



WITTGENSTEIN
and the PHILOSOPHY
of MIND

edited by JONATHAN ELLIS *and* DANIEL GUEVARA

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ABBREVIATIONS OF WORKS BY WITTGENSTEIN

AWL	<i>Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge, 1932–1935</i>
BB	<i>The Blue and Brown Books</i>
BT	<i>Big Typescript</i> (TS 213)
CV	<i>Culture and Value</i>
LC	<i>Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief</i>
LFM	<i>Wittgenstein's Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics</i>
LW I	<i>Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology</i> , vol. I
LW II	<i>Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology</i> , vol. II
MS	Manuscripts as collected in <i>Wittgenstein's Nachlass: The Bergen Electronic Edition</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
NB	<i>Notebooks 1914–1916</i>
OC	<i>On Certainty</i>
PG	<i>Philosophical Grammar</i>
PI	<i>Philosophical Investigations</i>
PPF	<i>Philosophy of Psychology—A Fragment</i>
PPO	<i>Ludwig Wittgenstein: Public and Private Occasions</i>
PR	<i>Philosophical Remarks</i>
RFM	<i>Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics</i>
RPP I	<i>Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology</i> , vol. I
RPP II	<i>Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology</i> , vol. II
TLP	<i>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</i>
Z	<i>Zettel</i>

Citations to texts by Wittgenstein will be given as follows.

Citations to NB are by date of entry (e.g., NB 11.10.14); those to TLP follow the numbering of TLP (e.g., TLP 4.041). Citations to numbered sections of other texts employ “§” before the section number (e.g., Z §239).

Roman numerals following abbreviations denote part numbers (e.g., RFM I, §24). Citations to Part I of PI omit the part number (e.g., PI §20).

In citations to page numbers, a comma precedes the page number (e.g., CV, 18; PI II, 219). A “p.” is used only when the name of the text ends with an Arabic numeral. Thus, a citation to page 139 of Manuscript 134 would be: MS 134, p. 139.

FOREWORD

On Getting to Know a State or Process Better: Wittgenstein and the Philosophy of Mind

DAVID HILLS

The first step is the one that entirely escapes notice. We talk of processes and states, and leave their nature undecided. Sometime perhaps we'll know more about them—we think. But that's just what commits us to a particular way of looking at the matter. For we have a certain conception of what it means to learn to know a process better. (The decisive movement in the conjuring trick has been made, and it was the very one that seemed to us quite innocent.)

—*Philosophical Investigations* §308

Most of the essays in this volume address recognized controversies in contemporary philosophy of mind and contemporary cognitive science, using material from Wittgenstein's later work as points of departure. They treat Wittgenstein as a useful ally or worthy antagonist in attempts to pose and solve determinate contemporary philosophical problems. The other essays, by Fogelin, Goldfarb, Hacker, and Stroud, are works of exegesis, remarkably diverse efforts to "take Wittgenstein at his word" when he calls for a purely therapeutic philosophy, a philosophy without surprising theses, a philosophy that

I regret that I was able to attend only the last two days of the memorably rich and beautifully organized conference on Wittgenstein and the philosophy of mind that Daniel Guevara and Jon Ellis hosted at UC Santa Cruz in June 2007. The talks were accompanied by carefully crafted replies and elicited searching questions from the audience; there was abundant opportunity for informal philosophical conversation between sessions; the full-time, long-time Wittgenstein scholars gave a warm welcome to generalist neophytes like myself. This preface incorporates the comments I gave at the conference to a paper by P. M. S. Hacker, and I am deeply grateful for the characteristic care and thoroughness and firmness with which he responded to my objections and queries, both on the spot and in subsequent correspondence. I'm indebted to various other

outgrows or outlasts or stares down its problems instead of solving them—as if philosophy’s proper mission were to clear up the confusions that gave birth to it, thereby doing its best to do itself in. It is easy to assume that if we take the first group of essays seriously, we need to write off the second group as misguided, and vice versa. But matters aren’t that simple.

1. VARIETIES OF SIGHTLESSNESS

I’m neither a Wittgenstein scholar nor a professing Wittgensteinian, but reading Wittgenstein and struggling with what he says has always been an important part of how I find my way in philosophy. He’s one of the landmarks I steer by, even when he seems incredibly distant. I’m not sure I could feel at home in a discipline that had lost interest in his strange and special and demanding voice.

But there is a striking and troubling contrast between how Wittgenstein has fared just lately and how Nietzsche has fared. Not so long ago, in 1993, Bernard Williams declared:

Nietzsche is not a source of philosophical theories. At some level the point is obvious, but it may be less obvious how deep it goes. In this respect there is a contrast with Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein said repeatedly, and not only in his later work, that he was not to be read as offering philosophical theory, because there could be no such thing as philosophical theory. But his work was less well prepared than Nietzsche’s was to sustain that position posthumously. There is more than one reason for this. Wittgenstein thought that his work demanded not only the end of philosophical theory but the end of philosophy—something associated, for him, with the end of his demands on himself to do philosophy. That association, of the end of philosophical theory with the end of philosophy, does not deny the idea that if there is to be philosophy, it will take the form of theory; indeed, it readily reinforces that idea. Moreover, the topics on which Wittgenstein wanted there to be no more philosophy—the topics, for him, of philosophy—were traditional topics of academic philosophy. It is not surprising that those who continue theoretical work on those topics still look for elements in Wittgenstein’s work itself from which to construct it.

No doubt many who do this lack a suitable irony about what they do to Wittgenstein’s texts, but their attitude is not in any important sense a betrayal: less so, in fact, than the attitude of those who think that Wittgenstein did bring to an end

participants as well, some of whom I got to speak with at the conference, others of whom I only got to read after the fact. Among the former, special thanks to James Conant, Gary Ebbs, Juliet Floyd, Warren Goldfarb, Christopher Peacocke, and Meredith Williams. Among the latter, special thanks to Robert Fogelin and Barry Stroud, who’ve been teachers of mine in matters Wittgensteinian for as long as I can remember. Thanks again to Daniel, Jon, and the Santa Cruz department for being such superb hosts, and a special acknowledgment to those you don’t get to read in this volume, my fellow commentators.

philosophical theory on those topics, and themselves sustain an academic activity that consists in reiterating that very thing. Among those who think there is room for ongoing philosophical theory on these topics, and that Wittgenstein contributed to it, someone owes Wittgenstein an account of why he ceased to see that this was so. But such an account might be given, and we might come to understand that if Wittgenstein could no longer see the edifice of an intellectual subject, his sightlessness was not that of Samson, but rather that of Oedipus at Colonus, whose disappearance left behind healing waters.

Wittgenstein's posthumous texts, though not designed to express or encourage theory, are not actually mined against its extraction. With Nietzsche, by contrast, the resistance to the continuation of philosophy by ordinary means is built into the text, which is booby-trapped not only against recovering theory from it, but, in many cases, against any systematic exegesis that assimilates it to theory. (Williams 2006, 299–300)

This struck me as obvious at the time; it still strikes me as fundamentally correct. But since Williams wrote these words, Nietzsche and Wittgenstein have undergone a curious reversal of fortunes in Anglo-American academic philosophy. A growing number of ethicists and metaethicists view Nietzsche as someone they can productively cite, adapt, and argue against without pausing to disarm his stylistic booby-traps, while a growing number of philosophers of language and mind portray Wittgenstein, the later Wittgenstein, the Wittgenstein of the *Investigations*, as a bomb-throwing nihilist, blindly, groundlessly, and preemptively hostile to some of his century's most fruitful working hypotheses: the compositionality of truth-conditional contents, the distinction between what is said and what is meant, the computational theory of mind, and so on. Professional philosophy has begun to view Nietzsche as Oedipus and Wittgenstein as Samson, instead of the other way round. How did this happen? How could it happen?

The Wittgenstein of the *Investigations* needs to compete for exegetical attention and philosophical sympathy with his earlier self, the author of the *Tractatus*. And whether because of the controversy generated by "robust readings" of that work (e.g., Diamond 1991; Conant 2000) or in spite of it, we've been treated in recent years to a steady stream of convincing insights into how best to take such key Tractarian notions as logical space and the picture theory of the proposition (cf. Sullivan 2001, 2004; White 2006, 139–143). *Tractatus* scholarship has begun to make the gradual consensual incremental progress we are accustomed to seeing in scholarship on Descartes or Hume or Kant, a kind of progress it is harder to discern (right now, at any rate) in scholarship on the *Investigations*. It is easier than ever to side with Russell and the logical positivists in preferring the earlier Wittgenstein to the later one, to the point of suspecting the later one of insensitivity to the earlier one's profoundest insights. The later Tolstoy is an incompetent reader of *Anna Karenina*; why couldn't the later Wittgenstein be an incompetent reader of the *Tractatus*? The *Tractatus* and *Anna Karenina* are both difficult books, after all, and the later Wittgenstein loved the later Tolstoy.

The later Wittgenstein also needs to compete with his ghostly doppelgänger, the impression he made a quarter century ago on the young Saul Kripke (Kripke 1982). Just as some find jousting with a constructed Cartesian skeptic about brains in vats more efficient than jousting with the historical Descartes about demons, dreamers, and madmen, some find jousting with Kripke's Wittgenstein more efficient than jousting with the Wittgenstein of the *Investigations*, on the questionable assumption that one can learn pretty much the same things about pretty much the same problems by tackling either opponent.¹

But it's hard not to feel that something else is at work here as well: a frustration born of unclarity about precisely what we would be giving up or giving up on if we were to give up or give up on "philosophical theory" as Wittgenstein understands it. What counts as philosophical theory, what counts as a philosophical thesis, for the later Wittgenstein's destructive purposes?

The contrast with Nietzsche on this score is striking. In part 1 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, "On the Prejudices of Philosophers" (1989, 9–32), Nietzsche defines the philosopher as a thinker desperate to vindicate his own unfortunate de facto motivational makeup, a thinker in whom some single basic drive or impulse predominates in such a way and to such an extent that it seeks to dominate or tyrannize every other drive or impulse by representing itself as "the ultimate purpose of existence and the legitimate *master* of all the other drives" (I, §6, 13–14). He undertakes to explain why those whose temperaments move them to philosophize in the first place persist in doing so despite entirely predictable failures and setbacks. In "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable: The History of an Error" from *Twilight of the Idols* (Nietzsche 2005, 171), he portrays the basic forms philosophy takes as so many successive reworkings, so many successive waterings down, of a vision he attributes to Plato, a vision on which questions concerning what to do reduce to questions concerning how things are in a supersensible realm of inherently authoritative entities. And Nietzsche has ready answers to an obvious question: If philosophical thesis-mongering as such is a mistake, you must think you're doing something else when you propound theses of your own concerning how we come to philosophize and why it is a mistake to do so—so just what is this something else you take yourself to be doing? Sometimes it is physiology, sometimes philology, sometimes a new and special form of narrative history, "genealogy."

By contrast, Wittgenstein offers no explicit account of what does and doesn't count as philosophy for his purposes. Although he presents his attacks on philosophical theses as a talking cure, a therapy, a technique (modeled loosely on Freud's) for breaking the hold of obsessive thought patterns, he doesn't portray the therapy he practices as the application to philosophy of some nonphilosophical account of why we are tempted to philosophize in the first place and how we go

1. A selection of the best work done in this spirit is Wright and Miller 2002.

wrong when we do. There is no theory of which his sort of therapy is the practice. Indeed, Wittgenstein takes pains to insist that as he sees things, patient and therapist alike, thesis-mongering obsessive and thesis-avoiding critic alike, are engaged in one and the same activity: philosophizing. It's just that the patient is doing it wrong and the therapist is doing it right:

The real discovery is the one that enables me to break off philosophizing when I want to. — The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* in question. (PI §133, Wittgenstein's emphasis)

2. ASSERTING, INVESTIGATING, REMINDING

Notoriously prone to hero worship outside philosophy, Wittgenstein had no heroes within it as far as I can see. He found plenty to admire and plenty to deplore in each of the handful of philosophical writers who were of enduring importance to him: Plato, Augustine, Schopenhauer, Frege, Russell, James, etc. Let's take a quick look at Augustine in particular.

On the one hand, Wittgenstein uses *Confessions* I, 8² to introduce the “particular picture of the essence of human language” (PI §1) that the early pages of the *Investigations* undertake to discredit, the picture known nowadays as *referentialism*, with the result that introductions to Wittgenstein find themselves speaking of Wittgenstein's attack on the Augustinian Picture of Language (cf. McGinn 1997, 33–72; Schroeder 2006, 128–134).

On the other hand, Augustine's description in this very passage of “the gestures which are, as it were, the natural vocabulary of all races, and are made with the face and the inclination of the eyes and the movements of other parts of the body, and by the tone of the voice which indicates whether the mind's inward sentiments are to seek and possess or to reject and avoid” reads like a rough draft of PI §244's suggestion that as employed by the person who has the sensations in question, sensation words are *expressions* of what they are said to name, replacing or supplementing “the primitive, natural, expressions of sensation,” informing others of her sensations in the same way natural expressions would, *replacing* crying and the like rather than *referring to* anything at all, be it pain, the impulse to cry, or crying itself. Augustine is right about this much: we have a natural repertoire of gestures and other expressive devices, thanks to which we can and do publicly manifest our needs and wants and sufferings. But we mustn't think of this repertoire as a vocabulary and mustn't think of ourselves as going by anything—any introspective givens *or* any internalized verbal rules or norms—when we resort to it. Artificial expressive behavior is like its natural ancestor in being utterly unguided.

2. I refer to the translation by Henry Chadwick (1992). I, 8, Chadwick 11.

On the one hand, Augustine's famous conundrum about the measurement of time (XI, 27, Chadwick 241ff.) is a prime example of the knots we tie ourselves in by assuming that our understanding of what it is to measure any given thing (e.g., time or a time) needs to result from composing a fully general understanding of the thing in question (our grasp of what time or a time is) with a fully general understanding of measurement (our grasp of what it is to measure anything at all) (BB, 26). And Wittgenstein regarded Augustine's dark saying that "it is in you, my mind, that I measure periods of time" (XI, 27, Chadwick 242) with its implication that duration itself is *in us* in some surprising and delicate sense,³ as a prime instance of viewing the mind as a queer medium where queer things happen.

On the other hand, Augustine's discussion of time anticipates the eminently Wittgensteinian thought that there are natural-sounding questions the explicit posing of which serves to destroy or disrupt the very knowledge they profess to seek:

What is time? Who can explain this easily and briefly? Who can comprehend this even in thought so as to articulate the answer in words? Yet what do we speak of, in our familiar everyday conversation, more than of time? We surely know what we mean when we speak of it. We also know what is meant when we hear someone else talking about it. What then is time? Provided that no one asks me, I know. If I want to explain it to an inquirer, I do not know. (XI, 14, Chadwick 230)

Take this at full face value and you will suppose there is a mode of inquiry that tends to discredit and destroy our knowledge of what we know best, our knowledge of things we must continue to know if we are to know much of anything, and not because it instills false beliefs or propounds bad arguments, but simply because it insists on asking knowledge-destroying questions like *What is time?* We need to spot this mode of inquiry and actively abstain from it if we are to preserve and protect our knowledge of what we know best—need to train ourselves to stop asking knowledge-destroying questions. But how can we do this with a clear intellectual conscience?

One possible answer surfaces later on in the discussion of time, at a second point where Augustine can sound uncannily Wittgensteinian to modern ears: "I am investigating, Father, not making assertions" (XI, 17, Chadwick 233). Take this at full face value and you will suppose there is a mode of philosophical investigation that rehearses instructive arguments and reaches instructive conclusions, despite the fact that the investigator himself doesn't really propound the arguments his

3. A point on which Augustine was anticipated by Aristotle and followed by Heidegger. For Aristotle, see *Physics* 4.10–14. For Heidegger, see especially his 1924 Marburg Lecture, *The Concept of Time* (1992).

investigation rehearses and therefore doesn't really endorse the conclusions these arguments reach. He simply displays these arguments and conclusions as a charm against taking *other* arguments and their conflicting conclusions with an undue and disabling seriousness.⁴

Such a mode of investigation is put to dogma-destroying use by the Pyrrhonian skeptic; perhaps it can also be put to knowledge-protecting use. What if the best way to abstain from knowledge-destroying inquiry is by engaging in assertion-free investigation? After all, if the task at hand is preserving what one already knows rather than learning anything new, one might not *need* to assert anything—unless mere reminders, deliberate restatements of things that everyone already accepts and that nobody is about to question, are to be counted as assertions. Like Plato before him, Augustine thinks the human memory contains things the human senses are powerless to teach—the laws of number and dimension, the joy that can attend aligning one's human will with God's will—and he reads such things into the record of his meditations without offering arguments in their behalf (*Confessions* X, 9–12, Chadwick 187–190; X, 20–26, Chadwick 196–201).

Of course, preserving what one already knows about time and the like isn't the only task Augustine sets for himself. He is out to praise God, out to align his will with God's will, out to impress himself and his readers with the disparity between how we know about time and how God knows about it, out to defend and explain his conviction that we are made in God's image. And for these further purposes, he needs to produce statements that are neither the unasserted conclusions of unendorsed arguments nor mere reminders of things everyone is prepared to concede. Augustine's text contains real contentions, contentious contentions, and offers a reasoned defense for these contentions. But the defense it provides for them doesn't take the form of explicit premise-and-conclusion arguments in their behalf. The label "assertion-free investigation" needs to be taken with a grain of salt, at least when it comes to Augustine himself.

What if Wittgenstein is attempting something similar in the *Investigations*?

This conception of what Augustine and Wittgenstein are up to combines Platonic and Pyrrhonian features in a curious way. It harkens back to Plato, in that it portrays these thinkers as using well-timed reminders to recover and protect knowledge they *already* possess, *prior* to any investigation they conduct here and now. It harkens back to Pyrrho, in that it portrays them as making a purely defensive use of explicit philosophical arguments, with the result that they don't really endorse the conclusions of these arguments.

4. Of course, this could be just a loose way of saying that the narrator isn't wholly sure of what he says and is prepared to stand corrected: I'm feeling my way here, Father, stop me if I'm straying from the truth. But tentative assertion is still assertion, and the passage is more suggestive if we take it literally.

3. WITTGENSTEIN'S VOICES

Some such conception of assertion-free investigation informs David Stern's account of depicted conversational exchange in the *Investigations*.

It is commonly taken for granted that the conversational exchanges that make up the *Philosophical Investigations* take the form of a debate between two voices. One of them, usually identified as "Wittgenstein," supposedly sets out the author's views, while the other voice, usually identified as "the interlocutor," plays the role of the naïve stooge or fall guy. . . .

However, if one reads the *Philosophical Investigations* in this way, it then becomes hard to explain why "Wittgenstein" is also so dismissive of philosophical problems. . . . For the book also insists, in a voice that is clearly not the interlocutor's, that traditional philosophical problems are more like a disease than a question in need of an answer, and that the author's own approach to philosophy aims, not to solve those problems, but to dissolve or undo them—to get us to see that they are nonsense: [Here Stern cites PI §§38, 123, 119, 118, 133, 255]. . . .

Rather than attributing such a fundamental inconsistency to the author of the *Philosophical Investigations*, this book proposes that we distinguish between two different voices, voices which are usually lumped together as "Wittgenstein's." On the one hand we have the voice of Wittgenstein's narrator—who does argue for positive philosophical theses—and on the other hand we have Wittgenstein's commentator, the speaker of the lines quoted above, who dismisses philosophical problems and compares his way of doing philosophy to therapy. (Stern 2004, 3–5)

Rather than seeing [the arguments presented in the text] as exchanges between "Wittgenstein" and "his interlocutor," I propose that we see them as an exchange between a number of voices, none of which can be unproblematically identified with the author's. . . .

In addition to these opposing voices, voices that play different roles at different points in the text, we also meet with a third voice. This third voice, which is not always clearly distinct from the narratorial voice, provides an ironic commentary on their exchanges, a commentary consisting partly of objections to assumptions the debaters take for granted, and partly of platitudes about language and everyday life they have overlooked. Most readers treat both of these voices as expressions of Wittgenstein's views, with the result that they are unable to reconcile the trenchant and provocative theses advocated by the narrator and the commentator's rejection of all philosophical theses. . . .

Wittgenstein, I contend, provided [no solution] to the philosophical problems discussed in the *Philosophical Investigations*. Rather, he aimed to dissolve those problems by means of a dialogue between opposing voices, a dialogue in which the commentator comes closer to expressing the author's viewpoint than either of his leading protagonists do. (Stern 2004, 22–23)

On Stern's account, we need at least three depicted speakers to make sense of the text. We need at least one, possibly more than one, *interlocutor* to provide the

philosophical arguments, explanations, and justifications that suffer explicit defeat in the dialectical exchanges that constitute the bulk of the text. We need a *narrator*, who sets the scene for these exchanges and participates in them as their host and eventual winner. Some of the narrator's victories come with suspicious ease, thanks to a home court advantage reminiscent of that enjoyed by the followers of Socrates in the dialogues of Plato. Be that as it may, the narrator is the depicted author and depicted advocate of arguments, explanations, and justifications that contest, refute, and improve upon those presented by the interlocutor(s). Finally we need a *commentator* who sits back and observes the passing argumentative show, offering cryptic admonitions to the participants—"don't think, but look!" (PI §66); "Just try—in a real case—to doubt someone else's fear or pain!" (PI §303)—and making aphoristic general claims about the nature of philosophy, philosophical problems, philosophical progress, and the like. Claims that what pass for convictions in philosophical discussion are really disabling obsessions, that what it takes to dispel them isn't refutation but some kind of therapeutic intervention; that in philosophy it is always beside the point to advance a controversial thesis or proffer a substantive explanation of why or how something happens; that philosophy properly practiced leaves everything—at least, everything genuinely doctrinal—as it is.

Some interpreters either tune out the commentator in favor of the narrator (much as we might tune out the cheerleaders in our efforts to pay closer attention to the game that's being won or lost out on the floor, behind and entirely apart from their noisy and colorful antics) or tacitly equate the voice rattling on about philosophy in general (the commentator) with the voice that gets the upper hand in individual dialectical exchanges (the narrator). Either way, narrator and commentator would be on the same side, so to speak; both would speak for Wittgenstein himself, even if they did so from slightly different perspectives governed by slightly different standards of what's properly sayable and genuinely worth saying. Interpret the text this way and you'll be inclined like Dummett to treat PI §43 as announcing "Wittgenstein's *doctrine that meaning is use*"; inclined like Kripke to treat PI §§256ff. as "Wittgenstein's *argument against the possibility of a private language*."

There are at least two problems with this "one side, two voices" approach to the text. One is that the observations of the commentator seem to repudiate *both* the practice of the interlocutor *and* the practice of the narrator, since the narrator himself offers arguments, explanations, justifications—"theses"—many of which remain standing, unrefuted, at the end of the depicted dialectical exchange. The other is that the commentator's contentions about philosophy are so sweeping, a reasoned defense of them would require considerations much more general and much more powerful than any the narrator explicitly provides.

These considerations aren't conclusive by any means. Perhaps the commentator's remarks aren't to be taken literally; perhaps they are over-the-top color commentary on the narrator's genuine, anything-but-Pyrrhic, anything-but-Pyrrhonian dialectical victories. Or perhaps we are to reconcile the letter of what the narrator says (by way of specific contentions about philosophical matters at odds with those

of the interlocutor) with the letter of what the commentator says (about the futility of philosophical contentions) by urging that not all contentions about philosophical matters are philosophical contentions: the refutation of a philosophical argument needn't be a philosophical argument in its own right, and the denial of a philosophical thesis needn't be a philosophical thesis in its own right. To make the "one side, two voices" approach stick, we'd need a suitably subtle account of what makes a thesis or argument *philosophical* in the sense Wittgenstein inveighs against.

The same goes, it seems to me, for the alternative, "assertion-free investigation" approach hinted at by Augustine and advocated by Stern.

This approach would have Wittgenstein siding with his commentator against his own narrator. No doubt there is some sort of special bond between commentator and narrator. Perhaps the commentator thinks the narrator comes as close to being where one should be, philosophically speaking, as one can hope to get without renouncing philosophical dogma for good. Perhaps he views the narrator as his own younger self. Nevertheless, the commentator's metaphilosophical asides signal that there is something provisional or downright hollow about his protégé's victories; they warn the narrator (and us) that the mode of attack he effectively mounts against the interlocutor can be remounted with equal effectiveness against him.

My sympathies are with Stern here: this is the path we need to follow if we are to take the later Wittgenstein at his word. But it is a winding path. If we are to walk it successfully, we mustn't assume that even the commentator speaks for Wittgenstein in all things. Philo doesn't always speak for Hume, and even Diotima stands corrected on certain crucial points by the reckless and drunken voice of Alcibiades. If the *Investigations* really is best understood as a philosophical dialogue, no single voice in it can be relied on to speak for its author every time it's heard from. And there are times when Wittgenstein's commentator sounds just as intemperate, just as reckless, just as subject to temptation as the other voices audible in the text.

What is perhaps more important, to the extent that the commentator does speak for Wittgenstein himself, Wittgenstein himself is committed to contentions about the nature of philosophy, philosophizing, and philosophical theses. And although a few of these contentions may be well-timed Augustinian reminders of things everyone will be prepared to concede, not all of them are. Many of them are contentious contentions, contentions Wittgenstein has to defend somehow if we are to take them at all seriously. So not every contentious contention about philosophical matters, not every contentious contention about philosophy itself, can count as a philosophical thesis in the sense Wittgenstein inveighs against. Which ones do? Let me venture a suggestion about this.

4. THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE

In our investigations of the natural world we encounter a wide variety of substantive necessities and tendencies in the behavior of material things, the behavior of

animals, the conduct of human beings. We cite these necessities and tendencies after the fact, in the course of efforts to understand what happens in the natural world, and we consult them before the fact, in the course of efforts to control or constrain what will happen there next.

In our public social dealings with one another we encounter a wide variety of substantive proprieties and improprieties in our treatment of our fellow human beings, our treatment of ourselves, our employment of tools and implements, our use of words and numerals and other signs. We cite these proprieties and improprieties after the fact, in evaluating our own actions and those of our fellow agents, and we consult them before the fact, in considering and planning out what to do next.

In what do these necessities and tendencies, proprieties and improprieties, consist? And what is it about *us* that puts us in touch with *them* so as to be able to cite them, consult them, or refer to them for any purpose whatsoever? In their differing ways or senses, necessities, tendencies, proprieties, and improprieties purport to *govern* the natural world in which we find ourselves, the social order we build and maintain together, or both. Yet it can seem as if the public natural world and public social order can't literally *contain* their purported governors. The public natural world is exhausted by what it contains and what actually happens therein, and the public social order is exhausted by what it contains and what is actually done therein. The world is all that is the case: to specify the world's contents, to specify the world, the declarative mood is the only mood we need. But how can what *does* happen constitute or even settle what *must* or merely *tends to* happen? And how can what *is* done constitute or even settle what *should* or *shouldn't* be done?

We thus appear to be dealing with relations of constraint, influence, and rule-giving between the public natural world and public social order (on the one hand) and something else (on the other), something residing elsewhere that is brought to bear on the natural world and brought to bear on the public social order by the individual human mind in the course of ordinary theoretical and practical thinking. To get clear about the nature and status and place of residence of this something else residing somewhere else, we need to execute a strategic retreat from both the public natural world and public social order. We need to commune more closely with our own mental representations and our own mental activity in that Fortress of Solitude that is the individual human mind.

The hope is that one of two things will become clear to us when we do so. Perhaps the individual human mind enjoys some sort of extrasensory access to a mind-independent supersensible realm whose contents embody the necessities and tendencies, proprieties and improprieties we are striving to understand. (Such is the outcome announced by various forms of platonism in philosophy of mathematics.) Or perhaps the human mind itself embodies those necessities and tendencies, proprieties and improprieties; perhaps the constraint, influence, and rule-giving we are struggling to understand are products of our own mental activity, things we ourselves provide as we impose various sorts of needed or desirable order on our own mental representations as we endeavor to study the natural world, our

own urges and impulses as we endeavor to inhabit the public social order. (Such is the outcome announced in one way and for one set of reasons by Hume and the naturalistic psychologistic logicians who followed in his wake, in a second way and for a second set of reasons by Rousseau, Kant, and the German idealists.)

We have here the makings of a special and rather compelling literary genre. In stories of this genre, a narrator/hero secludes himself in order to renew and refound his working understanding of human knowledge, human action, and the place therein of various necessities and tendencies, proprieties and improprieties. He proposes to manage this by carefully and deliberately *watching himself think*, inwardly monitoring the arrangements and rearrangements of internal mental representations that constitute his own thought processes as he thinks through the fundamentals of his situation as a natural and social being. A work in this genre consists of alternating episodes of abstract thinking and narrated inward self-observation: first the hero thinks something, then he reports what he catches himself doing in order to think it, confident that if he does this scrupulously enough, the account he gives of what goes on in him as he constructs his train of thought will fit what goes on in us as we follow it equally well. Classics of the genre include Descartes' *Meditations*, Hume's *Treatise*, the "Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar" in Rousseau's *Emile*, William James's *Principles of Psychology*, and of course, Augustine's *Confessions*.

When Wittgenstein sets out to oppose *philosophical* explanations and *philosophical* justifications in the *Investigations*, I take him to mean: explanations and justifications formulated in Fortress of Solitude terms, in response to perceived Fortress of Solitude needs. His opposition to philosophical thesis-mongering—to the propounding of distinctively philosophical explanations and the offering of distinctively philosophical justifications—sounds two themes over and over. The first is that contrary to what we easily suppose, the natural world as we find it is a fit home for necessities and tendencies and the social order a fit home for proprieties and improprieties, *as they stand*. The second is that all that really swims before the eye of the mind when we resolve to inspect our own thinking while we think, inspect our own expectancy while we wait for someone, or for that matter inspect our own suffering while we are in pain are bits of voluntary mental imagery, "illustrated turns of speech" inspired by but utterly distinct from the states of mind we purport to be inspecting (PI §295). The thinking itself, the expectancy itself, the suffering itself aren't subject to inspection at all—by their owner, at any rate.

The first of these themes comes to a head in the twin climaxes of what has come to be called *the rule-following considerations*: PI §202, with its invocation of customs, usages, institutions, *practices*; and PI §270, where it is suggested that a rule or practice is determinate in its dictates when and only when it possesses a sufficiently determinate point or purpose or use.

The second theme comes to a head in PI §§304–308, where Wittgenstein condemns the idea that thinking, expecting, remembering, suffering, and the rest are *inner* processes, subject to first-person inspection on Fortress of Solitude terms.