

## CRITICAL NOTICE

### **Reading Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* *A Beginner's Guide***

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In 'What Does It All Mean?', the final Chapter of his Guide to the *Philosophical Investigations*, John J. Ross speculates that because Wittgenstein refers in his Preface to having made several unsuccessful attempts to weld his results into a whole, he may have had a guiding theme or purpose directing the course of his work. This theme Ross locates using 'a little patience' and a detailed look at the uniting principle that governed Wittgenstein's belief that his new thoughts could only be properly understood against the background of his earlier way of thinking in the *Tractatus*. (*Ibid.*, 155). Whatever the 'grave errors' actually are in the earlier book to which he refers - and Ross understandably locates them in logical atomism and in the picture theory of meaning - Wittgenstein is guided throughout by the principle that 'a logical or philosophical investigation is also an ethical one', so that 'morality and logic go hand in hand': only by removing the 'nonsense' consequent upon a failure to rigorously apply 'logic' to our language, can the philosopher achieve a moral life.

Ross takes his cue from Wittgenstein's mention in *Culture and Value* of those individuals who had the most significant effect on his thinking: Boltzmann, Hertz, Schopenhauer, Frege, Russell, Krauss, Loos, Weininger, Spengler and Sraffa. Only Sraffa and Spengler exerted their influence well after Wittgenstein's arrival in Cambridge during 1911. The rest of his chapter is taken up with a more detailed look at the work of some of those individuals and how they illustrate the principle that Ross is keen to promote as the underlying motivation for Wittgenstein's oeuvre: Krauss as critic, poet and satirist, Loos as architect and critic of contemporary culture, Weininger in his more positive aspect as a thinker who believed that committing errors in science and philosophy is not merely an intellectual failure but a moral failure as well, so that both logic and ethics are a duty to

one's self. For Ross, this connection between logic and morality finds its historical precursor in Kant. Ross also sees Wittgenstein's own biography as a clear illustration of Weininger's belief that logic produces a moral identity, an identity which if constructed from actions owned up to by the individual, will therefore be morally pure. Ross sums up the influence of three of those thinkers on Wittgenstein as follows:

Overall, I think we can see that in these three thinkers, Krauss, Loos, and Weininger, we find this common thread of the connection, in one form or another, between logic and ethics. Krauss sees it in language; Loos puts the idea to work in a critique of art, architecture and culture, and Weininger sees this connection as fundamental to our very nature. I think if we briefly examine the *Tractatus* we will see that Wittgenstein was thinking along the same lines. I want to argue Wittgenstein was still of this opinion when he composed the *Investigations*. (*Ibid.*, 173).

But what constitutes an argument in this context, a context in which Wittgenstein is clearly being regarded as a philosopher of culture, is solely a matter of citing certain comments that he occasionally made both about our civilisation and about our times, which on the face of it have no direct relevance to the themes which occupy him in his two major works. As Ross in common with almost every other commentator who writes on these matters is only too well aware, no one would cite passages directly from the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations* themselves as evidence that Wittgenstein's philosophical work directly reflects cultural concerns, in the absence of the indirect evidence provided from sources like conversations and *Culture and Value*, from which claims about his cultural concerns are normally derived. It is then understandable that in order for Ross to show that throughout Wittgenstein's work, early and late, the desire for logical clarity was also a reflection of moral clarity (*Ibid.*, 178) - so that to see the world aright one must become clear about the nature and function of language - he should find himself doing little more than repeat claims that the reader may sometimes feel have already found adequate expression :

From this perspective the *Tractatus* is part of the philosophical trend that we have seen exemplified in Krauss, Loos, and Weininger. The focus is different for each thinker, language and media for Krauss, architecture for Loos, and psychology for Weininger, but the message is the same: logic is the gateway to morality. Wittgenstein, looking at the foundations of language and therefore thought, agrees. By clearing away the nonsense, the application of logic to our language makes truth and therefore ethics possible. (*Ibid.*, 178).

In the same way, when Ross takes what he believes to be the chief difference between the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations* to lie in Wittgenstein's desire to discover 'the logical clarity of language' no longer in the notation of symbolic logic, but instead - utilising his Tractarian insight that ordinary language is in logical order as it is - in the ordinary employment of language 'in the everyday circumstances of our lives' (*Ibid.*, 179), he provides an account which is repeated in slightly more detail only two pages further on:

Despite this important difference with the *Tractatus* and the ideas that influenced it, I would argue that Wittgenstein still holds in the *Investigations* that clarity of language equates to moral clarity. That is, by engaging in the difficult work of clarifying our language, ridding ourselves of nonsense, bad philosophy in particular, we can also rid ourselves of many of the ethical problems that plague us. The misuse of language often hides many problems, and the bad philosophizing often makes us think we have solved problems that we haven't, or worse, sends us off on wild goose chases, looking down a road that leads nowhere. (*Ibid.* 181).

This is followed by Ross's claim that in the *Investigations* 'Wittgenstein is still concerned with the moral problems that plague our society' (*Ibid.*) although on his view it takes 'a little

analysis' to uncover this theme. A pertinent result of this analysis is Ross's discovery of the reference made by Wittgenstein to the 'darkness of this time' in his Preface. Ross then provides us with a potted history of the relevant period as a way of illustrating what may justify the reference made to this darkness, pointing out that Wittgenstein lived in Vienna at a time during his youth when the social problems to be encountered there included anti-Semitism, racism, housing shortages, an impoverished lower class and an apparent epidemic of suicide amongst the young that claimed three of Wittgenstein's own brothers. Wittgenstein's experiences in World War I, the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the rise of the Nazis and the election of Hitler as German Chancellor in 1933 are all cited as evidence which shows that Wittgenstein had more than a passing acquaintance with the 'darkness of this time' (*Ibid.*, 182). We are also advised that by 1942 'many of the concentration camps became death camps, built for the purpose of exterminating the Jews and other so-called "undesirable races" ' (*Ibid.*), although this is technically incorrect if it implies that the number of camps existing purely for the purpose of extermination alone was ever more than 6 or 7 out of a total usually estimated in 4 figures. Only because of their wealth and the payment of a large sum of money were Wittgenstein's sisters able to be reclassified as Aryans and allowed to remain in Vienna throughout the War. After the Anschluss Wittgenstein himself renounced his German citizenship to become a British subject.

The obvious question here is whether we can be justified in treating this potted history as having any direct relevance to the notion of Wittgenstein as a philosopher of culture. After all, over the last few centuries no period of European history has been totally free of the kinds of horrors to which Ross draws our attention. Can it really be right to claim along with him that 'there is ample evidence Wittgenstein saw the moral crises alluded to above as symptomatic of a general intellectual malaise in the society at large, and just as the *Tractatus* can be seen as part of a philosophical trend that uses the precision of logic to address moral problems, the *Investigations* likewise is intended to dispel intellectual darkness as an antidote to the moral darkness of the age' ?

The answer surely is that any understanding we might have of Wittgenstein as a philosopher of culture has to arise from considerations that render far more subtle and indirect the relation between his two major works - which *per se* can be treated in their own right as having no direct cultural relevance at all - and the comments often cited from conversation and *Culture and Value* which are taken as evidence for a cultural claim. Perhaps one of the finest expressions of the real point at issue here was made by Maurice Drury in 1966:

The number of introductions to and commentaries on Wittgenstein's philosophy is steadily increasing. Yet to one of his former pupils something that was central in his thinking is not being said.

Kierkegaard told a bitter parable about the effects of his writings.

He said he felt like the theatre manager who runs on the stage to warn the audience of a fire. But they take his appearance as all part of the farce they are enjoying, and the louder he shouts the more they applaud.

Forty years ago Wittgenstein's teaching came to me as a warning against certain intellectual and spiritual dangers by which I was strongly tempted. These dangers still surround us. It would be a tragedy if well-meaning commentators should make it appear that his writings were now easily assimilable into the very intellectual milieu they were largely a warning against. (1)

If that warning is still highly relevant today, this is not because, as Ross puts it, Wittgenstein and his compatriots Krauss, Loos and Weininger 'had ample personal confirmation of Spengler's predictions for the West.' (*Ibid.* 183) The importance of Spengler for Wittgenstein lies, not so much in the fact that he was providing an accurate historical forecast of cultural decline, but rather that in his own way he forms one more example that illustrates a general tendency: the tendency of that group of sensitive individuals including Kraus, Loos, and Weininger amongst

others, who collectively acted as an accurate barometer of what was culturally significant in their times, to look at things in the way that they did. This is a point reflected in a quotation from *Culture and Value* that was brought to our attention by von Wright in his well-known paper 'Wittgenstein in Relation to his Times' (2):

...the spectacle which our age affords us is not the formation of a great cultural work, with the best men contributing to the same great end, so much as the unimpressive spectacle of a crowd whose best members work for purely private ends. (*Culture and Value*, 6)

This is why it is at best misleading for Ross to reiterate that 'Wittgenstein saw his personal experiences from the horrors of war to the stupidity and heartlessness he saw around him as evidence of the truth of Spengler's beliefs' (*Ibid.* 183). Indeed, in the course of suggesting that these considerations were on his mind as he composed the *Investigations*, Ross asks whether we really can read the *Investigations* as an attempt to advance these issues. Yet the most he can do in justifying this claim is to repeat the connection between the kinds of issues Wittgenstein discusses in his work and those cultural concerns, in a way which succeeds only in begging the question:

Showing the public or social nature of our psychological language attempts to sidestep the solipsistic and skeptical tendencies engendered by the belief that our language is private, and so we hopefully avoid the moral consequences outlined above. In general, in the *Investigations* as in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein wants to show us how to remove the nonsense from our language so that we can see who we really are and put our world in order. Again, this is a demanding search for truth and perfection, the result of which is an ethical life. (*Ibid.* 185)

Once again, in attempting to make what has now become in the secondary literature the acceptable point that the role ethics plays in Wittgenstein's work must be sought in considering

it as a whole, Ross exhibits a tendency to regard this as a thesis of some kind which requires to be proved, whereas its relevance to his philosophy can be established only in ways which are much more subtle and indirect. There may be some philosophers who would feel that what is here presented to the reader (cover blurb) as an introductory book about the *Investigations* which is suitable either for undergraduates or for those coming to it for the first time, can hardly be the place to dwell on wider issues of this kind, issues which many introductions to the *Investigations* simply fail to discuss. But the point is not so much that Ross is wrong to introduce them, as that his entire approach leaves the reader with what could only be a false impression of the role that ethical and cultural considerations can have played in Wittgenstein's oeuvre.

In a brief Introduction in which he sets the scene for his interpretation of the *Investigations*, Ross makes the almost obligatory references to the 'obscurity' of the book, to Wittgenstein's own unwillingness to clarify his thoughts in order to make himself readable in conventional terms, to the tendency amongst commentators to try to fit Wittgenstein into existing philosophical moulds, and to the incredibly wide variety of Wittgensteins which the secondary literature has produced. Remarking on the disdain that Wittgenstein was known to have felt for academic philosophy, he can hardly help but regard it as rather ironic that 'Wittgenstein has certainly kept many of us in business' (*Ibid.* ix). Although he does not claim to be having the last word on the *Investigations*, he admits to being less puzzled now about the book than once he was, thanks both to 'many years of hard work and the hard work of the many scholars' who have preceded him (*Ibid.* xi).

Yet it is one of the most notable features of his commentary that in pursuing his aim of making the book accessible to students and beginners, he makes little or no reference to the work of any other interpreters, believing that he ought to stick as close to the text as possible instead of 'critiquing readings of readings of Wittgenstein' involving detailed commentary on Wittgenstein scholarship (*Ibid.*). One consequence of this is that Ross takes no part in the major controversies that have occupied Wittgenstein interpretation in the last few decades. There is no mention of Kripke on rules and private language, or of Diamond-Conant on the *Tractatus* - despite frequent references

to 'nonsense' - surely surprising given the significance that Ross attributes to this book in the course of drawing our attention to the unity of Wittgenstein's work as a whole.

Another feature of Ross's approach which makes itself felt in this Introduction, one which continues to appear throughout the book, is his noticeably discursive style, with its tendency towards unnecessary repetition and towards bold statements instantly requiring qualification when more moderate claims would have been appropriate. A writer who says, for example, that a 'beginning student trying to survey this secondary literature would understandably get confused, possibly dizzy (or maybe just bored silly)', is almost bound to qualify this by stating, in a following paragraph, that 'Obviously this scholarship on Wittgenstein contains a great deal that is commendable' (*Ibid.*x). Similarly, two pages later on, in claiming that commentators often make the mistake of straying from the original texts - something for which Wittgenstein should take the blame where 'blame' is surely inappropriate - Ross asserts that rather than devote their attention to ancillary evidence provided by original sketches and lecture notes in the course of seeking clarification, interpreters ought to return to the main text of the *Investigations*. Yet this assertion requires instant qualification because it is perfectly obvious to all that there are in practice a number of books lacking these failings that successfully comment on the *Investigations* (*Ibid.* xii).

The remainder of the Introduction is taken up with a biographical account of Wittgenstein's life. This is provided in reasonable detail up until the publication of the *Tractatus* and mention of his spell as a schoolteacher, with a final paragraph only being devoted to the return to Cambridge in 1929 and the years culminating in the *Investigations* as Wittgenstein had left it. A large part of this biography, however, exhibits the clear fascination that *fin de siecle* Vienna holds for many observers - in this matter Ross is surely not alone - and here we are treated to tales of the 'Palais Wittgenstein', and reminded again of figures like Krauss, Loos, Trakl and Rilke. Adolf Hitler appears under the tutelage of Vienna's future mayor, Karl Lueger, and we are reminded of the open practice of anti-Semitism. What may appear to dominate the account, however, is the darker side of Viennese life exemplified by the large number of upper class youth, and intellectuals like Boltzmann who

'abruptly and often inexplicably ended their lives' (*Ibid.* xv). As already explained, some of this historical material will be repeated at the very end when Ross comes to consider the ethical and cultural significance of Wittgenstein's work.

In what is in effect the first chapter of his book, 'Building Blocks', Ross makes an attempt to understand why the *Investigations* is so especially 'tricky' (*Ibid.* 1), and comes to the conclusion that its apparent lack of form might dissipate 'if we look at it in terms of modern art or music' (*Ibid.* 3), a comparison that may be illuminating and suggestive. He remarks that although Wittgenstein never announces openly that he had literary aspirations, the care that he took with his work, and its thoroughly modern character suggests otherwise. Here as elsewhere Ross refers to this topic, as to others he often introduces, as something to be taken up in more detail later on - leaving to the reader the hard job of discovering where - preferring at this point to say that 'I only want to caution the reader against looking at the *Investigations* as a badly drawn pastiche' (*Ibid.* 4), when any reason that the reader might have for believing this could have come only from what Ross himself has already, if only indirectly, implied.

Commenting that it only takes a little reflection to see that 'language, what we ordinarily speak and write, is extremely messy' because it 'is jumbled, tangled, flexible, twisted, and twistable, and as such it is a source of amazement, humor and of course artistic expression' (*Ibid.*), and suggesting that modern literature - Joyce, Faulkner *etc.* - seems to focus on how far language can be stretched in the service of art, Ross believes that for Wittgenstein this inherent flexibility of language is a source of error. Consequently, Ross's Wittgenstein addresses the problems of philosophy by dealing with them at what he sees as their source in the misuse of language:

This is not to say that Wittgenstein's *Investigations* consist of reading philosophical works and declaring ,e.g., 'Ah ha, Descartes has used the word "soul" incorrectly!' Wittgenstein goes deeper than that in showing us that we misunderstand how language functions. Because we fail to

understand the workings of language, we fail to understand its limits, or as we shall see its logic - what it can and can't do - and so we fall into error.

Anyone who struggles long enough with Wittgenstein's text will see him returning to the above point over and over again. But right away we usually hit a major stumbling block in interpreting the text. As I mentioned earlier, we often think that Wittgenstein is defending a theory of language that will deal effectively with its misuse. But, really, this is not the case. (*Ibid.* 4 *et seq.*)

Ross's Wittgenstein attempts to describe, and not to explain, the workings of language. This allows Ross to reach the conclusion that most philosophical problems arise because the philosopher often borrows words from their original context in which they have a clear meaning and attempts to transport them to a context where they work less well or not at all. He uses the example 'I see what you are talking about', and to cut a long story short the wayward philosopher is led to a concept of a form of mental seeing based on the model of visual seeing, a model which apparently requires a special theory to explain it, when on Wittgenstein's view this theoretical construct of a form of mental seeing 'is a chimera conjured out of the labyrinth of language' (*Ibid.*, 7).

Ross refers in this context to the idea that the philosopher is often obsessed with the notion that a word has a special independent meaning of its own which it carries along with it outwith its original context of use. Here he may come close to the idea that philosophical problems often arise for Wittgenstein because the philosopher has become party to the attempt to apply a *picture* in which he takes our understanding of a concept to consist, a picture which he realises that he cannot after all entertain even when his intuitions inform him that this picture captures the real meaning of the concept in question. Classic examples rest in a certain understanding of what it is to follow a rule, or to believe in other minds, and here one wishes not only that Ross had

considered the work of other commentators including Kripke with his evidently anti-realist orientation, but also that he had related his discussion more directly to Wittgenstein's texts in the *Investigations*.

Another example where it is not entirely clear where Ross is going, occurs immediately prior to this example of *seeing*, where he mentions a connection between thought and language:

...Wittgenstein wants to show us that it is essentially impossible to separate thought and language. Any idea or thought, certainly one that is foundational for language, that has no expression in language, is certainly useless and might as well be non-existent. For all practical purposes language and thought are the same - we think in language. Thus, if language had failed you because of its flexible nature and it has led you into error, the best someone can do is show you how to follow out the thread and show you where the cloth unravels. This is what Wittgenstein does in the *Investigations*. (*Ibid.* 6 et seq.)

The problem here is that Ross is actually discussing three different issues which he is failing to disentangle, the first that one cannot use language to get outside language to the reality it serves to express, a principle he has been struggling with just prior to this passage, a second resting on the point that in order to discover where he has gone wrong the philosopher has to unravel the knots into which he has become entangled by his (mis)use of language, and a third about a connection between language and thought; and in this context Wittgenstein's point is not that there cannot be any thinking without language, but that when we do think in language, language is itself the expression of thought (§ 329). To express this as Ross does, incurs the danger of presenting the relationship between thought and language as if it were a way of saying that you cannot have one without simultaneously having the other, and this is to neglect the Wittgensteinian point that thinking is a widely ramified concept (*Zettel* § 110), so that there are indeed circumstances in which there can be thinking which is not

allied to any form of talking, a form of thinking expressed in behaviour which may indeed apply to animals which have no spoken language at all. The 'no thought without language' principle is always in danger of fostering a notion of thinking as an accompaniment to the use of language, and this makes it look as if a philosopher might legitimately claim that he could think without language as the exercise of a special ability, when the only question that can ever really be at issue in these cases is whether, in certain circumstances, we would recommend that what is going on, as expressed in behaviour, can be properly regarded as a matter of thinking in the absence of speech.

'The Old Way of Thinking', a chapter in which Ross according to its sub-title will attempt to outline the problems that Wittgenstein believed he had solved in the *Tractatus*, begins by asking exactly what were the 'grave errors' in that book to which he refers in his Preface to the *Investigations*. Ross then remarks that an exhaustive answer is beyond the scope of his enquiry, leaving the purpose of the chapter to then lie in a discussion of some common features of both books which might throw light on the later work. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, for Ross, had very deep cultural and philosophical roots, with inherent ethical, aesthetic and philosophical requirements 'that stimulated Wittgenstein's search for logical purity' (*Ibid.* 9). There follows a brief description of *Tractatus* ontology with its *objects* as the utterly simple components of the *world*, objects which cannot be described but only *named* or labelled. Later on, this feature will play a role in how he interprets the private language argument in the *Investigations*. He does not actually mention that a *complex proposition* describing a *fact* can be analysed into *elementary propositions* describing *states of affairs*, although he does say that states of affairs are combinations of simple objects, and he presents a very brief outline of the *picture theory* of the proposition from which it can be gleaned that the picture or model concerned, acts as a representation of how the objects it depicts stand in relation to one another depending on how the elements of the picture are arranged. But since his main aim is to quickly reveal how in *Investigations* §§ 1 - 65 this entire edifice is 'deconstructed' (*Ibid.* 11), any niceties surrounding *Tractatus* interpretation in this context may be assumed to be irrelevant.

It is perhaps unfortunate that in the following few pages Ross is at his most discursive, so that it is only when he comes to discuss Wittgenstein's builders (*Ibid.* 15) that the text comes alive again, and here it is significant that, along with many other commentators, Ross initially sees nothing at all problematic about Wittgenstein's statement that the builders' language might be conceived to be a complete primitive language (§ 2) or the whole language of A and B (§ 6). It remains very much an open question whether Wittgenstein's reference to these passages in *Zettel* § 99 helps to settle the issue, because in raising the question whether these builders are really like us and are not merely behaving mechanically, in which case the reference to a proper *language* would begin to lose its significance for us, it may not be thought to *be* an answer merely to say that primitive thinking can be expressed *via* primitive behaviour. For *that* point is not at issue if there really is no sharp dividing line between primitive organisms at one end of the scale and sophisticated language-using creatures at the other. The question here is whether we can even look upon the builders as creatures in any way like ourselves. Ross at this point states that the builders and their use of 'Slab !' illustrates that the 'student must know what to do when *slab* is called out', and that 'these features are such an integral part of language and meaning that we take them for granted and they escape our notice' (*Ibid.* 18)

Ross characteristically connects Wittgenstein's use of the phrase 'form of life' at this point in his discussion with the idea he attributes to Spengler that a culture is like an organism that develops over time and goes through a process of growth and decay. Remarking that this idea was central to National Socialism and that it probably originated with Hegel, but is also certainly found in Nietzsche, Ross nevertheless cautions us that in Wittgenstein's philosophy this phrase should be seen along with 'language-game' and 'meaning as use' as doing no more than point towards the background of activities against which human beings use language. Emphasising his point that *slab* only makes sense within the overall context of *building* as a human activity - and so begging the question whether the builders' language could be the *whole* language of a tribe - Ross stresses that phrases like 'form of life' are not technical terms but serve

instead to illustrate how language 'is interwoven with our lives' (*Ibid.* 20).

Although this may not be entirely consistent with what he has already claimed, Ross argues that the builders' language is not actually intended to be seen as the description of a possible language, so that its 'failure' is not to be taken as a 'proof that such a thing doesn't occur or could never work' (*Ibid.* 24). He calls the failure 'logical', although it should surely be remembered that Wittgenstein does not call his description of a primitive language - or of the whole language of a tribe - a failure at all: it is instead a description of a language which correctly fits what Augustine says. Nevertheless, Ross may be correct to talk of the 'failure' of the builders' language insofar as it is not intended to have any application once we move beyond the narrow confines of the builders' lives, a point Ross at one stage indirectly connects to his obscure claim that the builders' language shows what cannot be said.

What he would ultimately appear to be getting at here is the idea that the *Investigations* cannot be taken to constitute a disproof of the *Tractatus*, and this is correct insofar as it reflects a remark Wittgenstein made to Malcolm that 'he really thought that in the *Tractatus* he had provided a perfect account of a view that is the *only* alternative to the viewpoint of his later work.' (3) Yet if Wittgenstein's reference to a complete primitive language still appears to induce a sense of irony, this arises solely from our inability to grasp how the creatures who use this language could be regarded as being in any way human, and it is no doubt for this reason that Rupert Read and Phil Hutchinson (4) claim that the builders example 'deconstructs' in the very act of its being brought to our consideration. Other commentators like Marie McGinn, however, see the example (5) of the builders as an illustration of the important role Wittgenstein attributes to the notion of *ostensive teaching*, which unlike *ostensive definition*, introduces the pupil to the role of *naming* in our language.

The important passage ( § 46) in which Wittgenstein identifies both his 'objects' from the *Tractatus* and Russell's 'individuals', with the primary elements mentioned by Socrates in the *Theaetetus*, is followed by the claim in § 47 that outwith a particular context it makes no sense to talk about the absolutely simple parts of a chair. Ross argues that here the metaphysical

character of the Tractarian view comes out most clearly in the thought that we have no real conception of what *objects* which can only be named but not described could possibly be, if all description can only be made of what is complex or composite (*Ibid.* 28). It may be thought that Ross makes rather heavy weather of this point, his discussion extending to 4 pages, and ending with the conclusion that, in his terms, there 'is no external, formal, logical structure that we can rely on to automatically supply meaning or sense' (*Ibid.* 32). The reason for this is expressed by Wittgenstein *via* an answer which need not be thought to be less important purely because it may appear disparagingly to echo the words of C. M. Joad (6): 'that depends on what you understand by "composite" ' (§ 47) ; and this for Wittgenstein is a rejection of the question whether the visual image of this tree is composite, and what may be its component parts ?

The point is extended by Wittgenstein in § 48 when he considers the famous example of the coloured squares as an illustration of a language-game echoing § 2. In § 49 he comes to emphasise what he now regards as the Tractarian error of thinking that we are making sense in talking *at all* in the abstract of something's being simple or complex, or of being able to name elements without describing them ; for naming is not so far a move in a language-game, *nothing* has so far been done when a thing has been named, and a thing only *has* a name within the context of a language-game. With his discussion of § 48, however, Ross brings his treatment of Wittgenstein's old way of thinking to an end.

In his Chapter 3, ' The New Way', Ross's discussion meanders for several pages before settling on Wittgenstein's 'great question' in § 65, claiming that Wittgenstein never spells out what this question is in the very act of explaining that it concerns the essence of language and the general form of propositions. Ross sees Wittgenstein raising at this point the perennial 'problem of universals', although he cautions us that Wittgenstein may not even have been aware of the history of this problem or even whether he himself is raising it at all, and he concludes that Wittgenstein is making the point that our grammar 'cannot be a pure, rigid calculus, but must be multifaceted and flexible.' (*Ibid.* 41) This leads to a discussion of *games*, the concept of *family resemblance*, and the challenge

Wittgenstein presents to the notion that 'meaning requires sharp boundaries.' (*Ibid.* 45). Ross's discussion then gravitates to the subject of measurement, and here the ultimate point he wishes to make is that 'length and measurement are part of a conceptual apparatus. Measuring is an operation or a calculation, and length is a result. Both are defined as part of an actual practice and not as abstractions' (*Ibid.*, 47). His idea here is that if one draws a very sharp boundary around a word like 'game' apart from its ordinary context of use and not for any particular purpose, then just as the notion of *measuring* has its role within the context of a practice of laying a ruler against an object, and loses its sense outwith this context, 'then very likely I have missed out on the actual employment of the word and so its meaning' (*Ibid.*)

Ross's meandering discussion from this point on in the chapter has the grave disadvantage that the reader can actually gain more understanding of Wittgenstein by directly reading the text of the *Investigations*. We are told that a meter stick is a tool that has a use within a particular practice, that Wittgenstein raises the important issue that outside of a practice of this kind it is hard to say what a tool really is - an issue to be explored in more detail later on - and that the 'answer to the question as to the essence of x is found in the grammar of the language' (*Ibid.* 49), another issue a deeper discussion of which is to be saved for later. We are advised (*Ibid.* 50) that there are a few important ideas to be discussed here - *concept, grammar, meaning* and *essence* - and that what Wittgenstein says is not without controversy, 'though we will have to return to this later'. (*Ibid.*) Ross then introduces the example of a group of people who think that oak trees have evil spirits, and since there are *no* evil spirits, *we* think this idea is wrong, whereas for Wittgenstein the existence or non-existence of something 'is an empirical question. not a conceptual one'. (*Ibid.*)

This is said to leave Wittgenstein open to the charge of ethical, cultural or scientific relativism, and if our grammar is 'multifaceted and mutable' then Ross thinks this a charge with which it is hard to disagree. Yet having raised what in this context amounts to no more than a red herring, since there is nothing in what he says that could conceivably justify a charge of this kind, Ross almost inevitably finds the charge easy to evade on the grounds that 'it might be nearer

the mark to say that for Wittgenstein a rigid conceptual structure offers a false picture of language and so is a barrier to the truth, while a flexible conceptual structure reflects the way language actually operates and allows the truth to emerge.' (*Ibid.* 54).

The subject matter then turns to ethics, which is said to be similar to science - science is mentioned in the context of a discussion about Einstein's Theory of Relativity *v* Newton's absolute space and time, the purpose of which is presumably to illustrate that Einstein had genuine grounds for overthrowing the Newtonian legacy - but ethics is a very complex subject that must be fully treated later on (*Ibid.*). Mentioning that whilst in the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein treats ethics as part of the unsayable despite managing to have quite a lot to say about it - although this is surely open to question - Ross then argues that the '*Investigations* corrects this defect'. Apparently the correction consists in Wittgenstein's making no ethical pronouncements in the *Investigations* whatsoever, so raising after all the obvious question how in this respect the later work *is* supposed to differ from the *Tractatus*. Yet Wittgenstein's practice in regard to ethics in the *Investigations* is held to be consistent with Ross's claim that uncovering the rules of language is a descriptive process - as distinct no doubt from an evaluative one - 'that must be as flexible and multifaceted as that which it describes.' (*Ibid.* 55)

Ross ends this poorly presented and rambling account of the relevant passages in the *Investigations* - making it so far the least interesting chapter of his book - with a description of what is going on in §§ 72 - 74 that succeeds only in forcing the reader to return to the original to gain a proper understanding of what Wittgenstein, in the clear prose of Anscombe's translation, is really about. Reference is made to § 90 and Wittgenstein's claim that his investigation is directed at the '*possibilities*' of phenomena, but here again the unclarity of Ross's account forces the reader to return to the original text - ironically fulfilling his intention - to obtain a clearer grasp of what this means:

Through grammar we can form many different descriptions of the language of things and events - there are many possibilities in this regard. Some descriptions will be nearer to our actual usage

than others. It is Wittgenstein's intent to note inaccurate pictures and try to dispose of them. This has no bearing on the things themselves. It changes nothing, really, but leaves everything the same. However, we let go of certain illusions conjured up by the complexities of language (*Ibid.* 57).

If this is intended to be a paraphrase of the second paragraph of § 90, which it seems to be, then it only vaguely follows the letter, let alone the spirit of what that passage is all about. This paragraph certainly may not be the clearest in philosophical literature, but one would think that a commentator would have had to be going out of his way to render it as obscurely as Ross does here.

It cannot therefore be without a certain trepidation that the reader approaches Chapter 4, 'Grammar and Philosophy', to discover at its beginning that Ross intends to discuss § 143 as the beginning of one hundred passages or so that he refers to as falling 'under the rubric of "rule-following"' (*Ibid.* 59). But after briefly describing Wittgenstein's pupil who is asked to continue the series of numbers, he then for the following 4 pages indulges in a lengthy digression to explore what it means for the pupil to *understand* the series. Here Ross opposes the philosophical temptation to *define* understanding in terms of its possible neurological or psychological causation, when the important question that surely requires his attention relates instead to Wittgenstein's claim that the pupil's capacity to learn *may* come to an end. He may be suggesting, for example, that the fact that there is no guarantee that this will not happen cannot in itself be regarded as a justification for thinking that sceptical doubt over the *correct* continuation of the series is legitimate. Whilst Ross is then drawn to conclude that the meaning of a term should not be regarded as an accompaniment of the term that a person can grasp by introspection, it is arguable that his entire approach strays too far from what Wittgenstein's is getting at in the passages following § 143. Indeed, even when he does return to the pupil of § 143, Ross stresses that the accompaniments of understanding are not to be confused with the understanding itself

(*Ibid.* 64), and whilst this is no doubt correct, it is perhaps symptomatic of the fact that Ross has no real intention of exploring the true significance of the rule-following passages in detail up to § 202 and beyond, since it is at this point that his discussion of this subject comes to a halt.

Or perhaps not quite, for Ross decides to look at the example of *reading* in § 156, an example which he uses to draw the conclusion that whereas in the case of the experienced reader who unreflectively reads and understands what he is reading, we are not inclined to ask about a mental mechanism in which we might take his understanding to consist, this is exactly what we are inclined to do once we introduce the beginner who is reading aloud yet not understanding what he is actually saying, just because we naturally wish to discover what serves in the final analysis to *account* for the distinction between the practiced reader and the beginner who is only pretending to read. As Wittgenstein suggests, we feel that what goes on in the mind of the practiced reader *must* differ from what goes on in the mind of the beginner. Or if the difference does not lie in the conscious or unconscious workings of their minds, then we feel that it *must* lie in the physical mechanisms of their brains. ( § 156)

In fact, the subject of reading continues up to § 171, and in providing his answer to what distinguishes reading from not reading in such cases, Wittgenstein's stress is always on those surrounding circumstances in which we do talk about one rather than another ; and whilst this does not rule out the causal explanation which will certainly be required for particular purposes - think, for example, of having to provide a cause for dyslexia - it reveals that what we can *count* as reading is not reducible to anything in which we would normally take an explanation of this kind to consist. Ross considers the possibility that the distinction between reading and not reading could be defined in terms of levels of neural activity, with the consequence that this could serve as a criterion which might in certain circumstances over-ride our ordinary application of the concept, although he correctly, if obscurely, attempts to argue that this must lead to a contradiction if what we understand to *be* reading, and what we therefore take to require explanation in this context, is always parasitic on how our ordinary term 'reading' is actually used.

Unfortunately, the remainder of the chapter contains a number of statements which are sufficiently obscure to make the reader wonder where Ross is going. We are told that the object Wittgenstein pursues in the *Investigations* is 'language and its workings', and that because of his interest in concepts like *understanding*, it is thought that he must have a psychological theory. From this Ross deduces that 'the focus on psychology and the absence of any pronouncement on what the understanding is has led some people to argue that Wittgenstein is a skeptic or perhaps a behaviourist.' (*Ibid.* 68) Wittgenstein is said to deny the charge of behaviourism, although the charge of scepticism is 'a bit trickier', and here Ross refers to Peter Hacker in his *Connections and Controversies* as someone who provides an excellent overview of the issue. However, the issue for Hacker is Kripke's notion of Wittgenstein as a rule-following sceptic, whilst the issue Ross goes on to discuss is scepticism regarding the senses. We are told that the 'sceptical problem' is much deeper than even Ross is managing to describe, and that it relates to Wittgenstein's later treatment of sensations and private language, a matter to which he will turn shortly, although it does not actually arise until Chapter 6 (*Ibid.* 69).

Ross, however, detects yet another form of scepticism that may be lurking here, one that is far more subtle and related to the charges of relativism already levied against Wittgenstein, and this rests on the claim apparently made by Wittgenstein that since the meaning of *understanding* changes with circumstances, we can never really know what understanding is. If the reader is tempted to feel at this point that the discussion has reached an appalling level of obscurity, then it must be admitted that with the best will in the world it is very difficult to knit together the claim that our ability to understand is not affected by the fact that we may mean various things by *understanding*, that Wittgenstein has no intention of denying the possibility of scientific truth, that he is interested in discarding illusions created by an incorrect picture of language, and that from this it does not follow that we can never be right. Indeed, scientific progress might even be impossible without the flexibility of our language (*Ibid.* 70 *et seq.*)

The chapter meanders to its conclusion with the claim that readers who may have a wide

knowledge of philosophy yet who have not framed the topic of thought and behaviourism in his way, may find Wittgenstein's treatment of it opaque - in the circumstances a comment that readers will find particularly ironic - and that it may be helpful to note that Wittgenstein was an avid reader of William James and Sigmund Freud, although just why this should be particularly relevant to the claim that Wittgenstein is a behaviourist, the charge under discussion, is not made clear. But a commentator who can even ask why Wittgenstein might show an interest in the topic of behaviourism at all can almost be expected to say anything, and this Ross succeeds in doing with his introduction of Alan Turing as the strongest proponent of a behaviourist viewpoint that regards the human brain as a sophisticated computer. Once again, just why the *Turing test* together with Wittgenstein's reference to the question whether a machine can think in §§ 359 - 360 should be raised here at all is obscure, as is Ross's reference to §§ 418 - 419 as an apparent answer to the primitiveness of the test as he sees it, for it is never made clear how all these issues are interrelated. To be told in any event that a full treatment of the relationship between Turing and Wittgenstein is beyond the scope of his book (*Ibid.* 72), only begs the question whether the issue should have been raised at all. The final paragraph of this chapter allows the reader to assess both the flavour and the level of sophistication of Ross's treatment:

The upshot is that Wittgenstein is clearly interested in the topics of philosophy, and his work touches many traditional areas of the philosophical endeavor - from meaning to human nature. His ideas have profound consequences for all these philosophical topics - but not from advancing any theories. Rather, Wittgenstein's investigation is logical or grammatical. Clarifying philosophical concepts can help us to rid ourselves of misleading pictures and so reveal the truth in these areas (*Ibid.* 74).

The 10 pages which comprise Chapter 5, 'The Grammar of Mathematics', offer something of a hotchpotch in which a definite theme only gradually develops. Beginning with a reference to

*Investigations* § 211 which is said to commence a discussion of rule-following that is closely connected to related passages in *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* - leading the reader to suspect that the rule-following passages may be discussed here after all - Ross concludes that Wittgenstein 'is anxious to rid mathematical concepts of any psychological or metaphysical justifications for their truth or usefulness' (*Ibid.* 75). In order to fully appreciate what Wittgenstein is saying here, however, Ross refers to his previous discussion of 'some ideas connected with behaviorism and the mechanical nature of thought', and this leads - it is not entirely clear why - to the notion of a machine as operating according to a fixed plan or design which predetermines its actions. Several paragraphs then discuss the notion of a scientific law, with a return to § 194 of the *Investigations* where Wittgenstein discusses the idea that the possible movements of a machine are already there in it in some mysterious way. But here again Ross's rambling account of this passage forces the reader to return to the succinct and brilliant treatment provided by Wittgenstein himself, a treatment ending with that remarkable paragraph in which he refers to our being like savages when we do philosophy, savages who in hearing the expressions of civilised men, put false interpretations upon them. The striking nature of this paragraph has led to its having been often quoted in the secondary literature.

Ross continues by discussing what he refers to as Wittgenstein's preoccupation throughout his working life with the foundations of mathematics, mentioning that he heard Brouwer, the founder of intuitionism, lecture in Vienna just prior to his return to Cambridge in 1929, an event claimed by a number of scholars to have been the turning point in his later career largely because of the stimulus that the lecture afforded him to rethink his various ideas. It occurred to Wittgenstein that he might again do important work in philosophy. A brief account is provided by Ross of the distinction between logicism and intuitionism, and although a detailed debate on the subject 'would take us well beyond the present volume' (*Ibid.* 79), Ross proceeds to provide a more sober assessment firstly of what he takes intuitionism to be, and of what it is about it that Wittgenstein rejects, and this leads finally to the treatment of rule-following that the reader

has been half expecting for some considerable time. Ross comes down firmly on the side of those interpreters who see rule-following as a practice in which understanding is not a mental state acting as a source of correct use. This inevitably sounds rather pedestrian because the importance of Wittgenstein's treatment lies not in such meagre results, but instead in the way in which he brilliantly roots out common yet unquestioned prejudices as part of a process that can enable the reader to undergo a reorientation in his approach to the problems of philosophy. That Ross does not go so far as to bring this out need not in itself be regarded as a fault. Indeed, at this point in the book, the reader may begin to feel thankful merely that Ross's treatment of the texts is showing definite signs of improvement.

Ross ends with a brief discussion of *Investigations* § 237, where someone despite appearing to be guided step by step in his use of the compass, is clearly not following a rule because one can learn nothing from what he is doing. Only what is done as a matter of course, can constitute following a rule insofar as it seems that one can draw all its consequences in advance. Ross takes this as his cue to ask whether a person can follow a rule which is a rule only for him alone, and here he means a rule which is in principle private, an issue that 'has received a good deal of attention [*sic*]' (*Ibid.* 84). Ross connects this question with problems Wittgenstein pondered in his early days, problems predating the *Tractatus* that are connected with Schopenhauer, solipsism, scepticism, and idealism.

In Chapter 6, 'The Grammar of Experience', in which 'we should examine the so-called private language argument' (*Ibid.* 87), although there are admittedly a number of pages that do little more than provide a rambling and discursive treatment of associated issues, the important point that Ross early on wishes to establish is that the essence of the private language that Wittgenstein rejects in the *Investigations* lies in its conforming to a principle that Ross sees as an original premise of the *Tractatus*: words function as the names of *objects*. These objects for Ross are the ultimate simple constituents of the world that can only be named and not described. It follows that if we regard the 'sensation' that Wittgenstein attempts to 'name' in § 258 as one

of these 'objects' - at least insofar as it cannot be described but only named - then it cannot be intrinsically meaningful: it cannot already have what is referred to in the literature as *representational content* allowing a name to be applied to it *as* the name of a sensation of a particular *kind*. Although Ross does not actually present the point in *exactly* these terms, his presentation of § 258 allows it to be understood as a criticism of a form of super-privacy, and this undercuts the fairly typical objections to § 258 in the secondary literature that have relied on the argument that since our ordinary sensations *do* have representational content, we ought to have little difficulty naming them even outwith the confines of a public language; although the language in which these ordinary sensations may be named is usually assumed by empiricist critics to be publicly applicable in principle. Ross's main argument is expressed as follows:

Notice I have not said here that this sensation is a tingle in my elbow or ache in my wrist that I call *S*. That would not be private. This identification is limited to a bare name that I supposedly can apply when the sensation reoccurs. But what is this sensation ? There is no grammar of *S* and so no description of the sensation. If this is the case , then we literally can't say how it feels or what it is like.....This sensation, like a Tractarian object, cannot be described but only named. So how can I recognise it when it returns ?  
( *Ibid.* 94)

Ross succeeds here in making the significant point that if the sensation referred to in § 258 is already defined by Wittgenstein in such a way that it cannot at all conform to our understanding of what a sensation ordinarily is, because there is no method of comparison which would allow the sensation to be remembered *as* a *kind* of sensation already previously experienced, then 'whatever seems right is right' and we cannot therefore talk about 'right'. Consequently, this private language conforms to a model so constructed that relative to our actual experience, there is nothing in which a language of this kind could consist, from which

we can deduce that to refer properly to our sensations, Wittgenstein would require a different model in which first person sensation ascription is criterionless. This alone cannot be taken to prove that our sensations are not intrinsically meaningful, but since Wittgenstein's claim is not that no word can acquire meaning by association with an intrinsically meaningful sensation, but rather that on reflection this assumption is entirely empty, then it allows him to explore the actual background against which in practice we acquire sensation language, without necessarily implying that this *must* be so. His main aim is to dispel the myths encapsulated in the misleading *pictures* associated with conventional philosophical treatments of sensations.

Ross continues with a brief description of § 270 from which we can deduce that his being able to say that his blood pressure is rising without checking a manometer implies that he has established a certain correlation expressible in a public language; although he then commits the common mistake of claiming that it would not matter in these circumstances whether his memories deceived him about the sensation's recurrence because he would have an alternative public check *via* the manometer on what he is again experiencing, so granting to the 'private' model the very status that Wittgenstein is effectively denying to it. He does, however, reiterate that the private object as Wittgenstein sees it, is a nonentity that cannot be described but only named.

The point extends to § 293, where Ross stresses that the item 'we thought we could know so clearly by introspection becomes a myth' (*Ibid.* 96) although in fairness what § 293 shows is only that if we adopt a model of super-privacy in which, on Ross's assessment, sensations can be named but not described, then it does indeed follow that there is nothing in which, so defined, identifying and reidentifying a private sensation could consist. Consequently, if a philosopher tends to think of his 'private sensations' as having representational content, then he will be inclined to conclude that he has 'beetles in his box' after all simply because he is thinking of his sensations on a model to which § 293 does not apply. In what is in effect, in spite of its defects, the most successful chapter of his book, Ross reminds us of an important element in Wittgenstein's treatment of sensations that can be easily overlooked. Towards the end of the chapter, Ross claims

once again that if we rid ourselves of these muddled conceptions of language, 'then we have gone a long way to curing many of our social ills' (*Ibid.* 98), and this with its moral overtones serves as a foretaste of the extravagant claims about Wittgenstein as a philosopher of culture with which he will eventually conclude his book.

'The Grammar of Psychology', Ross's Chapter 7, begins by stating that beyond § 316 - the part of the *Investigations* including almost half the remarks in Part I which he has already managed to reach - Wittgenstein discusses psychological concepts, which he also mostly does in Part II. This is Ross's cue to briefly discuss the structure of the book, reminding us of the Rhees-Anscombe comment in their Editors' Note that Wittgenstein had he lived would have suppressed the last 30 pages or so of Part I and worked Part II together with other material into its place. Ross makes rather too much of a dispute supposedly resulting from a difference in approach between Rhees-Anscombe and von Wright, the third executor, claiming that the first pair contradict themselves by creating a Part II in which they do not actually believe, whilst von Wright is said to take an opposing view in which Wittgenstein from 1946 gradually moved in *new* directions, with *Zettel* forming what perhaps may be regarded as a trilogy. Yet von Wright has no ultimate objection to the thought that Wittgenstein would have wanted all of these component parts to form a more integrated whole than they actually do, so that in practice he adopts a rather more tentative position than Ross makes out. Interested readers will be aware that the latest Anscombe-Hacker-Schulte translation forming the 4th Edition of the book has relegated the status of Part II to that of a separate work by classifying it as 'Philosophy of Psychology - A Fragment' (7), and this reflects current scholarship which would rather see Part I as a complete work and the rest as a separate 'work in progress'.

The remainder of the chapter after this aside, however, consists largely of Ross's attempts to paraphrase Wittgenstein's texts in ways which remain unilluminating, constantly forcing the reader to return to the original to see what Wittgenstein is about. This makes his treatment extremely difficult to adequately discuss, but perhaps his occasional attempts to sum

up Wittgenstein's method may successfully convey the flavour of his approach:

However, for Wittgenstein to explain the meaning of a word or sign we must attend to its grammar, the language game to which it belongs. Meaning does not depend on anything external to language. Meaning takes place within the set of circumstances and activities of a language, and outside of this sphere words may mean anything or nothing at all. (*Ibid.* 110)

Although the reader can often see the point that Ross is attempting to make, the effort he expends in extracting from Wittgenstein's texts as translated by Anscombe, a clear and fairly comprehensible account of Wittgenstein's aims and methods, can result only too often in quite desperate attempts to extricate himself from the *cul-de-sacs* in which he finds himself trapped after taking wrong turnings that with a little thought could have been avoided. Wittgenstein is at his most succinct on consciousness (§§ 416 - 420), for example, but there is really no excuse to render this as does Ross in the following passage:

Here we often want to identify something that we have and can identify what counts for consciousness: an experience, an observation, a feeling - anything at all. It must be a unique something, and to point out this uniqueness we stand ready to deny consciousness to trees, stones, furniture etc. But ordinarily no one would want to put it there is the first place. ('My wastebasket is mocking me,' 'the doorknob hates me.')

...To make it apply I would have to twist our language in such a way so that to give consciousness to an inanimate object I would have to deny it to human beings and, of course, this is ludicrous. (*Ibid.* 115)

Ross unfortunately finds it necessary here to remark that although language allows constructions of the kind he has just discussed - a point to which he will once again have

to return - he finds it strange that we (or he) should have to resort to them. But this is to follow a highly circumlocutory route just to make the simple yet crucial point expressed in the relevant passages that those philosophical problems about consciousness that perplex the philosopher result entirely from the misguided attempt to use a concept outwith the circumstances in which it would normally be applied. The problem of human consciousness, as it is conventionally understood, arises entirely in Wittgenstein's assessment from the tendency to adhere to that misleading *picture* which allows consciousness to appear as a 'something' that may or may not accompany outward behaviour. It is solely as a result of his having become party to this picture that the philosopher is inclined to stare at the 'logical possibility' of zombies, or to find himself puzzled when *via* introspection he is disposed to direct his attention inwardly at his own consciousness. In the absence of any ordinary criteria by which in these circumstances the concept can be applied, it is hardly any wonder that the problem of consciousness, as presented for example by Colin McGinn, may seem beyond the capacity of the human mind to solve.

Ross continues with his discussion of this problem when in his next Chapter devoted to the exegesis of Part II, he comes to consider Section vii, which includes two paragraphs about the evolution of the higher animals and of man and the associated awakening of consciousness. Here Wittgenstein provides us with a *picture* in which it seems as if the world before the awakening of consciousness is totally dark and inhospitable, the home merely of mechanical vibration, until Man opens his seeing eye, and there is light. Ross goes some way towards elucidating the point of this tale, one in which Wittgenstein allows us to realise that the very fact that the picture *seems* to carry its own application along with it, blinds us to the realisation that it is ultimately performing no real work at all. The picture relies, as most philosophical treatments of *consciousness* do, on severing our concept of what it is to be conscious from the ordinary surroundings of its application.

Here as elsewhere, Wittgenstein succeeds in brilliantly conveying that what, when doing philosophy, may seem the most important thing, the *picture* that merely accompanies our application of a concept, can come to assume a role in our thinking that allows us to mistakenly

conclude that through its application we have an intuitive grasp of what it *really* means, where the 'really' has classic metaphysical overtones. In this case, Ross with his reference to Genesis and 'Let there be Light' goes some way to bringing out what the passage is really about.

Also in this final chapter of exegesis, Ross provides us with a few pages on Section x discussing Moore's Paradox concerning *belief* (*Ibid.* 138) in which he gives a competent overview of the issue, even in the course of spoiling things at the beginning by stating that this is the subject of Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*, when that work relates to an entirely different concern of Moore's regarding his claim to *know* certain basic truths about the world around him, a claim which equally stimulated Wittgenstein's thinking. The chapter ends with a discussion of the now famous topic of 'seeing as' - aspect seeing - and the duck-rabbit beginning at Section xi, where Ross introduces a distinction between what is seen and how he sees it (*Ibid.* 148). Ross again offers a discussion of the relevant issues indicating improvement over some of his earlier treatments.

Despite displaying insight in at least one particular chapter, however, the fact remains that if an author is deserving of praise mostly because he occasionally reaches a level of competence that would normally count as a prerequisite for deciding even on basic questions concerning, amongst other things, therapeutic *v* theoretical interpretations of Wittgenstein's philosophy, then he is failing to attain the standard that in introductions to the *Investigations* can usually be taken for granted. But if the job has already been done so well by so many others no matter the interpretative stance of the author, then in the final analysis there can be little justification for having published this book in its present form when the least that can be said in criticism of it is that it requires extensive revision in order to properly clarify, structure, and condense its overall argument. An additional minor quibble is that the very many passages from the *Investigations* quoted in full or in part do not have their page or section references (e.g., § 258) attached to them : to find these the reader is annoyingly referred to chapter endnotes. On the cover, John J. Ross is described as an 'adjunct professor in the liberal studies program at New York University', whilst in an 'About The Author' he instead 'teaches' in this program.

## ENDNOTES

- (1) *Ludwig Wittgenstein Personal Recollections* ed. Rush Rhees. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981). Quoted in Preface by Rush Rhees, ix.
- (2) G.H. von Wright: *Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982). 213, Footnote 17. An interesting recent discussion of related questions is undertaken by Kevin Cahill: 'Bildung and Decline' in *Philosophical Investigations*, Vol. 32, No. 1, January 2009, 23. A recent study that is dedicated to Wittgenstein as a philosopher of culture, with a comprehensive treatment of Spengler's main work is William James DeAngelis's *Ludwig Wittgenstein - A Cultural Point of View: Philosophy in the Darkness of This Time* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007). A considerably earlier treatment is provided by Erich Heller, 'Wittgenstein: Unphilosophical Notes', originally *Encounter*, 13, No.3, 1959 and in *Wittgenstein: The Man and His Philosophy*, ed. K.T.Fann, (New York: Delta, Dell Pub.,1967), 89. Cf. Erich Heller: *The Disinherited Mind*, (London: Pelican, 1961), a study of German Literature.
- (3) Norman Malcolm: *Ludwig Wittgenstein A Memoir* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 69.
- (4) Rupert Read and Phil Hutchinson: 'Whose Wittgenstein?' Review in *Philosophy*, 80, July 2005.
- (5) Marie McGinn: *Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations* (London: Routledge, 1997), Chapter 2, 33 .
- (6) This was something of a famous catchphrase from the redoubtable Joad who became the embodiment of what philosophy is to the British public during his World War II appearances in radio's *The Brains Trust*, and prior to his demise over the famous rail-ticket scandal in 1948.
- (7) *Philosophical Investigations* Translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker & Joachim Shulte. 4th Edition (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

*As do most philosophers, Derek McDougall fondly remembers the publication of his very first paper. This was in MIND in 1972. He has, however, continued to worry whether Gilbert Ryle's comment that "the matter is stated well and almost interestingly" referred more to the quality of its treatment rather than to Ryle's aversion to the nature of its subject (religious belief). Other papers have appeared in organs including PHILOSOPHY AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH and PHILOSOPHIA. His latest, on Wittgenstein, appears in the 2008 edition of JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH, with a further in PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS January 2010.*