

CRITICAL NOTICE

Wittgenstein

Revised Edition

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There have been so many approaches and introductions to Wittgenstein's philosophy, so many critiques and expositions, that their production has long since become subject to Austin's 'law of diminishing fleas'. Dr. Bolton has, nonetheless, found a line of approach which, if not altogether new, is at least sufficiently undeveloped, and sufficiently promising, to merit further exploration. In contrast with recent insistence on the essential continuity of Wittgenstein's work, his thesis is that the *Investigations*, and later publications, make a radical break from the *Tractatus*; and, more specifically, that their differences represent, not just a personal recantation or conversion on Wittgenstein's part, but an important watershed in the general history of thought. (1)

However one decides to define Austin's 'law of diminishing fleas', T. E. Burke evidently decided to mention it in this review of Derek Bolton's *An Approach to Wittgenstein's Philosophy* from 1979 because he felt, in common with many other observers of the philosophical scene, that the sheer volume of commentary on Wittgenstein's philosophy being published at that time was having the opposite effect to that intended : instead of enlightening the beginner, this proliferation of works on the earlier and on the later philosophies was instead making it almost impossible for him to see the wood for the trees. We are also incidentally informed that far from its having been generally accepted during this period that the *Investigations* made a clean break from the *Tractatus* - referred to as the 'standard view' until late in the century - it was already recognised by at least a number of his commentators, that the essential continuity of Wittgenstein's work was even then nothing like the heresy it has subsequently been often understood to have been.

This is quite apart from any assessment of Derek Bolton's contribution which, interesting as it is to dip into even now, is unlikely to raise more than a few eyebrows given the fairly general nature of its thesis that the *Tractatus* marked the decisive ending of a philosophical tradition. This modern tradition, begun approximately in the 17th century, brought to a climax in the *Tractatus*, and against which Wittgenstein reacted in the *Philosophical Investigations*, was party to certain fundamental assumptions. Wittgenstein's rejection of these is reflected in the sciences *via* the change from Newtonian to Einsteinian physics. If this all sounds rather too trite, this is perhaps a little unfair to Bolton, whose book was a published version of a doctoral thesis neither better nor worse in quality than many other publications on Wittgenstein appearing at that time. As it has turned out, Derek Bolton's subsequent philosophical contributions have been mainly to the fields of clinical psychology and to psychiatry, rather than directly to Wittgenstein studies, an indication of how Wittgenstein's influence has so often had a subtle and enduring effect in fields with which he was not himself directly concerned in his writings.

Burke's reference to the sheer volume of Wittgenstein commentary being produced during this period, is also plainly echoed in the number of times contemporary authors were inclined to apologise for producing 'yet another' addition to the secondary literature, one which was nevertheless justified usually because of some new and exciting proposal that *just* managed to shed new light on Wittgenstein's oeuvre. Meredith Williams, for example, makes it perfectly clear that she requires a very good reason for discussing the private language argument *yet again*, (2) just as Saul Kripke tells us frankly that 'the utility of yet another exposition is certainly open to question' (3), because he is covering matters that have been discussed only too often in the past. Perhaps even he was initially unaware of the repercussions his treatment would prove to have over the next decade and beyond. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Anthony Kenny should begin the Preface to his own 1973 book on Wittgenstein with the following statement:

So much of Wittgenstein's work has now been posthumously published
that an overall study is bound to be selective, and so many volumes have

been devoted to its elucidation that a new one may well appear superfluous.

I have exercised selectivity by concentrating on Wittgenstein's philosophy of language and mind, and by almost ignoring the philosophy of mathematics to which he devoted nearly half his work; I have hoped to escape superfluity by emphasising the continuity of Wittgenstein's thought and tracing its evolution through the recently published and little studied works of his middle years.

Kenny's decision to ignore Wittgenstein's treatment of mathematics was strongly criticised at the time by Anthony Manser in his review in *Mind* (4) in which, referring to Kenny's neglect of this question as something already criticised elsewhere, Manser presents Wittgenstein as someone who was not in the business of producing separate philosophies of mind, of language, and of mathematics, as distinct from following the argument wherever it led. Whilst this is almost certainly true, the history of Wittgenstein scholarship has actually shown Kenny's approach to be, if not on the 'right' lines, then at the very least a realistic reflection of the perhaps regrettable fact that Wittgenstein's philosophy of mathematics has failed to play the decisive role in any assessment of his importance as a philosopher that he himself would have wished to attribute to it: this branch of his thought has become a very specialised field in which the majority of philosophers who have something to say about Wittgenstein, choose not to enter. This is probably because, with backgrounds resting primarily in the humanities and in the liberal arts, rather than in mathematics and in the sciences, most philosophers who have an interest in Wittgenstein lack his sheer breadth of mind; but whatever the cause, the fact remains that this aspect of his greatness has signally failed to stir the philosophical imagination of many of those who have found Wittgenstein's work in other fields to be of fundamental importance to the future of philosophy. (5)

Anthony Manser's review of Kenny's book was probably unique in providing a mostly unfavourable response to it. He claims that Kenny tends to do nothing but paraphrase the original texts, with the consequence that he wrongly presents Wittgenstein as someone who did not

change the problems handed down from his predecessors - as great philosophers do - making it appear instead that he issued only another response to them. Despite recognising that its study of the intermediate works throws new light on the continuity of Wittgenstein's philosophy, and that partly because of this he thinks Kenny's book 'will become a standard work, for it has many virtues', and that 'many students have already found it the best work on Wittgenstein that they have encountered', Manser astonishingly concludes his review with the comment that 'I know many of my students will read this book, though I would prevent them from doing so if it were within my power.'

Typical of the more positive responses to Kenny's *Wittgenstein* was Barry Stroud's assessment in *The Philosophical Review* (6) : stressing that Kenny has decisively shown the idea of the 'two Wittgensteins' to be a genuine myth, primarily through his discussion of the recently published middle-period works, Stroud interestingly compares Kenny's *Wittgenstein* to David Pears's much shorter *Ludwig Wittgenstein*, to James Bogen's *Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Language* and to P.M.S. Hacker's *Insight and Illusion*, claiming that it is more detailed than Pears, and more general and introductory than either Bogen or Hacker. Suggesting that Kenny's treatment mostly resembles George Pitcher's *The Philosophy of Wittgenstein* in pedagogical intent, yet going beyond it with his stress on the continuity of Wittgenstein's thought, Stroud nevertheless leaves the impression that within the space he allocates to the completion of his task, Kenny attempts to bite off rather more than he can chew. The sense that Kenny appears to run out of space towards the end of the book is illustrated by the provision of only a single chapter on 'Private Languages' devoted *exclusively* to the *Philosophical Investigations*, whilst the chapter on *On Certainty* is marred for Stroud because 'it reads more like a catalogue of points, or sometimes even slogans, with which Wittgenstein wishes to score against "the sceptic" than like the more typical subtle give-and-take between Wittgenstein and an interlocutor in whose reactions we can recognise the philosophical predilections of all of us.' From at least one perspective on *On Certainty* that properly belongs to the new millennium, this may actually reflect a misunderstanding on Stroud's part: to some readers *On Certainty* is not after all a further application of Wittgenstein's method in the *Philosophical Investigations*. It may properly be

regarded instead, according to Daniele Moyal-Sharrock, as a reflection of Wittgenstein's 'move to a more conservative mode of doing philosophy'. (7)

So what can readers coming to Kenny's *Wittgenstein* for the first time, or perhaps returning to a work they first encountered almost 40 years ago, expect to confront in the first revised edition since 1973 ? Taking for comparison a UK paperback version of the book from the 1980's under the Pelican banner, the Revised Edition under the Wiley-Blackwell imprint has been completely reset in a new format allowing for a superior presentation. The book's actual content, however, with its original Preface, 12 Chapters and Abbreviations from the Works of Wittgenstein (now in alphabetical order) remains unchanged. What readers already familiar with the work will particularly wish to read is the interesting 10 page Introduction to the Revised Edition, with its overview of how Kenny came to write the book, how it relates to current scholarship and how he became disappointed with the reception Wittgenstein's work began to receive towards the end of the century in a climate antithetical to the spirit it serves to express. In this regard, the tone is very similar to that of Peter Hacker in, for example, the later chapters of *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth-Century Analytic Philosophy*. (8)

The paradox, however, is that if reviewers like Burke were already questioning the viability of the sheer number of books being published about Wittgenstein in the 1970's, what could they possibly say about the new millennium, when in 2008 alone there appeared at a conservative estimate over 30 new volumes in English, comprising books about the earlier and later philosophies in addition to collections of essays on individual themes ? Furthermore, no one nowadays feels compelled to apologise for providing 'yet another' volume about Wittgenstein. The reason for this is that the background against which Wittgenstein's work is now studied and interpreted has dramatically altered since the 1970's: Wittgenstein has already joined the ranks of philosophers like Hume who regularly have reassessments, 'companions to', and new interpretations of their work published even if that work is not necessarily deemed to have any direct relevance to the kinds of

problems considered to be important - the source of Kenny's disappointment - to the vast majority of philosophers in the analytic tradition who would not classify themselves directly as adherents to Wittgenstein's ideas in any of the numerous interpretations to which they have given rise. This enormous outpouring of interpretational literature on Wittgenstein is only partly reflected in Kenny's final section of his book on Selections for Further Reading where, in spite of referring to the 'thousands of books and articles' published since 1973, he retains the original paragraph in which 'the best full length book on the *Investigations*' is claimed to be the now relatively unknown translation of Ernst Konrad Specht's *The Foundations of Wittgenstein's Late Philosophy* by D.E. Walford (Manchester University Press 1967) which originally appeared in German in 1963. An additional paragraph created for the new edition mentions the publication of Wittgenstein's works from *Remarks on Colour* (1977) onwards, the well-known biographical pieces by Ray Monk and Brian McGuinness, the Baker and Hacker Commentaries, together with a short selection of recommended monographs by Wright, Kripke, Pears, Rundle, Schulte and Hacker.

As Kenny mentions in his new Introduction, his book was written between 1967 and 1971 in response to a request from Penguin for an elementary introduction to Wittgenstein, which proved successful in being widely adopted as a textbook with translations into 7 languages. The first 1973 edition remained in print until the late 1990's. But is the new edition, without any alterations or amendments to the original text, something of a lost opportunity? The answer must be *yes*, and whilst Kenny admits that were he to revise the book now he would prefer to say a bit more than he does about Wittgenstein's last writings - *On Certainty* - the book would also be improved by devoting more space to the *Philosophical Investigations* in line with that allocated to the earlier *Tractatus* and to the middle-period works. The opportunity could also have been taken to confront, in line with Kenny's more traditional approach, the proliferation of radically therapeutic assessments of Wittgenstein's entire methodology, which would inevitably have involved a confrontation with the Diamond-Conant treatment of the *Tractatus*, the work which Kenny discusses in depth.

It is not, however, primarily these developments in Wittgenstein interpretation that saddens

Kenny - the work of Diamond, Conant, and even the earlier work of Kripke are barely mentioned in the book - so much as his grave disappointment at the reception Wittgenstein subsequently received within the wider philosophical community: as the result of what he refers to as changes in philosophical fashion in Europe and America, including the work of Quine, the later work of Donald Davidson with his search for a systematic theory of meaning, the amalgamation of philosophy of mind with empirical psychology, and the postulation of hidden mechanisms from Noam Chomsky's perspective in linguistics, there emerged a new cognitive science allied to a form of 'scientism' which throughout his life Kenny regards as very much Wittgenstein's *bete noire*. On Kenny's assessment, these developments 'ignore Wittgenstein's criticism of false philosophy and pseudo-science' and 'run the risk of constructing imposing edifices of thought that turn out to be nothing but houses of cards' (*Ibid.*, xiv):

Suppose a cognitive scientist tells us that he is going to investigate what happens in the brain when we think. We ask him, before starting his research, to be quite sure that he knows what thinking is, what 'think' means. Perhaps he will reply that in order to be clear about the meaning of the word all we have to do is to watch ourselves while we think: what we observe will be what the word means (PI, I, 316).

Wittgenstein's patient researches into the use of the word show that this is a misunderstanding of the concept of *thought*. If a neurophysiologist does not have a sound grasp of the concept prior to his investigations, then whatever he discovers, it will not tell us much about thought. He may protest that he is not interested in the linguistic trivialities that entertain philosophers. But after all, he is taking our ordinary language to identify the problem he wants to solve, and to define the boundaries of his research programme. He needs, therefore, to take ordinary language seriously: he should not dismiss it as 'folk-psychology'. (*Ibid.*)

Whilst this is undoubtedly in the main correct, it makes Wittgenstein's position seem almost too *weak*. The real problem posed by the person who provides the term 'folk-psychology' with a *philosophical* role, is that he is prone to regard our understanding of human behaviour in terms of our beliefs, motives and intentions as *nothing but* a naive or primitive version of a deeper account belonging to the same fundamental *category*, which could in principle be supplied *via* a scientific investigation. Given that naive accounts of this kind are by definition *already* held to be no more than *misleading* surface explanations of a *causal* nature, which function only to point towards the *real* yet hidden causes that underlie them, it is then taken to follow that once these genuine yet initially concealed accounts are forthcoming, their ordinary surface counterparts can be *replaced* without further ado.

Just how the philosopher wishes to handle this proposal in practice, however, is another matter. If, for example, he takes a statement like 'he intends to travel from Edinburgh to London tomorrow' to be *really* a way of saying that certain neural events are occurring in the agent's cerebral cortex - a detailed physical explanation being available in each case - then what he is claiming can easily be made to appear rather silly. The philosopher who says this kind of thing is, from Wittgenstein's perspective, being party to a misleading *picture* governing his understanding of the *role* performed by an ordinary intentional account of his behaviour: it is almost as if - in a *Tractatus* like fashion - the fully analysed account of what he is *really* doing remains hidden until a proper scientific *explanation* of his utterances and behaviour becomes available. Wittgenstein's point here would be expressed by Ryle in terms of the philosopher's having made a monstrous howler, a *category* mistake of the first water, in which he conflates two entirely different kinds of explanation which serve quite different purposes: the role performed by certain physical mechanisms within, say, the human brain upon which specific features of mental life are causally dependent, and which serve to provide a physical explanation of the *possibility* of intentional behaviour, is being confused with the ordinary role performed by our intentions in accounting for the behaviour *per se*. The tendency to produce a

metaphysical account *via* a unitary notion of *causal* explanation applicable to both, is *relieved* by showing that whilst for particular purposes, the scientific explanation has a particular role to play, that role cannot be - on pain of absurdity - to *replace* something distinctly autonomous, our ordinary motivations which, together with the 'reactive attitudes' of P.F. Strawson, are part and parcel of our participation in a human world. Wittgenstein's stance here would be methodological : the 'scientism' referred to and castigated by Kenny arises because, when doing philosophy, there is a tendency to endow scientific procedure with a *metaphysical* role. In becoming party to this misleading *picture*, the philosopher succumbs to a natural temptation to provide the *causal* explanation with a *universal* role extending beyond its normal boundaries of application.

The position is patently different with Continental writers like Foucault, Derrida and Lacan, whom Kenny sees as assimilating philosophy not to science but to rhetoric. This has the consequence, for Kenny, that those 'admirers of continental postmodernism' who 'have often claimed Wittgenstein as an ally' fail to provide an even remotely accurate assessment of Wittgenstein's intentions. Yet he takes this Continental approach to be not dissimilar to one that has become 'fashionable in the United States under the title "The New Wittgenstein" ', whose followers for Kenny wish 'to unmask the absurdity of philosophy, and to wean us from the practice of it'. Neither American 'scientism' nor Continental 'irrationalism' come close to understanding Kenny's Wittgenstein:

Both views seem to me to be equally remote from Wittgenstein's theory and practice in philosophy. Whilst the scientific error takes no notice of Wittgenstein's claim that explanation and deduction have no place in philosophy, the irrationalist error exaggerates it out of all proportion. (*Ibid.*, xv.)

The very distinction which Kenny draws here between theory and practice is inevitably going to make him appear rather old-fashioned in his outlook to those who have decided to adopt an entirely *therapeutic* perspective on Wittgenstein's methodology; for on their view, *theory* has no

place at all in Wittgenstein's approach. This is consistent with the fact that whilst Kenny is prepared to admit that Wittgenstein's disposal of the philosophical errors of solipsism, idealism and a belief in private objects is properly achieved using 'methods that resemble the cure of a delusion rather than the deduction of a theorem' (*Ibid.*), he spends the remainder of his new Introduction reflecting a rather ambivalent stance: that of being prepared to take Wittgenstein at his word in sections like *Investigations* §§ 126 -128 whilst admitting that he finds his actual *practice* difficult to reconcile with his therapeutic methodology. There is for Kenny an unresolved tension between theory and practice in his philosophy, one which appears even at the end of his life in *On Certainty* - perhaps pointing once again to Daniele Moyal-Sharrock's claim about a more conservative method of approach in that work - so that in the final analysis Wittgenstein 'could not hide from himself that there were more things in his philosophy than could be confined within his metaphilosophy.' (*Ibid.*, xx.)

But there can be no quick and easy answer to these questions, because the only way in which any kind of answer can be arrived at is to show how Wittgenstein's method is put to work in a range of particular cases. Without this, we are merely being invited to consider in the abstract, as it were, the kind of generalisations that Kenny actually presents towards the end of the brisk 14 page Biographical Sketch of Wittgenstein's Philosophy with which his book begins:

In the *Tractatus* the connection between language and reality depended on the correlation between elements of thought and simple atoms of the world. In the *Investigations* Wittgenstein argues that the notion of atoms which are simple in some absolute sense is an incoherent notion, and that a private correlation between thought-elements and items of reality is impossible to make. The ultimate data in the *Tractatus* are the atoms which form the substance of the world; the ultimate data of the *Investigations* are the forms of life in which the language-games are embedded. (*Ibid.*, 13)

It is not that this is necessarily objectionable in itself. Indeed, Kenny expresses these ideas rather better in a later paper where the relevant generalisations are captured in an admittedly splendid passage which exhibits the kinds of comparisons commentators can often be inclined to make in the abstract, and without paying any attention to what Wittgenstein is actually doing in so much of his work. The passage is quoted in full here because it captures so well much of what one might *wish* to say is correct, whilst at the same time it can point the reader misleadingly in a direction which *can* miss an important element in Wittgenstein's actual methodology:

But the *Tractatus* itself did not think, as the British empiricists did, that impressions and ideas could themselves confer meaning unaided. In the *Tractatus* meaning is conferred by pure will, the pure will of the extra-mundane solipsistic metaphysical self; in the *Philosophical Investigations* it is conferred by the active participation of the human being in the social community in the empirical world. From one point of view the two conceptions could hardly be further apart. But common to both are two theses of fundamental importance: first, that introspectionist psychology can never explain meaning; secondly, that the ultimate creation of meaning is indescribable (in the *Tractatus*, because it takes place outside the world; in the *Philosophical Investigations*, because all description is within a language-game). And common to both are the tasks and method of philosophy of mind: to clarify psychological statements by separating out the logical and intentional from the contingent and empirical. (9)

At one level, this surely presents a superb summary of Wittgenstein's oeuvre, and perhaps only Kenny could have presented it so succinctly and so well. The problem it poses becomes clear when, in the paragraph immediately following that already quoted from his Introduction in which he is exploring Wittgenstein's motivations for undertaking an attack on private language, he expands his discussion to consider not only Wittgenstein's immediate reasons for doing so in

reacting to the *Tractatus*, but the supposed historical implications that this attack has for the work of some of Wittgenstein's illustrious predecessors:

But the interest of the private-language argument is not merely internal to Wittgenstein's own philosophy. Philosophers as different from each other as Descartes and Hume have thought it possible for an individual mind to classify and recognise its own thoughts and experiences while holding in suspense the question of the existence of the external world and of other minds. Such a supposition seems to entail the possibility of a private language or of something very like one. If Wittgenstein is correct in thinking such a language impossible, then both the Cartesian and empiricist traditions in philosophy require immediate overhaul. (*Ibid.*, 13).

But if the argument Wittgenstein is actually presenting against the possibility of a private language is closely studied, its import is really quite different from that which Kenny attributes to it here. The thrust of Kenny's presentation is captured in the claim that 'We are tempted to think that for each person "pain" acquires its meaning by being correlated by him with his own, private incommunicable sensation. This temptation must be resisted. Wittgenstein showed that no word could acquire meaning in this way.' (*Ibid.*, 12). He then goes on to provide what has all the appearance of a paraphrase of *Investigations* § 258 which succeeds only in raising more questions rather than in providing any real answers:

Suppose that I wish to baptize a private sensation of mine with the name 'S'. I fix my attention on the sensation in order to correlate the name with it. What does this achieve? When next I want to use the name 'S', how will I know that I am using it rightly? Since the sensation it is to name is supposed to be a private one, no one else can check up on my use of it. But neither can I do so for myself.

Before I can check up on whether 'This is S' is true, I need to know what I mean by the sentence 'This is S', true or false. How then do I know that what I now mean by 'S' was what I meant when I christened the first sensation 'S' ? Can I appeal to memory ? No, for to do so is to call up the right memory: in order to summon the memory of S I must already know what 'S' means. There is in the end no check on my use of 'S', no possibility of correcting any misuse. That means the talk of correctness is out of place, and this shows that the private definition I have given myself is no real definition. (*Ibid.*)

Later on, Kenny devotes an entire 19 page chapter to Private Languages, the most detailed treatment given to any section of the *Investigations* in his book, and here his presentation is much better: the valid conclusion which he takes Wittgenstein to be reaching is that 'there is no way of giving "S" genuine independence of the object it purports to name short of taking it into a public language.' (*Ibid.*,155). This comes out most clearly in his discussion of *Investigations* § 270, where the occurrence of a *particular* sensation is correlated with a rise in blood pressure *via* a manometer reading. Many commentators have been caught out here by Wittgenstein's claim that it is quite indifferent whether the sensation is *identified* correctly, because they take this to mean that it is quite indifferent what *kind* of sensation is recurring when the manometer shows a rise in blood pressure - leading to the characteristic claim that Wittgenstein is really correlating the manometer reading *not* with a sensation but with the *writing* of 'S' in a diary - when what it does mean is that we do not in practice in talking correctly about our sensations *recognise or identify* them at all. However, Kenny's presentation here has to some commentators seemed sufficiently convoluted to give rise to even more puzzlement:

Why does Wittgenstein say no mistake is possible ? Cannot I say 'S' and then find that my blood pressure is *not* rising ? Yes, but

that is not what Wittgenstein is rejecting: he is talking about a would-be intermediate step between having the sensation and judging 'Now my blood pressure is rising', a step which would consist in recognising the sensation as a sensation of a particular kind, and remembering that a sensation of that kind indicated a rise in blood-pressure. Misidentification here would not matter, provided that I both misidentified the kind of sensation *and* misremembered what kind of sensation indicated the blood-pressure rise. It is this, according to Wittgenstein, which shows that the hypothesis of a mistake is mere show (*Ibid.*, 154).

The consequence of the argument Kenny presents here is that in practice there is no room for the intermediate 'private' step, so that 'S' becomes, not the name of a private object but a word in a public language. Suppose that every time I have a sharp pain in my knee I discover that my blood pressure rises, but that every time I have a dull pain in my foot my blood pressure falls. The medical explanation for these phenomena need hardly arise. The Kenny - Wittgenstein point is that in these cases it is not only going to make a recognisable difference to the behaviour of the manometer whether I have one *kind* of pain or the other, but also that my correctly predicting the manometer reading is going to correspond to my reporting *what* kind of sensation I am having. If, for example, I temporarily forget the proper correlation and predict a rise in blood pressure on having a dull pain in my foot, then I will have made a quite definite mistake in my prediction. In the same way, if I instead make only a slip of the tongue by saying that there is a rise in blood pressure when I report a dull pain in my foot, intending to refer to my knee, I will still have made the right prediction regardless of how clumsy I have been in stating what I feel, since this slip of the tongue will have been no part of my intention. It then follows that when Wittgenstein talks of its being quite indifferent whether I have recognised the sensation *right* or not, he is either referring to a private *object* that has no

part to play in talking about our sensations, because it is only on this *inapplicable* model that a question of correct or incorrect *recognition* arises, or he is simply reiterating the point that since a question of recognition does not arise in those cases where we do talk about our ordinary sensations, the private object drops out of consideration altogether.

The fundamental Wittgensteinian point underlying these considerations, that we do not recognise or identify our sensations in the first person according to *criteria*, allows Wittgenstein to answer Kenny's earlier question 'How do I know what I mean by "S" ' if asked about its use in a *public* language - a question that can have *no* answer in respect of a *private* language - by saying that I have learned English (*Investigations* § 381), because in the public language first person sensation ascription is criterionless: this means that there are no *grounds* for attributing sensations to one's self. This is importantly connected with *Investigations* § 290, the passage in which Wittgenstein talks not of identifying a sensation by criteria but simply of repeating an expression; and this refers back to § 288 where his very concept of privacy - which had better be called *super-privacy* to distinguish it from ordinary privacy - is *defined* in terms of the requirement that the sensation have a *criterion* of identity; and with this comes the possibility of *error* in *identifying* it.

But what does this actually imply? This is a return to Kenny's point, *a propos* of § 270, for example, that misidentification has no role to play in talking about our ordinary day-to-day sensations in a *public* language. In a *private* language, however, there would require as a matter of *definition* to be an *intermediate step* of *recognising* the sensation *as* a sensation of a particular kind, incurring the possibility of *error* so that it could be identified *rightly* or *wrongly* - a step for which it has been shown that there can be no genuine role in our ordinary language. What Wittgenstein has decided (10) to do here is *define* a super-private sensation in terms of its possessing its own *individual* criteria of identity. The super-private sensation not only has to be identifiable under a meaning-rule, but it has also to have *individual* criteria of identity which serve to differentiate it from *other* individual sensations of the same kind. But this is an absurd

model to apply to our sensations so that, if we return to § 258, it will follow that because there can be no criteria to distinguish *individual* sensations in this way, then any attempt to re-identify a *particular* sensation of a given kind will automatically imply that ‘whatever seems right is right’.

It should now be clear why there ought to be some doubt about the supposed *historical* implications of Kenny’s treatment of private language, for it is hard to see how any philosopher of an empiricist persuasion could have been guilty of the assumption that sensations have any such *individual* criteria of identity ; although there is admittedly an argument for saying that what Wittgenstein is doing here is to bring to our attention certain *implications* which irresponsible talk of private sensations as interior *objects* actually has, implications of which philosophers of an empiricist persuasion, for example, may be said to be unaware. If this *could* be established, then it would constitute grounds for claiming that Wittgenstein has to hand a genuine *reductio ad absurdum* argument with which to beat the empiricist; but on balance the evidence rather tends to point in the opposite direction. This can be easily illustrated by returning to a central section of Kenny’s argument in which he demonstrates in a highly *a priori* fashion that § 258 is conclusive proof that the private ostensive definition ‘This is called ‘S’ ‘ cannot confer meaning on ‘S’:

Suppose that at some time after making the would-be definition the private-language speaker says of a later sensation ‘This is S again.’

We may ask him ‘What do you mean by “S” ?’ Three types of answer are open to him: he may say “I mean *this*’ ; he may appeal to a private memory-sample of S; he may mention a public correlate of S. All three types of reply are countered by Wittgenstein. (*Ibid.*, 153).

The third answer has already been considered, and it has been shown to what extent it correctly captures what § 270 is about. The second answer is not an obvious appeal to scepticism about memory, for it could only be *that* if it were assumed that the linguist were attempting to remember an *established* meaning, when the example is already framed in such a way that there is nothing that could *count* as remembering correctly a *private* sample which conforms to the

conditions underlined in § 265, *viz.* that a 'subjective justification' cannot count as a justification at all when, as Kenny indicates - referring to *Investigations* Part II, xi, 207 - this memory sample is by *definition* the super-private *object* that constantly changes, changes unnoticed because memory is constantly deceptive. But it immediately follows from this that this memory sample can have *no* role to play in establishing any kind of *super-private* meaning, because in talking *meaningfully* of our private sensations we can *already* be talking of them only 'because we have learnt English', *i.e.*, because our first-person sensation ascriptions are criterionless. Kenny's *first* answer is particularly interesting, however, because there is to hand an empiricist 'reply' to it which serves to reveal that what most empiricists have actually understood § 258 to be implying bears no relation to the actual role it is playing in Wittgenstein's strategy. Kenny's first answer is:

If the private-language speaker says 'By "S" I mean *this*', gesturing, as it were to his current sensation, then it is clear that 'This is S' is not a genuine proposition capable of being true or false; for what gives it its content is the very same thing as gives it its truth: the significance of the predicate is supposed to be settled by the reference of the subject. 'Whatever is going to seem right to me is right' therefore, and 'That only means that here we can't talk about "right"' (*Ibid.*, 153).

Once again, 'By "S" I mean *this*' is understood by *definition* here to be a way of gesturing towards a sensation that is *not* already subsumed under any kind of meaning-rule; for if it were, that meaning-rule could only be public: there can be no meaning-rule which could allow for reference to a super-private sensation *if* there can be no criteria by which *individual* sensations of particular kinds could conceivably be *identified*. It follows that when A.J. Ayer provides his own reply to what he believes to be going on in § 258, this reply is in a very important way wholly incidental to the concept of super-privacy Wittgenstein is using in this passage. Yet Ayer's is the *kind* of reply that has been supplied down the years, in many

different guises, and by many philosophers of a roughly empiricist persuasion when they point towards the obvious truth that they so often think that Wittgenstein is attempting to deny:

The recognition consists in treating whatever it may be as an instance of its kind, as being '*the same*' as a previous specimen which, if no label has yet been applied to it, may itself be remembered simply as being, in a more or less shadowy context, the same as *this*. If the kind has been labelled, the disposition to apply the same label enters into the process of recognition; and here it must not be forgotten that the labels themselves have to be recognised. (11)

Consequently, when Ayer decides to say 'By "*S*" I mean *this*' he certainly does not feel that he is failing to issue a genuine proposition: all he sees himself as doing is talk about a sensation, albeit 'privately', in the kind of situation we are all already familiar with in which we can enjoy new sensations without necessarily deciding to put a name to them. The point is echoed by a number of philosophers who have succeeded in misinterpreting Wittgenstein's intentions in exactly the same way as has Ayer. Here, for example, is Saul Kripke:

For, if we see Wittgenstein's problem as a real one, it is clear that he has often been read from the wrong perspective. Readers, my previous self certainly included, have often been inclined to wonder: 'How can we prove private language impossible? How can I have any difficulty identifying my own sensations? And if there were a difficulty, how could 'public' criteria *help* me? I must be in pretty bad shape if I needed external help to identify my own sensations !' (12)

Participating in a debate which played an important role in the secondary literature and which still leaves some ripples today, even when its direct relation to Wittgenstein's concerns is clearly open to question, Simon Blackburn echoes the same presuppositions as Kripke:

In this circumstance there is no reason at all for the private linguist to take the attitude that whatever seems right is right. He may do better to take the attitude that his memory is not totally reliable, that it is easy to fail to notice genuine differences between 'S' and sensations like 'S' but importantly different in what surrounds them, and so on....The would-be private linguist's title to think of himself as a believer would be derived from his title to think of himself as a theorist, attempting a whole set of views about his mental life. (13)

Even Crispin Wright can sometimes be given to express the issues apparently at stake here in terms which are distinctly *un*-Wittgensteinian:

But if the felt quality of my experience has *some* part to play in determining the content of the relevant parts of my vocabulary, and if it is accepted that this quality can be known only by myself, it must follow, it seems, that we cannot have reason to think that we *fully* understand each other's talk of sensations, and so on. (14)

Even if we allow that Wright is ploughing a quite distinct field from Wittgenstein in which the principal issue at stake is one in which the private diarist as a *theorist* of his sensations may be allowed to predict patterns of their recurrence, a field in which Blackburn allows for the establishment of *system* enforcing recognition of fallibility whereas Wright does not, the fact remains that these philosophers are shown here to be party in varying degrees to an assumption that is really quite irrelevant to what is going on in § 258. The assumption, of course, is that our sensations are *intrinsically* meaningful, and merely require to be *named*, the assumption already mentioned briefly by Kenny - albeit in its 18th century guise - in his reference to the British empiricists who thought that impressions and ideas could confer meaning unaided. The reason that this assumption has little to do with the content of § 258 is that the notion of *privacy* which these philosophers are using here is one which is actually *parasitic* on its ordinary use, so that

from Wittgenstein's methodological perspective these philosophers are doing something which he did not directly consider when mounting his attack on private language, *viz.*, treat for their own (metaphysical) purposes these ordinary circumstances in which we do in fact name our private sensations, in *isolation* from the background of our acquaintance with a public language. Yet it is this background alone which Wittgenstein would take to underlie whatever sense there is to their speculations about *naming* their private sensations, because that is something we *can* be said to do in a quite everyday context.

This could certainly be entitled a 'private language argument' though of an altogether different kind. It is not a *reductio* but a *reminder* that what the philosopher often *thinks* he is doing in presenting important *metaphysical* revelations about naming the *already* meaningful, is actually parasitic on his prior acquaintance with a public language. Wittgenstein's point here *is* entirely methodological, and to that extent its force may appear weaker if a philosopher decides to adhere to his 'metaphysical intuitions', come what may. Yet this does require a reassessment of the method of approach adopted by Kenny, and indeed by Peter Hacker (including the former *Baker & Hacker* partnership) if this method consists in attributing to philosophers like Descartes and Hume a concept of *super-privacy* to which it is far from certain, historically, that any of them were ever committed. This failure to distinguish between the common modern empiricist response to § 258 in the secondary literature, and the actual argument provided by Kenny's Wittgenstein - with the consequent failure to distinguish between the *different* conceptions of privacy used by the modern empiricist and by Wittgenstein - helps to explain the lack of any uniform consensus even today in the secondary literature - after a period of almost 60 years - on the *interpretation* of the private language argument.

But this could not of course *be* the case unless the actual argument which Kenny attributes to Wittgenstein in these passages is *already* on something like the right lines. This detection of an *argument* is also perfectly consistent with the view that *either* the notion of *privacy* being used by Wittgenstein's private-linguist is one with which we are already familiar, in which case it gains

its sense from the normal circumstances in which it is applied, or it is so outlandish that we can have no *genuine* conception of what we are talking about by referring to this notion of *super-privacy*. This has the consequence that those who adopt the same viewpoint as Cora Diamond, *viz.*, that it is nothing but a piece of plain *nonsense* as sheer gibberish to even attempt to think that the idea of a private language *could* make sense to us, are only able to adopt this standpoint because the very concept of a *private language* has already been *defined* by Wittgenstein in such a way that it can have no conceivable *application*.

Whilst Kenny's chapter on Private Languages is his most sustained treatment of any section of the *Philosophical Investigations*, the *Investigations* assumes an importance in three other chapters in which it becomes the culmination of a process of development in Wittgenstein's ideas that Kenny manages to trace from The *Tractatus* right through the middle-period works. The first of these to be considered is Chapter 9 on Language-Games which, perhaps characteristically, begins with the statement that 'The theory of meaning as use is closely connected with the concept of a language-game.' Stressing the application of the analogy of a game in the *Grammatik* to other than mathematical uses of language, Kenny develops his theme through the use of this notion in the *Brown Book*. Wittgenstein follows his normal practice here and avoids providing any general account of what a language-game is, or how one game might be differentiated from another according to fixed criteria. Turning to the detailed treatment of this topic in the *Investigations*, Kenny points out that Wittgenstein's mature notion of a language-game has developed substantially from the way in which it is used in the *Blue Book* to describe only primitive forms of language. Adopting a rather scholastic stance, he mildly rebukes Wittgenstein for appearing inconsistent in *Investigations* § 23, over a distinction between 'uses' and 'kinds' of sentence, a difficulty which is related to the question Kenny raises whether 'use' means 'usage' or 'utility'.

A similar problem about demarcation arises over the question whether the builders' game should rightly be called a language or not, and here a useful distinction can be drawn between

the *Blue Book's* tendency to look upon the primitive language-game as capturing the essence of language, and the more mature position in the *Investigations* (§ 130) that these examples should properly be regarded as *objects of comparison* which illuminate our understanding of the similarities and dissimilarities we may discover between them and - as it were - the genuine article. Kenny then discusses the notion of following a rule, and his treatment is inevitably interesting just because it predates the vast explosion in the secondary literature which was to follow the work of Saul Kripke in succeeding decades. Kenny's account stands up well, drawing attention, for example, to the proper understanding of the framework role of Wittgenstein's notion of 'communal agreement', meaning that it is *misunderstood* if interpreted as a way of saying that whatever the community claims to be right *is* right.

Suggesting that readers of the *Investigations* may be inclined to feel that there is something missing in Wittgenstein's account of rule following because it fails to explain how an action is guided by or determined by the rule, Kenny explains that this demand is itself an expression of the confusion underlying the idea that there *is* a mental act determining one's *going on* because the rule itself provides the necessary guidance. Finally asking whether the rules of grammar are themselves 'arbitrary', Kenny points to *Investigations* § 497, where Wittgenstein raises the question what '*could*' (rather than '*would*') means here, so that the *aim* of the grammar *is* that of the language insofar as it does not point beyond itself towards any external 'justification'.

Chapter 8 on Understanding, Thinking and Meaning has Kenny exploring the kinds of questions he has already pointed towards in his new Introduction, and there can be no doubt that a great deal of naive discussion about 'thinking' even today in the psychological sciences can stem from using terms like *thought* and *thinking* to denote what 'goes on in the mind' as a silent *accompaniment* to speech or behaviour. Kenny, following Wittgenstein, sees naive conceptions like these as leading to nothing but the construction of houses of cards:

What is the relation between thought and language? Can one think without speaking? The way to answer this is not to introspect and

wait for an occurrence of speechless thought as an astronomer might wait for an eclipse. It is rather to consider the different types of thing we call 'thinking', the different types of occasion in which the verb 'to think' is used. (*Ibid.*, 119).

Kenny explores the idea of 'thinking' with or without language and remarks that 'Wittgenstein was fond of telling a joke about a French politician who said that it was a characteristic of the French language that in it words occur in the order in which one thinks of them' (*Investigations* § 336). The idea here that the thought is in some way or other separate from its expression in language comes out in his amusing remark that one could not think a sentence with the remarkable word order of German or Latin just as it stands, for one first has to think it and then rearrange the words in that queer order. In *these* kinds of cases, language is itself the vehicle of thought. (§ 329). In fact, the kinds of circumstances in which one could correctly talk about 'thinking without language' conform to quite a limited pattern: performing a task with or without a great deal of thought, for example, where wordlessly, the degree of thought put into the task is shown in the work itself, perhaps only later finding verbal expression (*Zettel* §§ 100 - 102). This should be contrasted with the example of the philosophy professor who was wont to tell his students that the reason *he* knew he could *think without language* was that every time he found himself looking forward to his evening meal there appeared before his mind's eye a tantalising vision of a plate containing fillet steak, roast potatoes and peas, and all without any verbal accompaniment. Kenny sums up his assessment of this issue as follows:

Instead of finding a single, overall connection of thought with language, we find a number of different interlocking connections. But, though closely connected, the concepts of thinking and speaking are quite unlike each other. To say that thinking is an incorporeal process, while speaking (like eating) is a corporeal one is misleading: not because it makes the two concepts too unlike, but because it makes them seem too similar. (PI I, 339). (*Ibid.*, 120).

This chapter contains Kenny's introduction to Augustine's view of language, and he interestingly points out that this, together with other ideas familiar from the *Investigations* including that of a *language-game*, *family likeness* and a *criterion*, for example, all appear in the *Grammatik* either fully-fledged or in embryo form. In less than four pages, Kenny outlines the shopkeeper and builders, language as a toolbag, as the cabin of a locomotive, or as an ancient city, the inadequacy of ostensive definition - as acquaintance with the object for which a word stands - as an account of *meaning*, the confusion of the bearer of a name with its meaning, and the idea that what is really important is instead a mastery of a word's general *use*. This leads to the idea that in learning a first language the child has to master an entire system incorporating the ability to identify, classify and name items in order that he can grasp, for example, the meaning of 'red', the place in the language where it 'fits'. In reading this section one becomes aware of what Barry Stroud must have been referring to in his claim that Kenny seems to run short of space, for in spite of his erudition not even he has room available to properly elaborate on the ramifications of § 32 at the end, as readers would normally expect.

Kenny also takes the opportunity during his discussions of mental mechanisms earlier on in chapter 8 to mention Wittgenstein's well-known passage in which he states that nothing seems to him more natural than that 'there is no process in the brain correlated with associating or with thinking; so that it would be impossible to read off thought-processes from brain-processes', and that for this reason certain psychological phenomena cannot be investigated physiologically because there is, physiologically, nothing to correspond to them. (*Zettel* §§ 608-10). Strange as it may appear, the idea, except in the most *general* terms, that it might *not* be possible to read thought-processes from brain-processes seems quite unobjectionable, because the suggestion that an investigation of neuronal activity in Shakespeare's brain, for example, would allow us to print out the text of *Hamlet*, seems like nothing so much as an example of children's science fiction or fantasy.

On the other hand, the claim that certain psychological phenomena *cannot* be investigated physiologically because 'nothing corresponds to them' seems too vague to count

for very much, and can be treated as no more than a reflection of Wittgenstein's rejection of yet another highly misleading *picture*, one encapsulating the prejudice in favour of psychophysical parallelism *as* the fruit of a primitive interpretation of our concepts (*Zettel*, § 611). Once again, what is being rejected is *not* that the relevant psychological phenomena can in principle be investigated physiologically (*Cf. Investigations* § 412), but that this investigation could take a form which would result in the startling revelation that the full text of the *Philosophical Investigations*, say, could be thought to be forthcoming from a detailed study of neuronal activity within the author's cerebral cortex. Would the text of this work, incidentally, be that of the later or of the intermediate version ? Or would that have to depend on accessing the appropriate archives by properly utilising the codes implanted within the human brain's storage and retrieval systems ? There is something not quite right, as Wittgenstein surely recognises, about presenting these suppositions in a form - which we may imagine to have been integral to his thinking - in which they can very quickly be reduced to absurdity. Whilst Kenny adopts a rather neutral stance on the *general* issue, arguing that Wittgenstein was not in principle opposed to either a Chomskyan model for a particular purpose, or even to a purely physiological model which would provide a physical explanation of intentional phenomena by revealing how, for example, they may be causally dependent on the chemistry of the brain, this neutral stance is abandoned in a later paper (15) on 'Cognitive Scientism', where he adopts the more extreme view that Wittgenstein is questioning the scientific presumption that every power has a vehicle: Kenny makes him appear almost as a reactionary, someone who is taking a retrograde step in the face of the onslaught of scientific practice, a point of view which as argued here we are not obliged to adopt:

Maybe Wittgenstein is right that, in Aristotelian terms, there may be formal and final causes in the absence of efficient and material ones. Perhaps there can: but one cannot help worrying whether Wittgenstein may here be adopting towards contemporary neuroscientists the attitude that Renaissance Aristotelians adopted towards Galileo. ('Cognitive Scientism', 162).

Chapter 7 on Anticipation, Intentionality and Verification begins by quoting the well-known passage (§ 12) from the *Philosophical Investigations* comparing the diversity of word usage to the many functions performed by different handles within a locomotive cabin. Yet the reader is reminded that whilst this passage is sometimes used to point to Wittgenstein's change in direction from an early attempt to bring all forms of speech into a uniform pattern, to his later recognition of the richness and diversity of language, it actually occurs early on in an almost identical form in *Philosophische Bemerkungen* (§ 58) dating back to 1930, where it is accompanied (*PB* § 59) by an early statement of the *theory* of meaning as use. This is followed by Kenny with a discussion of Russell's and others' accounts of expectation as externally and causally related to states of mind, whereas for Wittgenstein expectation is immediately expressed (internally) as a picture of what is expected: 'It is in language that an expectation and its fulfillment make contact.' (*Investigations* § 445).

This chapter is particularly interesting towards its end when Kenny comes to look in considerable detail at Wittgenstein's early struggles with the implied consequences for the attribution of sensations to others, of his adhering to a version of the verification principle, leading to the claim that there is no difference in *sense* between saying that other men have toothache and saying that other men behave exactly as one does one's self even if one has *no* toothache. This is clarified in terms of the claim that one would speak in *pitying* terms about men who have no toothache, but behave as one does when one has toothache one's self, a formulation which for Kenny points towards the *theory* of language games, 'the theory that the sense of a proposition is given not just by its verification, but by its connection with a host of non-linguistic activities of which verification is only one and commiseration, for example, is another.' (*Ibid.*,107). Whilst this will sound only *too* anti-realist to many, it merely indicates the distance Wittgenstein still had to travel to reach the further conclusion that it is solely an adherence to a misleading *picture* accompanying the attribution of toothache to someone else, that prevents his reaching the final and more sophisticated view that behaviour is an *expression*

of what is inner. The verificationism then becomes a stepping-stone - eventually to be discarded - towards this final stage in the mature development of his ideas. Kenny claims towards the end of his account that the argument he detects in the *Bemerkungen* seems to him often obscure and frequently ambiguous - as it might very well be for someone in the process of finding his feet with new ways of thinking - though it points towards its further development in the private language passages of the *Investigations*.

Turning to Kenny's treatment of *On Certainty* in Chapter 11, the chapter which he would have wished to elaborate upon were he writing the book again, some readers may feel that the issues are already misrepresented at the beginning by the claim that in this work Wittgenstein turns to epistemology in his last days and, although 'Descartes is never mentioned by name, Wittgenstein conducts a three-cornered argument with Moore and the Cartesian sceptic.' (*Ibid.*, 161). In fact, Kenny's discussion reveals that this epistemological reference is purely terminological, for he presents a fairly conventional account of the work in which the sceptic's procedure is shown by Wittgenstein to be meaningless, although it is perhaps more important to stress from the beginning that the three philosophers mentioned actually have three quite individual agendas, and this applies particularly to Moore and Wittgenstein.

If it is accepted that Moore's attempt to defend Common Sense in a rather bluff down-to-earth way takes the form of an *argument* against sceptical doubt, then it has to be accepted from the beginning that scepticism only makes sense against a background in which ordinary discourse is already understood to have *metaphysical* implications, without which the sceptic has nothing properly to deny. It has also to be accepted that from the sceptic's viewpoint, merely to reiterate that there are certain standard criteria by which we determine that our ordinary statements about ships and shoes and sealing-wax and cabbages and kings, are true or false, can hardly in itself be taken to establish *metaphysical* claims about the existence of an 'external world' and about 'other minds', when it is the very justification of these claims that is supposedly in question.

But Moore does not see himself merely as presenting an argument from the

paradigm case in the manner of many an 'ordinary language' philosopher. He sees himself instead as directly justifying the metaphysical implications of ordinary discourse, which the sceptic is supposedly putting in question, and he does this through his claim that the task of the philosopher is to provide 'a general description of the *whole* of the universe', which contains 'enormous numbers of material objects', and that 'we men, besides having bodies, also have *minds*' which 'perform certain mental acts or acts of consciousness' which 'are attached to some material objects'; and in addition 'we believe that we do really *know* all those things that I have mentioned.' (16). Moore's apparent proof that he has two hands in his famous lecture 'Proof of an External World' is intended to provide exactly that kind of justification, and what Moore says in the lecture would not really have been of much relevance to *On Certainty* unless Wittgenstein had taken it to contain rather more than a reiteration that there are normal circumstances which provide the kinds of paradigm cases in which ordinary criteria for the application of our day-to-day propositions about ships, shoes, sealing-wax, and kings are found in practice to be satisfied.

Yet whilst Moore may make the sceptic look ridiculous, this does not at all imply that he is successful in establishing what he understands to be the *metaphysical* implications of ordinary discourse. Indeed, he did not even adopt a theory of direct or naive realism which it might be assumed to have been his most appropriate stance, since he would appear to accept a representative theory of perception. Never certain what the correct *analysis* of a statement like 'this is a human hand' might be, and although clear that a correct element in that analysis could be expressed by claiming that this proposition is made true because there is a true proposition about a sense-datum which is not *itself* a hand, it may be argued that he never conclusively decided to his own satisfaction whether sense-data are not, for example, part of the surface of a material object. It is even an open question whether Moore as part of his Common Sense outlook really did take material objects to persist unperceived in the form that we perceive them, for he does appear to imply that this is a sophisticated question the answer to which could be obtained only through the proper *analysis* of the propositions of Common Sense.

Fortunately, it is not necessary to pursue the ramifications of Moore's Common Sense outlook to appreciate what Wittgenstein took him to be pointing towards when he claims that there are propositions which in some way or other we are inclined to treat as being exempt from doubt because of their peculiar role in a system of propositions. This has nothing to do with the element of confusion Wittgenstein would have associated with the view that ordinary discourse embodies *metaphysical* presuppositions. His main point comes out most clearly if we consider that any inclination we may have to say that whilst $\text{water} = \text{H}_2\text{O}$ is an *empirical* claim, we nevertheless want to treat it as being in some sense *necessarily* true arises, not because it is true 'in all possible worlds', but because it is so well-established and attested to within a *system* of related propositions that it has become exempt from doubt. The observations, predictions, calculations and measurements by which we arrive at this equation are integral to the role it plays in the system (*On Certainty* § 105, § 167), to the extent that were it to be put in question it would make this entire framework unworkable. This point finds its expression by Wittgenstein in his statement that 'Further experiments cannot *give the lie* to our earlier ones, at most they may change our whole way of looking at things (*On Certainty* § 292).

It is one thing, however, to point to the role performed by certain statements within a scientific context, where this role is in a way already prescribed, and quite another to point to how it might similarly be revealed in the statements of ordinary discourse, because, except when doing *philosophy*, we have no reason to *manufacture* examples illustrating the point in question. This, indeed, is why Wittgenstein can be seen to introduce statements which on the face of it meet the criteria for being *exempt from doubt*, only to retract them because a *counterexample* suddenly occurs to him. In § 659, for example, he cannot be making a mistake about just having had lunch, only to realise that he might have dropped off immediately after the meal without knowing it and, having slept for an hour, awakened to believe that he has only just eaten. His suggestion that he then distinguish between different *kinds* of mistake is surely disingenuous when the issue is precisely whether statements of this kind *can* be used to point towards the

particular role he wants to attribute to them. In § 675, a person cannot be *mistaken* in his claim that he has just flown from America to England in the last few days, presumably because this *must* be so fresh in his memory that he could not possibly be *wrong* about it. But surely he may have become intoxicated on the flight so that his recollection of the date is factually inaccurate; or what if a stage hypnotist has recently implanted in him a false memory of the actual flight ?

Nevertheless, this does not invalidate the general *picture* Wittgenstein draws - captured in what is perhaps the finest expression of these last reflections in the book - between those empirical propositions which attain the (informal) status of rules, and those which are fluid in that they are true or false depending on the specific circumstances of the occasion. (§§ 94-100). A classic example is that of never having been on the Moon prior to the advent of space flight, or never having flown the Atlantic in the early 19th Century, the point being that these are statements 'of the form of empirical propositions' which are hardened into rules in that they form part of the cultural heritage of the era. Provided we accept the distinction in a rather *informal* way, we can understand Wittgenstein's annoyance at himself for presenting his case in a manner which makes it appear to be far more formal and rigid than it really is, as when he refers to the very *expression* 'propositions of the form of empirical propositions' as one that is thoroughly bad. (§ 402) The constant gesturing towards a *certainty* which is not epistemic because it reflects *unconditional* human action as the ultimate ground we have for making *ordinary* empirical claims which are *known* to be true or false based on appropriate evidence, is what Wittgenstein understands to be the valuable legacy of Moore's thinking that he chooses to echo in *On Certainty*. Yet if we consider Moore's *metaphysical* stance, it is far from clear whether he *himself* could have been aware of this reading of his work, so that his unique way of expressing himself in talking about his hands may in the final analysis have been no more than a *catalyst* which directed Wittgenstein's thinking in this new direction. In the most general terms, this points towards a methodology which is continuous with the *Philosophical Investigations* where, as Kenny has already reminded us, 'meaning...is conferred by the active participation of the

human being in the social community in the empirical world.' (*Ibid.*) Kenny also draws our attention to the unmistakable echo in § 501 of the first entry in Wittgenstein's 1914 *Notebook* that Logic must take care of itself.

The final Chapter sees Kenny provide a summary of his reflections on The Continuity of Wittgenstein's Philosophy, and the remainder of the book following the Biographical Introduction comprises five chapters which follow the legacy of Frege and Russell through Wittgenstein's reaction to Russell's *Principia*, The Picture Theory, The Metaphysics of Logical Atomism and its eventual dismantling after his ten year 'sabbatical' prior to his return to Cambridge in 1929. The fact that these chapters alone amount to half the book is a sufficient indication of the richness and diversity of Kenny's text, and the detail in which he covers this earlier period is testament to the highly favourable reception that his treatment received from reviewers. That the account is traditional in its treatment of the metaphysics of logical atomism and the picture theory, and does not engage with the later debates on *nonsense* beginning towards the end of the century, is not, from this perspective, in any way a drawback to its value as an account of the development of Wittgenstein's ideas.

Overall, therefore, Kenny's *Wittgenstein* stands up well after nearly 40 years. Whether we ought to agree with Michael Morris that 'it remains the best general introduction to Wittgenstein's work as a whole', or with Richard Kortum that '..Sir Anthony's remains the most useful critical introduction to Wittgenstein's life and thought' (*Wittgenstein*, cover blurb) is obviously a matter of debate. Indeed, as Kenny makes clear in his Preface, the very fact that he chose to draw attention to the middle period in order *not* to appear merely to be repeating what he no doubt felt had already been adequately covered elsewhere, is surely a pointer to why the coverage of the later work lacks detail, even if the account of the private language argument comes closer to Wittgenstein's intentions than the vast majority of discussions that have, up until today, occupied the secondary literature. Indeed, Kenny's discussion of this subject allows for a much better appreciation of Wittgenstein's method

than could be gleaned purely from what has tended to become the stock response issuing from purely therapeutically inclined assessments of his methodology, *viz.*, that the idea of a private language is just plain gibberish, or that we can, for example, have no conception of what such a language might be; for to say merely that a particular conception is *nonsense* is surely not an acceptable way of answering the important question why Wittgenstein should nevertheless have spent so much time investigating it.

Another reason why Kenny's assessment of the later period is important - and why so much attention has been devoted to it here - is because of the overwhelming significance he believes Wittgenstein's later work to have for the future of philosophy: Kenny's treatment is not intended only to be an abstract contribution to Wittgenstein scholarship. It is *partly* the fact that many other philosophers who write on Wittgenstein would wholeheartedly agree with this, to which we owe the sheer proliferation of monographs on the *Tractatus*, the *Philosophical Investigations*, to a lesser extent on the middle-period works, and recently on the last writings including *On Certainty*. Whether this final period is designated as a Third or as Kenny's Fourth Wittgenstein (*Ibid.*, xx) is clearly unimportant. Whilst no interpretational work originally from the 1970's covering the same ground as Kenny's within its allotted space can be expected to compete in terms of its range and scholarship with the kinds of in-depth monographs with which we are now familiar, we can nevertheless feel justified in concluding that Kenny's book displays more than sufficient insight in specific areas for it still to make a valuable contribution to our current understanding of Wittgenstein.

ENDNOTES

- (1) T.E. Burke: Review *MIND* Vol XCI, 364 October 1982, 614 of Derek Bolton: *An Approach to Wittgenstein's Philosophy*, (London: MacMillan, 1979)
- (2) Meredith Williams: *Wittgenstein, Mind and Meaning: Toward a Social Conception of Mind* (London: Routledge, 1999) Chap 1, 15.
- (3) Saul Kripke: *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982) 1.
- (4) Anthony Manser: Review of Kenny *Wittgenstein*, (London: Penguin Press, 1973) *MIND* Vol LXXXIV, 336 October 1975, 619.
- (5) See Ray Monk: 'Bourgeois, Bolshevik or Anarchist ? The Reception of Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mathematics' in *Wittgenstein and His Interpreters* ed. Guy Kahane, Edward Kanterian & Oskari Kuusela, (Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 2007), 269.
- (6) Barry Stroud, Review of Kenny *Wittgenstein* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Uni. Press, 1973), 576.
- (7) Daniele Moyal-Sharrock, Introduction to *The Third Wittgenstein*, Conference, June 2008, Uni. of Reading, Inaugural Conf. of British Wittgenstein Society, available on line *Philosophia* 2009.
- (8) Peter Hacker: *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth Century Analytic Philosophy*, (Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 1996) Chapter 7, 183 *et seqq.*
- (9) Anthony Kenny: *The Legacy of Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 9.
- (10) Cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Philosophical Occasions 1912-1951*: (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. 1993) ed. by James C. Klagge & Alfred Nordmann, Chapters 10, 11. and particularly Chapter 14 'Notes for the Philosophical Lecture' ' ed. David Stern, 445.
- (11) A.J. Ayer: 'Reply to David Pears., *The Philosophy of A.J. Ayer* ed. L.E. Hahn (La Salle Illinois: Open Court, 1992) 403.
- (12) Saul Kripke, *Op. cit.*, 60.
- (13) Simon Blackburn: *Spreading The Word, Groundings in The Philosophy of Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) 105.
- (14) Crispin Wright: 'Does *Philosophical Investigations* §§258-60 Suggest a Cogent Argument Against Private Language?' in *Rails to Infinity* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press 2001), 226.
- (15) Anthony Kenny: *From Empedocles to Wittgenstein Historical Essays in Philosophy*: (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 169.
- (16) G.E. Moore, *Some Main Problems of Philosophy* (London: Routledge 2004) Chapter 1. The reference to 'we men...' is characteristic of its period.

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 (forthcoming) in PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS.