

9 Wittgenstein and Wittgensteinians on religion

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I

Wittgenstein once remarked, 'I am not a religious man: but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view.'¹ Though he wrote very little about either religion or ethics, it is true that a sensibility to and concern for broadly speaking ethical and religious matters is pervasive in almost all of his work. He wrote extensively about language, meaning, intentionality, mind, consciousness, the self, logic, mathematics and necessity, but woven into all these considerations, which have been central to the main historical tradition of philosophy, is a religious and ethical concern. Perhaps it is better characterized as an intense ethico-religious concern, for when he speaks of ethics it is always in a distinctively religious way. But this would be badly understood if it were taken, after the fashion of Richard Braithwaite and R.M.Hare, to be a reductive view of religion in which religion is viewed as morality touched with emotion associated with certain traditional narratives which may or may not be believed.² Wittgenstein linked ethics and religion tightly. But, as we shall see, his thinking here was very different from that of the reductive, basically straightforwardly ethical accounts of religion of Braithwaite and Hare.

It should also be noted that Wittgenstein did not write treatises or even articles on either ethics or religion and that he did not even discuss the topics that moral philosophers normally consider. Moreover, it is clear that he would have regarded both philosophy of religion and ethical theory with great suspicion and even with disdain. John Hyman rightly observes: 'Wittgenstein's influence in the philosophy of religion is due to scattered remarks, marginalia, and students' notes. He never intended to publish any material on the subject, and never wrote about it systematically.'³ But all of that, as I will try to make plain, does not gainsay the import of my opening quotation from him.

In understanding what Ludwig Wittgenstein has to say about religion, or indeed about anything else, it is crucial to understand how Wittgenstein proceeded in philosophy and why he proceeded in that way. Here we must see that and how Wittgenstein was remarkable in generating and carrying

out two revolutions in philosophy, the latter one dismantling the philosophical practices, techniques and conceptions of the former while keeping a very similar metaphilosophical conception of the aim of philosophical activity. It is not an exaggeration to say, as P.M.S.Hacker does, that ‘Ludwig Wittgenstein...was the leading analytical philosopher of the twentieth century. His two philosophical masterpieces, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921) and his posthumous *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), changed the course of the subject.’⁴ Hacker goes on to observe that

the first was the primary origin of the ‘linguistic turn’ in philosophy, and inspired both logical positivism and Cambridge analysis in the interwar years. The second shifted analytic philosophy away from the paradigm of depth-analysis defended in the *Tractatus* and cultivated by logical positivists...and Cambridge analysts toward the different conception of ‘connective analysis’, which was a primary inspiration of Oxford analytic philosophy...⁵

However, this remark of Hacker’s, while saying something importantly on the mark, is also in a way misleading, for not only in tone and attitude, but in method and aim Wittgenstein was very different from Rudolf Carnap or Hans Reichenbach (positivists) on the one hand and Gilbert Ryle or Peter Strawson (Oxford analysts) on the other. Wittgenstein would have rejected the ‘scientific philosophy’ of Carnap and Reichenbach and the ‘descriptive metaphysics’ (more descriptive than metaphysical) of Strawson as well, and at least the avuncular, complacently confident, tone of Ryle’s ordinary-language philosophy. Both positivism and Oxford analysis would have struck him as scientific—though Carnap’s and Reichenbach’s plainly more overtly so. Moreover, the system-building of Carnap and Strawson would have been regarded by him as impossible (more ‘houses of cards’) and, even if possible, unnecessary and indeed harmful.

Through both revolutionary turns, Wittgenstein held a therapeutic and anti-scientistic conception of philosophy with a deep underlying ethico-religious intent. (Hence the word ‘harmful’ in the previous sentence.) But it is important that we do not misunderstand Wittgenstein here. It is not at all that he wanted to replace logic, metaphysics, epistemology or semantical analysis with moral philosophy, reformist moralizing or some *lebensphilosophie*. Nothing could be further from his intent. Rather, he thought *philosophy itself*, as a particularly bad species of intellectualizing, was bad for human beings since it stands in the way of our coming to grips with our lives. This coming to grips with our lives—something which he took to be supremely important—had, in his view, as well as in Kierkegaard’s, nothing to do with philosophy. Philosophy just gets in our way here. Philosophical perplexities, both traditional and those arising in contemporary ‘scientific philosophy’, arise from the often obsessively gripping but still misleading pictures of the workings of our language that we come to have

when we reflect on it, though often we do not recognize that it is certain pictures of our language that are generating our perplexities. And it is where that happens that we get in philosophical trouble: we catch the philosophical disease. We do not command a sufficiently clear view of the workings of our language when we try to think about (for example) consciousness, thought, sensations, truth, warrantability, intentionality and the like. The idea is not to provide some general descriptive account of our language (Strawson) or some formal scientific account of the semantics of our language (Carnap), but to provide, at our conceptual trouble spots, where we are experiencing mental cramps, a sufficiently clear representation of how our language works in order to break that perplexity. It will not, of course, cure all perplexities forever, but it might cure the particular one that is befuddling us—and so we proceed on from case to case. In this way philosophy is to be therapeutic. It does not (*pace* Carnap or Strawson) yield a theory of any kind—the search for one is perhaps *the* philosophical illusion—but it is an activity which, where successfully pursued, yields a sufficient understanding of the workings of our language and, with that, of our practices and forms of life to break the spell that a misleading picture of the workings of our language at some particular spot exerts on us. Philosophy is taken by Wittgenstein to be an activity and not something which constructs some theory to explain our language or the forms of life in which our language is embedded.

II

I shall very briefly say something about what Wittgenstein's second revolution consists in and then will turn to a detailed consideration of what it comes to for religion. Again there is a paucity of material directly on religion; during this later period, as well as in the earlier, Wittgenstein wrote nothing for publication specifically and in detail about religion. But there are many things that are very suggestive, though often only indirectly, for thinking about religion in quite different ways than have traditionally been done—ways which I think cut through or rightly bypass much of the cackle that goes for 'the philosophy of religion'. Fortunately, as far as texts go, we have in a recent work written by a former student, close friend and well-known interpreter of Wittgenstein, Norman Malcolm, a work (*Wittgenstein: A Religious Point of View?*) which provides a detailed collection of remarks on religion made by Wittgenstein along with an analysis by Malcolm of those remarks followed by a substantial critique of Malcolm's account by Peter Winch.⁶ In this account of Wittgenstein on religion by two prominent Wittgensteinians, who are also philosophers of importance themselves, we have a perceptive and faithful rendition of Wittgenstein's views on religion, plus, particularly on Winch's part, the beginnings of a probing critique of them. (Winch is less of an uncritical disciple than Malcolm is.) I shall build on this material seeking to etch out (a) a portrayal of Wittgenstein on religion in his later philosophy and (b) an account of some emendations provided by

Wittgensteinians (principally Winch) that will not only bring out the force of Wittgenstein's later account, but will, pointing to its vulnerabilities, enable us better to assess its soundness and import, both in its pristine form and in its critical Wittgensteinian reformulations. Here we can hopefully examine Wittgenstein's account of religion at its full strength. I shall attempt to do something of this.

But first for a thumbnail general account of what the later Wittgenstein was up to. In *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), the central work of his later philosophy, as well as in work beginning as early as 1930 and in work following *Philosophical Investigations*, and most particularly in his last work, *On Certainty* (1969), Wittgenstein articulates his changed conception of how to proceed in philosophy and applies it to a range of philosophical problems. Propositions are no longer construed as having a fixed logical form and, more generally, language is no longer construed as having a fixed and timeless structure, but is viewed as changeable, and not infrequently changing, and these forms of language are now seen as our historically and culturally contingent forms of life. The picture theory of meaning of the *Tractatus* is completely abandoned in his later work. The conception that words stand for simple objects that are their meanings is now regarded by Wittgenstein as a bit of incoherent philosophy. Instead the notions of language-games and practices are introduced. In being socialized—in learning, as we all must if we are at all to navigate in the world, to be human—we come to have practices in which words and actions are interwoven. In this activity, in learning to play these language-games, we come to understand words by coming to know their uses in the stream of life, and with this we come to know how to use words in the course of our various practice-embedded activities.

With this, Wittgenstein abandoned his earlier formalist Tractarian demand that language, if coherence is our goal, requires determinacy and exactness and that the sole function of language is to describe. Rather language is seen as an activity that has many different functions, is embedded in different practices which answer to and structure our different needs, interests or purposes. For someone to understand a word, it is not sufficient to bring the learner face to face with its putative referent while repeating the word. In many cases nothing like this is possible and in all cases, or at least almost all cases, the learner must come to understand what *kind* of word he is being taught; to grasp this an extensive training needs to have taken place in which the learner comes to be at home with the everyday activities—the social practices—of which remarks using the word are a part. As Wittgenstein put it in an oft-quoted remark from his *Philosophical Investigations*: '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' (*PI* §43).

There is, on Wittgenstein's account, no standing free of our practices and forms of life or escaping the context, including the historical contexts, in which they are embedded. Both the Tractarian (on the traditional reading) and the metaphysical realist conception of an independently articulated world

are incoherent on Wittgenstein's later account. We have no coherent conception of a world that we can describe by accurately copying it or mirroring it or even representing it in our thought. There are no referents 'out there' which simply force our concepts on us. We rather understand our concepts by coming to understand their use in our life activities. Concepts are aspects of our forms of life. They are not items forced on us by the world. To understand a concept is to 'assemble reminders' concerning how it works in our lives. And these will be various things, depending on the particular concept, as part of the varied contexts and the various purposes we have. These varied activities and ways in which we talk form our practices, and they build together into our forms of life. We have no concepts or conceptions which stand independently of them.

Wittgenstein's earlier views—more accurately his metaviews—on religion, at least on the standard interpretation of the *Tractatus*, could not withstand his changed conceptions about language. As I have noted, the idea of a general prepositional form is illusory. There is no common property or set of common properties that all and only propositions have. There are many different kinds of structures that we call propositions. As P.M.S.Hacker has put it, many things count as 'propositions':

avowals of experience (such as 'I have a pain' or 'It hurts'), avowals of intent, ordinary empirical propositions, hypotheses, expressions of laws of nature, logical and mathematical propositions, 'grammatical propositions' (in Wittgenstein's idiosyncratic use of this term) which are expressions of rules (such as 'red is a color' or 'the chess king moves one square at a time'), ethical and aesthetic propositions and so on.⁷

In the regimented, austere conception of the *Tractatus*, religious utterances are pseudo-propositions lacking bipolarity. They are, that is, not capable of being true or capable of being false. They, on that conception, describe nothing, are without any cognitive content at all and thus are nonsensical. By contrast, given Wittgenstein's later philosophy, they are not, at least on these grounds, nonsensical. On Wittgenstein's later, more relaxed and more realistic, conception of propositions, many religious utterances are propositions. 'Bipolarity is a feature of an important member of the family, but not a defining property of propositions as such.'⁸ Moreover, Wittgenstein's earlier conception that it was the sole function of a proposition to describe is mistaken, and importantly so. The 'roles of many kinds of propositions, such as logical propositions and mathematical propositions, are not to describe.'⁹ Yet for all of that, they are in order. We cannot take such a short way with dissenters and simply rule out religious utterances *carte blanche* as expressions of pseudo-propositions and nonsensical because they fail to have the general form of a proposition. The shoe is on the other foot. The error—the illusion—is to believe that there is such a general prepositional form: that there is something that propositions essentially are.

Wittgenstein continues, the above notwithstanding, to believe that religious beliefs are very different from factual beliefs. Surface appearances to the contrary, quite ordinary religious propositions are unlike factual propositions. They function very differently. But they are not, Wittgenstein now has it, any the worse for all of that. They are not therefore nonsensical.

A pervasive and, Wittgenstein believes, a pernicious error of our scientific culture is to try to assimilate the use of religious concepts to those of hypotheses, predictions or theoretical explanations. To do that, he has it, is to completely misunderstand their use. It is to be fettered by one kind of use of language and to try to read it into other uses. When, for example, a religious person says 'I believe that there will be a Last Judgment', it is a complete mistake, according to Wittgenstein, to take that utterance as a prediction. That is not the use, or even anything like the use, it has in religious language-games. In believing in a Last Judgment a person is not, Wittgenstein has it, thinking that there will be, or even that is probable that there will be, a certain kind of event which will occur sometime in the future. The religious person—or at least Wittgenstein's religious person—is not thinking any such thing.¹⁰ He is not trying to make any kind of prediction at all (*LC*, p. 56). Rather, Wittgenstein equates having religious beliefs with (a) using religious concepts and (b) having the emotions and attitudes that go with these concepts. He remarks that 'a religious belief could only be something like a passionate commitment to a system of reference' (*CV*, p. 64). But these beliefs—beliefs such as a belief in the meaning of life or the meaning of the world—can be neither true nor false. The question of their truth or falsity cannot even meaningfully arise. Moreover they are beliefs which are neither reasonable nor unreasonable. But what Wittgenstein does regard as unreasonable are apologists either for or against religion who assume that religious beliefs can in any way be tested: can be shown to be either true or probably true or false or probably false by evidence or by argument. That view he regards as ludicrous (*LC*, p. 58).

Now that something of Wittgenstein's later conception of how to proceed in philosophy is before our minds, I turn to an examination of *Wittgenstein: A Religious Point of View?*, starting with some central considerations by Norman Malcolm. They consist in a rather orthodox but still well thought out articulation of a Wittgensteinian point of view.

A *leitmotif* of Malcolm's discussion of Wittgenstein on religion is Wittgenstein's remark in *Philosophical Investigations* that 'philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything' (*PI* §126). Concerning this Malcolm remarks:

Wittgenstein is here proposing a radical change in our conception of what philosophy should be doing. To say that philosophy does not seek to explain anything is certainly not a true description of philosophy as it has been, and still is, practiced. Many philosophers would be dumb-founded or outraged by the suggestion that they should not be seeking

explanations. The traditional aim of philosophy has been to explain the essential nature of justice, right and wrong, duty, the good, beauty, art, language, rules, thought. A philosopher may well ask: 'What am I supposed to do if not explain?'

In Wittgenstein's later thinking there is an answer. The task of philosophy is to *describe*. Describe *what*? Describe *concepts*. How does one describe a concept? By describing the use of the word, or of those words, that express the concept, that is what philosophy should 'put before us'.¹¹

There is no independent access to concepts, Wittgenstein is at pains to argue in *Philosophical Investigations*, and Malcolm follows him here. Malcolm continues, 'The description of the use of a word is called by Wittgenstein describing the 'language-game' with that word.'¹² Then, without highlighting the therapeutic side of Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy, but in effect remaining faithful to it all the same, Malcolm remarks that it is not the task of philosophy to describe the use of a word in its *totality*, as if we had an understanding of what it would be like to do that, but only those features of the word that give rise to philosophical perplexity, and indeed, for any description we might give, to a certain philosophical perplexity in a certain situation. We assemble reminders to break a certain perplexity where we have mental cramps concerning the workings of our language. (Here again we see how very different Wittgenstein is from Strawson.) Describing the use of an expression is called, rather eccentrically but harmlessly, by Wittgenstein describing the grammar of the expression. But this, as by now should be evident, is not just giving an account of sentence construction or syntax. The point of speaking of language-games is to bring into focus, and clear prominence, 'the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity or a form of life' (*PI* §23). Malcolm, uncontroversially and rightly, takes this to mean 'that in describing the language-game, or some part of the language-game with a word, one is describing how the word is embedded in actions and reactions—in human behaviour'.¹³ 'Words', Wittgenstein remarks in his *Zettel*, 'have meaning only in the flow of thought and life' (*Z* §173). 'Our talk', he adds in *On Certainty*, 'gets its sense from the rest of our actions' (*OC* §229). Our language-games, embedded as they are in forms of life, provide us a place for explanations, for giving reasons and for justifications inside the framework of these language-games or forms of life. But there is, Malcolm has it that Wittgenstein has it, neither explanation nor justification for the existence of these forms of language or language-games themselves.

Illustrating the way language-games work and their link with forms of life. Malcolm comments on our use of 'motive'. We not infrequently wonder about the motives of people. Normally the quickest and surest way to find out is to ask them. 'Now of course he may not reveal it: perhaps he himself does not understand it, or perhaps he misrepresents it both to himself and to others.'¹⁴ But then Malcolm goes on to observe: 'what is highly interesting is

that if he does disclose his motive, typically his acknowledgement of it will not be based on *any inference* from the situation, or from his own behaviour or previous actions—as would be the conjecture of others. He *tells* us his motive *without* inference.¹⁵

We can, when we reflect about how this language-game works, just be struck by its sheer existence and contingency. And this is true with the language-games we play both with ‘motive’ and with ‘intention’ or with any other language-game.¹⁶ We have contingency here, not necessity. Gone are the supposed necessities of the *Tractatus* and indeed of the whole philosophical tradition. Reflecting on how Wittgenstein is reasoning and how Wittgenstein thinks we should reason if we would be realistic, Malcolm remarks that we ‘cannot explain why this use of language exists. All we can do is describe it—and *behold* it.’¹⁷ He quotes from *On Certainty* where Wittgenstein makes a general comment about language-games: ‘You must bear in mind that the language-game is, so to speak, something unforeseeable. I mean it is not based on grounds. Not reasonable (or unreasonable). It stands there like our life’ (OC §559).

Religions, that is Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc., are ancient complex forms of life with their distinctive but purely contingent language-games. *Within* these language-games there can be the giving of reasons, explanations and justifications, but for the language-games and forms of life themselves, as I have noted, there can be no explanations or justification, and no foundations for them either. They are human activities that are just there, and religious forms of life like other forms of life are neither reasonable nor unreasonable. They do not rest on some deeper metaphysical or theological foundations or any kind of grounding theory. They have neither some foundationalist epistemological grounding nor any other kind of grounding, nor do they stand in need of such grounding, rationalization or theorizing. They are, Wittgenstein argues, in order just as they are. They are just there, as we have already noted Wittgenstein saying, like our lives. There can be, and indeed sometimes should be, *internal* criticisms within religious language-games. Some expressions of faith are less adequate than others, less adequately capture the aspirations of a particular religion, but there can be, Wittgenstein has it, no intelligible standing outside these forms of life and assessing them. Justification comes to an end when we come up against them. This is true for all forms of life, religion included. As Malcolm puts it, giving what he takes to be Wittgenstein’s account: ‘Wittgenstein regarded the language-games, and their associated forms of life, as beyond explanation. The inescapable logic of this conception is that the terms “explanation”, “reason”, “justification” have a use exclusively *within* the various language-games.’¹⁸ Or again: ‘An explanation is *internal* to a particular language-game. There is no explanation that *arises above* our language-games and explains *them*. This would be a super-concept of explanation—which means that it is an ill-conceived fantasy.’¹⁹ What we can and should do as philosophers is observe and describe language-games; and, with hard work and luck, we will come to see more

clearly, by a perspicuous representation, the use of the terms of our language-games and the role they play in our lives. Philosophy, the kind of therapeutic philosophy that Wittgenstein, Malcolm and Winch practise, enters when we become entangled in our concepts—the use of our terms. There, in such particular situations, philosophy can, by assembling reminders for a particular purpose, enable us to command a clearer view of our use of these terms, and it can dispel our confusions about them. Philosophy, Wittgenstein has it, as do neopragmatists as well, ‘cannot explain why anything happens or exists’ and ‘it cannot reveal the essential nature of anything’, for there are no such essential natures. Its way of proceeding is descriptive and elucidatory, elucidatory in the service of dispelling the confusion we almost invariably fall into when we reflect on our concepts. We normally can operate *with* them without difficulties, but we often fall into confusions—suffer from mental cramps—when we try to operate *upon* them.

All of this, of course, applies to our religious concepts as much as to any other concepts. When the engine isn’t idling, when we work with our concepts—operate *with* them rather than *upon* them—we understand them well enough if we have been enculturated into such forms of life, but when we think about them, as when we think about other concepts as well, we almost irresistibly fall into confusion about them. The task of philosophers, for themselves as well as for others, is to dispel such confusions by providing *in situ* a perspicuous representation of these concepts. We move about, usually effortlessly, in our grammar, in our everyday practices. But in thinking *about* what we do with words we not infrequently fall into perplexity. In order to remove our misconceptions, Malcolm has it, no *theorizing* is called for, neither scientific nor philosophical. What is required is only that we *look* carefully at the grammar which is at our command. We can think with it even if we stumble, while still thinking with it, when we try to think about it. But in doing this Wittgenstein’s counsel is ‘Don’t think, but look’ (*PI* §66).²⁰

Philosophy, that is good philosophy, should replace our age-old metaphysical theorizing and its *ersatz* scientific replacements in a so-called ‘scientific philosophy’ bent on formulating theories about the nature of meaning, thinking, reference, belief, knowledge, mind, good and God. By contrast, good philosophy—therapeutic philosophy practised after the fashion of Wittgenstein—cannot interfere with the actual use of language. For good philosophy *elucidation* comes to accurate description in the service of dispelling confusions *about* our use of language. We have a mastery of our language—of the use of our terms—but we fall into confusion when we try to think about those terms, when we reflect about our use and try to grasp ‘the essence’ of our concepts expressed by these terms. Wittgenstein remarked in his *Philosophical Investigations* that our ‘mistake is to look for an explanation where we should see the facts as “primary phenomena [*Urphänomene*]”’. That is, where we should say: *this language game is played*’ (*PI* §654). Or again: ‘The question is not one of explaining a language-game by our experiences, but of observing a language-game’ (*ibid.*).

A language-game, as Malcolm well puts it, 'is an employment of language that is embedded in one of the innumerable patterns of human life'.²¹ *Some* forms of life are forms of life that not all people in all cultures share.²² We cannot, Malcolm has it, explain why this is so: that is, why some people have them and others do not. He remarks: 'Neither philosophy nor science can explain this. What philosophy can do is to correct our inclination to assume, because of superficial similarities, that different language-games and forms of life are really the same.'²³ Some words refer to or stand for something. They have a reference. But 'Hans', 'blue', '2', 'the Empire State Building', 'grace', and 'God' do not all refer in the same way. We must, in particular, not assume that 'God' refers like 'Hans' or 'the Empire State Building'.

Wittgenstein, and for that matter Norman Malcolm and Peter Winch, both following Wittgenstein, are as much set against the idea that there could be a single true description of the world or some ultimate explanation which would show us what reality really is as are neo-pragmatists such as Richard Rorty and Hilary Putnam. Such notions, they all believe, are without sense. Natural theology and natural atheology, as much as metaphysical realism, are incoherent. We can have no such knowledge and we do not need it. Religious beliefs can neither have any backing from metaphysics or natural theology or science, nor do they need it. (Here there is no difference between the earlier and the later philosophy of Wittgenstein.) But, by parity, atheological metaphysical theories or so-called scientific theories of a so-called scientific philosophy or a 'scientific world-view', which are really metaphysical theories in disguise, are also incoherent and can provide no intelligible ground or basis for *rejecting* or *criticizing* religion. Such activities—theology and atheology—take in each other's dirty linen. Both should be set aside as houses of cards.

However, Malcolm is quick to remind us that Wittgenstein's account is not a form of irrationalism or nihilism which says goodbye to reason or reasonableness, though Wittgenstein does, as much as does Paul Feyerabend, say farewell to Philosophical Reason or Scientific Reason (so-called 'Philosophical Reason' or 'Scientific Reason' would be more apt). But to be against Reason is not to be against reasoning and justification *within* language-games and against the reflective effort to make sense of our lives and to be reasonable. And that reasons, falsifications, explanations come to an end 'does not mean that there are no reasons, justifications, explanations for anything'.²⁴ *Within* many of our language-games, when we are operating with them, and reasoning and reflecting inside their parameters, reasons, justifications, explanations often can be given and often are perfectly in place. What, however, Wittgenstein does stoutly argue for, and Malcolm and Winch follow him here, is that the giving of reasons, justifications and explanations comes to an end somewhere: 'Where is that? It is at the existence of the language-games and the associated forms of life. There is where explanation has reached its limit. There reasons stop. In philosophy we can only notice the language-games, describe them and sometimes wonder at them.'²⁵ There

we see what has been called Wittgenstein's 'quietism'. Quietism or not, for us here it is a key question whether, and if so how, it applies to religion—to Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and the like. What is at least initially unsettling in this context in thinking about Wittgenstein and Wittgensteinians such as Malcolm and Winch is that it seems that, if their way of characterizing how to proceed in philosophy is correct, this means that no philosophical or any other kind of reasonable criticism, or for that matter defence, is possible of forms of life or, indeed, any of form of life, including Hinduism, Christianity and the like. Is this where we are at? Is this the end of the line?

III

It can be responded to such Wittgensteinianism that religions, and most strikingly Christianity with which Wittgenstein and Malcolm are most concerned, are *inescapably in part metaphysical religiosities*.²⁶ Moreover, the part that is metaphysical cannot be excised from the rest, leaving the rest intact. Without a metaphysical part as a settled element (component) in that form of life, the form of life will not even be recognizable as Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, or Islam. There are no doctrineless or creedless religions. Religion is a doing, a committing yourself to act or try to act in a certain way, but it is not only that. In Christianity, for example, God is said to be the ultimate spiritual being—the very ground of the world—transcendent to the world and, in being so, eternal and beyond space and time. And it is an essential part of that very religion to believe that human beings have immortal souls such that they—that is we—will not perish or at least will not perish forever when we die: when, that is, we lose our earthly life. And in addition there is what Kierkegaard called the scandal of the Trinity, but still, he believed, a scandal to be accepted trustingly on faith. These are central beliefs for Christianity, and without them Christianity would not be Christianity. It, of course, is not only a doctrinal system. It is also, as Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard stress, a demanding way of life that requires of believers—genuine believers—a reorientation of their lives. But it is also, and inescapably, a belief system with a set of doctrines.

This belief system is a metaphysical belief system and Christianity integrally is a metaphysical religiosity. It simply comes with the religion. But, if what Wittgenstein, Malcolm, Winch and the pragmatists say is so, metaphysical belief systems are all incoherent: 'houses of cards', as Wittgenstein said. But then that very form of life, *metaphysically infused as it is*, should be said by Wittgenstein and Wittgensteinians to be incoherent. But that is not at all what they say.

Still, that anti-metaphysical strain is central to their accounts. But, on another equally central part of Wittgenstein's account, Christianity can't be incoherent, for Christianity, as other religions as well, is a language-game—an employment of language embedded in a pattern of human life—and thus a form of life. But forms of life and language-games cannot on Wittgenstein's

account be incoherent or illusory or even, in any central or crucial way, in error. Such notions have no application with respect to forms of life. So we can see here that something has to give. Two central points of Wittgenstein's account—or so at least it seems—are incompatible with each other. Religions are metaphysical schemes and metaphysical schemes are incoherent, but religions are forms of life and it makes no sense to say of a form of life that it is incoherent.

Wittgenstein, I think, would respond—and here I think Kierkegaard would respond in the same or a similar manner—that these doctrinal elements, these metaphysical or metaphysical-theological beliefs, as important as they have *historically* been to Christianity and other religions as well, are nonetheless incoherent and should be set aside while still keeping, for example, the kernel of Christianity. These religious metaphysical beliefs are not what is really important in religion, and religiously sensitive people have—though sometimes inchoately—always recognized that.

What Wittgenstein saw as important in religion is that if one could have faith—if one could trust in God—then that will turn around one's life, enabling one to be a decent person and to do good in the world without vanity or arrogance. He took *faith without works* to be utterly vain. Indeed it would not, as he saw it, properly speaking even be called 'faith'. Moreover, as he says in his *Notebooks* of 1916, 'to pray is to think about the meaning of life' and 'to believe in God means to see that life has meaning' (p. 73).²⁷ These remarks are, against most of the philosophical temper of Wittgenstein, utterly reductionistic. If what they say were so, it would make, by implicit stipulative redefinition, many reflective and sensitive atheists into believers in God. By verbal magic, all sensitive, reflective, caring people become religious believers. It is to take what may very well be a *necessary* condition for genuine religious belief and turn it into a *sufficient* one. Is this the end of matter? Perhaps not quite. Let me proceed indirectly by first recording some of Wittgenstein's specific comments about religion. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind the fact, that historically, religions have changed over time; moreover, there is no reason to believe 'history has come to end' and to think that they will not continue to change.

Wittgenstein had, as I have remarked, scant patience with philosophical theology or the philosophy of religion, but throughout his life he read and re-read the Gospels, thought at one time seriously about becoming a priest, and was deeply taken by the ancient liturgical prayers of the Latin rite and their translation in the Anglican prayer book, remarking that they 'read as if they had been soaked in centuries of worship'.²⁸ Speaking to his close friend Maurice Drury, who had formed the intention to be ordained as a priest, Wittgenstein remarked:

Just think, Drury, what it would mean to have to preach a sermon every week. You couldn't do it. I would be afraid that you would try and give some sort of philosophical justification for Christian beliefs, as if some

proof was needed. The symbolisms of Catholicism are wonderful beyond words. But any attempt to make it into a philosophical system is offensive.²⁹

It was the *activist* life-orientation, involving *not* the speculative-cosmological side of Christianity, that appealed to Wittgenstein. What gripped him was Christianity's call to radically alter the manner of one's life—to be just and caring with one another, to clearly see what a wretched person one was, to atone for one's sins, and to struggle to be a decent human being.

The influence of Kierkegaard on Wittgenstein was very deep. It shows itself in the above remarks about guilt and sin and, again quite differently, in his attitude towards the historical claims of Christianity and in what he thought philosophy could achieve vis-à-vis religion. Wittgenstein (echoing Kierkegaard) wrote: 'Christianity is not based on a historical truth; rather it gives us a (historical) narrative and says: now believe! But not, believe this narrative with the belief appropriate to a historic narrative—rather believe, through thick and thin, and you can do that only as the result of a life' (CV, p. 32).³⁰ Wittgenstein, again like Kierkegaard, saw religion not only as something that makes extreme demands on one, but as something which answers to the needs of genuinely religious people—people who see themselves not only to be extremely imperfect but as wretched. 'Any half-way decent man', Wittgenstein wrote, 'will think himself extremely imperfect, but a religious man believes himself *wretched*' (CV, p. 45).³¹ Somewhat earlier in *Culture and Value*, Wittgenstein wrote 'faith is faith in what my heart, my soul needs, not my speculative intelligence. For it is my soul, with its passions, as it were with its flesh and blood, that must be saved, not my abstract mind' (CV, p. 33).³²

Wittgenstein, given his sense of what religion really is, is fully, intellectually speaking, on the fideist side coming down to us from Tertullian, Pascal, Hamann, and, most fully, from Kierkegaard. But in his very conceptualization of fideism there was also for a religious person an intense activist side very distinct from his quietism in philosophy. This comes out strikingly in a remark he made in 1946:

One of the things Christianity says, I think, is that all sound doctrines are of no avail. One must change one's *life*. (Or the *direction* of one's life.)

That all wisdom is cold; and that one can no more use it to bring one's life into order than one can forge *cold* iron.

A sound doctrine does not have to *catch hold* of one; one can follow it like a doctor's prescription.—But here something must grasp one and turn one around.—(This is how I understand it.) Once turned around, one must *stay* turned around.

Wisdom is passionless. In contrast faith is what Kierkegaard calls a *passion*.

(CV, p. 53)

For Wittgenstein, as for Tertullian, Pascal, Hamann, and Kierkegaard, religion was not a question of proving anything or even the articulating of doctrine, even a doctrine that orders one's life:

[Wittgenstein] objected to the idea that Christianity is a 'doctrine', i.e., a theory about what happened and will happen to the human soul. Instead, it is a description of actual occurrences in the lives of some people—of 'consciousness of sin', of despair, of salvation through faith. For Wittgenstein the emphasis in religious belief had to be on doing—on 'amending one's ways', 'turning one's life around'.³³

He came to have, mixed together with this striving to turn his life around and his realizing that this was what religion was about, an intense desire for purity together with an equally intense sense of his own impurity, his sinfulness and guilt, his standing under divine judgment, his need for redemption and forgiveness. He had a keen sense of a judging and redeeming God, but the conception of a creator was foreign to him and, as Malcolm put it, 'any cosmological conception of a Deity derived from the notion of cause or of infinity would be repugnant to him'.³⁴

In spite of Wittgenstein's statement 'I am not a religious man', I think that it is, as Malcolm puts it, 'surely right to say that Wittgenstein's mature life was strongly marked by religious thought and feeling'.³⁵ Kierkegaard had perceptively shown how difficult it is to be religious, how many people are deceived in thinking they are religious when they are not, and that some people who would honestly say they are not, and even some—say, militant atheists—who would vehemently assert that they are not, are nonetheless religious, and indeed deeply so. It is also the case that with his clarity of intellect, together with his deep religious sensitivity, Wittgenstein is likely to have had a keen sense of what a religious form of life is. I have claimed, as have many others, that there is no doctrineless religion and that religion inescapably involves making cosmological (metaphysical) claims.³⁶ Wittgenstein firmly rejects this. Is he right to do so?

IV

Concerning what was discussed in III and what I continue to discuss here, it will be necessary, as Winch reminds us, 'to observe the distinction between Wittgenstein's own religious reflections and his philosophical comments on religious discourse'.³⁷ I shall centrally be concerned with the latter and show concern with the former principally to help us, if it can, to gain a purchase on how we should think and feel about religion. I want to try to see what kind of form of life it is, what kind of language-game it is, and what role it can and should play in our lives. And what philosophically we are justified in saying about these matters.

Malcolm's account of how Wittgenstein understands religion and how he

understands philosophy in relation to religion is an important one. That notwithstanding, Peter Winch, I believe, has brought out some important ways in which Malcolm's account is flawed. I want to highlight them and then comment on them.

1. As we have seen, Malcolm claims, and claims for Wittgenstein, that there is no explanation for the existence of language-games or forms of life. Winch says that this is misleading. I think he actually shows something stronger, namely, that, taken straightforwardly, the claim is just false. Still, though false, taken straightforwardly, we can *give* it a very *specialized reading* in which it is not false and, so understood, it makes an important point that is frequently lost sight of in thinking about what religion is.

Winch does not disagree with the general understanding that Wittgenstein firmly maintained that explanation has an end and that explanatory theories are inappropriate in philosophy.³⁸ Good philosophy, he agrees, should be descriptive in the way Malcolm, following Wittgenstein, characterizes. That is not at all in dispute—and rightly so—as being something that Wittgenstein firmly maintained. Moreover, Winch, like Malcolm, thought that Wittgenstein was right about this. But Malcolm overlooks, Winch has it, 'the very different issues that are at stake in various of the contexts in which Wittgenstein insists that "explanation has an end"'.³⁹ Winch writes that it 'is misleading to say that "Wittgenstein regarded the language-games and thus associated forms of life, as beyond explanation." Language-games are not a phenomenon that Wittgenstein had discovered with the peculiar property that their existence cannot be explained!⁴⁰ Malcolm maintains that neither the 'hard' sciences nor the 'soft' sciences can explain why various practices exist. But, as Winch points out, that is simply false. There are many cases, he observes, 'in which historians, anthropologists or linguists give well founded explanations of the existence of this or that practice. Why ever not! The important question for us [that is, for we philosophers] to ask is: what relevance would such explanations have to the resolution of philosophical difficulties?'⁴¹ What Winch takes it that (*pace* Malcolm) we should not maintain is that language-games are *intrinsically* beyond the power of these sciences to explain; but rather what we should say is that any explanation they might offer would turn out to be quite uninteresting—and useless as far as the philosopher's characteristic puzzlement is concerned.⁴²

Wittgenstein, Winch has it—and it seems to me correctly—was not concerned to deny that there was any reasonable sense in which explanations of practices could be given. He was concerned, rather, 'with the peculiar pseudosense in which philosophers seek "explanations"'. Spinoza, for example, thought 'that because explanations have to come to an end there must be something which has no further explanation, a *causa sui*'.⁴³ Wittgenstein was concerned to combat that, to show that that kind of rationalism is senseless: that it makes no sense to say that there is something beyond explanation—intrinsically unexplainable—on which all ordinary

explanations depend or that there is, if we push matters resolutely, some *ultimate* explanation—some super-explanation as it were—which finally explains everything and brings inquiry to an end. Wittgenstein does not think, Winch observes, ‘that explanations come to an end with something that is intrinsically beyond further explanation. They come to an end for a variety of quite contingent and pragmatic reasons, perhaps because of a practical need for action, perhaps because the puzzlement which originally prompted the search for explanation has evaporated (for one reason or another)’.⁴⁴ There are many situations, perhaps most situations, in which we have no need ‘at all’ to explain a practice. The practice seems to us—and sometimes rightly so—unproblematic. But then, as C.S. Peirce and John Dewey stressed, circumstances might arise in which we need, or at least want, an explanation for one or another specific pragmatic purpose—political, moral, sociological or some combination of them—or perhaps because the practice does not seem for some reasonably specific reasons to be working so well and indeed might not be working well. Such situations do arise, and there is no reason to think such explanations, answering to such problematic situations, are impossible, always or even generally undesirable, or that they will invariably, or even standardly, degenerate into philosophical pseudo-explanations. Moreover, we do not have good textual grounds for thinking that Wittgenstein thought that.

Suppose, however, we stop talking about explanation and talk of *justification* instead. Wittgenstein also famously said that justification must come to an end or it would not be justification. Malcolm has stressed, as a view which is both Wittgenstein’s and right, ‘that reasons, justifications, explanations, reach a terminus in the language-games and their internally related forms of human life’. Let us set aside explanation and just concentrate on the giving of reasons and the justifying (if such is in order) of a form of life. Winch takes it, correctly as a bit of Wittgenstein exegesis, ‘that the expression of religious belief is itself a language-game for which it makes no sense to ask for...rational justification’.⁴⁵ *Within* a form of life, a justification of particular beliefs or particular conceptions in accordance with the constitutive norms and conceptions of that form of life can sometimes be given. But a request for a justification of the constitutive norms and conceptions—the very framework beliefs of a religious form of life—is another matter. Wittgenstein has it that to ask for justification here is senseless. Job’s seeking to require God to answer to him is seen to rest on a mistake for one who has faith. The questioning of why God’s will is sovereign and should never be doubted—the challenging of the whole framework—is, given Wittgenstein’s conceptions, out of place. Indeed, not simply out of place, but incoherent. Malcolm had remarked, Winch reminds us, that even in this technological and materialistic age, there are people who are inside the practices, the language-games of, say Christianity or Judaism, who pray ‘to God for help, asking Him for forgiveness, thanking Him for the blessings of this life—and thereby gain comfort and strength, hope and cheerfulness. Many of these people would have no understanding of what it would *mean* to provide rational justification for their religious belief—nor do they feel a need for it.’⁴⁶

And indeed Wittgenstein has it—and here both Malcolm and Winch follow him—justification there is not possible and, moreover, there is no need for it. Asking for it is not only obtuse but is wrong: morally wrong.

There are at least three issues here. First, it seems fair enough to say that a plain untutored person—say a minimally educated person living in an isolated community of believers—is being reasonable—or at least not unreasonable—in so believing. Moreover, it would, in most circumstances, be sadistic to challenge such a person's faith—a faith that that person regards as an undeserved *gift* from God. It would be unnecessary and pointless cruelty, causing, if it was at all psychologically effective, unnecessary and pointless suffering. Second, there is the question whether, if that person began to feel—say quite without wishing it—the irritation of doubt, whether (a) there are considerations available to an honest, reflective person sufficient to still, without subterfuge or self-deception, those doubts or (b) whether this is even an intelligible or legitimate possibility: whether it makes sense to have such doubts? They may themselves rest on philosophical confusions. Moreover, perhaps concerning something so basic—something so much a part of the life of some people—we have something which does not admit of such rationalization, such a reasoning out of things? Third, whether, that isolated person aside, for anyone in our modern cultures there are considerations which that person, or several persons reasoning together and sensitively feeling through the matter, could articulate that would show such beliefs to be not only coherent but not unreasonable? Or to come to the opposite conclusion? Are these, as it seems Wittgenstein and Wittgensteinians believe—*must* believe?—bad questions? But if that is claimed, it seems to be in order for us to ask: Just *why* are these bad questions? Or are they really bad questions? Do we just have, in maintaining they are, Wittgensteinian dogma here?

I think any Wittgensteinian would respond to this last query, and the second one as well, by rejecting them out of hand. It is *practices* which give the intelligibility and coherence to talk—words as they are used in their living contexts, in this case the context of a living engaged faith. If theorizing, he would say, makes the talk seem incoherent or unreasonable, then so much the worse for the theorizing. Moreover, and in addition, religion is something special, for it is not a matter, except peripherally, of the intellect but of the heart. The intellect in this context can only dispel bad philosophical reasoning that gets in the way of faith. There is in such fideistic reasoning a great distance between the confident doing of natural theology by Aquinas and Scotus and the fideistic reasoning of Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein: between the confident claim that if we reason carefully and attend to the facts we can see that it is irrational not to believe in God and the acceptance of God simply on faith—on a faith, or a trust, that eschews all search for or recognition of the appropriateness or even the very possibility of justification, except in the purely negative sense of showing the mistake of those who would say that without justification your faith is in vain. For to say that—to demand justification

here—is not only unjustified but is unjustifiable. Philosophical clarity, Wittgensteinians will argue, shows such argumentation is at best mistaken. If Wittgenstein and Wittgensteinians—such as Norman Malcolm, D.Z. Phillips, Rush Rhees, Peter Winch, Stanley Cavell and James Conant—and neo-pragmatists such as Hilary Putnam and Richard Rorty are right about the incoherence of metaphysics and foundationalist epistemology, then the rationalistic arguments of the philosophy of religion or natural theology or atheology cannot get off the ground. Then isn't the conclusion we should come to about religion such a Wittgensteinian one? Though this, of course, does not mean that we ourselves should become religious, but that we should desist from making claims about religious belief resting on a mistake. That is itself, they would argue, a mistake—a very big philosophical mistake. We might continue perfectly appropriately, if we are, to be atheists. But we should not engage in atheology—philosophical arguments for atheism. Philosophy has nothing to say here either for or against religious belief. Isn't this the conclusion we should be drawn to?

2. Perhaps what has been said above should be sufficient to put such matters to rest, to lead us, if we would be reasonable, to react and view things in such a manner. Still such an equilibrium is seldom the case in philosophy over something so fundamental. So let us look at things from another angle. Malcolm, correctly catching something that Wittgenstein stresses, remarks that what for Wittgenstein is 'most fundamental in a religious life is not the affirming of creeds, nor even prayer and worship—but rather, doing *good deeds*—helping others in concrete ways, treating their needs as equal to one's own, opening one's heart to them, not being cold or contemptuous, but loving'.⁴⁷ Surely someone with any religious sensitivity—or indeed with just plain human sensitivity—will feel the force of that. That said, Winch's cautionary remarks are very important here. Winch says that the link between faith and works 'is by no means as straightforward as Malcolm's discussion may suggest'.⁴⁸ There are people with just the doings and feelings described above—people having exactly those attitudes—who lack religious sensibility, who, as Malcolm himself in Chapter 7 of his book reminds us, 'take a serious view of religion, but regard it as a harmful influence, an obstacle to the fullest and best development of humanity'.⁴⁹ Are we, to return to something mentioned earlier, to turn them into religious believers—people with religious faith—by *stipulative redefinition*? Wittgenstein remarked to Drury that it was his belief 'that only if you try to be helpful to other people will you in the end find your way to God'.⁵⁰ Winch tersely and correctly remarks:

It is important because Wittgenstein did *not* say that being helpful to other people *is* finding one's way to God, nor that it is a *sufficient condition* of doing so. He said it is a *necessary condition* of doing so. One cannot live a godly life *without* 'good works'; but all the same there is more to the godly life than that.⁵¹

Moreover, as Winch also emphasizes, we cannot, as Malcolm sometimes seems to think, understand the ‘works’ Wittgenstein stresses—understand the role they play in the believer’s life—independently of their connections ‘with a particular faith on the part of the doer’.⁵² The doing of good, the being loving and humble, are for the religious believer *internally* connected to the ‘use of the language of faith in the life of the believer’. This seems to me, but *perhaps* not to Winch, to imply that they cannot in the thought and actions of a believer be disconnected from certain doctrinal strands and the creedal expressions of a particular religion. But this at least seems to run against Wittgenstein’s own setting aside of doctrines as not being what religion is.

It is not difficult to surmise how Wittgenstein, and Kierkegaard as well, would respond. ‘There you go again’, they would no doubt snort, ‘with your stubborn and even arrogant intellectualism, turning religion into a *theory*—failing to see what is there before your eyes that gives religion its importance. It is not doctrines or creeds that count but commitment and concern turned into action *on* yourself, though at the same time with a certain inwardness, and *for* others. Religion is ultimate commitment and concern. Brush aside all this sterile intellectualism. Theorizing about religion is not the way to God: thinking of great intellectual mansions while you live in a little shack’ (Kierkegaard’s comment on Schelling and Hegel).

Theorizing about religion is, indeed, not the way to God, if there is a way to God. The way is your action on yourself and for others, but, if it is done religiously, it is embedded in words integral to a form of life that would not be the form of life it is without the doctrines and the creeds. Religions are for the sake of life—for the very things Wittgenstein stresses—but the religious believer, immersed in those forms of life, sees and feels his commitment and concern and his deeds in terms of these very forms containing these doctrines and creeds. He does not have religious feelings which swing loose from religious concepts. Both his very understanding and his deepest reactions are tied up (internally linked) with doctrines and creeds and the distinctive concepts that go with them. And his reactions and understanding here cannot be split apart (as if there were a ‘cognitive’ and a ‘noncognitive’ side to them). There is *no* religious understanding without the reactions and *no* reactions which are intelligibly religious *without* that understanding.

To try to reduce religion and religious belief to some basic deep commitment and a concern to be a decent human being, to really care about others and do good, even if we add—probably with very little understanding—‘ultimate’ to ‘commitment’ and ‘concern’, just takes what, as I have already observed, is a *necessary* condition for being genuinely religious (note the implicit *persuasive* definition here) and turns it into a *sufficient* condition. On such a view of things Marx, Engels, Luxemburg, Durkheim, Freud, Dewey, Weber, Gramsci all become religious. But that is a *reductio*.

3. Wittgenstein, under the influence of William James’ *Varieties of Religious Experience*, came to recognize that the ways in which people

express their religious beliefs differ enormously.⁵³ Even within a given confessional community there are ‘vastly diverse forms of religious sensibility. And these different forms of diversity crisscross in bewilderingly complex ways’.⁵⁴ Even if we avoid any attempt to so define ‘religion’, such that the term captures all the great historic religions as well as those group activities and beliefs anthropologists firmly regard as religious activities of recognizable religions (e.g. the religion of the Dinka or the Neur), and concentrate only on those religions—Christianity and Judaism—in which Wittgenstein took the most interest, we still get very diverse forms of religious sensibility and conceptualization and interpretation of doctrine, and even doctrine itself.

Wittgenstein saw life as a ‘gift’ from God for which one should be grateful, but life, he firmly believed, was something that also imposes inescapable obligations. He also thought that in his work and in his life he required help—some ‘light’ from above, as he put it. These attitudes, Winch observes, unlinked as they are with specific confessional commitments, are from the viewpoint of a ‘developed theological doctrine’ inchoate.⁵⁵ But this, as Winch is perfectly aware, would not have bothered Wittgenstein one bit. He set himself, as we have seen, against theological and religious *doctrine*. More worrisomely, from Wittgenstein’s point of view, there are, considering the above attitudes—the above expressions of religious sensibility—some serious and reflective people whose very seriousness manifests itself in opposition to such attitudes.⁵⁶ Some people will have an attitude that accepts ‘one’s fate as “the will of God”, an attitude which neither pretends to provide any explanation of that fate nor seeks to find one’.⁵⁷ This attitude characteristically goes along ‘with an attitude of *gratitude* for life’.⁵⁸ But Wittgenstein remarks, commenting on the expression of a very different attitude:

We might speak of the *world* as malicious; we could easily imagine the Devil had created the world, or part of it. And it is *not* necessary to imagine the evil spirit intervening in particular situations; everything can happen ‘according to the laws of nature’; it is just the whole scheme of things will be aimed at evil from the very start.

(CV, p. 71)

But the reference to the Devil here is, of course, no more an explanation—nor does Wittgenstein think that it is—than is a reference to the will of God. Either viewed as an attempt at an explanation would be what Wittgenstein called an unnecessary and stupid anthropomorphism (*ibid.*). But faced with all the horrible contingencies of life, the suffering, cruelty, indifference, pain, jealousy, failures of integrity, the breaking of trust—the whole bloody lot—some would speak of neither God nor the Devil, or of the goodness, in spite of it all, of the world, or of the malignancy or maliciousness of the world. Indeed they would think (*pace* William James) that such talk makes no sense. Some would say, as I would, ‘That’s how things are’ without reference to

God or the Devil.⁵⁹ I think (to abandon for a moment a Wittgensteinian commitment to description and to speak normatively) this austere approach is a more proper frame of mind. We see that the plague is always with us, sometimes rather dormant but at other times raging, and always as something that will return, and we resolve to fight the plague. (Recall this was Albert Camus' figure of speech, and his resolve as well.) But again this expression of attitude makes no more an attempt at an explanation than does the expression of the attitude that goes with speaking of God's will, or of the Devil having created the world. Winch remarks perceptively that one 'might want to single out the reference to the will of God as the only one that expresses a religious attitude; or one might want to single out "that's just how things are" as the only attitude genuinely "free of all superstition"'.⁶⁰ Our language-games and forms of life, he observes, let us do either. And people, of course, do either. People, including reflective people of integrity, often differ here. And, as Hilary Putnam stresses, this is something to take to heart.⁶¹ Moreover, it is not at all evident, to put it minimally, that there would be anything even approaching a consensus about which attitudes are the more appropriate or which run the deepest. Indeed, not a few will think there is no answer to such 'questions'. And others would think that, even if in some sense there were, it would be inappropriate to ask them.

'It's God's will', 'It's the work of the Devil' and 'That's how things are' are all non-explanatory and in some language-games are where not only explanation stops, but where justification and the giving of reasons stops. I think myself 'That's how things are' is by far the more adequate way of viewing things. It is cleaner, with less mystification, and comes closer to—or so I think—telling it like it is. However, it should be immediately sceptically queried: How can I consistently say anything even remotely within that ball-park, given my pragmatist and Wittgensteinian perspectivism and contextualism, with their rejection of the idea that there can be a one true description of the world and my arguments to the effect that it makes no sense to say that one vocabulary is closer to reality than another, or that we can coherently speak of standing outside all our practices and assessing them, or that there is some unifying comprehensive practice that, like the Absolute, encompasses everything?⁶² I could say that for certain purposes 'That's how things are' is the more adequate response, and that for other purposes the other ways are better, but I could not consistently, it is natural to respond, flat-out say 'That's how things are' is the more adequate conception. I could not say this because some non-contextualist conception of 'That is how things are' is unintelligible. And, even more plainly and less controversially, I cannot even consistently say that that is so because it comes closer to telling things like they are and is less mystificatory and obfuscating. There is no way things are *überhaupt*, or, even if there is, even if such talk somehow makes sense, we have no way of knowing or even plausibly conjecturing when this is so. So we are back with my pragmatic contextualism and how Wittgenstein sees things.

I think I can consistently have my pragmatist perspectivism *and* my claim

about the greater adequacy of what I call my more austere 'That's how things are' way of viewing things. I will now argue that this is so: that it is not a case of having my cake and eating it too. We have genuine descriptions and explanatory practices, which are alternatives to each other: for example, the giving of a physiological description of bodily movements or a description in terms of actions and intentions; or, to take another, the giving of a commonsense description of tables, bits of mud, water flowing, the moon being pink on a given night, in contrast to giving a scientific physical description where we will say different things about solidity, colour and the like. These are alternative descriptive and explanatory practices utilized for different purposes. But none of these descriptions are 'closer to reality' or more adequate *sans phrase* than any other. We can say only that for different purposes one is more adequate than another; not that one is a more adequate or a better telling-it-like-it-is than another—*period*. There the story about my perspectivism and contextualism is perfectly in place. It is also the account that Richard Rorty and Hilary Putnam would give of things.

In saying, 'That's God's will', 'That's the Devil's work', 'That's how things are', do we not also have, in a way similar to describing things in terms of bodily movements and describing things in terms of human actions, different perspectives answering to different interests with none of them being in some general, 'perspective-neutral', sense more adequate? We can and should retort by remarking that with 'That's God's will' or 'That's the Devil's work' we have *metaphysical* utterances penetrating into our common life. They are metaphysical conceptions. And they, as metaphysical conceptions, are, Wittgenstein and both Malcolm and Winch following him argue, and, as we neo-pragmatists argue as well, utterances which, in being metaphysical utterances, are incoherent, yielding pseudo-descriptions and pseudo-perspectives from which no intelligible descriptions, interpretations or explanations could flow. They yield nonsense, but not 'intelligible nonsense' somehow conveying cognitive depth as traditionalist interpretations of the *Tractatus* claim Wittgenstein obliquely hints at. If Wittgenstein, the Wittgensteinians and the neo-pragmatists are right in seeing metaphysical claims as houses of cards that require philosophical therapy to break their spell, we do not have three alternative perspectives here but only one—one that (a) in effect summarizes a bunch of empirical observations and more or less concrete moral observations and (b) makes a morally freighted generalization about them. On the other hand, we have two metaphysical fantasies that have crept into the language-games of *some* people. These metaphysical fantasies are, as Wittgenstein puts it in other contexts, wheels that turn no machinery, conceptions that do no work in these practices, and the people who use such phrases are only under the illusion that they have some understanding of what they are saying and that these metaphysical conceptions are functioning parts of our social practices with their embedded language-games. There are no metaphysical forms of life. (If it is replied that they do rhetorical work, this is in effect to concede the case.) It is not like

saying that we use physiological descriptions for certain purposes and action-intention descriptions for other purposes and that both can be perfectly in place for their own purposes but no one of them is just telling it the way things are. The three allegedly alternative characterizations under discussion consist in one actual characterization and two pseudo-characterizations; and, of course, if this is so, we can, and should, say the one genuine one is more adequate. But that is not at all to say that it gestures at 'the one true description of the world'. There is no such thing.

Some (including Wittgenstein) might deny that 'It's God's will' or 'It's the work of the Devil' are metaphysical utterances. If 'God' and 'the Devil' are taken to denote Zeus-like entities, then these utterances are not metaphysical. They are implicit, very vague, empirical hypotheses. They are, that is, just crude, plainly false, empirical propositions plainly disconfirmed. *Such* religious beliefs are superstitions, and Wittgenstein was keenly aware of that and rejected *such* religious beliefs and such a way of looking at religion with disdain. But it is very unlikely that many Christians, Jews or Moslems so superstitiously conceive of God and the Devil. Indeed by now most of them do not. And where they do, Wittgenstein would have no sympathy at all with that. Where, alternatively, 'God' is construed as an infinite individual transcendent to the universe, we plainly do have a metaphysical claim—and a very esoteric one at that—and as such it is held to be nonsensical not just by positivists but by Wittgensteinians and neo-pragmatists such as Putnam, Rorty and myself.⁶³ If to that it is said that is not how to construe 'God' either, then it is difficult to know, unless we want to go back to the crude anthropomorphic construal or to a purely symbolic construal, how we are in some non-metaphysical way to construe 'God'. Just what is this non-Zeus-like, non-purely symbolic, non-metaphysical construal of 'God'? Do we really have any understanding of what we are talking about here?

If instead it is said 'That's how things are' is itself a metaphysical statement, this should be denied, for it functions as a summarizing, somewhat moralizingly emotive, proposition standing in for (a) a lot more particular propositions such as people suffer, the wicked often flourish, starvation and malnutrition are pervasive, droughts and devastating earthquakes occur, people are struck down in their prime, alienation is pervasive, tyranny often goes unchecked, and the like, and (b) the comment that this goes on at all times and in all places without much in the way of abatement. This—(b) in particular—may be an exaggeration, but that surely does not make it a metaphysical statement.

Suppose someone retorts that Jews and Christians do not have to treat 'That's God's will' or 'That's the Devil's work' in either the superstitious or the metaphysical way I attributed to them. Keep in mind, the response goes, that *practice* gives words their sense. Some mathematicians, when they speak of numbers, say they are abstract entities: real things but abstract things. And with this they become entangled in metaphysics. Indeed we have the shadow of Plato here. But they could, and most do, legitimately refuse to *so* theorize

and just go on proving theorems, setting up axiomatic systems or, as applied mathematicians, grinding out calculations for particular purposes and the like. Why cannot Jews, Christians and Moslems do a similar thing? Why could they not, and indeed why should they not, just stick with their practices in saying and thinking the things about God that their language-games allow them to say? They need no more theorize about God than mathematicians *need* theorize *about* numbers. Indeed it is not only that they *need* not theorize, Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard would insist, but that they *should* not theorize. That is destructive of faith. It is my *intellectualism* again—and here I am a token of a familiar type—that is leading me down the garden path: that is making me mistakenly think that practices which actually are not unreasonable—indeed, are compelling for the people who engage in them—are unreasonable and irrational.

It should be responded in turn that there are at least two disanalogies between the language-games of mathematics and the language-games of religion. First, we know, without any meta-mathematics, without any theory of numbers, at least if we are mathematicians, how to establish truth-claims, or at least assertability claims, in mathematics. Mathematics is a theory that structures practice, and mathematicians in doing mathematics cannot but use theory and in that way theorize. We need not theorize *about* mathematics, but we, not infrequently, theorize, often to good effect, *with* it. Second, we have in mathematics some ability to say what we are talking about. We often talk nonsense in talking *about* mathematics but not always. But actual mathematical talk is another matter. We have no such ability with our talk of God, the Devil or the soul. It is not just the meta-talk that is troubling.

Suppose it is in turn responded that this only shows some of the differences between the language-games of mathematics and those of religion. We understand, if we are religious, that God is a *mystery* and—or so Wittgensteinians have it—that the very demand to be able to warrant our religious claims shows we do not understand them or understand *what faith* requires, including what it is to believe in God. Anything that we could warrant—establish the truth of—wouldn't be a genuine religious claim. To make such a rationalistic demand shows, Wittgenstein *et al.* would have it, that we do not understand religious language-games and that we are not operating from inside them. It would be like in logic to demand that an inductive argument be deductively valid. It would show that we understand neither what induction is nor what logic is. We are just senselessly asking for induction to be deduction.

Still, if this is what religious language-games are like, would it *not* be better *not* to engage in them? We do not know what counts for truth or falsity or what counts as reasonable or unreasonable here; indeed we do not even understand what we are saying. We are just in a fog. Nonsense engulfs us. Isn't talk of mystery just a high-fallutin' way of saying that? Once we see this clearly should we not desist—close up shop, so to say? Moreover, it is not just that we do not understand: we are forced, if we would play that language-game, to say things

that we, if we reflect a bit, would not wish to say. Consider again Wittgenstein's remark in *Culture and Value* that we 'might speak of the world as malicious' or 'easily imagine the Devil created the world, or part of it' or that 'the whole scheme of things will be aimed at evil from the very start'. We not only *cannot* (*pace* Wittgenstein) easily imagine these things: we do not understand these utterances. We only, if we do not think, have the illusion of understanding them by extension from some familiar utterances we do understand. We understand what it is for a person to be malicious or an action or attitude to be malicious. We have truth-conditions or assertability conditions for such claims. But for the *world* to be malicious? We can't intelligibly impute *intentions* to the world. That makes no sense at all. Speaking of the world being malicious is but a misleading way of making the perfectly secular utterance: 'Many people are malicious and this maliciousness is pervasive in our lives.' Similarly, while we understand 'Sven created a new recipe' or 'Jane created a more efficient electric car', we do not understand 'The Devil created the world' or, for that matter, 'God created the world'. The former two sentences have truth-conditions or assertability conditions. The latter two do not. Similarly language has gone on a holiday with the claim: 'The whole scheme of things will be aimed at evil from the very start.' Aside from not understanding what 'the very start' comes to here, more importantly we are, with such a remark, again imputing intentions and aims to what it makes no sense to say has or can have intentions or aims. To say Shakespeare's Richard III aimed at evil or the Nazi regime or the Reagan regime aimed at evil makes sense, but neither the whole scheme of things nor the world can be intelligibly said to *aim* at things either for good or for evil. A scheme of things or a world cannot have aims, form intentions, have desires, goals, and the like. There is and can be no such teleology of nature. There is no such functional language-game. Language is idle here. In support of this, I have supplied what Wittgenstein has called grammatical remarks. But would not Wittgenstein, of all people, perfectly well realize that? That is the way he repeatedly reasons. And the grammatical remarks I have assembled above seem to be plainly so. It looks like Wittgenstein is in a double bind.

Of course Wittgenstein is right, as he says in a sentence following the one quoted above, that 'things break, slide about, cause every imaginable mischief. But that, minimally hyperbolic though it is, is a purely secular utterance. We have not even the hint of a religious language-game here. *If* that is what we '*really* are saying in saying that the whole scheme of things will be aimed at evil', we have turned it, by stipulative redefinition, into an utterly secular platitude without a whiff of religion or religious sensibility. Where we understand what we are saying we do not have a religious language-game at all; where we have one we do not—the superstitious anthropomorphic ones aside—understand what is said and thus cannot understand what it is for something to be, for example, God's will, and thus we cannot do God's will or fail to do God's will.

Suppose someone says that that is a philosopher's hat trick. People do God's will. People, following God's will, make pilgrimages to Lourdes, go to

confession, give up philosophy, lead a life of celibacy, go to the Congo or Haiti to alleviate suffering, etc. But to this, it in turn can be responded, that this—this doing of God’s will—is but to do things that some people take to be obligatory, the right thing to do, desirable to do, and the like, and that some of them associate these moral commitments with their *avowals* that that is doing God’s will without understanding what God is or what His will is or how one could ascertain what is or what it is to do God’s will. It is just a formula they recite with, if they are genuinely theistically religious, great conviction and sometimes with intensity of feeling. But that does not, and cannot, turn it into sense: into an intelligible utterance.

Your intellectualism continues to get in the way, some will respond or at least think. The aim in speaking of religion as Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein do is to expose the roots of the intellectual’s compulsion in approaching religion ‘always to reflect upon the task of living (a certain sort of life) rather than to attend to the task itself.’⁶⁴ The thing to do is to go to church, to pray, to confess, to sing songs in praise of God, to alter your life by becoming more open and loving, to fight against your arrogance and pride, and above all help your fellow humans by engaging with them in their life struggles. Don’t think, act! Thinking will never lead you to faith. To think that it can is a grand illusion of much of the philosophy of religion business. Philosophy will not lead us to God or help us in our religious endeavours.

There is, both Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard have it, no summing up ‘the sense of a religion in philosophical or theological doctrines’.⁶⁵ Kierkegaard stressed that religious belief stands at a very great distance from philosophical clarity. Such clarity is of no avail in coming to a religious life or, for that matter, in turning away from it and combating it. Wittgenstein, as we have seen, had scant use for religious doctrine, theology or the philosophy of religion. He took it to be one of the things that Christianity teaches us that even sound doctrines are useless. The thing is to change your life or the direction of your life. Even achieving wisdom, if indeed we could do this, is of little value. Wisdom is cold and does not connect to your passions, does not grip your life, as religion does by taking hold of you and turning your life around (CV, p. 53). Wittgenstein, in a deeply anti-intellectualistic way, wrote that ‘Wisdom is cold and to that extent stupid. (Faith, on the other hand, is a passion.) It might also be said: Wisdom merely *conceals* life from you. Wisdom is like grey ash, covering up the glowing embers’ (CV, p. 56). Religious faith is a passion yielding a trust that grips your life and turns it around. Trying to be intellectual about religion—trying to rationalize religion—will never get you anywhere. People who are gripped by religious forms of life will not try to show how the religious life is reasonable, though they need not say it is unreasonable either. They will see all argument and attempts at reasoning here, on the part either of the believer or of the sceptic, as utterly pointless.

Is this the end of the line? Should we, vis-à-vis religion, take some such anti-

intellectualist stance and claim that philosophical thinking, or any kind of thinking, only stands in the way of coming to grips with religion whether by way of faith or by rejection of religious faith?

I think not. For one thing, we should be more *holist* than Wittgenstein or most Wittgensteinians are prepared to be. We should not take distinct language-games to be autonomous, yielding their own wholly distinctive criteria of what it makes sense to say, what is justified, what is acceptable and the like. We need repeatedly to attend to how our various language-games and practices relate, criss-cross and affect each other, or would affect each other if we saw with any clarity how they are related. Though no doubt, without any clarifying articulation, these different practices just do affect each other. But with a clearer understanding of how they relate and affect—or could affect—each other, we may gain a more adequate understanding of how things hang together and of the import of it. This may not happen, but it is not impossible that it could and it is worth struggling to attain. Here there should be no *quietism*. Such a struggle is both reasonable and worth the candle.

If we look at our religious practices, including those containing rather well-firmed-up secular knowledge-claims, we can come to see without any theory at all that certain religious notions make such a bad fit with other things that are very pervasive in our culture and important to us that, in coming to understand this, we will come to see that there is very little, if any, sense in these religious notions. It is certainly right to tell us not to be so sure of ourselves and to look again to see if we are being blind to a fit that is there before our eyes which we simply do not see.⁶⁶ (Perhaps we are ideologically blinkered here.) Wittgenstein has shown, regarding the language-games he agonizes over, how often this is the case. But it is also possible that there is no fit—just clashing irreconcilable beliefs (sometimes just attempts at belief) and conceptions—or that a better fit can be made of the various things we know, reasonably believe and care about, by jettisoning religious beliefs and practices: setting them aside so that they—though no doubt this takes time—will no longer play a part in our thought and behaviour and in our conception of how we should guide our lives. It may be the case that there is a severe strain, and indeed even a clash, between different elements in our forms of life and that the religious element will, if we really press things with integrity, be the odd man out. It may be that, in the attempt to overcome the tension by making our religious beliefs and conceptions fit with the rest of our beliefs and conceptions, we will have to resort to increasingly *ad hoc* assumptions or esoteric readings of our religious beliefs and conceptions. It seems to me that something like this is actually happening, and indeed has been happening for some considerable time.⁶⁷

Holistic description also serves here as criticism. Philosophy, little ‘p’ philosophy, utilizing the method of wide reflective equilibrium, need not, and sometimes should not, leave everything as it is. A critical philosophy will utilize Wittgensteinian elucidation principally to break the picture that certain philosophical conceptions seek to impose on us, but it will also engage in

critical assessments, engaging with our lives as well as just with our cogitations—critical assessments that pass without metaphysical extravagance or any other kind of extravagance beyond Wittgensteinian philosophical *quietism* and *neutralism*. This is done without trying to have some ‘ultimate vocabulary’ or some ultimate point of reference or claiming that there is one and only one true description capturing how the world just is anyway. Indeed such talk makes no more sense than William James’ talk of an ‘ultimate datum’.

Wittgenstein shows us well the incoherence of such conceptions. But we have seen how we can, and sometimes should, criticize practices, and not just stop with the reminder that this language-game is played. But our criticism will itself rest on other practices. There is no Archimedean point, independent of *all* practices, from which to criticize any of them. But from this—to make a good Peircean point—it does not follow that *any* practice is immune from or beyond criticism. We can’t criticize them all *at once* or stand free of all of them and criticize them all at once. But where there is a clash among the practices or where the irritation of doubt is at work—real live Peircean doubt, not what Peirce well called Cartesian paper doubt—concerning any one, or several, of our practices, criticism is possible and in order. So we can see how a pragmatist need not, and should not, acquiesce in *quietism*. And we can see also how we can be pragmatists and consistently say that the Christian faith or any other faith or any set of beliefs and responses embedded in practices can rest on a mistake or (*pace* Putnam) be in deep and massive error.⁶⁸ And this holds true not only for religious forms of life, but for *any* practice or form of life. We start with practices, and it is important to see that and how many of them are crucial for our understanding and our lives and are irreplaceable. There is no place else for us to be than to start with practices and to remain with practices. Moreover, *taking them together*, we are stuck with them. There is no perspective outside of or beyond our practices as a whole. There is, that is, no leaping out of our skins. But for any one or several or particular clusters of practices, where for *specific* reasons we come to have trouble with some specific practice or specific cluster of practices, it or they can either be reformed (sometimes deeply reformed) or sometimes even set aside. There is, to repeat, no practice which is immune from criticism. And the same is true, at least in principle, of clusters of particular practices. So we can repeatedly, relevantly and intelligently criticize our very practices and the beliefs and attitudes that are a part of them. This includes our faiths—that is, our trustings. It is just that (1) we cannot criticize *them all at once* or stand free of all of our practices, and (2) that in criticizing a practice or a cluster of practices we must also be using practices. Thus we have Peircean *fallibilism* and Peircean critical common-sensism—something that was fully incorporated into the texture of Dewey’s philosophical practice.⁶⁹ With this, and without falling into philosophy and the conceptual confusions Wittgenstein was concerned to dispel, we can do something critical concerning our forms of life. We can reasonably engage in an activity here

for which Wittgenstein did not make space and indeed did not envisage. With his feeling for a religious sense of life he would probably have thought it all *hubris*. But need it be?

NOTES

- 1 Rush Rhees (ed.), *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Personal Recollections* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 79.
- 2 See Richard Braithwaite. 'An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief', in Malcolm L.Diamond and Thomas V.Litzenberg (eds). *The Logic of God* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1975), pp. 127–47; and R.M.Hare, 'The Simple Believer', in Gene Outka and John R.Reeder. Jr. (eds). *Religion and Morality* (New York: Anchor Press, 1973), pp. 393–427.
- 3 John Hyman, 'Wittgensteinianism', in Phillip L.Quinn and Charles Taliaferro (eds). *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell. 1997). pp. 150–7.
- 4 P.M.S.Hacker, 'Wittgenstein', in Robert L.Arrington (ed.), *A Companion to the Philosophers* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 538.
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 Norman Malcolm, *Wittgenstein: A Religious Point of View?*, ed. with a Response by Peter Winch (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).
- 7 Hacker, *op. cit.*, pp. 545–6.
- 8 *Ibid.* 546.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 Kai Nielsen, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 43–64.
- 11 N.Malcolm, *Wittgenstein: A Religious Point of View?*, p. 74.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 75.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 76.
- 15 *Ibid.*, first italics added.
- 16 *Ibid.*, pp. 75–7.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 76.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 77, italics added.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 78.
- 20 See *Ibid.*, pp. 79–80.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 81.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 82.
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 *Ibid.*
- 26 See Axel Hägerström, *Philosophy and Religion*, trans. Robert T.Sandin (London: Allen &Unwin, 1964).
- 27 See N.Malcolm, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 32.
- 31 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 32 See N.Malcolm, *ibid.*
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

- 36 See K.Nielsen, *God, Scepticism and Morality* (Ottawa: Ottawa University Press, 1989); and K.Nielsen, 'Atheism Without Anger or Tears', in Hendrik Hart *et al.* (eds), *Walking the Tightrope of Faith* (Amsterdam: Rodolpi, 1999), 80–127.
- 37 Peter Winch, 'Discussion of Malcolm's Essay', in *Wittgenstein: A Religious Point of View?*, p. 133.
- 38 See Winch, *Ibid.*, p. 100.
- 39 *Ibid.*
- 40 *Ibid.*, pp. 104–5.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 106.
- 42 *Ibid.*
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 104.
- 44 *Ibid.*
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 111.
- 46 N.Malcolm, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
- 47 *Ibid.*, p. 92.
- 48 P.Winch, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
- 49 *Ibid.*
- 50 N.Malcolm, *op. cit.*. Chapter 1.
- 51 P.Winch, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
- 52 *Ibid.*, p. 124.
- 53 *Ibid.*, p. 108.
- 54 *Ibid.*, p. 109.
- 55 *Ibid.*
- 56 *Ibid.*, p. 110.
- 57 *Ibid.*
- 58 *Ibid.*, p. 113.
- 59 *Ibid.*, p. 114.
- 60 *Ibid.*
- 61 H.Putnam, *Pragmatism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), pp. 27–56.
- 62 See H.Putnam, *Renewing Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 80–107.
- 63 See K.Nielsen, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion; Philosophy and Atheism* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1985); and *God, Scepticism and Modernity*.
- 64 James Conant, 'Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein and Nonsense', in T.Cohen *et al.* (eds), *Pursuits of Reason* (Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 1993), p. 207.
- 65 P.Winch, *op. cit.*, p. 128.
- 66 See R.Rhees, *Rush Rhees on Religion and Philosophy*, ed. D.Z.Phillips (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- 67 See K.Nielsen, *Naturalism Without Foundations* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Press, 1996), pp. 75–155.
- 68 See H.Putnam, *Pragmatism*.
- 69 See K.Nielsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 295–328.