

Returning to the New: Interpreting Wittgenstein's Methodology and Aims in *Philosophical Investigations*

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There is much dispute over the most appropriate and accurate way to interpret Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*.¹ *PI*'s remarkable form – a collection of over a thousand remarks – employs a 'rather unconventional' approach (Fischer and Ammereller 2004: ix). "Quite obviously, Wittgenstein's view of how philosophy *ought* to be practised, and is being practised by himself, diverges radically from how philosophers traditionally conceived of their own work" (Fischer and Ammereller 2004: x). Clearly, Wittgenstein is concerned with grammatical investigation. At *PI* 90 he states, "Our inquiry is therefore a grammatical one. And this inquiry sheds light on our problem by clearing misunderstandings away." However, there is no common consensus with respect to how *PI* should be interpreted. Some read this work as elucidatory, others as doctrinal, and yet others perceive Wittgenstein's *PI* as therapeutic.² Some have shown that the elucidatory and doctrinal readings do not do justice to this text.

¹ Henceforth referred to as *PI*.

² There are a plethora of ways *PI* has been interpreted, with many nuances amongst them. However, for the purposes of this analysis an attempt to engage with all of them would be superficial and unable to capture the intricacies of the numerous interpretations. Hence, taking into account the scope of my argument I have selected a few of those readings among many.

While the therapeutic understanding of *PI* is ubiquitous in secondary literature, such prevalence is open to question. This reading has rather problematic implications because it likens the philosophical problems that philosophers encounter to mental afflictions. The pervasiveness of the therapeutic reading remains dubitable, since this discussion emerged from a small number of remarks found in Wittgenstein's work (Savickey 2017: 95). Despite the frequency of the therapeutic reading among scholars, it is not the most appropriate way to interpret *PI*. Wittgenstein's text seeks to alter how we think about language and about the practise of philosophy itself. *PI* is more appropriately read as encouraging us to return to the traditional practise of philosophy – that is through spoken dialogue with others.

In *PI* 109, Wittgenstein states that:

[In philosophy] ... we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. All *explanation* must disappear, and description alone must take its place. And this description gets its light – that is to say, its purpose – from the philosophical problems. These are, of course, not empirical problems; but they are solved through an insight into the workings of our language, and that in such a way that these workings are recognized – *despite* an urge to misunderstand them. The problems are solved, not by coming up with new discoveries, but by assembling what we have long been familiar with. Philosophy is a struggle against the

bewitchment of our understanding by the resources of our language.

In many ways this suggestion about how to practise philosophy is diametrically opposed to the way it has been practised throughout the history of philosophy – that is, the practise of proposing a doctrine to be critiqued and analyzed by others in an attempt to arrive closer to the truth. Additionally, Wittgenstein does not create his own specialized vocabulary to express himself – he actually introduces few original terms (i.e. language games). Unlike philosophers such as Kant and Hegel who use convoluted language of their own making which needs to be deciphered before one can begin to analyze their arguments³, Wittgenstein uses straightforward language, and thus one need not be a philosophy student to understand the words he employs. Nevertheless, Wittgenstein’s work raises critical philosophical questions from which we can glean valuable insights. The form *PI* takes is also notable. Instead of a linearly structured argument, Wittgenstein’s text contains over a thousand remarks which, upon careful analysis

³ It is not my intention here to be dismissive or disrespectful of these philosophers, who have made significant contributions during the history of philosophy, or any philosopher who has similarly constructed their own unique terms by which to express their arguments. I only mention them because, based on personal experience, it appears that some tend to hold such philosophers as superior or as possessing a greater intellect, in comparison to those who use language which I would describe as straightforward. Furthermore, I maintain that establishing one’s own language when writing philosophical works is often unnecessary, takes us further away from the truth rather than bringing us closer to it, and rather than being a marker of intelligence, is simply a façade.

can be linked (though not necessarily in the order they appear) in intricate ways. One might be tempted to construct a pseudo-theory by manipulating Wittgenstein's diverse remarks, or to impose a doctrine upon the text, but to do so would be inconsistent with his aim. Because he presents no doctrine, it can be immensely challenging to figure out how to even respond to Wittgenstein's writing, since, in philosophy we are taught to respond to a text by critically examining the argument put forth. Moreover, throughout the history of philosophy, regardless of whether or not philosophers did indeed explain anything, they believed there was something there for them to explain and generally attempted to fulfill this goal. Hence, they did perceive themselves as in fact advancing (sometimes even establishing) theses which engendered spirited debates (Fischer and Ammereller 2004: x). Thus, Wittgenstein's assertion that we should not be advancing any kind of theory, compels one to consider his goal in *PI*.

To investigate this consideration it is necessary to analyze the opening of *PI* where he cites the following from Augustine's *Confessions*:

When grown-ups named some object and at the same time turned towards it, I perceived this, and I grasped that the thing was signified by the sound they uttered, since they meant to point it out. This, however, I gathered from their gestures, the natural language of all peoples, the language that by means of facial expression and the play of eyes, of the movements of the limbs and the tone of voice, indicates

the affections of the soul when it desires, or clings to, or rejects, or recoils from, something. In this way, little by little, I learnt to understand what things the words, which I heard uttered in their respective places in various sentences signified. And once I got my tongue around these signs, I used them to express my wishes (PI 1).

Augustine's claim here reflects the commonly held notion about developing the skill of language, which is that one learns by recognizing an object and associating a word with it. However, Wittgenstein wants to show us that this is not consistent with how we actually learn language, and he aims to point out the inadequacies of Augustine's account. Wittgenstein wanted to do this because, "...whether or not we are aware of this, the fact that we tacitly assume its correctness tends to govern our thinking about words and meaning, and thus it has bearings on the way we think about many of the problems of philosophy" (Hertzberg 2014: 41–42). In response to this excerpt from Augustine's text, Wittgenstein notes that, "These words, it seems to me, give us a particular picture of the essence of human language" (PI 1). In other words, Augustine is clinging to an idea of how he thinks language is learnt; he thinks this *must* be the correct account for language learning.

Wittgenstein however, remains unconvinced and provides us with his own notorious shopkeeper example – an imagined scenario where a person is sent to the store with a slip marked five red apples and obtains these items by handing the paper to the

shopkeeper. Upon reading it, the shopkeeper opens the drawer labelled apples, then looks up the word 'red' from a chart and locates the color sample next to it. The shopkeeper says the series of numbers and as he is saying each number, removes an apple, matching the color sample from the drawer (*PI* 1). Initially, this remark appears baffling because it is clearly not an assertion and it raises a series of questions from the reader. Why would Wittgenstein include a scenario which, on first thought, never occurs in real life? Why would he have the shopkeeper carry out such peculiar actions in order to perform the simple act of handing over the items to the customer as requested? Moreover, what is the aim of this remark?

In response to the first question, upon more serious thought, one can come up with numerous examples in which we can (at least partly) relate this scenario to real life. A customer may request their required items by handing over a list of goods to a shopkeeper rather than verbally requesting them if they do not speak the predominant language (which the shopkeeper assumedly speaks), were hard of hearing (or were non-verbal as the result of some other condition) and the shopkeeper did not know sign language, or if the customer was a child sent to the store by an adult who wanted to ensure the correct items were purchased. While the actions of the shopkeeper still appear bizarre, they serve a significant purpose which underscores Wittgenstein's objective at

large in *PI*. “What Wittgenstein is trying to create here, however, is what might be called a distancing effect⁴: we are so accustomed to operating with words that we are not aware of the complexity of what is involved in doing this” (Hertzberg 2014: 42). In other words, this scenario aids the reader who likely does consider all the intricacies that language use encompasses, unless they themselves have encountered a serious struggle with language.⁵ Furthermore, it becomes abundantly clear how each word in this example requires a unique type of skill when we consider someone who is just beginning to master these words (i.e. someone who suffers from extreme memory problems). The purpose behind this scenario is that it, “...instantiates an important feature of Wittgenstein’s way of doing philosophy: he is not so much giving

⁴ An interesting choice of phrase because it brings to mind a theatrical technique of the same name employed by Brecht. For him, the distancing effect (*Verfremdungseffekt*) was a way to prevent the audience from becoming emotionally involved by establishing a distance between them and the actors. The purpose of creating this distance was to compel the audience to think objectively about what was unfolding onstage, contemplate the correlation between the artificiality of the theatre and real-life circumstances, and thereby engage their intellect in critical thought about the social injustices of society (Brecht 2000: 2). Likewise, as Hertzberg suggests, Wittgenstein wants us to, in a sense, step back and reflect upon the complexities that occur in our use of language. Moreover, Savickey (2017) suggests that Wittgenstein’s practise of philosophy is performative and so the phrase ‘distancing effect’ is arguably relevant to Wittgenstein’s text in more ways than one.

⁵ By a serious struggle with language, I am not referring to someone being extremely challenged by learning an additional language. Instead I have in mind here someone whose struggle with language is so severe that they have immense difficulty stringing together a simple sentence in their native language.

arguments⁶ as working on our habits of thought. That is, he is trying to make us aware of our tacit assumptions in order to liberate us from them” (Hertzberg 2014: 43). With this aim in mind, his inclusion *Confessions* excerpt becomes much clearer. Augustine holds on to the idea of how he thinks language *must* be acquired and Wittgenstein’s shopkeeper scenario challenges that notion. Hence, Wittgenstein wants to alter the way we think about language.

Amongst scholars, there is much diversity with respect to Wittgenstein’s method of carrying out this alteration. Genia Schönbaumsfeld divides readers of Wittgenstein into two broad groups: ‘resolute readers’ and ‘standard readers.’ Resolute readers claim that Wittgenstein’s primary aim in both his early and later works was, “... offering a therapy that will cure us of the illusion of meaning something where we really mean nothing” (Schönbaumsfeld 2010: 649). Whereas standard readers maintain that he was concerned with more than mere therapy and that there is a substantial amount of discontinuity between Wittgenstein’s earlier and later works. ‘Resolute readings’ of Wittgenstein emerged as a ‘radical new approach’ to his initial texts, but are now beginning to become a more common interpretation for his later work as well (Schönbaumsfeld 2010: 649). Scholars who interpret

⁶ This claim is not entirely precise. Wittgenstein is not giving arguments *at all*. However, I include this quote because it is consistent with my assertion that Wittgenstein’s aim in *PI* is indeed to alter our habits of thought.

Wittgenstein in this way are committed to nonsense monism, namely the assertion that from the perspective of logic there is only one type of nonsense – plain gibberish, and that they also deny that “... there is something we ‘cannot do in philosophy’” (Schönbaumsfeld 2010: 650). Both the ‘resolute’ and the ‘substantial’ readings of Wittgenstein are insufficient to adequately account for the complexities within Wittgenstein’s *PI*. Moreover, “... there are neither good philosophical nor compelling exegetical grounds for accepting a resolute reading of the later Wittgenstein’s work” (Schönbaumsfeld 249).

In contrast, Phil Hutchinson identifies three general ways of interpreting *PI*: doctrinal, elucidatory, and therapeutic (Hutchinson 2007: 693). Doctrinal readers suggest Wittgenstein, “...advances (putatively non-metaphysical) doctrines such as the use-theory of meaning and a raft of doctrines in the philosophy of psychology...” (Hutchinson and Read 2008: 143). However, to advance doctrines would be inconsistent with Wittgenstein’s *PI* 109 discussed earlier, where he explicitly says this is what he is not doing. Additionally, proponents of the doctrinal interpretation, to a certain extent, play fast and loose with Wittgenstein’s wording in his remarks on meaning and use, for example, *PI* 43 (Hutchinson and Read 2008: 144). Moreover, this reading is insufficient because it does not acknowledge the modal terms which play a crucial part in *PI*, and because this reading does not seriously take

into account Wittgenstein's metaphysical statements (Hutchinson 2007: 693). On the other hand, the elucidatory readers of *PI* argue that "...Wittgenstein practises therapy *and* elucidates the grammar of our language." However, elucidatory readers are distinguished from therapeutic ones because they place an emphasis on giving an overview of language and also on the significance of 'mapping' that language as something that plays a role separate from the therapeutic purpose (Hutchinson and Read 2008: 143). Hence, the elucidatory reading fails due to the fact that it, "...ultimately commits Wittgenstein to untenable philosophical positions" (Hutchinson 2007: 693).

At this point, I wish to examine the therapeutic reading in greater detail. The therapeutic approach consists of three variations: ones that compare Wittgenstein's philosophy to psychoanalysis, ones that compare his philosophy to therapy, and ones that perceive philosophy as an illness (Savickey 2017: 95). Among the initial therapeutic interpretations of Wittgenstein's work is the comparison of his methods to psychoanalysis which are mostly rooted in textual and anecdotal evidence dating back to the early 1930s. Sources utilized as a means to support this comparison include a disclaimer issued by Wittgenstein, a typescript submitted in the 1930s, and an article by Braithwaite which offers the first public description of Wittgenstein's philosophical pursuits with respect to psychoanalysis. However, Wittgenstein explicitly links

philosophy and psychoanalysis only twice in his posthumously published works. Furthermore, in these remarks he is not concerned with making an analogy between philosophy and psychoanalysis, but instead is directing our focus toward the analogies themselves (Savickey 2017: 96–99). Indeed, Wittgenstein often directs our focus to the use of analogies throughout his later works. Understanding the notion of philosophy as therapy rather than just being similar to it, is an overly literal reading of Wittgenstein's remarks (Savickey 2017: 100). Hence, therapeutic readings that compare Wittgenstein's philosophy to psychoanalysis do not accurately represent his work (Savickey 2017: 116).

Hutchinson is one scholar who perceives Wittgenstein's methods as therapeutic and philosophical questions as mental disturbances. He maintains that the therapeutic interpretation does not commit Wittgenstein to the untenable philosophical positions. Because of this, this reading is able to, "... make sense of Wittgenstein's text as a whole ..." Therefore, the therapeutic reading is the only one Hutchinson deems to be accurate (Hutchinson 2007: 693). He maintains that Wittgenstein referred to his methods as therapeutic and even goes so far as to say that after 1929, the motivating force behind Wittgenstein's philosophy was to relieve mental disturbances which emerged from struggling with philosophical dilemmas (Hutchinson 2007: 694).

For Hutchinson, Wittgenstein's methodology in *PI* is therapeutic in the sense that through his remarks, he helps to liberate us from the particular picture we hold onto and to show us that there are other ways of seeing things. When philosophers are confronted by an apparently impossible philosophical dilemma, said dilemma can be traced to one's being within the unconscious or unacknowledged hold of a certain picture of how things must be. The goal of the philosophical therapist is to fracture this hold that the picture has on the individual and demonstrate to them alternative ways of seeing things. This individual is then supposed to be cured of their mental disturbance, once they are released from the grip of the picture, and have freely accepted the alternative one as valid. "The acceptance of new pictures serves to loosen the thought-constraining grip of the old picture, the picture that had led the philosopher to the seemingly insurmountable philosophical problem, and thus to suffering the resultant mental disturbance" (Hutchinson 2007: 694). Furthermore, for Hutchinson a mental disturbance is not a *consequence* of a philosophical dilemma, but *is* in fact a mental disturbance. This assertion is putatively supported by Wittgenstein's perception of philosophical dilemmas as problems of the will which are rooted in particular pathologies⁷,

⁷ Similarly, Read and Hutchinson claim that therapy's goal is to liberate one from what might be referred to as pathologies of the mind, and while it can be carried out in numerous ways, Wittgenstein explored one of these and decided on the one which was the best according to him (Read and Hutchinson 2014: 153).

and needed to be treated in the form of therapy which target the afflicted individual's mode of engaging with the world (Hutchinson 2007: 695).

Likewise, Read and Hutchinson assert that:

Wittgensteinian philosophy is a quest to find a genuinely effective way of undoing the suffering of minds in torment. The analogy with therapy is with 'our method' of philosophy; it is not claimed to be with philosophy, per se. 'Our method', the therapeutic method, is concerned with bringing to consciousness similes or pictures that have hitherto lain in the unconscious, constraining one's thought (and, maybe, leading one to believe one needed to produce that theory, to do that bit of metaphysics) (Read and Hutchinson 2014: 150).

For them, the objective behind philosophy as therapy is to obtain freedom of thought and an enhanced understanding about the meaning of our words when we utilize them in actual and possible occasions. They argue that Wittgenstein's concern lies with helping liberate both ourselves and himself from the impulse to metaphysics. Wittgenstein carries out this therapy by engaging the reader in dialogues with a varied and dialectically structured series of philosophical impulses. The impulses are presented to the reader through the interlocutor whose voice is interspersed in the text between Wittgenstein's. *PI* consists of imaginary scenarios aimed at immersing the reader and the interlocutor. As the reader becomes immersed they try to make sense of Wittgenstein's text

and this is intended to result in a reorientation of their thoughts (Read and Hutchinson 2014: 152). Other scholars echo this view as well. For instance, Savickey asserts, “Wittgenstein’s art of grammatical investigation requires a change in mode of thought or philosophical practice” (Savickey 2017: 106). Similarly, Rom Harré claims that, “The first thirty-odd paragraphs of the *Investigations* (Wittgenstein 1953) presents the patient with an alternative way of conceiving meaning, loosening the grip of the picture that has been causing the sufferer such mental anguish...” (Harré 2008: 485) He likens the mental condition that Wittgenstein is supposedly offering therapy for to paranoia.

I agree that Wittgenstein is trying to free us from the particular picture we hold onto of how things must be and to show us that there are other ways of seeing things – this idea is supported by the excerpt from *Confessions*, where Augustine clings to his picture of how language must be acquired, and Wittgenstein’s shopkeeper scenario helps to free us from this picture by offering a different conception of how language is learnt. However, I would not agree that Wittgenstein’s philosophy is therapeutic. Reorienting the way in which one thinks is not best described as treating a mental disturbance or an illness in need of a cure, nor is it aligned with Wittgenstein’s aims in *PI*. Such a perspective actually results in many problematic implications. Firstly, the idea of therapy is closely linked to the ideas of a patient, illness or disorder, therapist

and optimal health” (De Mesel 2015: 567). Even if ‘therapy’ is being used metaphorically it implies an illness which needs to be cured either literally or metaphorically (Fischer 2011: 22). While philosophical questions and illnesses need to be treated in a way which will rid the individual of them, such similarities are not sufficient to support the argument that, according to Wittgenstein, philosophical questions are, literally, illnesses. Wittgenstein was notorious for being exceptionally exact with his use of words and would not have chosen to phrase his sentence as, ‘Philosophical questions are treated by the philosopher *like* an illness’ if he had really meant that a philosophical question *is* an illness. Furthermore, De Mesel remarks, “...an illness is often assumed to be a condition or a state or one’s personal experience of that condition or state...” (De Mesel 2015: 568) For De Mesel, it is unclear how a philosophical predicament could be consistent with that definition.

Additionally, if a philosopher grappling with a philosophical dilemma is indeed afflicted with a mental disturbance, as some scholars suggest, then this makes the philosopher a patient (De Mesel 2015: 570). But, we would be mistaken to think that professional philosophers are the only ones to confront philosophical questions. For De Mesel:

Philosophical questions arise through a misunderstanding of the workings of our language, and may emerge in, for example, psychology and mathematics, as well as in

philosophy. Wittgenstein's point is that philosophy is not a science about a particular subject matter, but that it is an infinite set of methods, ways of dealing with a particular kind of question, namely those based on conceptual confusions (De Mesel 2015: 570).

Furthermore, what sets philosophers apart from others who deal with philosophical ponderings is that their work is oftentimes explicitly concerned with conceptual confusions, and therefore, the difference, De Mesel concludes, is merely quantitative not qualitative. Hence, those who devote their life to the practise of philosophy are not the only ones to grapple with philosophical questions (De Mesel 2015: 570–71). Thus, if many others raise these questions also as De Mesel suggests, are we then to deem all these individuals as being afflicted with a mental illness too? Taking this implication further, are we then to say that all those philosophers throughout the practise's history have been suffering from mental illness. If we had decided so and proceeded to 'treat' them, would we not have lost out on numerous truly valuable insights?

Moreover, if we conceive of philosophers as the only individuals who concern themselves with philosophical inquiries, and view these types of questions as a form of mental disturbance, then such a line of reasoning could lead us to perceive these individuals as ill in comparison to others who are healthy (De Mesel 2015: 572). However, concerning oneself with

philosophical queries is not a mental illness, in fact these are entirely normal questions for any human being to raise. Since we often understand an illness to refer to a condition which prevents one from living a healthy, normal life, if we perceive philosophers as individuals with a mental illness, we are then implying that they are incapable of living a healthy, normal life (De Mesel 2015: 572). Needless to say, such an implication is glaringly problematic. De Mesel argues that Wittgenstein conceives of philosophical therapies as meant to dissolve philosophical questions, not to eradicate our urge to ask such questions. “The urge to misunderstand the workings of our language is not an illness, just like our inclination to misjudge distances in the dark or our vulnerability to getting a cold are not illnesses” (De Mesel 2015: 571). In other words, we are simply prone to misunderstand the workings of our language from time to time – this is simply a condition of being human. To attempt to ‘cure’ something within our very nature would be quite troublesome.

By perceiving the practise of philosophy as an intellectual or mental illness, scholars who hold this view maintain that the objective of philosophy is to put an end to philosophy (Savickey 2017: 95), which is inconsistent with Wittgenstein’s *PI*. Wittgenstein states, “...philosophical problems should *completely* disappear” (*PI* §133). What he means here, is that certain philosophical dilemmas can and should be entirely cleared up. But,

it would be inaccurate to take this statement as meaning that *all* philosophical dilemmas can or will be entirely cleared up. Clearing up such dilemmas can be accomplished through therapy, but Wittgenstein is not claiming that we will reach the end of our philosophical work, since our urge to misunderstand will cause new queries to arise and old ones to crop up in a different form. Hence, while it is possible to clear up questions in philosophy, this does not imply that the end of philosophy is imminent (De Mesel 2015: 577). Moreover, because we use language, we are prone to conceptual vulnerabilities which make the idea of the culmination of philosophy inconceivable (De Mesel 2015: 578). Furthermore, I would like to suggest that an end to philosophy, even if it were conceivable would not be beneficial, but instead rather disadvantageous. Philosophy is one of the foremost ways in which we gain new insight, and it helps us to continue asking questions which have the potential to result in new discoveries. Putting an end to philosophy would seem to suggest that we possess all the wisdom there is to know and that there are no more questions to ask, no more discoveries to make. If we were to stop practising the art, might we not be showing arrogance with respect to the extent of our wisdom?

Moreover, the prevalence of the therapeutic reading in Wittgenstein scholarship is questionable since Wittgenstein made few specific references to the link between philosophy and therapy.

In *PI* 133 Wittgenstein notes, “There is not a single philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, different therapies as it were.” This remark “...contains the only explicit reference to therapy in Wittgenstein’s entire *Nachlass*” (De Mesel 2015: 566). Hence, despite the extensive emphasis on the therapeutic interpretation, the relation between philosophy and therapy is rarely mentioned. A diligent reader of Wittgenstein finds that philosophy is not literally therapy but only similar to it. What Wittgenstein accomplishes in *PI* is the alteration of our conception about how things must be, including the practise of philosophy itself. The philosophy and therapy analogy which, among Wittgenstein’s numerous writings shows up the most in *PI* (about five times), occurs in total only about twenty times. When taking into account the thousands of remarks Wittgenstein penned, the number of times this analogy appears is clearly minimal. Yet scholars have dedicated significant discussion to these few remarks. The therapy analogy may seem more prevalent than is the case due to the fact that Wittgenstein dedicated a significant amount of his texts to discussing pain and other related concepts (Savickey 2017: 95–96). Hutchinson attempts to justify the pervasiveness of the therapeutic reading, by suggesting in a footnote that for therapy to be effective one must be, to a certain extent, covert in their intentions and practise of it (Hutchinson 2007: 694 fn 9). However, his justification here appears impulsive and is insufficiently supported.

Thus, I maintain that the therapeutic readings outlined above are inconsistent with Wittgenstein's aims and methods in *PI*. To offer my reading of how Wittgenstein proceeds to liberate us from our picture of how things *must* be, I return to the noteworthy elements of his text which I referred to at the beginning: Wittgenstein's statement about not advancing theses in philosophy, his form, and his style of language. These characteristics demonstrate his effort to free us from our picture of how philosophy *must* be practised. By supplying the reader with numerous comments regarding grammatical investigation, instead of theses or a doctrine, Wittgenstein compels us to verbally discuss his text with others. Upon reading *PI* alone, one can certainly begin to draw connections between the remarks and develop their own insights in response. However, if one stops there, they miss much of the richness and depth that Wittgenstein's work has to offer. Discussion about the text with others allows one to make new connections among the remarks that they had not seen before, to exchange interpretations, and to make sense of what is being said. When a philosophical work takes the form of a linear argument it is possible to read the text alone, then read what others have written on the argument and respond by writing one's own paper. Thus, it is entirely possible to go through this process without ever having verbally spoken to others about the argument in question.

However, one can only gain so much insight by looking at words on a page.

Additionally, it is evident Wittgenstein does not want us to just read his sentences, think about them briefly, and then lay them aside. Indeed, he asks us to be much more active when engaging with his text and frequently tells us to ‘imagine’ or carry out an action.⁸ For example, at *PI* 330, he asks us, “Is thinking a kind of speaking?” Rather than respond with an argument, he asks us to carry out a scenario so that we can complete the investigation ourselves. Further on in the same remark, he orders us, “Say: ‘Yes, this pen is blunt. Oh well, it’ll do.’ First, with thought; then without thought; then just think the thought without the words.” In the following remark he says, “Imagine people who could think only aloud. (As there are people who can read only aloud.)” (*PI* 331). Such remarks are meaningless if the reader fails to engage with them by carrying out their own investigation as Wittgenstein suggests. Through form, Wittgenstein thus compels us to engage in discourse with others about what we have read.

⁸ One may argue that Wittgenstein’s suggestion for engaging with his text in this manner is not much different from traditional philosophy’s practise of carrying out thought experiments. However, I maintain that Wittgenstein’s method is quite distinct because in comparison to other philosophers who in the process of presenting their thought experiment also present and support a particular stance, at no point does Wittgenstein argue for a position that we should take and defend it. He presents a scenario and leaves us to conduct our own investigation independently and as such draw our own independent conclusions.

Moreover, Wittgenstein's employment of what I refer to as 'straightforward language,' allows him to raise crucial, meaningful philosophical questions in a more inclusive manner than philosophers who have been known to use technical jargon of their own making. Wittgenstein's approach makes philosophy accessible to a greater diversity of people and makes it possible for *PI* to be discussed beyond the university classroom. To say that everyone asks philosophical questions may be an overgeneralization, but it would be misleading to assume the only ones asking these questions are philosophy students or graduates. When philosophical works are written to be accessible only to those with a formal education in the field, they alienate a significant portion of the population from the discourse. Thus, we risk losing out on important insight and wisdom from this excluded population. It is of great importance that these discussions be inclusive, since the greater the variety of readers and interlocutors, the more likely it is to lead to an enhanced diversity of insights.

In closing, Wittgenstein is concerned with altering our way of thinking about language and our practise of philosophy. He attempts to free us from our grip to the picture of how things must be – specifically, he tries to free us from our picture of how we think philosophy must be practised. Wittgenstein's *PI* is intended to be read actively, verbally discussed with others, and not limited

to those with a background in philosophy. Thus, Wittgenstein attempts to encourage us to practise philosophy in a communal interactive fashion. Rather than assert a doctrine open to debate by fellow philosophers and scholars, his text is exceptionally interactive because of the imaginary scenarios and interlocutor he creates for the reader to engage with. Such an original form has the potential to help the reader develop valuable insights since it invites them to become active participants in the dialogue that Wittgenstein introduces, instead of a passive recipient of dogmatic views as is normally the case with other philosophers. While such a view may appear new, Wittgenstein is arguably returning to the practise of philosophy carried out by Socrates, who similarly did not profess a creed of his own, but rather engaged in dialogue with others to challenge their beliefs. Wittgenstein's practise of using non-technical language, inclusive to interlocutors of all backgrounds, reflects Socrates' practise because the latter was willing to talk philosophy with just about anyone, not only formally educated individuals. In sum, *PI* is an acutely complex work which explores a diversity of philosophical questions and is in many ways a revolutionary text with respect to how we practise philosophy.

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