is articulated or expressed in ordinary language? May it not be the case that the everyday use of language embodies a knowledge which, although perfectly adequate from the standpoint of the practical needs of everyday life, is, from a purely 'theoretical' standpoint, somehow incomplete or imperfect? Perhaps it would be a great error to presume, as Wittgenstein appears to, that one can properly assess the possibilities of 'theoretical' thought and knowledge simply on the basis of criteria and standards rooted in everyday life-practices and pertinent to everyday, practical knowledge. And perhaps it is possible to transcend 'theoretically' our natural understanding of things without really contradicting or undermining that understanding.

One possible solution to this problem has already been hinted at in the preceding remarks. If our sketch of Wittgenstein's view of science is essentially correct then the above-mentioned possibility of a 'theoretical' transcendence of everyday speech would seem to lie along the path of natural science. Although Wittgenstein often sounds as if he wishes to do away with this possibility altogether, it is, I believe, only to philosophy that he does in fact deny it. To repeat, according to him, philosophers characteristically have not made skeptical claims about, or raised skeptical questions concerning, everyday speech and common sense on the basis of strange, new, hidden facts, that is, of phenomena with which we non-philosophers are wholly unfamiliar. Instead, they have done so on the basis of phenomena commonly experienced in the normal course of everyday life, hence in the light of what is on the surface and open to view. Therefore, whether they have been aware of it or not, they have continually drawn on the ordinary uses of language in their conflicts with 'common sense'. Now if the surface aspects of things were fundamentally problematic in some way, i.e., replete with basic anomalies, inconsistencies, etc., then everyday speech would necessarily point beyond itself toward an extraordinary, deep, and esoteric explanation of, and resolution of the problems inherent in, those surface aspects. And of course, there would be good reason for philosophers to have skeptical doubts regarding the adequacy of the ordinary use of language. However, the

surface is, in Wittgenstein's later view, essentially free of such difficulties. The 'problems' which the traditional philosopher purports to have uncovered originate, not in the phenomena themselves, but in his failure to see them aright. Therefore ordinary language is on the whole "all right",⁵⁴ and philosophy properly understood is limited to the task of re-collecting and rendering perspicuous the 'knowledge' already contained in it, with a view to dissolving all skeptical, philosophical 'problems'. Science, on the other hand, endeavours to explain, i.e., ascertain causal connections among, phenomena of all kinds. Since the phenomena which are commonly experienced in the context of everyday life do not provide the scientist with data sufficient for the establishment of causal relationships or laws of nature, he must also seek out phenomena which are strange, uncommon, and hidden from view. Yet, for Wittgenstein, neither of these additional concerns is reflected in the everyday use of language. To illustrate the point, the everyday uses of the words "thought", "thinking", etc. are completely independent of the meanings assigned to the various 'mind-models' used by psychologists to explain phenomena of which only some are connected with what we ordinarily call thinking.⁵⁵ All of this would seem to imply that natural science does in fact transcend the everyday understanding of

⁵⁴L. Wittgenstein, BB, p. 28.

⁵⁵See *ibid.*, p. 6.

things without opposing or undermining it in any way.

However, as is the case in regard to the first one, a more complete discussion of this second issue must await a careful examination of Wittgenstein's conception of science. For now we leave it at having indicated the direction which Wittgenstein's thought might have taken.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aristotle. The Politics of Aristotle. Translated and edited by E. Barker. London: Oxford University Press, 1958.
- Austin, J. L. Philosophical Papers. 2nd ed. Edited by J. O. Urmson and G. J. Warnock. London: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Bartley, W. W. III. Wittgenstein. London: Quartet Books, 1974.
- Berkeley, G. A New Theory of Vision. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1972 (first published 1910).
- Cavell, S. Must We Mean What We Say?. Cambridge: University Press, 1976 (first published 1969).
- Danford, J. W. Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.
- Descartes, R. The Philosophical Works of Descartes. Translated by E. S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross. (vol. I). Cambridge: University Press, 1970 (first published 1911).
- Dummett, M. "Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mathematics", in G. Pitcher, ed., Wittgenstein: The "Philosophical Investigations". London: Macmillan, 1970 (first published 1966).
- Hacker, P. M. S. Insight and Illusion. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.
- Hobbes, T. Leviathan. Edited by C. B. Macpherson. New York: Penguin Books, 1968.
- Hume, D. An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding. Edited by C. W. Hendel. New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1955.
- Husserl, E. Ideas. Translated by W. R. Boyce Gibson. New York: Collier Books, 1972 (first published 1962).
- Kant, I. Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. Translated by N. K. Smith. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965.

- Locke, J. An Essay Concerning Human Understanding. Edited by J. W. Yolton. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1978 (first published 1961).
- Pitkin, H. F. Wittgenstein and Justice. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972.
- Plato. The Republic of Plato. Translated and edited by A. Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 1968.
- Rosen, S. Nihilism: A Philosophical Essay. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974 (first published 1969).
- Specht, E. K. The Foundations of Wittgenstein's Late Philosophy. Translated by D. E. Walford. Manchester: University Press, 1969.
- Wisdom, J. Philosophy and Psycho-analysis. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969 (first published 1953).
- Wittgenstein, L. On Certainty. Edited by G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright. Translated by D. Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.
- . Philosophical Investigations. Translated by G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967 (first published 1953).
- . The Blue and Brown Books. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.
- . Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. Translated by D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974 (first published 1961).