



The New Wittgenstein, eds. Alice Crary and Rupert Read (Routledge) £17.99/\$29.99

In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein famously claims: 'The right method of philosophy would be this: To say nothing except what can be said, i.e. the propositions of natural science, i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy: and then always, when someone else wished to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had given no meaning to certain signs in his propositions.'

Many of his readers have taken this as implying that he was, together with Russell, Carnap and others, in the business of 'logical analysis', of sorting out reasonable talk from 'metaphysical rubbish'. On the other hand, during the later phases of his development we find Wittgenstein saying things which are scarcely compatible with such an understanding of his efforts. As he himself once put it, he comes to be 'in a sense making propaganda for one style of thinking as opposed to another' (and needless to say that 'making propaganda' and carrying out logical analyses are enterprises almost opposed to each other).

Some philosophers interpreted the late Wittgenstein, despite such pronouncements, as still pursuing ends constitutive of Russellian analytic philosophy, only by rather nonstandard – sometimes perhaps even extravagant – means. This appears to be the position of Saul Kripke in his influential *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*; but also of some of the most vigorous Kripke's critics, such as G P Baker and P M S Hacker. Other philosophers

have urged that the late Wittgenstein cannot be seen as merely using 'non-analytic' means, but also as pursuing 'non-analytic' ends – that his later writings cannot be really understood if we do not realise that Wittgenstein's struggle for the delimitation of 'the bounds of sense' is not animated by his will to secure a firm, nonsense-free ground for science or rational philosophy, but rather by his fascination by what is *beyond* the bounds. Stanley Cavell's book *The Claim of Reason* is a good example of such 'non-analytic' reading of the late Wittgenstein.

Although reading Wittgenstein's later writings in this 'non-analytic' way is no longer considered extravagant or controversial, it has been almost universally accepted that it implies rendering him as completely changing his views between his early and his late stage. It was the realisation of the futility of his own earlier analytic zeal, so the story usually goes, that made him assume his later standpoint. What is *new* on the Wittgenstein as portrayed by the majority of the essays in the volume reviewed here is that he is taken to be assuming the 'non-analytic' standpoint from the very beginning.

The first part of the book concentrates on Wittgenstein's later philosophy, and is a bit heterogeneous. The core of the volume is constituted by the second part, which concentrates on the early Wittgenstein. There, philosophers led by Cora Diamond and James Conant try to overthrow the received wisdoms about the sense of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. It is well known that in the end of that text Wittgenstein claims that his sentences are in fact nonsensical: but it has been usually as-

sumed that what was meant by this is that although these sentences cannot *say* what they seem to say, they do have a point in that they manage to somehow *show* it. Diamond, Conant and their followers argue that the purpose of the *Tractatus* is not to show something unspeakable, but rather to develop a certain ('metaphysical') viewpoint only to let us see that it is *utterly* nonsensical.

How does such a reading of Wittgenstein fare in comparison with the standard one? The writers of the essays, I think, succeed in showing that it is not too implausible, and they succeed in using it to throw new and unexpected light on many of the things Wittgenstein says. However, as Hacker, whose paper comprises the third part of the book, takes pain to show, it would be hard to make it compatible with the entire body of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*-related texts and pronouncements. (Wittgenstein, for example, kept referring to what he had said within the *Tractatus* as *his (earlier) views* – not as something he put on paper only in the role of 'devil's advocate').

Hence Hacker's analysis, as far as I can see, shows quite convincingly that the way to read Wittgenstein propagated within the *New Wittgenstein* cannot be *the right* way to read him. However, the question is whether there is *any* 'right' way to do so; and if not, then the further question is whether even presenting *a* way to read him, if it is succeeds in opening a new and stimulating vista, is not something to achieve. I, for one, would vote for a negative answer to the former question and for the positive one to the latter.

PM

No change

Jaroslav Peregrin on a valuable but flawed account of Wittgenstein's intellectual consistency