REVIEW DISCUSSION

GETTING INTO WITTGENSTEIN'S PHILOSOPHY

A. G. E. Blake

The Foundations of Wittgenstein's Late Philosophy by Ernst Konrad Specht, translated by D. E. Walford. Manchester University Press 1969 at 42 shillings.

Dr. Specht has made an exposition of a Wittgenstein who is not the severe logical atomist of the *Tractatus,* nor even simply the man who claimed his intention in philosophy was to "cure a kind of mental cramp". Wittgenstein is here a philosopher with a message, in the sense that his philosophical work points out an ontology and provides a method for its articulation. Since the ontology of Wittgenstein can neither be summarized nor categorized, all Dr. Specht can do—and in fact has done—is to lead the reader to the point where the ontological investigation is, so to say, in progress. Though Specht himself does not put it in this way, we could say that his book is a guide to the Philosophical Investigations that opens a doorway for the reader to the later remarks which question, suggest, and experiment in an attack on concrete issues such as the nature of mental states, the foundations of mathematics, the role of intention in language and so on.

Most people, even those without philosophical skill, are stirred by Wittgenstein's power of expression and the cogency of his remarks; and in struggling to grasp the point of a remark, there is opportunity for an insight that cannot be acquired by a passive acceptance of 'what is said' nor by reading an explanation. The *Philosophical Investigations* is an intellectual maelstrom deceptive in its outward modesty—but it has the property of expelling the lazy reader (and we are usually such) back onto the surface of language: what has to be done by each reader is to create his own structure out of the complexity. Wittgenstein prefaces the Investigations by this admission:

"After several unsuccessful attempts to weld my results together into such a whole, I realized that I should never succeed. The best that I could write would never be more than philosophical remarks. And this was, of course, connected with the very nature of the investigation. For this compels us to travel over a wide field of thought criss-cross in every direction —the philosophical remarks in this book are, as it were, a number of sketches of landscapes which were made in the course of these long and involved journeyings."

In other words: there can be no ordered exposition of this philosophy.

Then what is Specht (and countless others) up to? Obviously, the commentary or interpretation is incomplete without the original which is its subject; and in that sense we can say that all commentaries are appendices to be incorporated into the original text as it pleases the reader. As we have intimated, this particular interpretation of Wittgenstein's later philosophy leaves the reader just at the threshold of the ontology which is the main theme of the interpretation. It therefore constitutes a suggestion for the activity of the reader of the Investigations: worthy enough, certainly, of being taken seriously as a direction for research; but lacking in instrumentation—which is taken for granted. But can we any longer take this instrumentation for granted? Is not the very issue at stake—with our high regard for the philosophical work of Wittgenstein—one of instrumentation as much as direction? To put the point more explicitly (but more crudely) are we not concerned with what the method of language-games can do and show, rather than with a theory of what the method implies?

Wittgenstein himself says: "we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. We must do away with all explanation, and description alone must take its place" (P.I.109).

Dr. Specht comments:

". . . when Wittgenstein makes this demand, then, every individual point in it runs counter

to his own conception of language, which is a theory that has hypothetical moments and is used to explain certain phenomena." (p. 190).

It is true enough that such implications can be found, but is it the point? To draw a parallel, was not Newton right in saying "hypotheses non fingo" when he introduced, in the Principia, mathematical physics to a population whose minds were full of corpuscles and mechanisms? However, we have in this book a great deal of useful work. Reducing it to its minimum, the book presents an arrangement of fragments from Wittgenstein's text that in itself provides illumination. This is, in fact, the common underlying technique in all exposition, but rarely so important as in the case of Wittgenstein's work, which has no obvious order and cannot be divided into separate discussions. Dr. Specht in his grouping of quotations has made use of a number of themes which enables him to discuss Wittgenstein's work in relation to traditional philosophical concerns and with contemporary work (especially in linguistics) and also enables him to build up his ontological interpretation. The chapter headings are these:

> The atomic model of language.
> The language game as model-concept in Wittgenstein's theory of language.
> The ontological and epistemological presuppositions of the signification function.
> The ontological background to the problem of meaning.
> The constitution of objects in language.

In this review, we wish to put forward some of the arguments and interpretations of Dr. Specht in such a way that the reader can enter into the activity of interpretation in a simulated discussion based on just these quotations used by him. It is hoped that enough of the spirit of the Investigations will be aroused to enable the reader to judge for himself the usefulness of Specht's interpretation—what follows is in the nature of experiment. The technique to be used is that of structural communication and the reader unfamiliar with the technique is asked to be patient in acquiring skill in the rules of this 'communication-game'.

On pages 184-185 there is a folding out sheet on which are printed twenty of the quotations used by Specht. We can follow Specht's interpretation in terms of a selective attention on the quotations; as when we, as readers of the Investigations, move from considering what Wittgenstein said to what he meant. To put ourselves in a position to appraise the merits or interest of Specht's interpretation, we have to simulate his activity in ourselves. The device is simple. The reader is given an indication of one of Specht's lines of thought and asked to justify this line of thought by making a selection from the twenty quotations offered. He can then find out the validity of his justification in terms of Specht's own arguments by means of a simple key that is provided.

SPECHT'S INVESTIGATION OF THE INVESTIGATIONS

1. *Away from the atomic model of language*

Dr. Specht begins his interpretation with an exposition of the atomic model of language. His main figures are Aristotle and the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus-Logico-Philosophicus*.

"The simple signs employed in propositions are called names. A name means an object. The object is its meaning. ... In a proposition a name is the representative of an object." (3.202, 3.20, 3.22).

This strict adherence to the schema sign-object is complemented by an account of "signs belonging to symbolism of language". Thus, for example:

"In a tautology the conditions of agreement with the world—the representational relations—cancel one another, so that it does not stand in any representational relation to reality" (4.462).

Aristotle, apart from his special considerations of the terms 'being' 'entity' 'identity', etc. tended to treat every signifying sign as having a substantial reference, even qualities of things and relations. Specht describes the followers of Aristotle's approach as divided into two schools of thought: the 'Realists' adhering to the view that for every signifying expression there exists a substantial something; and the 'Nominalists', who endeavoured to reduce the number of entities involved in constructing the theory of language.

Specht sums up Aristotle's thesis as: "a definite thing corresponds to every categometric expression" and points out the obvious ontological difficulties which come out from such a thesis. Wittgenstein in the Investigations uses a completely different starting point for his

exposition of language—that of the "language-game"—but this involves a criticism of the atomic model. Dr. Specht refers at many points to this criticism with which he concurs.

If the reader would refer to the tabulation of quotations, he should be able to find a sub-set which illustrates Wittgenstein's criticism of the atomic view. After due consideration of the possibilities, he should then turn to the next pages where he will be able to compare his assessment with one based on Dr. Specht's book.

If you have included item 1, read this:

The whole of the first paragraph of remark 71 reads:
"One might say that the concept 'game' is a concept with blurred edges—but is a blurred concept a concept at all?"—Is an indistinct photograph a picture of a person at all? Is it even always an advantage to replace an indistinct picture by a sharp one? Isn't the indistinct one often exactly what we mean?"

One might say that the intentional adaptation of a 'blurred concept' is a fundamental departure from the tradition of the atomic model and hence is an implied criticism. This is not a point suggested by Dr. Specht.

If you have omitted 4, 6 or 16, read this:

In these remarks, Wittgenstein is making an attack on the core material of the atomic model—ostensive definition and meaning. Remark 41 is discussing the situation when a tool labelled 'N' is broken, so that it no longer exists; yet, since the command 'N'—which means "bring the tool labelled 'N' "—can be responded to—by a shake of the head—which signifies that the tool no longer exists—the sign 'N' still has a place in the language game and, hence, a definite meaning. Here is, first of all, an attack on the Realist interpretation. Indirectly, we have a criticism, also, of Nominalism by demonstrating the use of a name—with a definite meaning—that is neither a reference to something nor the converse. Wittgenstein's main attack on notions of ostensive definition revolves around the point that ostensive definition can only work when the 'grammar' of propositions incorporating the ostensibly defined signs is grasped. In actuality, children are not taught their mother language by pointing to things and naming them: this is only useful after something of the structure of the language has been absorbed (or invented) and the role of words understood.

In the chapter "The ontological and epistemological presuppositions of the signification function" Specht describes Wittgenstein's analysis of ostensive definition. First of all, ostensive training—in the sense of just pointing and saying the associated word—will not lead to understanding unless the pointing is a natural part of the language-game in which the words are used. Secondly, ostensive definition—i.e. of the form "this is . . ."—can always "be misunderstood" (p. 1 footnote). The only effective communication is of the form "This number is called 'two' " (29), which presupposes acquaintance with the use of several words.

Hence the model: sign-object is unworkable as an explanation of how the use of words is learnt and this casts serious doubts on the atomic model as such.

If you have omitted 5 and 19, read this:

Specht makes a great deal of Wittgenstein's use of the formula "the word . . . signifies ..." The point here is very important indeed. In remark 10 he draws attention to a question hardly raised before: what are we asking for when we demand an explanation of the meaning of a word? And Wittgenstein, instead of reverting to a theory, answers the question by reference to the kinds of thing present in actual practice with all its complexity.
"... w/wt is to show what they signify, if not the kind of use they have?"

Why is this a criticism of the atomic model? The latter attempts to set up an overall model—and it is just in that that error arises. In remarks 18 and 23 Wittgenstein is directly attacking the simplification of the atomic model. We can also refer here to remark 23:
"It is interesting to compare the multiplicity of the tools in language and of the maps that are used, the multiplicity of kinds of word and sentence, with what logicians have said about the structure of language (including the author of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*)"; and connect these remarks with his attack on the notion of ostensive definition (see quotation 6).

If you have included 10, 11 or 12, read this:
These three quotations have a central theme in Wittgenstein's notion of 'grammar', to which

Specht devotes a number of pages. There are difficulties in this notion, but these are not of immediate concern to us at this stage. The general proposition "Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is" is illustrated in two ways: in the grammatical proposition "this body has extension" and in the analysis of 'the grammar of the expression of sensation'. Only the latter has direct relevance as a criticism of the atomic model which is largely based on the model of 'object and designation'. Quotation 11 should be accompanied by quotation 8 in order to have the full sense of the criticism which is both linguistic and ontological. If we follow the use of the word sensation we find ostensible components which effectively make sensation itself a non-object: the 'outward criteria' constitute the only objects which fit the model of 'object and designation'. This idea is to be found also in quotation 14.

If you have included 15, read this:

This remark shows Wittgenstein tackling the problem which faces anybody who concerns himself with the signification of words—plurality of meanings. At the same time, it is an exemplification of his thesis "essence is expressed by grammar". However, here we are wholly "inside". Wittgenstein's own frame of reference of language-games, grammar and use and there is no specific criticism of the atomic model.

If you have included 19, read this:
Here we are very far away indeed from criticism of the atomic model. Dr. Specht looks to such remarks for support of his thesis that Wittgenstein's philosophy does have an ontological concern.

2. The problem of the definability of the term "language-game"

There has been a great deal of discussion on the usefulness of the notion of "language-game"—both critical and appreciative. As Dr. Specht points out, by and large, those people, involved in linguistics and linguistic philosophy have similar thoughts and philosophers who object to the word 'game' are being, perhaps, rather carping. The whole of the *Philosophical Investigations*, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* and the *Blue and Brown notebooks* are devoted to demonstrations of the meaning of the term 'language-game'. Attempting to form a single conception of its meaning may be in principle the wrong strategy, but most people would agree that there is something elusive about the term. Specht draws out a number of useful points about Wittgenstein's notion: a language-game is inseparable from human action; a language-game is an instrument for some purpose; the notion of language-game enables us to analyse language "into definite concrete entities that can be examined in relative isolation." (p. 53).

These points do not resolve the difficulties—these are inherent in the complexity of language itself. We should look at Wittgenstein's remarks and apprise for ourselves the problem of the definability of the term language-game. What quotations would the reader select as making a challenge to his understanding of the term?

If you have omitted 1, read this:

It seems to us that right from the beginning Wittgenstein is insisting that no cut and dried model of language can ever prove adequate. Specht refers to the writings of Weisberger who distinguishes the ergon and the energia of language. The former is language as a completed thing, an object, dead. The latter refers to language as an activity, in process, alive. Supporting this we can add that where concepts are most precise—as in physics, for example—'the world' is a set of unmoving states in which transitions are never described. However, with no fixed model, what do we do? Here is something very important to Wittgenstein's method which is a challenge to all model-making and its attendant atomism—these latter being our habitual modes of thought.

If you have included 9, 12 or 20, read this:

These quotations are more in the character of results than in preliminaries but they do reveal, when considered together, a great deal of the anatomy of the language-game. Quotation 9 is deceptively simple with its well-known slogan "the meaning of a word is its use in the language." At first sight we seem to have a kind of reductionism—meaning is 'only' use,

Specht writes:

"It is certainly true that in his analyses Wittgenstein brings signification function and word use into the closest relationship: what a word signifies can be derived exclusively from the use of the word concerned. Assertions about use for Wittgenstein thus underline the application of the sentence schemes: "The word . . . signifies . . ." But this binding of a proposition about signification function to propositions about word usage still does not amount to a reduction." (pp. 87-8).

Dr. Specht devotes some space to a discussion of the ambiguities in the term 'use' and tries to bring out the important features of the method involved in Wittgenstein's approach. On Page 76 Specht says:

"The use of a word is ... the only access to the signification function of the word concerned."

This explanation can help us in understanding quotation 20 and its insistence on "description alone". Quite literally Wittgenstein is saying: how a word is used is everything about its meaning. At the same time, he constantly makes use, implicitly or explicitly, of a distinction between superficial and intelligent acquaintance with the use of a word. In remark 664, Wittgenstein is explicit about this:

"In the use of words one might distinguish 'surface grammar' from 'depth grammar' . . . compare the depth grammar, say of the word "to mean" with what its surface grammar would lead us to suspect. No wonder we find it difficult to know our way about." This remark is important to bear in mind when considering the meaning of quotation 12.

Each of the terms 'use', 'grammar', and 'description' raise queries in their wake. Wittgenstein might well have prepared some of his remarks to be taken as explanations. The point is that certain immediate clarifications are brought about by the use of these 'indistinct' concepts; but these in their turn are deceptive—the real work is yet to come. The remarks quoted in 9, 12 and 20 then do constitute a challenge—when the reader has grasped that behind all of them is the 'language-game' concept which enables the quoted propositions to make sense.

If you have omitted 2, 5 or 17, read this:

In these quotations, Wittgenstein is pointing out the 'spontaneity' and complexity of language games in their actuality. There is some ambiguity in his discussion of the notion of language-game both as an abstraction (the two builders' language game) and as the 'real thing'. At one point in the *Investigations* he says:

"The language-games are rather set up as objects of comparison which are meant to throw light on the facts of our language by way not only of similarities but also of dissimilarities" (130), which somewhat clashes with quotation 2. However, the point here is this: if the concept of the 'language-game' is to accommodate 'spontaneity', 'complexity' and 'ways of seeing' then it itself is something pretty 'deep'. Specht discusses in some detail the conventionalist interpretation of the 'spontaneity' of language-games. He points out the rules cannot be arbitrary in the sense that "if you commit yourself, there are consequences" (Moore Lectures, p. 7). Further, there is always the prior existence of rules in language which, practically, cannot be ignored. Specht does not make reference to Wittgenstein's early discussion of the game-concept in the *Investigations*, which contains some illuminating material:

". . . someone might object against me: 'You take the easy way out! You talk about all sorts of language-games, but have nowhere said what the essence of a language-game, and hence of language, is: what is common to all these activities, and what makes them into language or parts of language. So you let yourself off the very part of the Investigation that once gave you yourself most headache, the part about the general form of propositions and of language'."

And this is true. Instead of producing something common to all that we call language, I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which we use the same word for all—but that they are related to one another in very different ways" (65).

"Consider for example the proceedings that we call 'games'. . . What is common to them all?—Don't say: 'There must be something common, or they would not be called 'games'—but look and see whether there is anything common to all. ... To repeat: don't think, but look!" (66).

"... 'But then the use of the word is unregulated, the 'game' we play with it is unregulated.'—It is not everywhere circumscribed by rules; but no more are there any rules for how high one throws the ball in tennis, or how hard; yet tennis is a game for all that and has

rules too." (68).

To understand something neither bounded nor unbounded in any obvious way is difficult. Specht does dwell on this point but neglects to say very much on Wittgenstein's passionate insistence "don't think, but look!" Here we would say that traditional philosophical methods are on the rack—which is demanding on us, too.

If you have included 7, read this:

This remark may seem to state the obvious, but Wittgenstein's insistence on it reminds us of his distinction between 'surface' and 'depth' grammar. Dr. Specht does not take up this point which leads us to the questions: how does Wittgenstein get into the depths? how does the notion of the 'language-game' serve this purpose?

If you have omitted 3 and 19, read this:

Dr. Specht draws many parallels between Wittgenstein's view of language and those of Weisberger, Whorf, De Saussare and others. Language is based in human praxis and is not something autonomous. However, Specht criticizes Wittgenstein on quotation 3 for completely ignoring the relevance of communication. After all, are 'forms of life' nothing but behaviour? We can agree that only with the proposition—that is, 'what people say'—does the criterion of right and wrong apply; we cannot think a wrong thought because thought does not entail the commitment entailed by saying something. There are no rules in thinking. But in considering communication, we consider the possibility of language instrumental to a mutual adjustment of intentions. What can be described is the language-game involved; but what can be seen is also this moment of agreement. Wittgenstein is right in expressing the conditions and character of our agreement, but gets dangerously near a reductionism.

What Wittgenstein means by a 'form of life' seems to be inaccessible except in the most simple cases. But 'the world itself is also inaccessible —according to quotation 19.

Dr. Specht discusses the problem of what is the 'substratum' of all language-games. Quotation 19 does suggest that there is a primal connection with the stuff of the world that's the base for the content of language. But this connection cannot be construed on the lines of raw sensations, since the language-game always involves a 'grammar' and "grammar tells us what kind of object anything is." Dr. Specht refers to Wittgenstein's discussion of the use of the word 'same' and quotes him as saying:

"For of course I don't make use of the agreement of human beings to affirm identity. What criterion do you use, then? None at all. To use the word without a justification does not mean to use it wrongfully," (*Foundations of Mathematics*, 184).

What can all this imply except 'a degree' of structural apprehension of the world which, at least, influences the constitution of a language-game?

"If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: This is simply what I do' " (217). As Specht points out, even though Wittgenstein himself turns away from metaphysical interpretations, he has certainly led us to the threshold of such interpretations. Dr. Specht, himself, only introduces the notion of an ontology and produces no corresponding metaphysical constructions.

3. The ontological interpretation of the signification function

On page 88 of his book, Dr. Specht asks:

"Could it not be that, although he (Wittgenstein) was always orientated towards word usage, he nevertheless allows a determination of the object signified, i.e. he admits the possibility of ontological assertions about the objects occurring in a language-game?"

This suggestion runs counter to the conclusions of e.g. Wisdom who claims, in so many words: "Wittgenstein taught philosophers to ask linguistic questions instead of ontological ones"; but it is crucial to Specht's line of interpretation. What is the evidence we can find in the quotations which lend support to this ontological view of Wittgenstein's method?

If you have omitted 8, 11, 13 or 14, read this:

We have grouped these four quotations together because of their mutual coherence. The quotation from remark 370 should be continued:

"And I am only saying that this question is not to be decided— neither for the person who

does the imagining, nor for anyone else— by pointing; nor yet by a description of any process. The first question also asks for a word to be explained; but it makes us expect a wrong kind of answer."

In this passage, directed against certain common misinterpretations, the possibility of a correct interpretation is presumed. Put more directly, there is an acceptance of an ontology of mental 'states'.

It may well be worthwhile restating Wittgenstein's argument in such a way as to bring out its general application.

I want to know what 'imagination is': I want to know what I am talking about when I use the word 'imagination'. When I have found out how I used the word imagination, I must therefore know what imagination 'is'.

Ontology is revealed by penetration into the language game in which the word is used.

The other quotations, especially quotation 14, clearly indicate that what is being attacked is not ontological determination but misapplication of grammars. Standing outside of Dr. Specht's discourse, we could say that in his treatment of inner, including bodily, experiences, Wittgenstein foreshadows the Merleau-Ponty of "Phenomenology of Perception". That which "is not a something, but not a nothing either" is, in phenomenology, related to intentionality.

Specht admits that people such as Strawson have used remarks such as remark 293 (quotation 11) to claim that Wittgenstein's 'strong thesis' was a denial that any words name 'private experiences'; but Specht again draws attention to Wittgenstein's obvious concern with misapplication of grammar.

"We have only rejected the grammar which tries to force itself on us here" (304).

If you have included 20 read this:

The appeal to description does perhaps entail the notion of describing something, but the inference is weak. As we have seen, the ontology of Wittgenstein—if we accept with Dr. Specht that there is such a thing— is elusive and description cannot be thought of along the lines of things in the world which are named. To interject an aphorism "what is said and what is seen can never coincide."

If you have included 10, 12 or 15, read this:

These quotations can be taken either way—for or against an ontological interpretation. Specht establishes an ontological interpretation only through an extended discussion of Wittgenstein's 'grammatical propositions'.

If you have omitted 17 or 19 read this:

Wittgenstein's remarks on the language for mental states could be taken as a restricted discussion on the 'mind-body problem'. The most general pointers to an ontology are to be found in quotations 17 and 19.

"What you have primarily discovered is a new way of looking at things". But is this new way, more correct, or 'deeper' than the old ways? How do we tell? By success in action? ". . . and if things were quite different from what they actually are ... this would make our normal language-games lose their point."

If we say: "the proof is in the success of action", we have to add: "but we don't see why this is so!"

"We do not command a clear view of the use of our words."

It is to our mind a real misfortune that Dr. Specht does not bring into his discussion material related to current work on the construction of new language-games in the sciences. Of course, Wittgenstein specifically disdains concern with special problems of the sciences. "Philosophy . . . leaves everything as it is. It also leaves mathematics as it is, and no mathematical discovery can advance it. A "leading problem of mathematical logic" is for us a problem of mathematics like any other" (124). Nevertheless, the attitude of mind which looks for language-games, sees "essence . . . expressed by grammar" and so on is so obviously present in contemporary research in the sciences. To quote a few very recent examples at random, we have the "Laws of Form" of Spencer-Brown, the "Objective Language" of Bennett, Bortoft and Pledge, the "axiomatic thermodynamics" of Giles and of Roberts and Luce and so on and so on. The moment of deliberately establishing a new language-game is of paramount importance to an understanding of Wittgenstein's method. But, he himself has to

reject an involvement in a specialized form of language-games, otherwise he is no longer doing philosophy.

Taking Wittgenstein's point on the variety of language-games, we could say that metaphysics should accommodate itself to this variety and the whole approach of traditional ontology is wrong. Ontology enters into a specialized family of language-games in ways belonging to that family. Generalization entails involvement in a grammar that is almost inevitably misleading.

We might conclude by saying: Wittgenstein does not deny ontology, he simply says that in what actually goes on—in what is said—there is all that ontology can be; the traditional activity of the philosopher was simply the imposition of a limited grammar on all the variety of cases with its inevitable points of confusion.

"Philosophy is a battle against the bewilderment of our intelligence by means of language" (109).

3. Theory of the grammatical proposition and the constitution of objects

Dr. Specht endeavours to bring out how the form of use of words determines what it is one is talking about. By 'form of use of words' we refer to what Wittgenstein designated 'grammar'.

"... our observations on the characteristic qualities of the concepts 'grammar' and 'grammatical proposition' already enables one to see that with these two concepts Wittgenstein implicitly throws up the whole question of the relationship between language and the world, between word usage and the structure of objects." (Specht, p. 153.)

"Like a priori propositions grammatical propositions refer to reality without being dependent on this reality in their truth value . . ." (Specht p, 153). Specht goes on to discuss Wittgenstein's descriptions of the drawing up of language-games incorporating new terms which group objects in definite ways. But he points out that the grammatical propositions involved are not necessarily analytic—in the strict sense.

We can turn the proposition "All bachelors are unmarried" into the proposition "All unmarried men are unmarried" by a direct substitution; but the proposition "There is no blueish orange" is synthetic, not subject to logical determination alone. Specht takes the argument further by a discussion of the proposition "One and the same surface cannot be blue and red at the same time". He argues that if we look into the rules of use of the terms 'red surface' and 'blue surface" it turns out that these must be mutually exclusive; so even synthetic-looking propositions can be viewed as analytic. He says:

"... a new group of objects is 'constituted' in a language-game simultaneously with the new linguistic sign. The a priori propositions express this unity of linguistic sign and object by simultaneously making an assertion about the objects constituted in the language-game and giving expression to the rules of usage of the words signifying these objects. For this reason, the a priori proposition is a 'grammatical' proposition, i.e. a proposition describing the grammar of a language-game." p. 159).

In an interesting footnote, Specht quotes from Waismann, one of the most perceptive philosophers in the discussion of language. The quotation concludes: "Language then contributes to the formation and participates in the constitution of a fact; which, of course, does not mean that it produces the fact." In some ways, this view if so obviously true: the proposition "the sky is blue" does not usually lead us to think of there being an object 'sky' which 'is being' a colour 'blue'; what we have is an example of a common mode of description that as a whole is factual without intervening ontological considerations. Specht does not consider the view that 'facts' are in some sense prior to 'objects'; and that our picture of 'objects in the world' is a kind of residue of the linguistic acts by which we apprehend 'what is the case'.

If you have omitted 12 or 17, read this:

The direct statement of the constituting character of grammar is in quotation 12. Grammar is for Wittgenstein, of course, something always specific; never the grammar. Dr. Specht refers (p. 148) to some of the examples given by Wittgenstein of grammatical propositions: "every rod has length", "my images are private", "only I myself can know whether I am feeling pain", "every body has extension" (251, 252), "an order orders its own execution". (458). The specificness of grammar is indicated by these examples. In each one of them, the sense of the proposition depends on the signification of the terms in it: we do not have a purely syntactical

account. That is why we have included in this comment a reference to quotation 17 where the relation between grammar and a 'way of looking at things' is clearly spoken. The reciprocity of a way of looking at things and what is spoken of is obvious but tantalizing hi its refusal to respond to analysis.

We must add that Dr. Specht is careful to bring out the association of 'grammar' with 'the rules of the usage of linguistic signs' both as the usage and the rules themselves. A 'grammatical proposition' is one that makes an assertion about something in correspondence with the rules.

We might say that the rules are limits or conditions and the use of signs are the mark of a connection with reality. Hence speaking differently entails seeing differently.

If you have included 10, read this:

This quotation is no more and no less than an exemplification of a grammatical proposition but it points out the a priori, necessary, character of such propositions. We cannot refute the proposition "This body has extension" without talking gibberish.

If you have omitted 6, read this:

We believe this quotation to be very useful in highlighting certain features of the theory of grammatical propositions. It is, of course, a remark in the context of a critique of the Augustinian theory of language; but in that critique, Wittgenstein says that the use o] words is made clear by grammatical propositions—e.g. "this number is called 'two' " (29).

This point is not made by Dr. Specht, but is raised here in anticipation of our concluding remarks.

If you have omitted 18, read this:

We should add the remark following: "The question is not one of explaining a language game by means of our experiences, but of noting a language-game." (655). Specht interprets remark 654 as an illustration of Wittgenstein's view that "language-games justify themselves simply because they are used, i.e. they are recognized as binding and are continually being used by the linguistic community concerned." (p. 171).

However, such remarks of Wittgenstein are also examples of where Wittgenstein considers the 'force' of a grammar to reside. If Dr. Specht wishes to give an ontological interpretation of Wittgenstein's philosophy, is he doing more than saying: "ontologies are thought"; and seeking to find a concert between this ontological thinking and Wittgenstein's portrayal of language-gaming?

THE FUNCTION OF PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Specht's final conclusions are intended as a rebuttal of some of Wittgenstein's own claims on the function of philosophy:

"Wittgenstein determines the function of philosophy as analytical and critical. . . . Greater stimulation and more fruitful ideas are to be found in his actual philosophising."

One of the most telling passages in the *Investigations* for the view that Wittgenstein saw philosophy as analytic is in remark 109, where he says:

"The (philosophical) problems are solved, not by giving new infor¬mation, but by arranging what we have always known."

But let us contrast this unambiguously analytic claim with other parts of the same remark:

"We must do away with all explanation and description alone must take its place. And this description gets its power of illumination—i.e. its purposes—from the philosophical problems. These are, of course not empirical problems; they are solved, rather, by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize these workings: in despite of an urge to misunderstand them."

"Illumination . . . in despite of an urge to misunderstand them". There is almost a ring of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries here; a Cartesian common reason shining through confusion, Locke clearing away the rubbish of previous generations. But Wittgenstein is more consistent. "The problems arising through a misinterpretation of our forms of language have the character of depth. They are deep disquietudes: their roots are as deep in us as the forms of our language and their significance is as great as the importance of language" (111).

Is it then this—that philosophy has to say what it is that people do in saying?

"When I talk about language (words, sentences, etc.) I must speak the language of every day. Is this language somehow too coarse and material for what we want to say? Then how is another one to be constructed? And how strange that we should be able to do anything at all with the one we have!

In giving explanations I already have to use language full-blown . . . this by itself shows that I can adduce only exterior facts about language.

Yes, but then how can these explanations satisfy us?—Well, your very questions were formed in this language, etc....

And your scruples are misunderstandings.

Your questions refer to words: so I have to talk about words. . ." (120).

To return to the notion that no new information is added by philosophy, we might well think of a grammar that is not specific. According to Wittgenstein, if no new information is adduced by a proposition it is entirely grammatical, yet if it were specific, there could be nothing distinctively philosophical. .But every grammar must be specific.

"The work of the philosopher consists in assembling reminders for a particular purpose." (127).

"Philosophy simply puts everything before us...." (126).

Look at the remarks themselves. The 'light dawns' for a reader, the mists clear away, what is involved in a contradiction is made clear. Yet are things the same? Why does Wittgenstein draw back from any assertions that philosophy can show something new?

"Something new (spontaneous, specific) is always a language-game" (p. 224).

At the same time, we cannot deny Wittgenstein his assertion that no new things are discovered:

"The aspects of things that are the most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. ... The real foundations of his enquiry do not strike a man at all. Unless that fact has at some time struck him—that this means: we fail to be struck by what, once seen, is most striking and most powerful" (129).

If philosophy can show what everybody knows it is something powerful indeed! There's the old phrase: "to know what one knows". Wittgenstein does not talk of philosophy on the lines of watching people using words like a detached Freudian analyst with a patient recounting dreams—he speaks of getting inside language, into the heart of 'saying', which is where everything that muddles us begins and where philosophy begins.

Dr. Specht fails to take Wittgenstein literally on the crucial point: Wittgenstein offers no model of language, no theory and no hypotheses— in the sense of: "... not a something, but not a nothing either" (304).

"The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to ... we now demonstrate a method, by examples; and the series of examples can be broken off." (133).

CAN THERE BE AN ONTOLOGY?

Wittgenstein's own pronouncement on this question might be: "as you like". Specht's interpretation of Wittgenstein, based on the view of the language-game as a model, quite well supports a 'Wittgensteinian ontology'—and well it might since an ontology is inherent in the model-view. A lot then seems to hinge on Wittgenstein's disavowal of theory.

Without this disavowal, Wittgenstein joins the ranks of linguistic researches—who, however significant they may be in their own right, do not share in his ultimate concern with philosophy.

We discussed the point that it is the most difficult thing in the world to find out what one is doing all the time. There is the story of the centipede who when asked by the frog which leg he started off with in walking, tripped and stumbled with confusion; and our philosophizing is largely a series of analogous muddles. Wittgenstein takes up the sequel to the story when the frog invites the centipede to the local and the centipede trots off without any difficulty: we already do in life what the philosopher fails to do in theorizing.

Between knowing and doing is language, and ontology is wholly in language.

In part vi of the *Investigations*, there is an amazing discussion of 'meaning' and of 'imagination', in which Wittgenstein describes how meaning is not at all like a picture, 'happens' instantaneously in the 'seeing of a meaning', and cannot be considered to endure or persist even though there has been an irreversible transition.

"If the meaning has occurred to you, now you know it, and the knowing began when it

occurred to you. Then how is it like an experience of imagining something?" (p. 176).

If we look on ontology as a matter of knowing we end up in an impasse. Take for example: "this object has extension". This we know. But what is it more than knowing that that with extension has extension? The point is in the application of the grammar. Looking at what we say we have a "categorical proposition according to a framework" to use Stephen Korner's description of metaphysics, and this is irrefutable in that framework. So long as the 'this' is correct (but it is very difficult to point at nothing!). In terms of 'how things are', we cannot get beyond knowing what we already know in our language. If we accept that the nearest we can get to the nature of things is in the meanings of our words —then we are thrown back on meaning as the base of any possible ontology.

Now Wittgenstein is time and again adamant that meaning cannot be considered in terms of having a picture; or as an 'atmosphere' which accompanies a word; and he is, as Dr. Specht well brings out, quite opposed to the model: sign—meaning—thing signified, which tends to make a 'third world' of meaning. Meaning is of the kind "... not a something, but not a nothing either."

We would say that meaning is not to be understood as a kind of object, but as exemplifying the mutual involvement of determination and freedom. Look at quotations 2 and 19 and then add to the picture quotations 9 and 17. Put into a sentence, we could sum up the totality of these: "Meaning is embedded in a language-game which, though in its origin is spontaneous, is true to the world in that it works and also in that it embodies a valid way of looking at things."

If we can speak of determination and freedom, we must consider our concern to be with will (rather than with being). Will has just that character "not a something, but not a nothing either".

In the Tractatus, we have read: "Of the will as subject of the ethical, we cannot speak". The will makes limits. We cannot speak about what makes limits, because it is only by way of there being limits that we can speak. Let us say; "Human beings make language-games and use them on the basis of seeing limits in the world; they set up rules out of which meaning arises as a recurrent adherence to grammatical limits". We must then add: "The seeing and the language-game creation are not consecutive, nor is there an hierarchical predominance of one over the other". Now for some further additions.

First of all, if ordinary language was inadequate to speak about the world, philosophy would also be inadequate. The fact of human beings being able to open their mouths to produce sentences is so profound that it overwhelms the differences between the utterances of poets and philosophers and the chatter of the market place. That is why ontology can have no special place in philosophy—people talk about things all the time—the problem is to be conscious of what is happening all the time.

Secondly, if a person has a profound vision of reality—and one that is more than a fragmentary glimpse quickly dying into an empty memory —he will be able to say what he sees. But, this does not entail that he will be able to communicate what he has seen. Let us be clear—perhaps simple-minded—about this. When Hallaj said: "I am God", those around him certainly grasped his meaning—as far as they were able. They did not see what he saw—but were able to detect a heresy and put him to death.

There is experience—crudely, what I see, think, feel etc.—which in itself is never communicated. It just would not make sense. If we could exchange experience we would be exchanging each other with each other. But, as Wittgenstein points out:

"I can know what someone else is thinking, not what I am thinking.

"It is correct to say "I know what you are thinking", and wrong to say "I know what I am thinking".

"(A whole cloud of philosophy condensed into a drop of grammar)" (p. 222).

We are here taking for granted that Wittgenstein's analysis of the language-games for 'private' experiences shows the real muddle of solipsism. Again, the important key in understanding this analysis is meaning.

"Meaning is as little an experience as intending" (p. 217).

"The intention with which one acts does not 'accompany' the action any more than the thought 'accompanies' speech. Thought and intention are neither 'articulated' nor 'non-articulated' " (p. 217). (We are interpreting 'thought' as it is used here to signify 'meaning').

What we can grasp from each other is meaning, not experience. We can so to say 'reshape' our experience through a grasp of meaning—as in listening to somebody's account of their suffering, or in reading a novel— but we do not take in another's experience. When we look at meaning itself, we find nothing.

"If God had looked into our minds he would not have been able to see there whom we were speaking of." (p. 217.)

We reiterate our interpretation: meaning has its 'locus' in the will; and as such is neither an experience nor a process of any kind.

"Meaning is not a process which accompanies a word. For no process could have the consequences of meaning." (p. 218).

Reference to will can help us to be clearer about the problem of the 'stuff' of language-games—i.e. what remains when all structuring is taken out. In the philosophy of Avecibron, for example, the formula is established that will 'creates' and/or 'divides' form from matter; and out of their re-integration, the multiplicity of being arises with its relativity of freedom. There is no form without matter and no matter without form. We cannot extrapolate either towards pure matter, or towards pure form—neither of these can exist; that is why they are coterminous with the will, which is "infinite in its essence, finite in its operations".

It may appear strange to invoke an 11th century philosopher in a discussion of Wittgenstein. However, Wittgenstein himself laboured so very hard to break away from the artificialities and narrowness of the philosophy current at that time and to open the doors to an appreciation of all that is said, that our best salutation can be by way of heresy, albeit of a modest kind.

Wittgenstein's monumental achievement was to discover the profound in the commonplace. However the method of analysis using language-games remains a monologue. How do we bring Wittgenstein's discovery into our communication? We have broken off our following of trails through the *Investigations* and have left our experiment in communication behind. The technical question remains: how can we incorporate into the philosophical text a device for thinking?

1. Is it even always an advantage to replace an indistinct picture by a sharp one? Isn't the indistinct one often exactly what we need? (71)	**2.** We remain unconscious of the prodigious diversity of all the everyday language-games because the clothing of our language makes everything alike. Something new (spontaneous, 'specific') is always a language-game, (p. 224)	**3.** What people say is right and wrong! and it is in *language* that people agree. This is no agreement of opinions but of forms of life. (24)
4. Nominalists make the mistake of interpreting all words as *names,* and so of not really describing their use. (383)	**5.** Our language can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses. (18) But how many kinds of sentence are there? Say assertion, question and command?— There are *countless* kinds . . . and this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all. (23)	**6.** The ostensive definition explains the use—the meaning—of the word when the overall role of the words in the language is clear. (30)
7. *We do not command a clear view* of the use of our words. (122)	**8.** An 'inner process' stands in need of outward criteria. (580)	**9.** Now what do the words of this language *signify?*—what is supposed to show what they signify, if not the kind of use they have? (10) For a *large*

		class of cases— though not for all—in which we employ the word "meaning" it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language. (43)
10. "This body has extension." To this we might reply: "Nonsense!"—but are inclined to reply "Of course!" —Why is this? (252)	**11.** If we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of "object and designation" the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant. (293)	**12.** Grammar tells what kind of object anything is. (373) *Essence* is expressed by grammar. (371)
13. One ought to ask, not what images are or what happens when one imagines anything, but how the word "imagination" is used. But that does not mean that I want to talk only about words. For the question as to the nature of the imagination is as much about the word "imagination" as my question is. (370)	**14.** But you will surely admit that there is a difference between pain - behaviour accompanied by pain and pain-behaviour without any pain? — Admit it? What greater difference could there be?— And yet you again and again reach the conclusion that the sensation itself is a *nothing*— Not at all. It is not a *something,* but not a *nothing* either! The conclusion was only that a nothing would serve just as well as a something about which nothing could be said. We have only rejected the grammar which tries to force itself on us here. (304)	**15.** "Of course I mean the same thing: *one!"* (Perhaps raising one finger.) Now has "1" a different meaning when it stands for a measure and when it stands for a number? If the question is framed in *this* way, one will answer in the affirmative. (552, 533)
16. In this way the command "N" might be said to be given a place in the language-game, even when the tool no longer exists, and the sign "N" to have meaning, even when its bearer ceases to exist. (41)	**17.** You have a new conception and interpret it as seeing a new object. You interpret a grammatical movement made by yourself as a quasi-physical phenomenon which you are observing. . . . But there is an objection to my saying that you have made a 'grammatical' movement. What you have primarily discovered is a new way of looking at things. (401)	**18.** Our mistake is to look for an explanation where we ought to look at what happens as a 'proto-phenomenon'. That is, where we ought to have said: *this language-game is* played. (654)
19. . . . . if things were quite different from what they actually are . . . . this would make our normal language-games lose their point. (142)	**20.** We must do away with all *explanation,* and description alone must take its place. (109)	