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WITTGENSTEIN ON CONSCIOUSNESS AND LANGUAGE: A CHALLENGE TO DERRIDEAN LITERARY THEORY

CHARLES ALTIERI:  

It would be foolish of me to deny that the recent influence of serial structuralists like Barthes and Derrida has had an invigorating influence on American literary criticism and has illuminated a wide variety of texts and literary themes.¹ It is not so foolish, however, to decry the effects it has had on American literary theory. Because it entered what was in a sense a conceptual void and because its philosophical concerns seemed closely parallel to much modernist writing, serial structuralism has popularized sceptical perspectives on language, consciousness, and meaning that have been often ignored by critics with other commitments but rarely challenged. Even if they are correct, the Mill in me finds this a bad situation. So I will attempt in this essay to develop the position of the later Wittgenstein as a direct challenge to their sceptical assumptions.

I am not yet sure that the Wittgensteinian approach I will be taking is an adequate philosophy, but at the very least it can provide a direct and systematic contrast to concepts we seem to be accepting all too readily. Moreover I see this essay as largely a prolegomenon to specific work in literary theory and will not here try to solve specific problems. Instead I hope to take up three general issues. First I shall compare a theory of consciousness implicit in Wittgenstein with the theory of consciousness as a representational force natural to literary critics and basic to Derrida's deconstructions.

¹ I think that the term "serial structuralism" nicely applies to Barthes and Derrida because both accept Lévi-Strauss on the nature of signification, but both deny that we can uncover beneath the signifying chain a single informing set of structural oppositions. See Derrida's comments on Lévi-Strauss in "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" in Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato, eds., *The Structuralist Controversy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 247-265. And compare Lévi-Strauss's rejection of serial music in *The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1970), pp. 23-28, with Barthes' use of it as a model in "The Structuralist Activity," in *Critical Essays*, trans. Richard Howard (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 213-220.

Then I shall pursue Newton Garver's suggestion that both Derrida and Wittgenstein share a fundamental opposition to traditional essentialist forms of philosophy.² Both subordinate a logic of reference to a rhetoric of significations or speech acts, but the more closely we examine this common point of origin the more the two men's differences emerge. Wittgenstein indeed once intended to preface his *Philosophical Investigations* with a motto from *King Lear*, "I will teach you differences," but his reflections on differences help us to show that Derrida, inasmuch as he makes claims, remains trapped, like his master, Nietzsche, in an ironic or demonic version of the logic he wishes to deconstruct. Moreover, by comparing Derrida's logical scepticism with Wittgenstein we can dramatize Wittgenstein's claim that the activities of speculative philosophers provide the light which gives his mundane descriptions their significance.³ Sceptical doubt applies a kind of pressure on familiar realities that can make us aware of how our ordinary activities are in fact anchored and of how we characteristically determine meanings and values. Then there is an easy transition to my third concern, for I want to show how the ontology implicit in Wittgenstein's work helps us recover the force of humanistic claims about literature that have come to seem mere truisms.

II

Let me try to give a brief summary of a theory of consciousness, ultimately derived from idealist thought, which I think underlies the work of most influential literary theorists today. It has two basic assumptions which take a variety of forms. First of all, it sees consciousness, or language as the medium of consciousness, as some-

² Garver, "Preface" to Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1973), pp. xix-xxix.

³ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, 1958), no. 109. I shall hereafter abbreviate the *Investigations* as *PI* and use the following abbreviations for Wittgenstein's other works: *Notebooks, 1914-1916*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1969), *NB*; *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), *TLP*; *The Blue and the Brown Books* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), *BB*; "Lecture on Ethics," *The Philosophical Review*, 74 (January, 1965), pp. 3-12, *LE*; *On Certainty*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972), *OC*; *Zettel*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1970), *Z*; and G. E. Moore, "Wittgenstein's Lectures in 1930-33," in his *Philosophical Papers* (New York: Collier, 1972), pp. 247-318, *PP*.

how a separate structuring force with its own contents. Consciousness does not mirror a world but represents and structures it. Trained as literary critics to articulate a variety of schemes for organizing experience, we find it quite natural to image reality as an unknowable flux and to attribute what order we experience to the power of consciousness to impose its structures on that flux. We often feel, in fact, that we only glimpse reality through the gaps or failures in any given representational scheme. Secondly, we tend to emphasize one particular problem central to representational schemes—the problem of personal identity or “what you know too well about self-consciousness and never wanted to know.” The problem here is in essence the impossibility of making one’s thoughts or fictions about the self correspond to what the self actually experiences and does. We find inescapable Paul de Man’s restatement of Kant’s distinction between conceptual and empirical selves. Or, now that we have come to prefer a problematic of language to one of self-conscious identity, we consider the self as lost among an endless play of impersonal signifiers. In both cases the problem comes down to one of negation. The agent seeking to locate itself, in experience or in a correspondence between signifiers and signified, is at the same time the agent of dislocation, the agent who must represent in an alien form what it seeks to find. In the classic terms of alienation, the spirit must posit as another’s what it wants or should appreciate as its own. In order to represent his self to himself a person must posit as other, as a construct in the impersonal system of language, the very realm of prereflective experience which he wants to appropriate. Moreover, without the negation of the world as other, our symbolic system cannot define a self standing out against the world. The two themes ultimately come together in our sense that to be conscious, to be aware that one operates in an essentially arbitrary system distinct from an objective reality, leads inevitably to one’s becoming self-conscious. One sees either his will or his linguistic acts as the source of the alienating powers of consciousness. No wonder that we find ourselves, like the literature we study, torn between two unacceptable poles. Always appealing and ever receding is the dream of a pure naturalism within which one can free himself from reflective consciousness and merge with the natural energies of the world and of his body. At the other pole, we can recognize the irony of the first dream and, embracing irony ourselves, devote ourselves either to

Nietzsche's free play or to the more leisurely, and perhaps more decadent, free play of the intellectual—exploring the manifold fictions of consciousness while positing the empirical world as unknowable or, for Blakeans like Harold Bloom, actively demonic.⁴

The brief analysis I have just offered may be the clearest section in this paper, and for good reason, since its concepts come so naturally to one trained in literature. However, this may itself be sufficient reason for entertaining another perspective, even if the Wittgensteinian insights I shall attempt to turn into abstract arguments do not directly connect with the thematic concerns that most interest literary critics. We must begin with an important proviso. Even if one is rash enough to claim that Wittgenstein's reflections can be turned into abstract arguments, one must realize that the first and perhaps most important move in his philosophizing is the refusal to posit an all-encompassing theory of any mental act. Instead he insists that there are only a wide variety of contexts in which we can glimpse, from different perspectives, the many ways it makes sense to speak of these acts. Perhaps the most pervasive theme in his specific treatment of issues relevant to the concept of consciousness is the need to define the reflective powers of the mind in a way not subject to the problematic of self-consciousness. This is most apparent in two interrelated recurring themes—the argument against private language and the insistence that truth and meaning do not depend on special forms of verification which exist beneath or behind the utterance, for example in the speaker's intentions or in the intuition or sensation referred to. Wittgenstein argues that once the words are taken as primarily signs of something else, once verification depends on people's intentions or on their particular intuitions of the reality referred to, there will always be a gap between direct experience and linguistic expression, a gap which we try to fill with concepts of representation and of the necessity for a person self-consciously to mediate between signs and sources of meaning. But the terms by which one expresses his self-conscious awareness are always themselves mediated, imper-

⁴ The conceptual self-empirical self-distinction and the general structure of my description of representational versus empirical orders may be found in two of Paul de Man's essays "The Rhetoric of Temporality" in Charles Singleton, ed., *Interpretation: Theory and Practice* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1967), and "The Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image," in Harold Bloom, ed., *Romanticism: Theory and Practice* (New York: Norton, 1970), pp. 65-76.

sonal, and subject to the temporality of differing and deferring. Thus there is an inescapable infinite regress between expressions of consciousness and the necessary but unrecoverable grounds for certain direct knowledge. Both solipsism and scepticism, the demons Wittgenstein continually wrestled, derive from the logical impossibility of explaining how we move from representation to direct knowledge, whether in our own acts or in the doubly mediated process of interpreting the expressions of another.

The way out is to deny the way in, to refuse to grant that consciousness in any intelligible sense represents a reality independent of it and thus creates separate structures needing to be reconciled with immediate experience. G. E. Moore, especially in his disputes with idealism, realized this goal, but his arguments remain problematic because they try to establish an alternative general and abstract picture of the relationship between mind and world. Wittgenstein is more subtle and more willing to go beyond Moore's empiricism to incorporate some of Kant's insights, albeit on a very different foundation. The first move, as I have already suggested, is to stop talking about consciousness and examine specific forms of mental activity (*PI*, 416). For our purposes, Wittgenstein's meditations on the process of "thinking" will serve to delineate a clear alternative to models of the mind which see representation as transforming the content of some original relationship to reality.⁵

Two distinctions help clarify what is at play when we speak of someone thinking. The first is between dispositions and states of mind, and the second between situations in which we might describe someone as thinking and those where we would say he was acting without thought. The first distinction has been much discuss-

⁵ The most powerful statement of the concept of the tension between representation and some reality which is its other occurs in Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Random House, 1970), chapter 10. I take his formulation as basic to a good deal of post-structuralist fascination with the limits of language, particularly that of Lacan and of Julia Kristeva's pursuit of genotexts. For an interesting, if extreme, example following Kristeva, see Shoshannah Feldman's argument that woman may be defined as the other of the patriarchal representational order, in "Women and Madness: The Critical Phallacy," *Diacritics* 5, no. 4 (1975), 2-10. I should add that there is an interesting argument for the need to conceive thought as representational and computational in Jerry Fodor, *The Language of Thought* (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1975). Fodor, however, argues for a basic primitive language of representation not subject to infinite regress and thus is not fascinated by the other of representation. And he is not convincing in reducing semantic relations to computational processes.

ed, but we can briefly characterize disposition terms as those expressing capacities or abilities, while terms referring to states of mind express specific modes of activity which have a duration and which are signified by characteristic marks (Z, 72,81). Knowing how to do something is a disposition term because it would be meaningless in ordinary circumstances to keep testing whether I knew how to play chess or to ask when I stopped knowing it. Expecting or fearing or, I think, thinking, on the other hand, can be considered states of mind since these verbs normally refer to specific durations, take direct objects, and are accompanied by characteristic behavioral traits while they are going on. Because thinking entails a relationship to an object and because it has characteristic behavioral signs, Wittgenstein feels that he can take on the Cartesian tradition. Thinking is not a separate act which takes place in addition to one's relationship to the object. It is not a mysterious inner process with its own rules and energies, but a particular way in which a person relates to his involvement in the world: "Of course we cannot separate his 'thinking' from his activity. For the thinking is not an accompaniment of the work any more than of thoughtful speech" (Z, 101).

The most important single characteristic which indicates that one is thinking, and which determines the difference between thoughtful and thoughtless behavior, is the phenomenon of paying attention to what one is doing: "How can we learn the truth by thinking? As one learns to see a face better if one draws it" (Z, 255). Closely involved with paying attention is the fact that thinking is often characterized by a reflexive testing of the process within which one is engaged: "If he has made some combination in play or by accident and he now uses it as a method of doing this and that, we shall say he thinks. . . . He 'thinks' when in a definite kind of way he perfects a method he has" (Z, 104).

The fact that thinking is not a separate activity but a way of proceeding in other more specific activities has three important consequences. It obviously suggests that thinking is not representation since thinking is a style or mode of acting not the imposition of a separate set of forms. (We may think within representations, e.g., while looking at a mimetic painting, yet in such situations the thinking occurs within what we take as conventional processes not themselves constituted by thought but guiding it.) Indeed Wittgenstein can avoid some of Moore's problems here because by

treating thinking as a way of engaging in other activities he finesses the question “what is the relationship between consciousness and objects in the world.” Consciousness is essentially not a way of relating to objects but of relating to actions we learn to perform. The basic condition of human experience is not minds facing a world of objects but a wide variety of activities constituting a complex inter-related web of cultural and natural forms toward which we can behave in a creative way if we need or care to. As I will develop later, the relevant alternatives here are not so much realism and idealism, as two versions of Kantian thought—one positing a gap between representations and noumena and the other insisting that the forms in human life are not representations of consciousness but an irreducible web of activities and language games which constitute human reality and beyond which there is nothing for us to say: “What has to be accepted, the given, is—so one could say—forms of life” (*PI*, 226).⁶ We do not usually think about objects but about the specific form of activity which involves us with these objects at this time.

Secondly, because thinking is not a separate structuring activity, there is no special subject of thought which one can seek by self-reflection. Compare the approach in the two following statements to one like Poulet’s, with its endless and hopeless search for an original cogito:

Ask: what result I am aiming at when I tell someone: “Read attentively”? That, e.g., this and that should strike him, and he be able to give an account of it.—Again, it could, I think, be said that if you read a sentence with attention you will often be able to give an account of what has gone on in your mind, e.g. the occurrence of images. But that does not mean that these things are what we call ‘attention.’ (*Z*, 91)

“It’s true I say ‘Now I am having such-and-such an image’, but the words ‘I am having’ are merely a sign to someone *else*; the description of the image is a complete account of the imagined world.”—You mean: the words ‘I am having’ are like ‘I say’ . . . ” (*PI*, 402)

⁶ Stanley Cavell, “The Availability of Wittgenstein’s Later Philosophy,” in George Pitcher, ed., *Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations* (London, Macmillan, 1968), pp. 157-62, is very good on the relationship between language games and “forms of life.” Below I shall refer to this essay for its formulation of the parallels between Wittgenstein and Freud on the concept of freedom as depending upon self-knowledge.

The self may be an object of consciousness but no requirement of authenticity tempts us to pursue it since the self does not here constitute anything. For if consciousness as thinking is a way of relating to specific activities, then all self-consciousness can give is awareness of the self acting in a particular way. It cannot give us any entity called the self. Indeed the very idea of a substantial, constitutive self to be discovered in reflexive thought is a residue of the essentialist thinking, the need to posit sources for phenomena, which Wittgenstein tries to escape. Given the difficulties in adequately conceiving what authentic knowledge of the self as an epistemological agent might consist in, one suspects, with Foucault, that our present concerns with discovering identity through self-consciousness are largely the result of specific historical forces. From an analytic perspective, it seems likely that our normal ways of acting in the world provide all the criteria we need for a sense of identity. As Sidney Shoemaker has shown, the most important source of our sense of identity is the way we use the spatio-temporal location of our body to make basic physical distinctions between here and there, in front and behind, etc. Those who cannot make these distinctions and use personal identity in this way need therapy not self-reflexive philosophy. And this physical sense is supplemented on a public level, as J. F. M. Hunter has shown, by a wide variety of legal and behavioral constructs which define modes of seeing oneself as possessing an identity.⁷

Derrida, of course, would agree with this denial of a constitutive self defineable through self-consciousness, but he goes on to make too easy a leap to denying any criteria of identity or possibility of self-knowledge. It seems likely, however, that if we cannot know the self as an independent entity, we can come to understand the various procedures it has for acting in the world and even for

⁷ Sidney Shoemaker, *Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1963), and J. F. M. Hunter, *Essays After Wittgenstein* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1973), p. 38. I should confess here that I am troubled by one aspect of these Wittgensteinian approaches to identity. I do not see how we can avoid behaviorism if we do not posit a specific agent of choice who decides to initiate or change language games. Many philosophers who follow Wittgenstein handle this problem by discussing human actions as a specific form of life involving a grammar of terms like intention and purpose. While I agree with them, I do not see how to reconcile these action concepts with sheerly behavioral or public conceptions of identity. The same problem, of course, is even more pressing for structuralist denials of the whole notion of identity.

establishing emotional and conceptual attitudes toward its actions. Stanley Cavell, for example, has argued that Wittgenstein's way of investigating experiences in terms of established procedures and language games provides a basic source for enhancing human freedom by showing us what our commitments really are. Through these investigations we learn what we depend on in order to carry out the activities that give meaning and purpose to our lives, and, more important, we come to recognize that what is deeply personal is not therefore subjective and arbitrary. Literary experience is a relevant example. We can readily see that our reading is no less engaged for being dependent on conventional procedures. Moreover the kind of self-consciousness bred by literary texts is not of the self-reflexive sort propounded by theorists as diverse as Norman Holland and Jonathan Culler. Literary texts provide images of the various attitudes we can take up toward the world; they focus attention on the ways we normally engage in experience without reflectively attending to it. These texts do not lead us to consider the way we subjectively constitute our responses, but give us a perspective on and involvement in acts which can also take place without thought. (Consider the intuitive difference between describing a literary text and describing our subjective response to it.) Literature, one might say, interests us in our own interests⁸ and thus encourages us to recognize, to enjoy, and to comprehend the many different selves we can be in different instances. The depth of our personal involvement in diverse literary attitudes leads not back into a particular self-consciousness but into an awareness of the communal roles and modes of activity we share with others.

This capacity to respond to diverse attitudes leads to the third consequence of Wittgenstein's perspective on thinking—a different view of the popular insistence that whenever we try to understand an utterance or a phenomenon we must make an interpretation of it. If consciousness is a process of representing some external reality, it follows that consciousness is always interpretation, always the imposition of tenuous forms on an unknowable but felt flux. One

⁸ I am here combining Dorothy Walsh's fine Deweyian case for literature as eliciting "the awareness of awareness" in *Literature and Knowledge* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1969) with J. N. Findlay's argument for a dialectical process in which our interest in the interestingness of our experiences draws the mind out to a vision of Kant's absolute community. See his *Language, Mind, and Value* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1963), pp. 251 ff.

need not follow Nietzsche and insist that interpretation entails a radical subjectivism. Kant and later idealists in different ways sought to deny the subjectivity of interpretation by positing forms of *a priori* mental structure, but then the possibility of a shared human world depends on tenuous metaphysical constructs readily susceptible to sceptical attacks. For Wittgenstein, the sense of the given as commonly held forms of behavior greatly limits the sphere in which the problematics of interpretation apply. He does not deny that some modes of activity require interpretation, but he shows that interpretation, like other forms of behavior, has characteristic marks. And more important, once he has called our attention to these marks, he can show that the theme of the instability of interpretation says less about the human condition than it does about the characteristic situations in which interpretation is necessary. It makes sense to talk about problematic situations; it makes no sense to generalize these situations as the basic reality for those cursed by consciousness and language.

Wittgenstein describes at least three distinct forms by which people make sense of situations (see *PI* sect. XI for a thorough discussion). The majority of cases we might call simply “seeing”; one recognizes something by seeing its fit with rules, language games, or forms of life appropriate to the situation (*PI*, 201). “Seeing as” occurs when a variety of possible contexts help shed light or significance upon an object or action. Here we still are not adding something not inherently a part of the “internal relations” characterizing a situation (*PI*, 212). Finally interpretation in its traditional philosophical sense occurs when at least two characteristic signs are in evidence. There must be a feeling of doubt, a sense that the situation somehow does not allow us to respond to it in terms of our normal expectations (*PI*, 652). And this feeling of having lost our way is complemented by a need to fill out the situation, to imagine a new hypothesis by introducing new terms which might synthesize the disparate elements (*PI*, 212).

And if I have never read the figure as anything but an F [the figure is an inverted F in a mirror], or considered what it might be, we shall say that I see it as F; if, that is, we know that it can also be seen differently. I should call it “interpretation” if I were to say “that is certainly supposed to be an F”; the writer does all his F’s like that.’ (*Z*, 208)

It is crucial here to see that interpretations are problematic pre-

cisely because they are called for only when our normal procedures break down. Thus they cannot be applied to ordinary cases. On the contrary, they depend on a contrast with ordinary experience in order for us to recognize them for what they are. The problem of interpretation, then, has important similarities with the problem of doubt, a problem which Wittgenstein in *On Certainty* takes great pains to clarify because it is when this concept is misused that the sceptic gets his hold. I shall develop his discussion of doubt later, but the following quotation should indicate how limits can be placed on both doubting and interpreting:

What happens is not that this symbol cannot be further interpreted, but: I do no interpreting. I do not interpret, because I feel at home in the present picture. When I interpret, I step from one level of thought to another. (*Z*, 234)

If I see the thought symbol 'from outside', I become conscious that it could be interpreted thus or thus; if it is a step in the course of my thought, then it is a stopping place that is natural to me, and its further interpretability does not occupy (or trouble) me. As I have a time-table and use it without being concerned with the fact that a table is susceptible of various interpretations. (*PI*, 235)

Once we recognize a distinction between interpretation and knowledge as the ability to use established procedures, we can take a perspective on irony quite different from that shared by such diverse critics as Paul de Man and Northrop Frye. Both men see irony as essentially cancerous: as soon as we feel that one expression does not mean what it says we find it hard not to scrutinize other statements, and once the process of doubting the correspondence of sign and referent begins, it is difficult to stop. But this concept of irony as breeding scepticism is too dependent on a representational theory of language not to incur suspicion. Of course if our grasp of reality must rely upon a tenuous link between words and world, any threat to the lines of projection between word and reference becomes dangerously general. Here, however, Wittgenstein's sense of the difference between seeing from without and seeing from within affords another way to view the role of irony. If we see from without, there is nothing matching words and things but some form of faith or abstract justification. If we see from within, we see our words as tokens in a complex series of customary actions and exchanges. If you call into question the words we use to describe the actions (as Wittgenstein himself often does), you do

not seriously threaten the actions themselves or the natural and social history on which they are based. Irony, then, as Wittgenstein and as, I think, Socrates practiced it, does not make ordinary existence unstable; rather it makes it more secure by forcing us back on our natural history as the means to see the ironic contradictions in second-order statements about these processes.

Earlier I mentioned the fact that literary critics are tempted to representational theories of truth because they deal continually with different arrangements of experience. It may have struck some of you then that the same principle holds for philosophers—even more strongly in fact because in philosophy competing truth claims are rarely justified as expression of different possible attitudes toward experience in which we are asked to participate attentively. Why have there been so many philosophies if not that Nietzsche is right in seeing discourse as the objectification of individual wills to impose their interpretive structures on experience? One possible answer helps clarify Wittgenstein's position on irony and on interpretation. Of course abstract philosophy is interpretation because it has traditionally been speech from the outside, from men who consciously reject a perspective from within ordinary experiences in order to put these experiences in another, more systematic and abstract light. Philosophy then has always been second-order discourse and thus has been doomed to the continual uncertainties besetting those who cannot rely on the secure stopping points and agreements experienced in ordinary behavior.

Now what happens when a Socrates, a Lucian, a Hume, or a Wittgenstein begins to poke irony at those structures? The structures grow problematic, but very little in ordinary behavior is changed, even in the behavior of living philosophers or critics who are the objects of irony. And the irony frees the rest of us from the doubts and uncertainties traditional philosophy has done more to foster than to check. Perhaps Wittgenstein's most significant achievement, through his articulation of the idea of justification by description, has been his ability to point out why traditional philosophy so vexes the world. He shows that the ground on which traditional philosophers try to construct their edifices is unstable precisely because they feel the need to alter the rough ground they find and to rearrange it into a foundation built upon a desired total interpretation of experience. But because interpretation inherently forces us to take up a position outside the justifications embedded

in the way we live, it fosters the instability it is meant to overcome. Once we must interpret, we must hypothesize and be tentative: this is a grammatical fact about a language game or method of projection and not the ground for metaphysical statements. It has always struck me as illuminating that systematic philosophers like Kant read Hume as a scandalous sceptic while Hume's announced purpose was to put experience on a ground free from the attacks of scepticism.

III

I should now like to explore in a more systematic way the ontology which supports Wittgenstein's perspective on consciousness and his reflections on aesthetics. As my brief remarks on traditional philosophy may have indicated, there are here interesting similarities and contrasts with Derrida. These derive from both men recognizing that a representational theory of truth depends on problematic claims for permanent essential correspondences between mind and objects. Once words and things are seen as constituting separate, self-enclosed realms, one can only avoid scepticism by positing some metaphysical entity or "origin," an absolute mind, a synthetic *a priori*, logical simples, or an idea of forms or essences—to explain how the two come together. Derrida sees the problem and (especially in his work on Husserl) makes the rejection of essences the cornerstone of his scepticism. But Wittgenstein takes a further step: he recognizes the scepticism is only the reverse demonic side of essentialist thinking and seeks to establish the grounds of knowledge in a new, less problematic way. He moves from the static concept of essence as a permanent correspondence of mind and world to a concept of human actions and the recurrent forms they take as the irreducible ontological base on which to construct his investigations. For Derrida action as the play of signifiers destroys essentialist thought and leaves only free play; for Wittgenstein action provides access to a different secure ground for philosophy to be found by remaining within the complex interrelationships of ordinary experience.

There are two traditional philosophic grounds given for a theory of essences, both of which depend upon the possibility of analyzing human experiences to find the deep structures which support them and allow us to distinguish truth from falsity. We might call the first mode Platonic because in a variety of ways it insists that the real is

rational and that the test of truth is its correspondence to a deep rational or linguistic structure. The other mode is loosely speaking Aristotelian since essences depend upon the internal forms and systems of potential relationships which inhere in objects. In modern forms of this mode the test for one's knowledge tends to be some form of sensation or intuition.

Derrida attacks both modes—the first in his comments on Hegel and Lévi-Strauss and the second in his book on Husserl. But his deconstruction of these philosophers depends in large part on his accepting as true Lévi-Strauss's adaptation of Saussure's linguistics to all cultural modes of representation. That is, Derrida accepts the idea that essences must be expressible in rational, self-justifying formal systems, then he proceeds to deny the possibility that such systems can even truly represent anything. If language, for example, is a self-contained system, we can never find any lines of projection adequately linking it to the world. For all the projections we wish to apply to language must themselves exist in and be justified by the linguistic system. Lines of projection, the fields of force linking words and the world, then, are determined by linguistic acts of projection and any test of their validity leads us back to the slippery path on which language must continually justify itself. Each line of projection requires reference to an act of projection which can only be explained by another act of projection or signification *ad infinitum*.

In one sense Wittgenstein begins where Derrida leaves off—convinced that truth theories based on ideal systems are doomed to infinite regress: “If the world had no substance, then whether a proposition had sense would depend on whether another proposition was true” (*TLP*, 2.0212). The impossibility of the Platonic way, however, only drove him deeply into the opposite camp. Despite his quarrels with Russell's logic, he found logical atomism the only possible secure basis for meaning, especially when he discovered in the idea of pictorial logical form a way to escape Russell's tendency to give logic independent ontological status. Atomism might be difficult to work out in specifics, but in principle it allowed him the security of locating the possibility of reference and of truth in the relationship between words, objects, and a syntax mirroring the capacity for internal relationships constituted by the form of objects. Each proposition could be measured on its own merits, as a picture of states of affairs, and need not depend on a total rep-

representational system. (Pictures are not representational in a Kantian way; they add no distinct content to what they image.) But even after greatly limiting the realm of possibly meaningful sentences to those that could picture facts, Wittgenstein could not successfully resist infinite regress. For what are the objects which guaranteed referring expressions. The sceptic in Wittgenstein soon realized that Russell's logical atoms, the simple objects constituting the world language pictures, were as difficult to locate as were the essential realities of a Platonic or Husserlian philosophy. He was still caught up in a situation where each apparent stopping place or moment of correspondence seemed to require further justification.

Despite the heroic efforts of the *Tractatus*, then, Wittgenstein found himself in the same impasse that justifies Derrida's sceptical claim that an honest philosophy can only express its nostalgia for a secure ground of objects or essences to check the infinite regress of language or learn to revel in the free play this multiplicity of signifiers affords. But his dissatisfaction with the logical atomism he took from Russell eventually brought him to a theory of meanings leading neither to nostalgia nor to free play. His basic discovery has been crucial to the spirit of post-modern literary thought, even if his particular solution has been largely ignored. What he saw, quite simply, was that the theory of logical simples assumed that there was a stable and static reality which language tried to label: propositions have sense when they provide a picture where the names pick out specific objects and logical form delineates a relationship between the names which can be tested for its truth or falsity. But why must we consider reality as primarily static configurations of objects? Suppose I want to tell someone "That is a cow." How does he know I am speaking about the whole object and not its shape or color or way of standing? (*PI*, 33-36). The theory of simples assumed that language had primarily an ostensive relationship to objects, but the example of the cow indicates that there is something prior to objects that enables men to make meaningful utterances. Language is woven into a context of actions (*PI*, 7) which constitute the fundamental public norm for assessing statements—not simply as true or false but as appropriate to the procedures taking place: "Only someone who already knows how to do something with it can significantly ask a name" (*PI*, 31).

Wittgenstein's most suggestive metaphor for articulating the change in his perspective on the grounds of meaning consists in the

opposition between lines of projection and methods of projection. He told Rush Rhees that in the *Tractatus* "he had confused the 'method of projection' with the 'lines of projection'."⁹ He had assumed that meaning and truth functions depended on specifying the lines by which propositions pictured states of affairs. He eventually saw that all the problems of logical atomism could be finessed if he made the methods of projection, the various ways we use names and expect them to be understood, the primary postulate of a theory of meaning. The *Tractatus* focused on explaining what is involved in testing whether we can know *that* something is the case. But knowing *how* is a prior consideration to knowing that, and this realization enables one to avoid any abstract ontology. The norms for understanding utterances are not the pictures they contain but the way they fit in the procedure, the knowing how to do something, that is relevant in a specific situation. This stress on knowing how not only frees Wittgenstein from a problematic ontology, but it also enables him to recover as philosophically significant and meaningful the multiple forms of human speech which he, and, later, Positivism, had banished from philosophy as logically meaningless (though Wittgenstein, at least, never denied their importance for human life).

The later Wittgenstein's concentration on methods of projection establishes a new way of dealing with the concept of essences that, I think, successfully avoids the problematic relationship between signification and reference at the center of Derrida's scepticism. Wittgenstein's basic epigram is "Essence is expressed by grammar" (*PI*, 371), but this obviously will not get us very far without a good deal of analysis. Let us begin by setting another epigram against Derrida's insistence that there can be no secure concept of essence once we recognize the endless process of signifiers needed to supplement attempts to reach a secure signified. The relevant epigram is as metaphysical an utterance as Wittgenstein ever permits him-

⁹ Peter Winch makes very nice use of the distinction between lines and methods of projection in "Introduction: The Unity of Wittgenstein's Philosophy," in Winch, ed., *Studies in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein* (New York: Humanities Press, 1969), pp. 1-19. As one example of the difference between the two forms of projection, compare the *Tractatus* metaphor of logic as a ruler held up to the world (2.1512) with *PI*, 430, where the ruler is "in itself . . . dead, and achieves nothing of what thought achieves." The best general treatment I know of the ontology of the *Tractatus* is the opening five chapters of Anthony Kenny, *Wittgenstein* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973).

self: “If we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation as the model of ‘object’ and ‘designation’ the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant” (*PI*, 293; contrast *TLP*, 2.014-2.023). The point here is that some of the many ways we make meaningful statements correlate names and objects, but we recognize that and determine the specific reference from the form of the sentence and the actions woven into it, not from direct lines of projection between names and objects. We name objects because we know how words are used, not because sentences picture or correspond to independent facts (although “independent facts” has a meaning in specific procedures that differentiate, say, hypotheses from what confirms them). This does not entail any metaphysical claim that objects either exist or do not exist; it simply claims logical priority for something other than objects. After all, the very terms “object” and “exist” change meaning as we employ different methods of projection. Moreover these terms are abstract and rarely used in ordinary discourse. Thus any analysis of them in ontological or epistemological terms is bound to be less secure and less convincing than the confidence we have in our established normal procedures for dealing with and discussing the public phenomena philosophers try to define abstractly. Two more epigrams make a clearer case than I can:

Children do not learn that books exist, that armchairs exist, etc. etc.,—they learn to fetch books, sit in armchairs, etc. etc. . . . (*OC*, 476)

So one must know that the objects whose names one teaches a child by an ostensive definition exist! Why must one know they do? Isn't it enough that experience doesn't later show the opposite? . . . (*OC*, 477)

Wittgenstein's, as we shall see more fully, is an ontology of what will suffice. The proposition that essence is expressed by grammar seeks to locate the possibility of philosophical certitude on a level of the surface purposes and actions that constitute ordinary experience. Instead of pursuing deep structures underlying appearances, it tries to make us see the necessity within these appearances and to disabuse us of the desire, always leading to nostalgia and to irony, of locating a true source of meanings beneath those we trust in ordinary actions. The corollary of this ontology is a different claim for philosophy: logical analysis gives way to describing the structures implicit in the many modes of projection we employ in carry-

ing on our ordinary procedures for organizing and making sense of experience. The proper role of the philosopher of language, then, is to describe and reflect upon the characteristic way expressions are used (*PI*, 43), upon our knowing how to manipulate language. Conditions of use, rather than the far more narrow and problematic conditions of objective reference, become the criteria for measuring successful achievements of meaning.

The implications for discussions of literary meaning here are far-ranging. First, since reference is not a primary criterion for successful public utterances, there is nothing scandalous or problematic about literary language. We understand what the various personages in a text (including the implicit author) are saying because we have at least two sets of characteristic uses to rely upon—our education in a culture which teaches us to connect certain assumptions and functions to utterances and our ability to see how the specific situation clarifies the action performed in the utterance. Moreover, as some critics have recently made clear, it is possible to see literary conventions themselves as characteristic uses of language we learn to understand as we do other language games.¹⁰ And our response to these conventions need not be purely intellectual and analytic; emotional response or assessment of the qualities exhibited by an utterance can be as relevant and objective as any other way of responding to language when called for by the relevant method of projection. Finally the role of methods of projection and the image of criteria for using utterances woven into the language helps us see that there is something a little simplistic in two currently popular ways of discussing literary meanings. When Derrida distinguishes between the *sens propre* of a term as the only logical means for avoiding the ironic supplementary regress of signifiers, he ignores the possibility that methods of projection, our

¹⁰ The two best Wittgensteinian approaches to literary theory are John Casey, *The Language of Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1966), and John Ellis, *The Theory of Literary Criticism* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974). I might also cite three essays of mine on the subject: "A Procedural Definition of Literature" forthcoming in Paul Hernadi, Ed. *What is Literature* (Bloomington; Indiana Univ. Press); "The Poem as Act: An Attempt to Reconcile Presentational and Mimetic Theories," *The Iowa Review*, 6 (1975), 103-24, deals briefly with speech acts and the institution of literary discourse as a language game, and "Wordsworth's 'Preface' as Literary Theory," *Criticism*, 18 (1976), 122-46, goes on at length about the difference between Wittgenstein and representational theories of literary language and elaborates the points about Wittgenstein and Romanticism I will make in concluding this essay.

ways of producing meanings, are as publicly determinate as names which simply copy some ideal, static facts. And when critics like Stanley Fish make the slogan "meaning as use" a principle to justify a radical process view of individuals creating meanings as they read, they make a similar mistake. They overlook the fact that methods of projection are no more indeterminate than ideal referring expressions. If meanings depend on a texture of actions, these actions are measurable by the conventions we master for achieving or responding to states of affairs that exist in a public realm. As Wittgenstein puts it, "It is not because I mean it [an expression] that it makes sense" (*PI*, 357), for meaning, like naming, is only possible when one already knows what to do with an expression in a given context.

Rather than enter the many specific arguments one would have to make to give a thorough justification for the claims I have just made, it is more economical to shift the plane of discourse back to the ontology that gives them logical support. Derrida and Fish, in their different ways, seem to assume that once one denies a ground for meaning in constructs like logical simples, he opens up a necessary relativism among competing ways to construe facts, none of which is secure without being itself construed from a relative point of view. The clichéd formulation of such procedures is that once we recognize the dependence of nature upon cultural systems, and, not, as traditional Western thought had it, the dependence of culture on some ideal nature, then all cultural constructs must be arbitrary. The issue here is very close to the theme that all representational discourse consists in interpretive fictions, but now the focus is not on the nature of consciousness but on the ontological grounds we can use to discuss questions of meaning. We come then, with the issue of the possible arbitrariness inherent in replacing simples by methods of projection, to a topic where we can draw out the full impact of Wittgenstein's revolution in philosophy and of the gulf between his work and that of thinkers like Derrida who spin out ironic reversals on a theological dream of naturally guaranteed essences.

Paul Ricoeur provides a nice example of the way abstract metaphysics in the theological tradition poses the question of arbitrariness, later developed more fully by structuralists invoking Saussure. In comparing Wittgenstein and Husserl, he claims that Wittgenstein's emphasis on signs in use ignores the more fundamen-

tal issue of the ontological status of the sign. Wittgenstein fails to see that it is the arbitrary systematic quality of language which constitutes a “sign as a sign” and determines the unbridgeable “distance between thought and life.” This gap at once requires language and renders it problematic.¹¹ But from a Wittgensteinian perspective, defining the gap is more problematic than comprehending language in the only way it makes sense, in use. We can, of course, study language as a formal system, but how do we know what qualifies as language unless we concentrate on the uses it has? And how do we define such terms as “life” or “arbitrary” without seeing what they really mean in practice? Wittgenstein’s strategy of posing intermediate cases provides a good example of the impossibility of satisfactorily defining terms like “abstract,” or the “gulf between thought and life” without looking at the possible uses of such terms. The following remark echoes in its abstractness the pronouncements of Ricoeur and Derrida: “But if you say: ‘How am I to know what he means, when I see nothing but the signs he gives?’ then I say: ‘How is he to know what he means, when he has nothing but the signs either?’” (*PI*, 504). But Wittgenstein then examines what possible opposite there could be to the practice of dealing in what might be arbitrary signs:

I say the sentence: “The weather is fine”; but the words are after all arbitrary signs—so let’s put “abcd” in their place. But now when I read this, I can’t connect it straightaway with the above sense. I am not used, I might say, to saying “a” instead of “the”, “b” instead of “weather”, etc. But I don’t mean by that I am not used to making an intermediate association between the word “the” and “a”, but that I am not used to using “a” in the place of “the” and therefore in the sense of “the”. (I have not mastered this language) (*PI*, 508)

How easy it is to lose our place when we think from the outside. If the object can drop out as irrelevant then the whole problematic of arbitrariness cannot be resolved by abstract analysis. If the signs have a characteristic use they have the only kind of existence they need.

The possibility of defining language as arbitrary really requires the corollary possibility of standing outside language and judging it by reference to some more inclusive and more established form of

¹¹ Ricoeur, “Husserl and Wittgenstein,” in Edward Lee and Maurice Mandelbaum, eds., *Phenomenology and Existentialism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 216-17.

certainty. In other words we must be able to say “arbitrary in relation to something.” The deeper issue here is the kinds of doubt that can possibly make sense in human experience. Descartes provides a prototype for a typical form of philosophy in his careful doubting of all the certitudes of ordinary experience in order to reach a deeper reflective ground for certainty. But this form of absolute doubt logically entails scepticism, since it begins by denying the only possible grounds for resolving doubt. If I want to suspect that everything may be arbitrary, how can I ever find a ground on which to stop doubting, without some recourse to faith? For a doubt really to make sense, it must itself accept its second-order status as a move within an established system for testing and confirming. Doubt only makes sense where certitude is possible; doubting the possibility of certitude is a doubt with no possible resolution, and hence not a doubt but an ungrounded metaphysical statement. The following quotation exemplifies Wittgenstein’s many remarks on this subject in *On Certainty*: “What would it be like to doubt now whether I have two hands? Why can’t I imagine it at all? What would I believe if I didn’t believe that? So far I have no system at all within which this doubt may exist” (*OC*, 247; see also *OC*, 115, 117). The doubt in such a case, we might say, has no meaning because it has no use.

The possible charge of arbitrariness then leads us back around to the kinds of ground we must be willing to accept for human actions. The fact that doubt itself requires a language game makes us realize more deeply the truth of Wittgenstein’s contention that human actions form an enormous system and only within it do our actions make sense. Doubt presupposes certitude, so we cannot stand outside our forms of life to say that they are either arbitrary or not arbitrary:

You must bear in mind that the language game is so to say something unpredictable. I mean: it is not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or unreasonable). It is there—like our life. (*OC*, 559)

If the true is what is grounded, then the ground is not true, nor yet false. (*OC*, 205)

... as if giving grounds did not come to an end sometime. But the end is not an ungrounded presupposition: it is an ungrounded way of acting. (*OC*, 110)

Such statements echo Kant’s *a priori*s, but what if these are not forms of representation but a variety of established ways of acting

which can be described and recognized without metaphysical or epistemological hypotheses? Here we reach the center of Wittgenstein's implicit ontology. And the essence of this center, with its claim that the irreducible bases for human certainty are a variety of ways of acting (*PI*, 224), is the vision that there is no center and need not be one. We arrive then at a perspective on origins which avoids the whole problem. Wittgenstein simply accepts the fact so much lamented in Continental thought that we are twice removed from the Christian doctrine of an original Logos. There is no divine word grounding the free play of human words, and there is no way to discover any luminously present object anchoring words to the world. But the alternatives remaining are not just nostalgia and free play, because these themes depend on the absence of what we never had. Instead we can recognize the error so deeply embedded in traditional philosophy and try to restructure philosophy on the grounds of ungrounded but irreducible human actions. The hardest task in philosophy, then,—one never achieved by French critics of the doctrine of essence from Bergson, to Sartre, to Derrida—is to stop asking the old questions. If we are to speak of origins at all we must learn to stop at what can be recognized as a valid beginning for philosophical reflection, and that beginning lies not beneath the signs but in the relationships and contexts of action which they carry with them:

It is so difficult to find the *beginning*. Or better: it is difficult to begin at the beginning. And not try to go further back. (*OC*, 471)

. . . The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to. The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* in question.—Instead, we now demonstrate a method, by examples, and the series of examples can be broken off. Problems are solved (difficulties eliminated), not a *single* problem. (*PI*, 133)

IV

We have reached a point where philosophy and literature blend, for the only way to appreciate fully what Wittgenstein has achieved is to understand his own career as taking a dramatic form culminating in the metaphor of being able to stop doing philosophy. This achievement, moreover, helps clarify one crucial way literature in the Romantic tradition interprets its own humanistic role. I want to illustrate the dramatic structure of Wittgenstein's quest by showing

how his implicit ontology comes to give a philosophical place to what he described in 1929 as his experience “par excellence” of absolute values which he then felt were necessarily outside of his primarily positivist philosophy. The first is outwardly directed—a profound sense of wonder over the simple fact that the world exists. And the second expresses the psychological corollary of that state of wonder, an experience of a “state of mind in which one is inclined to say ‘I am safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens.’ ” (*LE*, 8ff.). The first is a vision of the world as a limited plenitude, the second is a feeling that one can accept that world and find it a secure home.¹²

In his early work, Wittgenstein developed the first experience, that the world exists, into the powerful idea that the mystical is the sense of the world as a limited whole, a sense of the world enclosed within all the possible forms of truth statements. As his vision of manifold methods of projection developed, the image of the limited whole gives way to the dream of a “synoptic view” (*PP*, 305) which recognizes but cannot enclose the virtually infinite possibilities for making sense of experience. The shift is most evident in the change from the metaphor of logic as “an infinitely fine network, the great mirror” (*TLP*, 511) to a metaphor for philosophical grammar as involving us in a complex tapestry or set of networks that continually expand (*PI*, v; *Z*, 447, 568-69). Here then the world one must accept and the sense of the mystical can no longer be based on a single all-encompassing vision, but consists in an endless series of possibly significant arrangements of experience. When deep structures go, the only object of wonder remaining is a sense of multiplicity and an appreciation of the riches inherent in the surface structures of events. If we consider Wittgenstein’s later work in these quasi-religious terms, it has clear affinities with Whitehead’s aesthetic philosophy of constantly emerging multiple events, with Owen Barfield’s insistence on the importance of saving the appearances, and above all, with Wallace Stevens’ vision of resisting the pressure of reality by imaginatively participating in whatever occurs as it occurs. I would like to call this

¹² For Wittgenstein’s early conceptions of value and of the mystical, see *NB*, pp. 72-91; *TLP*, 6.4-6.522; Jeremy Walker, “Wittgenstein’s Earlier Ethics,” *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 5 (1968), 219-32; and Eddy Zemach, “Wittgenstein’s Philosophy of the Mystical,” in Irving Copi and Robert Beard, eds., *Essays on Wittgenstein’s Tractatus* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), pp. 359-75.

perspective phenomenism and to link Wittgenstein with the tradition of Romantic poetics by calling attention to his constant appeals that we use our imaginations to break the hold of traditional philosophical questions and the monolithic world views they entail. He shares, in short, the recurrent desire of the arts since Romanticism to define themselves in opposition to ideologies and to systematic and analytic models for discovering truths. These arts at their best, for example in the Romantic poets' continual testing of new states of mind from which to experience common realities, could themselves have employed Wittgenstein's projected motto from *King Lear*—their aim is to show us differences that make a difference, that are more than diacritical marks.

By investigating some of the implications of the concept of phenomenism, we can clarify both Wittgenstein's own Romanticism and his articulation of a philosophical position which can provide a coherent secular defense for many aspects of the Romantic tradition. First of all, phenomenism involves an ontology capable of demonstrating that most of the differences we see in appearances are irreducible differences in fact. Whitehead's organic atomism and his refutation of much analytic philosophy as based on the fallacy of misplaced concreteness exemplifies the kind of philosophy I mean, although Whitehead perhaps created as many metaphysical entities as he saved natural appearances. Wittgenstein is simpler and closer to empirical reality; differences matter because of the variety of games we play, and particular situations matter, even when they seem to be illusions, because it is only by examining the particular event that we can see the possible contexts which inhere in it.¹³ Secondly, an adequate phenomenism must be willing to stop at particulars and not seek some grounding origin, for the ensuing quest tends to displace the phenomenon. Here phenomenology also begins, but Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre could not ultimately resist the pull of metaphysics and essential realities. Husserl's concern for essence overwhelms his sense of phenomena; Sartre's concern for developing a theory of consciousness reduces his great gift for describing phenomena to the role of mere illustration; and Heidegger's religious and metaphysical concerns allowed him to pursue particulars only when they could be spoken of as disclosing the mysterious presence of being.

¹³ On the importance of understanding illusions in terms of their full contexts and the implications for this in refuting empiricist sense-data theories of knowledge see J. L. Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 20-54.

Finally, an adequate phenomenism recognizes the role philosophy must play in relationship to causal explanations, especially scientific ones. Wittgenstein handles this by his distinction between description and explanation. Explanations seek to define phenomena in terms of categories derived from specific systematic constructs. They are concerned with giving reasons why things are the way they are, and they depend on specific needs and established ways of treating things from certain systematic perspectives. But, as we have seen, reasons depend ultimately on grounds which are not reasonable, grounds which simply are. And these grounds can only be described. We cannot be told why our fundamental views of things are the way they are, we can only be reminded of the grammar we have to deal with them. Moreover while explanations tend to appeal to specific systematic perspectives, descriptions appeal to the more fundamental testing ground of ordinary experience, to a perspective *within* the processes being reflected upon. Descriptions rely on the fact that we are all experts in the experiences that really matter and need only careful attention to our lives, not highly specialized forms of knowledge (*PL*, 124-28, 599).

The following reflection from the *Blue Book* illustrates both the difference between explanation and description and the dangers I have discussed in dealing with ordinary experience from a perspective outside it:

We have been told by popular scientists that the floor on which we stand is not solid, as it appears to common sense, as it has been discovered that the wood consists of particles filling space so thinly that it can almost be called empty. This is liable to perplex us, for in a way of course we know that the floor is solid, or that, if it isn't solid, this may be due to the wood being rotten but not to its being composed of electrons. . . . Our perplexity was based on a misunderstanding; the picture of the thinly filled space had been wrongly *applied*. For this picture of the structure of matter was meant to explain the very phenomenon of solidity. (*BB*, 45)

This sense of the fullness and the multiplicity of phenomena allows Wittgenstein a unique and important perspective on the relationship of philosophy to science, a perspective most clearly elaborated in the way Wittgenstein's heirs treat behaviorism.¹⁴ As I

¹⁴ See especially John Cook, "Human Beings," in Winch, ed., pp. 117-51, and for summaries of the anti-behaviorism growing out of Wittgenstein's phenomenism see Hannah Pitkin, *Wittgenstein and Justice* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972), chapter 7; and George Henrik von Wright, *Explanation and Understanding* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971).

see it, Wittgenstein's position is that philosophy neither applies nor rejects science. In some ways it tries to show what the grounds of science must be, but more important it proposes philosophy as a challenge to science. Wittgenstein in effect says to science—whether it be Behaviorism or Chomsky's linguistic Cartesianism, "If you want to extend your findings to the sphere of general human behavior, I have described complex sets of behavior which are undeniable and which any system must take into account." He reminds us that the philosopher should keep the negative example of Kant's Newtonian categories in mind and remember that the basic forms of human behavior tend to be more constant in the face of cultural change than are the paradigms of science. The true antagonist for most ambitious systematic projects in philosophy is not another system, but a renewed awareness of the complexity of the obvious.

Wittgenstein's ways of recovering the obvious give concrete substance to the sense of wonder at what is the case which he could only state abstractly and place outside of philosophy in 1929. The generalization remains outside of philosophy, but now only because it is not needed. And Wittgenstein's phenomenism also allows him to place within philosophy (though not subject to explanation or justification) the security he seeks. It is this concern with security which lies behind the need to find that one can stop philosophizing. Moreover the need for security is met by the wonder he elicits at the familiar objects and ways of acting which define our intersubjective world and, as Stanley Cavell suggests, make us free by exhibiting our true commitments. Like so many modern writers, Wittgenstein's deepest quest—both philosophically and personally (since he was an alien) was to find a place or a home. And the grand testament of his work is that so long as one is alive to what constitutes the conditions of his existence and avoids the enchantment of deep structures, origins, and essences, he need never find a home because he has never lost it. Yet at the same time he must find a way to lose it if he is to recognize that it has never been lost. This is the key to his philosophical style and to one continuous project in modern literature:

The feeling of 'familiarity' and of 'naturalness'. It is easier to get at a feeling of unfamiliarity and unnaturalness . . . (*PI*, 596)

The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice

something because it is always before one's eyes.) The real foundations of his enquiry do not strike a man at all. Unless that fact has at some time struck him. And this means: we fail to be struck by what, once seen, is most striking and most powerful. (*PI*, 129)

For Wittgenstein to be happy always entailed that one make himself accept the world as it is and not try to impose his will upon it (*NB*, 73, 75). The poetry of his later writings offers a continually expanding testimony of how we can achieve this peace without surrendering our capacity for wonder or turning to the all too easy conundrums of metaphysics or the cheap sense of self-importance offered by alienated ironists.

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