

## BOOK REVIEWS

Opportunities for Reflection:  
*The Oxford Handbook of Wittgenstein*, ed. by  
Oskari Kuusela and Marie McGinn

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Kuusela, Oskari & Marie McGinn (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Wittgenstein*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. 848 p.

According to the cover blurb of this massive Wittgenstein handbook, it constitutes “the definitive resource for the study of this great philosopher”. Fortunately, that is not true. After all, no collection of commentaries, be it as comprehensive as you like, could be the definite resource for the study of any great philosopher. For it is part of what makes a great philosopher great that his or her original writings have a life that precludes such definiteness – a life that makes his or her thoughts continuously grow beyond the loads of secondary literature produced by academic scholars. Hence it is a relief to see that what this collection in fact does – and what the editors actually aim at doing – is to exhibit the inescapable *indefiniteness* of Wittgenstein scholarship. As the

editors begin by noting, “Wittgenstein is a contested figure on the philosophical scene”, and the thirty-five contributions give the reader a clear and updated sense of how deep, wide-ranging and yet often intricately connected the various controversies about the significance of his philosophy are.

The editors are particularly concerned with Wittgenstein’s marginalization within contemporary mainstream analytic philosophy. This worry has two sides to it. On the one hand, there is the worry that analytic philosophy gets impoverished if it forgets about one of its own most important and original representatives. On the other hand, there is the worry that Wittgenstein scholars, by isolating themselves

from the wider analytic community, unwittingly mummify Wittgenstein's philosophy by not putting it to real philosophical work. To counter both these tendencies, the editors have made an effort to have among the contributors not only people who consider themselves Wittgenstein specialists, but also those whose philosophical approach lies closer to the analytic mainstream. The collection's being a meeting place for these diverse voices is one of its chief merits, and it is only to be hoped for that the book can substantially contribute to the sort of anti-isolationism that the editors are aiming at. The flipside of the coin is that potential connections between Wittgenstein and other philosophical traditions are left invisible and unexplored. There is no discussion at all of the relations between Wittgenstein's thought and the various strands within twentieth-century continental philosophy.

In his thought-provoking chapter on private experience and sense data, Paul Snowdon says that "Wittgenstein is fundamentally a negative thinker", and spells out this characterization as follows:

His aim is primarily to establish claims of the form Not [P], or, perhaps: "we should not think that P'. [...] Thus, when he says that his aim in philosophy is "to show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle', we should, surely, think of being trapped in the fly-bottle as a metaphor for being in the grip of an intellectual con-

fusion to the effect that P, and escaping as coming to realize that Not [P]. (403-4)

Many Wittgenstein scholars would respond to this passage by saying that the fly-bottle metaphor is designed precisely to *counter* the natural tendency to think of philosophical problems in terms of being in the grip of a confusion "to the effect that P" and think of the solution to such a problem in terms of coming to realize "that Not [P]". According to Wittgenstein – the response would continue – the very idea that there is a determinate view "to the effect that P" is often what gives rise to the problem in the first place, and the solution is to realize, not that one should not think that P, but that the apparent meaningfulness of both P and its anti-thesis might instead be the products of an artificial and tacitly relied-on dialectical scheme or picture which will lose its attraction if brought out into the open and properly scrutinized.

Now, Snowdon is of course aware of the possibility of this sort of response, and tries to forestall it in a footnote that I cancelled from the above quotation – a footnote where he says that "[i]n characterizing the intended conclusion as 'not thinking that P', I hope to leave it open that the problem in thinking that P might be, according to Wittgenstein, that the state characterized as thinking that P is deficient in proper content" (403, n. 6). However, this note seems to play no substantive role in Snowdon's

ensuing discussion of Wittgenstein's methodology. Thus, he counters Wittgenstein's notorious conception of philosophy as not proposing any theories, by claiming that "since Wittgenstein argues people out of the bad convictions [...] he has to advance some positive claims [...] and there really is no chance that such claims can all be, as one might say, a-theoretical" (404; original italics). The only way that Snowdon can make sense of Wittgenstein's conception is to think of it as a misleading way of suggesting that philosophy traffics only in trivial, agreed-upon truths: "Wittgenstein conceives of himself as saying something positive, albeit of such an untheoretical kind that no one has ever doubted it" (ibid.). As Snowdon immediately goes on to notice, however, many of Wittgenstein's own philosophical remarks, including his characterizations of philosophy, seems far from untheoretical in this sense – after all, few philosophical works are more hotly contested than Wittgenstein's.

I bring up this discussion of Snowdon's in some detail, because it seems to me representative of how mainstream analytic philosophers refuse to take fully seriously Wittgenstein's conception of what philosophical problems are and how they should be treated. By contrast – and as illustrated by the fact that no less than seven papers of this collection are included in the section "Method" and several others are centrally occupied by methodological issues – a dominant

(though by no means unanimous) trend in recent Wittgenstein scholarship is precisely to try to understand what it would be to take that conception fully seriously, the idea being that understanding this is critical to a proper interpretation of Wittgenstein's philosophy *überhaupt*. As a consequence, there is a strong tendency to emphasize and describe as essential to Wittgenstein's approach precisely those elements which mainstream analytic philosophers are inclined to see as eccentric and unfruitful distractions: his peculiar style of writing, his insistence that philosophy is not a science, and the idea that philosophical problems should be dissolved rather than solved. No wonder, then, that there is a sense of estrangement on both sides: today's analytic mainstream runs in a direction opposite to that of recent Wittgenstein scholarship. Also, while worries about the meaningfulness of philosophical problems and philosophy's proper relation to science were central to many of the classic figures in the analytic tradition – Frege, Russell, Carnap, Ryle, Austin, Sellars, and even Quine – a similar intellectual context is absent today. Thus Wittgenstein's treatment of these issues is bound to seem stranger now than it looked 50 years ago.

Putting Wittgenstein's philosophy to work in the context of contemporary analytic philosophy is thus not without its difficulties, especially if one is impressed by the developments within Wittgenstein

scholarship that I have just rehearsed. At the same time, to let methodological quandaries stop one from entering such conversation would seem to amount to a form of methodological dogmatism foreign to the author of *Philosophical Investigations*. As many contributors to this volume emphasize, later Wittgenstein is a methodological pluralist who warns against the idea that we can know beforehand precisely what sort of treatment a particular problem requires, and his approach is decidedly piecemeal (the exact sense of “piecemeal” here is the main topic of James Conant’s thoughtful essay). Indeed, it is refreshing to see how many of the authors that are willing to let the problems before them speak for themselves, rather than imposing upon them preconceived methodological guidelines (Barry Stroud’s contribution is a particularly fine example of this).

After the editors’ introduction, there is a short but insightful paper by Brian McGuinness about the relation between Wittgenstein’s life and work. Thereafter follows a section on logic and the philosophy of mathematics, with eight papers by Gregory Landini, Colin Johnston, Wolfgang Kienzler, A. W. Moore, Michael Potter, Mathieu Marion and Simo Säätelä. I found Johnston’s chapter on assertion and propositional complexity in the *Tractatus*, Moore’s discussion of Wittgenstein and infinity, Marion’s paper on Wittgenstein and the surveyability of proofs, and Säätelä’s discussion of

open problems in mathematics especially thought-provoking. Marion’s paper in particular breaks new ground in the study of Wittgenstein’s philosophy of mathematics, beyond the standard worries about his alleged strict finitism and verificationism, his criticism of Gödel’s incompleteness theorems, his attack on set theory, and so on (worries clearly spelled out in Potter’s contribution). Marion allows us to read Wittgenstein’s discussion of the need for surveyable proofs, not as an argument for strict finitism, but as exploring the idea that there is an ineliminable though traditionally neglected visual element in formal proofs – an idea which has gained increased attention in recent work on the role of visualization in mathematics.

The next section is on the philosophy of language, and also contains eight papers. Stroud’s contribution has already been mentioned. The other papers in this section are all good: Travis offers a difficult but worthwhile discussion of the notion of proposition during various phases in Wittgenstein’s development, and Ian Proops discusses logical atomism in Russell and early Wittgenstein. Like Stroud, Edward Minar nicely brings out the non-reductionist character of the rule-following considerations. David Cerbone has a fine paper on the hard question of linguistic idealism in Wittgenstein, and argues compellingly against Thomas Nagel’s and Jonathan Lear’s idealist-leaning readings. Cora Diamond’s “The

*Tractatus* and the Limits of Sense” illustrates with striking force how artificial the handbook-wise division of Wittgenstein’s philosophy under different headings really is: her paper could justifiably be placed in virtually any section of the book.

“Philosophy of Mind” comes next. The section contains six papers: besides Snowdon’s contribution, William Child discusses Wittgenstein and the first person, Joachim Schulte deals with Wittgenstein’s use of the term “private”, John Hyman brings up later Wittgenstein’s remarks on action and the will, Edward Witherspoon discusses the problem of other minds, and Michael Ter Hark focuses on Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning experience and secondary use. Here I found Witherspoon’s paper particularly illuminating, in its identification of the Kantian strands in Wittgenstein’s treatment of the problem of other minds, and its useful comparison of McDowell’s and Wittgenstein’s conceptions of criteria.

The epistemology section contains three papers. Duncan Pritchard discusses Wittgenstein and scepticism, and Tomas Baldwin deals with Wittgenstein and Moore. The most original paper here is Kim van Gennip’s intriguing discussion of the connections between intuition, rule-following and certainty in Wittgenstein’s response to Russell’s “The Limits of Empiricism” in “Cause and Effect: Intuitive Awareness”. Van Gennip argues that Wittgenstein’s criticism of Russell is

importantly similar to his earlier criticism of Brouwer, and makes a bold parallel between Wittgenstein’s 1930 reflections on rule-following, his criticism of Russell, and the *On Certainty* conception of certainty as fundamentally residing in action.

The next section is the one on method. Oskari Kuusela’s discussion is a sensitive account of continuities and discontinuities in Wittgenstein’s methodological development, and contains a reasonable description of how a “resolute” reader of the *Tractatus* can make sense of Wittgenstein’s later criticism of his early self. Conant’s contribution tackles similar issues, showing how the idea of a “piecemeal” treatment of philosophical problems can be seen as undergoing subtle but important changes during Wittgenstein’s philosophical career. Marie McGinn’s contribution gives a useful account of Wittgenstein’s notion of grammar, Beth Savickey deals with Wittgenstein’s use of examples as a method of conceptual imagination, Avner Baz offers a refreshingly new perspective on aspect perception in Wittgenstein, and Marjorie Perloff discusses the literary form of Wittgenstein’s writings. Finally, Joel Backström brings out what he takes to be the “submerged” theme of the moral dimension of philosophical problems in Wittgenstein.

The final section of the collection, “Religion, Aesthetics and Ethics”, contains three very useful papers on those topics: Stephen Mulhall on Wittgenstein on religious

belief, Malcom Budd on Wittgenstein and aesthetics, and Anne-Marie S. Christensen on Wittgenstein and ethics.

In sum, then, this book is no definite resource, but provides plen-

ty of opportunities for further reflection and controversy – and that is meant as high praise rather than as a point of criticism.

Wittgenstein and the Complexities of  
Semio-Translation:  
*Wittgenstein in Translation*  
by Dinda L. Gorlée

**Horst Ruthrof**

Gorlée, Dinda L., *Wittgenstein in Translation: Exploring Semiotic Signatures*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2012. 361 p.

Readers familiar with Dinda Gorlée's earlier works, *Semiotics and the Problem of Translation* (1994) and *On Translating Signs: Exploring Text and Semio-Translation* (2004) will quickly recognize the signature of a scholar consistently dedicated to the Peircean semiotic tradition in her new book *Wittgenstein in Translation*. They will also appreciate that the new venture is not only a gold mine for a better understanding of Witt-

genstein and Peirce, but also paints its picture on a generous palette of reading and scholarship from Plato, the Bible, St. Augustine, to not so recent as well as some contemporary writers. One of the obvious strengths of *Wittgenstein in Translation* is the author's comprehensive familiarity with the published works and manuscripts of Ludwig Wittgenstein, as well as an impressive range of existing translations of his

writings in English and some other languages. Given such accolades, even an extended review can do no more than draw the reader's attention to the book's general direction and some of its major themes. In reading *Wittgenstein in Translation*, we need to accept that Gorrée is not providing us primarily with yet another philosophical perspective on the Wittgensteinian oeuvre; her central focus is the pursuit of the question of what is happening when we attempt to render Wittgenstein's German in another language.

The book's opening motto "*Worte sind Taten*" (words are deeds) firmly establishes the author's platform of a pragmatics beyond the merely linguistic, the conviction that language cannot be well described if we remain stuck within merely verbal parameters. Gorrée understands her project as a criticism of the "shaky ground" of existing translations of the Wittgenstein oeuvre (5) and also as an attempt to provide a new direction for the predictable explosion of translations of the *Nachlass*.

In opposition to the traditional but "debilitating burden of synonymy", Gorrée aims at "harmonizing the semiotic method of Wittgenstein and Peirce" in order to achieve Peirce's ideal of the "power of constructive translation" (15f.). In the absence of a "multi-lingual glossary" for translating Wittgenstein's German writings, the book is designed to fill a substantial gap. Methodologically, Gorrée's *semio-*

*translation* draws on Peirce, Jakobson, Bühler, Uexküll, Sebeok, and others, with a view to finding a "disciplinary wholeness", especially one favouring an interpretively appropriate alignment of Wittgenstein and Peirce (17f.). Central to that relationship is Peirce's notion of the "fallibilistic sign burden" which makes "retranslation" an inescapable and never-ending task (13). Facing the necessity of selection any review must obey, I opt for a focus on three major themes that run through *Wittgenstein in Translation*: semio-translation; language-games and words as deeds; and Wittgenstein and the "healing" of philosophy.

### **I. Semio-translation**

A central concern in Dinda Gorrée's conception of translation is that all successful intertranslational rendering must transcend the merely linguistic; translation is of necessity embedded in the nonverbal signification of cultural umbrellas. As such, semio-translation is "future-oriented" and a "cumulative" process which is "irreversible", forming a "growing network of directing ideas of different values", much like "an organism radiating in all directions of time and space". In agreement with Peirce's idea of the growth of signs in the community of sign users, Gorrée views semiotranslation as evolving toward ever "higher rationality, complexity, coherence, clarity, and determination, while progressively harmonizing chaotic,

unorganized, and unintegrated translations” (18f.). Initially no more than an assertion, this evolutionary point is consistently argued and exemplified by comparisons of original and subsequent translations of Wittgenstein’s writings.

Following Peirce, Gorlée ties semio-translation to a community of readers as translators and interpreters “in all languages” by providing “a number of copies, recopies and variants in translated and retranslated versions” (86). Far from these versions being in any way stable, translation consists in “making interpretants” (43) and so remains a “fallible game” (21). It does not come as a surprise then when Gorlée dismisses the idea of “an ideal or standard translation”, or “authorized version” as “an oxymoron” (19; Gorlée 2004: 103f.). Since translation, like all sign activity, involves the production of Peircean *interpretants*, its results will always remain open to question and retranslation, generating “a potentially infinite network of different interpretant text-signs”. Because of the necessary involvement of an endless chain of interpretants in translation the author, once more in agreement with Peirce, closely aligns translation with interpretation: “we can approximate interpretation to translation” (41). Interpretation, translation, and communication are all aligned in *Wittgenstein in Translation* as producing a “parallel argumentation” (46f.).

Gorlée’s semio-translation is also indebted to Roman Jakobson’s

influential threesome of *intralinguistic*, *interlinguistic*, and *intersemiotic* translation, except that the verbal economy of translation always already mixes features of Jakobson’s second and third types. Intersemiotic translation, the author says, “involves the decentring of verbal language to transpose it into nonverbal languages” (51). This is a crucial step reminiscent of Peirce’s insistence that “every assertion must contain an icon or a set of icons, or else must contain signs whose meaning is only explicable by icons” (*CP* 1.158). Though iconic features exercised Wittgenstein’s mind ubiquitously throughout the *PI* in the form of *Vorstellbarkeit* (imaginability), he was not prepared to follow this part of the Peircean scheme to its logical conclusion (Ruthrof 2011; 2013). Gorlée resolves this tension by reluctantly letting go of her obligations to the iconic Peirce and instead emphasizes “agreement in the definitions” and “agreement in judgments” (*PI* §242; *G* 46f.). It is above all “the logical superstructure of the context” that “must guide the choices between synonyms, arising in the translator’s” mind “from the different “forms of life” he or she is acquainted with” (307).

Even so, iconicity is at least a stepping stone in Gorlée’s semio-translation in the shape of “metalingual”, “metapoetic”, and “hypoiconic analogies” (219) whereby “the translator needs to ‘visualize’ the mixed fragments before translating them in the right perspective” (213). At this junction

Gorlée appears to be in conflict with Wittgenstein's commitment to the merely incidental contribution of *Vorstellung*, a topic I shall have occasion later to return to (*PI* §6). What is important, Gorlée insists, is "to carry over Wittgenstein's cultural source values into the target text, expressing essentially the same degree of emotional states and cultural thought". The goal then is "cultural equivalence" rather than merely "linguistic equivalence" (220).

This broad conception of translation is reiterated throughout the book and resumed again towards the end when Gorlée emphasizes the constraints on linguistic meaning exerted by such non-linguistic features as gesture, *Gebärde* and *Geste*, mental attitude, and other extraneous features. Summing up, she writes, "the semiotic environment of a linguistic context reacts against the vagueness of the experiential propositions of the game" (288). This larger web stands against Wittgenstein's "basic uncertainty of the last pages of *On Certainty*". Compelling grounds turn into "a person-oriented rational experiment" of reasoning, a much more complex situation than propositional certitude (289). Even when I act with complete certitude, writes Wittgenstein, this very certainty "is my own" (*OC* §25; *G* 290).

*Wittgenstein in Translation*, though, is not only a theoretical enterprise; it is as much a practical demonstration of how translation works, where it goes wrong and where its results are

convincing. When Gorlée does comparative work with Wittgenstein translations from different periods, she is having fun displaying her multi-lingual skills, especially when she draws the reader's attention to the nuances of meaning that result of necessity when we transpose Wittgenstein's attempts at precision thinking in natural language from one tongue to another. A good set of examples of Gorlée's linguistic skills is given from pages 188ff., as for instance her comments on the translation of Wittgenstein's phrase "*Die musikalische Gedankenstärke bei Brahms*" as "the strength of the musical thinking in Brahms" (189), or on what happens when "*schlecht*" is rendered as "evil", which would add a misleading "devilish touch" (205), or on the appropriateness of the translation of "*Verblendung*" by "bedazzlement", which retains traces of "*blenden*" and "*blind*" (205). A rare exception is the rendering by Winch of "*Betrachtung*" by "approach", rather than "viewing" or some other representational phrase, which goes unnoticed, yet results in a loss of Peircean iconicity (202). This little difference is the more important because Wittgenstein, in spite of his struggle to rid the theorization of language of *Vorstellung*, always acknowledges it when he cannot but observe "the law of mental association" at work (*CP* 5.284; 216). To remind ourselves of how forcefully this law is conceived by Peirce in the same passage, "there is no exception ... to the law that every *thought-sign* is translated or

interpreted in a subsequent one”, except when terminated by death. Another little misreading has occurred, I think, on page 210 where the author refers Wittgenstein’s “*ihnen*” to “Beethoven and Goethe”, when it actually refers to “*Probleme der abendländischen Gedankenwelt*” (210). On the whole, though, Gorrée has a fine ear and feeling for Wittgenstein’s (Austrian) German. She frequently notes such effects as semantic alienation and other meaning shifts away from the “original source” (263), as for example in her detailed analysis of “particular” and “peculiar” (261-265). She is especially critical of the French translation of the *BBB* which “reflects an “elegant” novel in the French literary style of philosophy”, yet introduces both “overtranslation and undertranslation, as if it were *Wittgenstein’s philosophy*” (269). Trans-cultural translations of Wittgenstein’s text may produce appealing results; when they do not, it is because, Gorrée observes, “Wittgenstein’s authorship” has been “muddled up” in the target language (270).

Gorrée ends her theme of semio-translation with a reprimand addressed to “many of the global translations” which, though “good translations” fail to “enable philosophical reasoning about Wittgenstein’s philosophical manuscripts”. This leads Gorrée to ask the fundamental question: “Is Wittgenstein’s philosophy perhaps translatable but nonetheless untranslatable?” (270f.). The answer she

offers is that Wittgenstein is translatable when the translator(s) recognize that “meaning in translation is no statistics” but rather the product of “a multi-layered organicism of the mind, working on combining the cotextual (that is, the surrounding linguistic context) and contextual meaning (of the situational and extralinguistic context) as Wittgenstein’s signature or his form of life” (279). In spite of translation remaining “an uncertain procedure”, what is ultimately crucial according to Gorrée is that we respect Wittgenstein’s “revelatory attitude” which in many ways mirrors Augustine’s, for whom translation, as Gorrée notes, was a “missionary” task (309 n37).

## **II. Language-games and words as deeds**

Although the pragmatics of later writings on language by Ludwig Wittgenstein’s is hardly in dispute, it is worth repeating his conviction that “words have meaning only in the stream of life” (*LW* 1982: 913; *G* 165). Gorrée highlights this fundamental tenet because almost everything Wittgenstein has to say after the *Tractatus* rests on it. At the same time, in order not to distort the fine print of Wittgenstein’s conception of language we must pay attention to these two qualifications, one, that “use” is to be understood in terms of its “rules”; the other, that the “meaning of a word” is defined “not by the feeling that attaches” to it (*W* 1979: 3ff.; *G* 173), but “how

the general term “word” operates in grammar” (173). At the same time, meaning in Wittgenstein is to be conceived, Gorlée’s writes, as a “process of cultural ordering” (174). The important qualification to stress with respect to “use” then is the separation of its rule-governed character from *Vorstellung*, a point that is not easily reconciled with the Peircean sign conception. With this qualification in mind, we can sum up the way Gorlée characterizes Wittgenstein’s *Sprachspiel*, the language-game, as his central, pragmatic notion. According to Gorlée, the language-game is a verbal translation of non-verbal situations and other verbal configurations requiring a reverse process of translation (61). Both linguistic and non-linguistic “play-acts” are types of “cultural construction” (279). They shape *Lebensformen* by “grammar”. (159) Thus Wittgenstein views language-games as “the primary thing”, and “feelings, etc.” as “a way of looking” at it (*PI* §656; *G* 160). Whether the two can be so neatly separated in the semantics of natural language must remain a moot point.

This criticism however does not affect Gorlée’s formulation that “the language-game itself is the real game, Secondness, sandwiched between the logical Thirdness and emotional Firstness” (160). Keeping in mind her insistence on the Peircean triadic conception of the sign, meaning requires all three, such that the *Betrachtungsweise* would have to be accepted as a constituent component of the language-game at the semantic

and pragmatic levels, without reduction to empty, symbolic notation. This seems to be confirmed a little later when Gorlée says that “the language-game, *in its semiotized version*, operates outside language to imply extralinguistic components” (160; my emphasis). Wittgenstein appears to support this reading, if not in §6, but a paragraph later in the *PI*, where he regards “the whole of language and the activities with which it is interwoven” as the “language-game” (*PI* §7), as part of a *Lebensform*, (*PI* §23) which reinforces Gorlée’s emphasis on the “socio-cultural variety of the language-games” (224).

In playing the language-game we constitute meaning of necessity, as a “necessary necessitation” (*CP* 1.530). Meaning in this process is not, according to Gorlée, “a single word but rather deeds of a propositional syntax, the semantics of a fragment, without reaching the total work”, a claim she exemplifies by way of the Heraclitean metaphor of not being able to step into the same river twice. “The experiential association of the crossing of the river is the language-game”, which we must play in reading *On Certainty* (293). Here, Wittgenstein substitutes for deductive certitude “a variety of subjective truths” and “propositional attitudes of uncertainty” (294). In Wittgenstein’s “method of doubt and inquiry” the final interpretant forever recedes before us. Because of the effects of Wittgenstein’s imponderables of “nuances of tone, gaze, and gesture”, the traditional

“action of judgment” is converted into the “action of the deeds of the language-game” (*LW* §121; my rendering; *G* 298; 295). In natural language, then, we are dealing with “experiential propositions”, if with propositions at all, one might add, which are always already “mediated” by Wittgenstein’s final notion of “groundlessness” (299). In a way, in Wittgenstein’s last language-games, it would seem that the “grammar of propositional argument” is *aus den Angeln gehoben*, that is, literally *unbinged*.

In her theorization of language-games, another feature of Wittgenstein’s pragmatics to be mentioned briefly, though thoroughly pursued by Gorrée, is the Faustian theme of the primacy of verbal meaning as deed and action, the theme of “the meta-action of deeds in language” (107). This becomes obvious, says Gorrée, “when a word can be discovered in a passionate and alive search, meaning becomes more complex” and “words become deeds” (128). Likewise, linguistic “clues are not words in language, but cultural deeds” (231). As such, language is a cultural activity stretching from its habitual to its most creative employment. For Gorrée, as for her philosophical mentor Wittgenstein, “the central problem is the existence and significance of human creativity in language”, which emanates from “the symbiotic act of the Peirce-like interpreter and translator” (131). But even in its most creative use, language rests on forms of life as its

“basic condition”, Wittgenstein’s “*Hinzunehmende, Gegebene*” (what has to be accepted, what is given) (*PI* §192; *G* 230).

### **III. Wittgenstein and the “healing” of philosophy**

With reference to Rorty, Gorrée suggests that Wittgenstein’s ultimate aim was to “heal” philosophy (77). This, as I will sum up a little later, seems to consist in repairing both the philosophical myth of the symbolic and the preoccupation with mental processes. Given Wittgenstein’s deceptively “simple language”, how, the reader may ask, is such a “healing” possible? How can an oeuvre dedicated to a style of *bricolage* produce “a highly philosophical picture”, a *Weltbild* (*PI* §42)? And how does Gorrée persuade us that “a system of broken and unbroken parts” (45), comparable with Peirce’s “scattered outcroppings” (59), amounts to a *Weltanschauung*? Gorrée likens Wittgenstein’s “fragmentary experiment” to “a postmodern ‘potpourri’ of a basically unpublished philosophical system”, a mixture of “short texts or paragraphs” concealing “contradictions” (62). What emerges from all this, the author says, is a “private style of writing mere fragments about philosophy” which offer an “aesthetic vision” and the “personal confessions of being an author” (66). As Gorrée illustrates, a salient characteristic of Wittgenstein’s unique style is his habit of

interspersing his formal discourse with “informal questions and commands answered by himself”. “Loose scraps of observation or thoughts” inform his method of philosophical inquiry such that they generate the effect of a “pseudo-pedagogical performance” (67). Viewed from this angle, suggests Gorrée, the *PI* could be seen as a “scrapbook” (68). And yet, in spite of the impressions of no more than “*Denkbewegungen*”, a series of “mental snapshots”, we are provided not just with “isolated ideas” (70), but rather with earnest “*Geichnisse*” (parables) (*Nachlass*, CV 16; G 70). Looking at Wittgenstein’s writings and its reception in translation, Gorrée discovers a larger purpose, part of which she calls his “fragmentary therapy” (77). And there can be little doubt that in the end his “solipsistic and collective ‘puzzle picture’” (*PI* §§23, G 168), his *Bemerkungen* and *Aufzeichnungen*, his quasi-propositions, like Peirce’s “instantaneous impulses” (*CP* 6.330; G 95), amount to one of the most influential philosophical positions of the twentieth century.

A forever intriguing aspect of Wittgenstein’s “new philosophy” are his almost desperate attempts at avoiding what he regards the two major traps threatening critical thought: “In philosophy one is in constant danger of producing a myth of symbolism, or a myth of mental processes” (*Z* 1967: 211; G 88). In striving to avoid importing into the description of natural language the logical but unwarranted

presupposition of the purity of “crystalline” clarity, Wittgenstein replaces Fregean sense with a “shadowy being” (*BBB* 1958: 36). Pointing to the schematic nature of language, instead of adopting the notion of pure thought, Wittgenstein feels compelled “to paint something ‘*Verschwommenes*’ (something blurred) ... a grey section” (*Nachlass MS* 229: 411; G 91). So meaning, for the later Wittgenstein, according to Gorrée, had not only lost the sharpness of definitional sense but also “its straightforward referentiality” and as a result “had become a complex, elusive, semiotic entity to be vaguely understood by the receivers (translators)” (156). This is why, as Gorrée persuades her readers, the language-games afford us “no proof, no reality, and no truth”. They offer “degrees of fidelity” (169).

The other philosophical trap, Gorrée tells us, Wittgenstein does not wish to fall into is the unwarranted stipulation of “mental processes”. This appears to be directed against the Lockean, Kantian and Husserlian traditions. Yet, as Wittgenstein well knows, such a new direction is difficult to make coherent and persuasive. After all, how is it possible “even to think of the existence of things, if we always only see *Vorstellungen* – their replicas – always only *Vorstellungen* (*nie die Dinge selbst*)” (*W* MS 211: 108f.; G 153)? Kant’s *Vorstellung* continues to loom as a massive cognitive precondition of appearances. In a similar vein, Wittgenstein appears to rebel against

phenomenology and its elaboration of the mental process. Yet again, there are obstacles in the way of such a critique. As Wittgenstein feels compelled to concede, “the life of the sign” as well as its “use” depend on “certain definite mental processes through which alone language can function”. Without them, “the signs of our language seem dead” (*BBB* 1958: 3f.; *G* 154). Such sentiments are supported by Wittgenstein’s sensitivity to the manner in which a culture utters its expression, a theme I have discussed repeatedly under the heading of *implicit deixis* (e.g. Ruthrof 2000: 48-53; 2011: 173). As Gorrée acknowledges, Wittgenstein expresses this aspect of meaning simply and neatly as a “feeling” with which “the sentence is said” (*BBB* 1958: 35; *G* 156).

Guiding us through *Wittgenstein in Translation*, Gorrée argues the “shift from arithmetic to existential logics”, Wittgenstein’s “open nature of quasi-propositions” suggestive of “a sort of *unvollständiges Bild*”, an incomplete picture rather than a coherent world view (*PB* 1984: 115; *G* 88). Indeed, the very idea of “incompleteness” is shown to lie at the heart of Wittgenstein’s “new philosophy”. Pulling certain threads of Wittgenstein’s “*unvollständiges Bild*” together, we are nevertheless able to pursue in more detail the question at the heart of his later work, of what precisely “*meaning as use*” consists in. Two powerful philosophical trends appear to have made it difficult for him to complete this part of his theoretical landscape: his scientific

dedication to *observables* and his lingering formal commitment to the ideal of *algebra*, in a way “blocking the road of inquiry” (*CP* 6.273). What Wittgenstein tried to escape from until the very end of his thinking, as portrayed by Gorrée, is the one issue that could have added significantly to, if not completed, the picture Wittgenstein was striving for, permitting him to “leave something in the place where something was missing”: his very own, trade-mark transformation of Peirce’s *iconic*, rather than reductively symbolic, *mental interpretant* (*PB* 1984: 115). Yet, as much as he wrestled with *imaginability* throughout his later career, Wittgenstein in the end could not accept it as that which, suitably translated, was the *something* that was missing in his account of language as “refinement”. What Gorrée has been successful in driving home for this reader, in addition to a wealth of other insights, is Wittgenstein’s absolute commitment to critical inquiry as a spiritual search, to be surpassed only by his extraordinary modesty. When he recalls his insight of the meaninglessness of the law of causality Wittgenstein says, “*da hatte ich das Gefühl vom Anbrechen einer neuen Epoche*” (there I had the feeling of the dawning of a new epoch). He is thrilled to be a participant in the inception of a new way of thinking rather than, as in the English rendering, “I felt myself initiating a new epoch” (113).

#### IV. Conclusion

In her Conclusion “with anticipation”, the author surveys the main steps of her argument in *Wittgenstein in Translation*. She does so with a mild reprimand of translations which have failed to be sensitive to his “total oeuvre”. Such errors can be avoided, Gorlée suggests, if philosophical translation were to follow the “path of the computerized version of Wittgenstein’s philosophical work” conducted in the “Hyper-Wittgenstein” project by the “Wittgenstein Archives in Bergen” (324). She ends her book with yet another nod to Peirce by telling the reader that such an approach via hypertext would reveal “the underlying code of inward iconicity and outward indexicality” resulting in a “multi-disciplinary symbolicity” (326). By no means an easy read, *Wittgenstein in Translation: Exploring Semiotic Signatures* is an enormously rich book, original, personal, and entirely committed to the spirit and detail of Wittgenstein’s writing. It will prove an invaluable source of information for readers interested in Peircean semiotics and a broad and sympathetic perspective on Wittgenstein’s life-long intellectual struggle.

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