
Itinerari / Interviews

Cora Diamond
Philosophy in a Realistic Spirit
An Interview by Silver Bronzo

Silver Bronzo. *How did you come to philosophy?*

Cora Diamond. Even when I didn't know anything about what philosophy was, I had a question in my mind: How do I know that what someone else calls «orange» is the same as what *I* call «orange»? After all, I thought, I can't see *his* orange; how can I match what I have when I perceive with what somebody else has when that person perceives? Then, possibly when I was a little bit older, I also found very strange that the past cannot change, that when something has happened, it is *absolutely* fixed and there is nothing one can do to change it. These were philosophical questions, even though I didn't identify them as such when I first thought about them.

I didn't really have an idea of doing philosophy as something serious until I was an undergraduate at Swarthmore College. At that time, I did study some philosophy. I took a one-year introductory class on the history of philosophy, taught by Monroe Beardsley (the first semester) and Richard Rudner (the second semester). The first semester was on Greek philosophy, whereas the second semester was on early modern philosophy, from Descartes to Kant. In fact, one thing that I remember from that second semester was the amazingness of Hume on causation. I was on the honors program my final two years, as a philosophy minor. I was a math major, not because I really wanted to do anything with mathematics, but because my parents thought it would be good for me to have something that would enable me to earn a living. But I did not particularly like the mathematics, and of the three subjects which I studied at the time, math was the one that I did the worst at. I wound up with an honors degree in 1957, but thanks to economics and philosophy, not thanks to the mathematics.

Then I went off to start doing economics as a graduate student at MIT. I did economics because you can earn a living doing that. MIT did not have a philosophy program at that time, but if you were at MIT, you could take at Harvard any course that MIT did not offer. So, in addition to whatever economics I was doing that year, I went to a seminar that Paul

Grice taught at Harvard, called «Meaning, Implication, Logical Form, and the Categories». It was a class taught by a wonderful philosopher, but I didn't really have much of a clue about what was going on; I didn't even know what «categories» meant, exactly! I also went to a class on political philosophy, taught by Morton White.

That was my first year at MIT. I didn't want to continue with economics as a graduate student. I wanted to do philosophy; but at that time, it was not clear how I was going to get financed for a year or even more of philosophy. I also wanted to go to Oxford. This was partly because I possibly had a quite romantic view of what Oxford was, partly based on reading Stephen Leacock. So, I wanted to go to Oxford, I wanted to study philosophy, but I didn't have any money. On the other hand, you didn't need much money to study in Oxford in those days: academic life, in the UK, was cheap. Thus I lived at home, in New York, and I worked first at the National Bureau of Economic Research, and then I got a job as a computer programmer at IBM. I spent most of that year at IBM, commuting between New York and Poughkeepsie, in upstate New York. I worked on some of the *enormous* old computers that they had in those days; I was essentially in the development stage of what became the IBM 709 computer, doing the debugging program. I was accepted at Oxford at St. Hugh's College and I started in the fall of 1959.

In what kind of program did you enroll, at Oxford?

At first, I started a second undergraduate program, in Philosophy, Politics and Economics. But at the end of the first term, Mary Warnock, who was then my tutor, asked me whether I wanted to switch to the B.Phil. program¹, and I accepted. After I switched to the B.Phil., I was tutored by Paul Grice.

I am actually struck by how lucky I was in various ways to be able to get into philosophy, beginning with the fact of its being extremely affordable to study at UK universities at that time. I could totally manage two years at Oxford – including both tuition (which was really tiny) and living expenses – with the savings from one year of work in the US. The ease with which I got into the B.Phil. program had to do also with the fact that there wasn't the huge philosophy business of applicants for graduate study that would have filled all the places by

¹ The B.Phil. (Bachelor in Philosophy) is a two-year graduate degree. At that time, most philosophy teachers in the UK, including many of the tutors at Oxford, did not have a Ph.D. The B.Phil. degree was regarded as a good qualification for teaching philosophy in the UK.

way of applications that had all been officially dealt with by the spring of the previous year. The sociology of academic philosophy, we might say, was then very different from what it is today. One can think of academic philosophy today in countries such as the US or the UK as a big rationalized international business, whereas in the UK then it was more like a small family firm.

I should also mention that the structure of the B.Phil. has changed significantly since then. In that distant past, when the B.Phil. still worked the way Gilbert Ryle had set it up, you got accepted into the program, and at the end of the second year, you took exams in three subjects and submitted a thesis. You passed or you failed. (In this respect, it was then a fairly scary sort of degree: if you failed at the end of the two-year course, that was that. There was no second chance, and most years a certain number of people did fail. Everyone knew very good people who had failed.) Now you are «continuously» assessed, as the Oxford website puts it. You submit one essay after the end of the first term (plus the vacation), then two more at the beginning of each of the next three terms, and then the thesis at the end of the sixth term. And you are having tutorials and supervisions and whatnot on a set schedule. There are no exams. I had two terms of tutorials with Paul Grice, and occasional meetings with Ryle. And then was dumped into the exams. And what you did on the exams might or might not really draw on what you had done in your tutorials. I did best in the exams I'd had no teaching at all in. (I don't recall much about the exams, but I do recall this question: «If you see double, is there two of anything that you are seeing?») I think the way it is now set up, it would have been much more difficult to switch after starting out at Oxford doing an undergraduate degree for a term, in the way I did. Also, I was certainly somewhat disadvantaged in not having had an undergraduate philosophy major – but it was only somewhat; and the degree now looks pretty much impossible for someone who hadn't already done an undergraduate major, since you need to submit one essay that is actually an essential part of the degree after one term. Probably people in my position would simply not be regarded as admissible.

What was it like to study philosophy at Oxford in those years?

The whole Oxford system had been strongly influenced by the model of classical education as background. Oxford was then quite different from Cambridge with regard to where the philosophers were coming from: they were almost all (including philosophers as different as Austin, Ryle, Anscombe and Grice) people who had read Greats (*Literae Humaniores*) and had spent years and years and years of their

childhood and adolescence reading *and writing* Latin and Greek – and doing virtually nothing else. Tony Woozley, to whom I was married, had that kind of classical education and he told me that he basically stopped doing anything else but Latin and Greek when he was seven or eight. He would of course read, say, D.H. Lawrence and all the sorts of thing that people were interested in at that time. You were expected to be intellectually alive; but the education involved reading ancient texts and writing in those ancient languages, so that, for example, you would be asked to take a passage of contemporary English poetry and set it over into Latin.

This classical background was important for the study of philosophy, I think, because *language* was taken very seriously as subject. These were people who could *not* assume that something that you said in one language would have an obvious translation into another language. They were aware of relations between languages that went deep; and I think that *that*, actually, is reflected in the kinds of ways in which they went on to do philosophy, even when it was a very different sort of philosophy. Tony, for example, did philosophy of law, but I think that his understanding of philosophy of law was shaped by such things as his knowledge of the complexity of words for things such as «voluntarily» in Greek.

There was also the tradition of the Oxford tutorial system. You wrote an essay every week for each tutorial that you were doing, and then it was totally shredded by your tutor. (During my first semester in the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics undergraduate program, I was actually doing two tutorials – one in ethics and one in politics – and so I was writing two essays every week.) You used to read the essay aloud to the tutor, and the tutor would stop you right away if you said something that he or she didn't believe or thought was questionable. In particular: if you said, for example, that Hume thought such-and-such, your tutor would say: «Where does he say that? Prove it!» This was described by various people as: *having one's nose rubbed in the text*. As I mentioned earlier, when I switched to the B.Phil. program I had Paul Grice as my tutor. I don't do philosophy in the same way Paul did, but I learned what it is to try to work philosophically from him, from those tutorials, from trying to get my essay into a shape that would enable us, in the tutorial, to get past page one of what I had written. In fact, I don't think we ever got beyond page two! – It was a superb education.

One thing I would like to emphasize about that education is that it is not a situation in which thinking of philosophy as a *kind of science* is a temptation. Among the people who were active when I was at Oxford, one very important person who stands out as somewhat separate from the others is A.J. Ayer. He had exactly the sort of classical English education that I have described, at Winchester. But he became very interested in

the logical positivists, he went off to Vienna, and as a very young man, he wrote *Language, Truth, and Logic*². That was a very important book in dividing a generation then. However, Ayer was actually part of the original circle of people discussing with Austin; the original pre-war group of ordinary language philosophers did include Ayer.

Were you expected to be an «ordinary language philosopher»?

No. It is true that both of my tutors were associated with Austin's group of ordinary language philosophers, and Paul had worked closely with several of the others. But in the years I was in Oxford, he was already becoming quite critical of ordinary language philosophy. Also, although this was the period of ordinary language philosophy, it wasn't as if you got to Oxford and they told you: «Ok, you are now going to do ordinary language philosophy, this is what it is, go on and do it!». That wasn't what it was at all. In my ethics tutorial, for example, we started with Hume's *Treatise* and so on. What you were very much expected to do, was to be able to think about a question even if it was just thrown at you. Working with texts was something that they took very seriously; but another thing that was part of the Oxford education was that, even if you were asked a question which did have some literature behind it, it didn't *matter*, really, if you were totally ignorant of that literature, if you could think intelligently about that question: *that* was really what they wanted. With the tutorial system, this was a necessity, given that you had only a few days for writing each of your essays. You were of course doing a fair amount of reading, but you were mainly working with the texts themselves, rather than with the secondary literature.

So it was a nice combination of being pushed to think quickly about a question, without knowing that much about the secondary literature, while being very closely engaged with the primary text.

Yes. Thinking quickly about a question also went with the way the examination system there worked. You might have a question on the examination that in fact had been discussed in the literature; but it was important for them that you could give a good answer in the time you had, even though you had never seen that literature. The examinations for fellowships at All Souls are also interesting in this respect. The fellowship allowed you to pursue research essentially free from any obligations for some years. Most of the fellows were either in philosophy or law. It was a very big thing to get. You got this fellowship by taking an examination,

² A.J. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*, London, Victor Gollancz, 1936.

and one important part was the «general questions». To give you just an example of a recent question: «What are museums for?» You were asked to pick three such questions and answer them in an intellectually serious way, where these were not questions that you had seen or thought about before.

In some of his late writings, Bernard Williams defends a conception of philosophy as a «humanistic discipline»; this really seems to reflect the way he was brought up at Oxford.

Yes. Williams was not at Oxford when I was there—I think he had gone off to London. I think I might have first seen him at one of the joint sessions of «Mind» and «The Aristotelian Society». He was, in a way, the *classic product* of the Oxford system. He was *faster* in thinking well on his feet than anybody else! He did very much come through that system, and it is certainly something which left a lasting mark on the way he understood philosophy as a humanistic discipline and on the way he took himself to be capable of learning from the conceptual mode of thinking of the Greeks, precisely because they are in many significant ways different from us.

Do you think that coming from Oxford specifically made a difference for your intellectual development?

I think it did, in many ways. There is a sense in which I am (still) a product of that system. I had that philosophical education, and – partly for that reason – I am less of an *American* philosopher than someone like Stanley Cavell or Jim Conant. I didn't have the Latin and Greek that most of the philosophers who were at Oxford then had had – but the background atmosphere of the place was shaped by the fact that that was the kind of background most of them had. I think it also matters (though I am not sure how) that I did not do a Ph.D. This is part of my not having the background that American philosophers all have. I think that possibly someone like me is Hidé Ishiguro, who was Japanese and was at Oxford at the same time. There is a sense in which the «Oxford time» does shape the kinds of ways in which you see philosophy as something you are doing, something you are teaching, how you are trying to get your students to work, what gets you *angry* when you see it in your students, and so on.

While you were at Oxford, you met several remarkable women philosophers, such as Elizabeth Anscombe, Iris Murdoch, Philippa Foot, and Mary Warnock. How were they perceived?

Even though they were all working within analytic philosophy, I think it is true to say that they were perceived as in various ways coming up

with some critical questions about «standard Oxford moral philosophy». R.M. Hare, of whom they were all critical (in different ways), is reputed to have said that «the women were after him». I don't know whether this is true, but if he thought that the women were against him, it would have had more than a grain of truth. In various ways, you have Anscombe with *Modern Moral Philosophy*³, you have Philippa Foot⁴, you have some of the things that Iris Murdoch was beginning to do at that point, in the late Fifties⁵, and Mary Warnock's discussion of contemporary philosophy in her little book on moral philosophy is also very critical of Hare⁶. For whatever reason, it is true that the women at Oxford that you mentioned put forth criticisms of Hare that I do not associate with any of the men philosophers of that time.

Was it important for you to meet these great women philosophers, given that the discipline, even today, is still largely dominated by men?

Perhaps I should first say that I was at a women's college, even though after I started the B.Phil., I would go outside of the college to work with my tutor Paul Grice. The atmosphere of encouragement of women was historically enormously important for the women's colleges, and it was good to experience it.

I think that the importance of the first three women that you mentioned (namely Anscombe, Murdoch, and Foot) for my self-conception as a woman in philosophy is sort of hard to judge. As a matter of fact, I didn't get to know personally any of them during those two years at Oxford. I don't think I ever had any particular contact with Philippa Foot. I went to a class of Elizabeth's, but it was a large class: I sent her some questions at some point, and she very kindly replied, but I can't say that I really knew her. With regard to Iris Murdoch, some of the people in my college invited her to a dinner, so we got to know her a little there. But I and another woman were out mulling wine during a good part of the dinner, so I didn't get to know her as much as some of the other people. The woman philosopher I had the closest relationship to was Mary Warnock,

³ G.E.M. Anscombe, *Modern Moral Philosophy* (1958), reprinted in Ead., *Ethics, Religion and Politics*, vol. 3 of *The Collected Philosophical Papers of G.E.M. Anscombe*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1981, pp. 26-42.

⁴ See Ph. Foot, *When Is a Principle a Moral Principle?*, in «Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes», 28 (1954), pp. 95-110; Ead., *Moral Arguments* (1958), reprinted in Ead., *Virtue and Vices*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002², pp. 96-109; Ead., *Moral Beliefs* (1959), reprinted in *Virtue and Vices*, pp. 110-131.

⁵ See I. Murdoch, *Vision and Choice in Morality*, in «Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes», 30 (1956), pp. 32-58.

⁶ M. Warnock, *Ethics since 1900*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1960.

who taught at my college and was my tutor during my first term at Oxford, before I switched to the B.Phil. In fact we were living in the same house, because I rented a room up at the top of her house.

I do know that for somebody like Jenny Teichman, who spoke to me about this explicitly, it was especially important to have met a person like Elizabeth Anscombe, who was at the same time a married woman, the mother of children, and a philosopher. But I think all of us could see these really interesting and important women in philosophy, and this certainly had an effect.

How did you first become interested in Wittgenstein?

I had a number of different encounters with Wittgenstein, which really came to very little over the years until considerably later. As an undergraduate, I did a seminar at Swarthmore on symbolic logic, taught by Michael Scriven, which focused on the history of the foundations of mathematics. At some point, in connection with various paradoxes, we looked at Wittgenstein's *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*⁷, which had just come out. I probably wrote a paper on that book, but I really had no idea of what was going on. That was my first encounter with Wittgenstein, and it didn't amount to very much. At Oxford, as I mentioned, I went to Elizabeth Anscombe's class, but this was just one of many classes, and I didn't take in very much of what she was saying; I wasn't, in a sense, ready for it.

My first year of teaching was as a temporary replacement for Peter Winch at the University College of Swansea. I used his room in the Arts Building, which was full of miscellaneous papers, many of which were very Wittgensteinian. But I didn't really have a clue about what was going on in those papers. The other people at Swansea were working in a very Wittgensteinian way. Rush Rhees and Roy Holland were there, and Howard Mounce was a graduate student, very active in the department colloquia. So there were all these Wittgensteinians, but I could not see the point of what they were doing; it did not make much sense to me. My year at Swansea certainly did not make me a Swansea philosopher.

When I was deciding what I was to be doing the following year, it turned out to be possible for me to have another year at Swansea, since Roy Holland was going away; but I had an offer of what we would call here in America a «tenure track» position at Sussex, and I took it. At Sussex, Wittgenstein came into view in a quite different way. I can't imagine this is totally accurate, but I have a picture of myself standing at the window of my flat, above the village shop, having a conversation with another philosopher,

⁷ L. Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1956.

Ivor Hunt, who was down on the ground outside; he was shouting that there was the most beautiful article by Stanley Cavell that had just come out in «The Philosophical Review» and that I needed to go and read it *at once*, as it were. That was Cavell's piece on David Pole⁸. I read that piece and I discussed it with Michael Feldman, who was my first husband.

Perhaps I should say something about Michael at this point. A lot of the philosophical discussions that I was having during those years did involve Michael. I met Michael during my first year at Oxford. At that time, he had done a philosophy degree as an undergraduate at Oxford and he was supposedly signed up for a D.Phil. He was also writing a novel. It was a very philosophical novel, and it wasn't very clear how or whether the novel and the D.Phil. were related to each other. We got together and when I went out to teach at Swansea, we lived together in the countryside outside of the town. When Hunt announced the piece by Cavell, we both read and discussed it, and we thought that we really did need to come to understand something about Wittgenstein.

The episode with Ivor Hunt would have been, I think, in the autumn of 1962. The following year I moved from Sussex to Aberdeen. Over that summer, I was away in America for some time and Michael was looking for a place for us to live in or near Aberdeen, so we didn't get around to doing anything with Wittgenstein for a while. Also, I had for three years in a row totally new classes to teach, which meant that I didn't have much time to find out about Wittgenstein. But after my second year in Aberdeen, and this is now the summer of 1965, Michael and I decided that, if we were going to learn about Wittgenstein, we needed to start with the *Tractatus*. We were going to spend the summer – three months – in Norway, in a hut on a lake...

Like Wittgenstein!

Yes, but the reason for this had nothing to do with Wittgenstein. The place that we rented near Aberdeen was not available in the summer, so we needed to move out. We left all our belongings at the University and looked for a place to go. The hut in Norway seemed a nice place. As a matter of fact, it was much nicer than Wittgenstein's hut in Skjolden! The place where Wittgenstein's hut used to be is, in many ways, a very difficult and «Wittgensteinian» place for a hut: there is no easy walking around it; it is about fifteen meters steeply up from the lake; and there is no... horizontal walk around it. It is on a tiny little ridge on a slope, and when he left the hut to someone else, the first thing they did was to move

⁸ S. Cavell, *The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy* (1962), reprinted in Id., *Must We Mean What We Say? A Book of Essays*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002², pp. 44-72.

it somewhere else, where you can actually *use* a hut. It was an excellent hut if what you want is to be Wittgenstein and sit around and think; but it was not a good hut for much of anything else.

Anyway, we went to Norway and since we didn't have a car, and so had no access to bookstores, we had to take with us whatever books we wanted. We took the *Tractatus* and two books on the *Tractatus* that were available at that time: Anscombe's *Introduction*, and Max Black's *Companion*⁹. We worked through the *Tractatus*, using those two books and keeping in mind Anscombe's recommendation that you can't just read the book sentence by sentence, but have to think about a lot of things first. You know how difficult Anscombe's book is, it's not really a very introductory introduction. Max Black's book goes through the text in a more straightforward manner, and no doubt it was of some help, because that was *all* we had, but it is not a book I have subsequently found myself going back to. That was when I first really got to Wittgenstein. The following summer, we took with us the *Investigations*. (The summer after, for what this is worth, we read Hare's *The Language of Morals*.)

At that point, did you find Wittgenstein's philosophy attractive?

I certainly felt interested in Wittgenstein. My piece on secondary sense¹⁰ was published in the «Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society» in 1967; I was reading the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations* in the summer of 1965 and 1966, and you can certainly see what I am doing with *both* of those works in that paper of mine. There were two ancestors of the secondary sense paper. In 1966, I gave a reply to a paper on self-deception by Michael Clark, who was a colleague of mine at Aberdeen. I think it must have been a meeting of the Scots Philosophical Club. I had a very different view from Clark's, and in some ways a much more «Wittgensteinian» view, even though I didn't know very much about Wittgenstein at that time. Then, having done that reply on self-deception, I wrote another piece, which I have never done anything with, on self-deception and duties to self. I was treating both of those as *secondary senses*, in one case of «deception» and in the other case of «duty». That is where my ideas on secondary sense first got formulated.

It must have been roughly at that time that I taught a honors seminar at Aberdeen with Michael Clark and Guy Stock on Wittgenstein. None of us knew terribly much about Wittgenstein, and besides the three of us, it

⁹ G.E.M. Anscombe, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (1959), South Bend, St. Augustine's Press, 2001⁴; M. Black, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1964.

¹⁰ C. Diamond, *Secondary Sense* (1967), reprinted in Ead., *The Realistic Spirit. Wittgenstein, Philosophy, and the Mind*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1991, pp. 225-242.

might have been one or two students. So it was a very nice opportunity to work through the material.

The other essay of mine that comes from the Sixties is the piece on Dummett and the philosophy of mathematics¹¹. I sent it off to «Mind», but Ryle did not want it: he said they did not want to publish an historical piece. I sent it to «Philosophical Review», I guess, and got turned down. It wasn't as if I *needed* to get published, given the way the UK system worked at that point: they wanted you to be active thinking, rather than publishing. So I never did anything with that paper for many years. But I did send it to Rhees at some point around that time.

I am not sure how exactly this worked out, but Rhees and I then started working on the idea of putting out together some of Wittgenstein's own pre-lecture notes from 1933-1934. (Before he gave a talk to his students, Wittgenstein would, in the week before, write down ideas.) Rhees had also copies of the notes that Alice Ambrose and Margaret Macdonald had taken at those classes. Rhees' idea was that we should do some edited version of both, so that you would have what Wittgenstein set down in his notebooks, and then what he *said* that week. We did quite a lot of work on that project. Then we had the idea of getting Alice Ambrose involved. She said something to the effect that certainly only *her* name was going to appear on the book as the first name, and everyone else's had to be in much smaller letters, and so on. I can't remember exactly what she said, but she was a real pain.

At some point when we were working on the 1933-1934 material, Rhees gave me material from 1939 and asked me whether I thought there was anything to be done with it. These were student notes from lectures on the philosophy of mathematics. There were *four* different sets of notes. It was not clear what one could do with them. It was different from the Ambrose-Macdonald material: that was only *one* set of notes, which Ambrose had put together from her own and Margaret Macdonald's notes. (Ultimately, that's the material that Ambrose published¹².) I had no idea what to do with the 1939 notes that Rhees handed over to me. The same remarks would come up in different orders and phrased in different ways. It was very hard to see that you *could* make any sort of single account out of it. That material was actually similar to the 1946-1947 *Lectures on the Philosophy of Psychology* that Peter Geach published¹³. Geach decided to publish each version of the notes he had; but if you look at

¹¹ C. Diamond, *The Face of Necessity*, in Ead., *The Realistic Spirit*, pp. 243-266.

¹² A. Ambrose (ed.), *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge, 1932-1935. From the Notes of Alice Ambrose and Margaret Macdonald* (1979), Amherst, Prometheus Books, 2001.

¹³ P.T. Geach (ed.), *Wittgenstein's Lectures on Philosophical Psychology, 1946-1947*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1989.

them, it's the same material, coming up in very different order and putting Wittgenstein's talk in different ways.

I first started playing around with the 1939 material. You have four people, taking notes, coming up with things that are very different. One of them, R.G. Bosanquet (who was Philippa Foot's cousin), edited his notes, turning what Wittgenstein said into English sentences with what seemed to him a better grammar. So I had the actual shorthand notes he took, plus his own edited version. Then I had Yorick Smythies' notes, Rhees' own notes, and Malcolm's notes. In the case of Malcolm's notes, I think I had both the original and the pirated *edited* edition that had been circulating for some years in Berkeley, California. So I had all this different material and it took me really quite a long time to begin to figure out how I could put it together. Eventually, I got a technique of working. I would take a passage of perhaps ten minutes and I would set out each of the four versions on parallel columns, using colors to mark the correspondences between the different versions. So, for example, I had on one column a passage in red followed by a passage in yellow; on another column, I had the yellow passage first; on yet another column, possibly, I had only the red passage. I gradually came to have some kind of sense of what Wittgenstein might have said that yielded these four different versions. In a sense, there were some hours of Wittgenstein's life to which I had indirect, filtered access. That was certainly important to the way I came to know Wittgenstein.

I believe I had a complete draft of this material by the summer of 1973. Rhees was involved in trying to find a publisher. He was reluctant to try Blackwell, because he thought Elizabeth Anscombe would be against it, and Blackwell would decide whatever Elizabeth would decide. There is a sense in which this went on behind her back. As you know, Elizabeth, Rhees and von Wright were the three executors of Wittgenstein's estate. But the copyrights of the material I edited had nothing to do with the executors. The copyright of the lecture notes is in the lecture notes takers. A fairly obvious possibility, as publisher, was Cornell, because of Malcolm's connection to it. So we went to Cornell as the original publisher. Cornell, eventually – and rather stupidly, I think – let it go out of print. At that point, they sent me the copyrights and I asked Chicago whether they were interested. That's why these lecture notes are currently published by The University of Chicago Press¹⁴.

Wittgenstein's philosophy of mathematics comes up in your writings in a great variety of contexts: it may be a paper on moral philosophy, or on riddles, or on conceptual change. Yet Wittgenstein's philosophy of mathematics is often

¹⁴ C. Diamond (ed.), *Wittgenstein's Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics, Cambridge 1939* (1976), Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1989.

dismissed as rather amateurish. Is it the case that what you find interesting in this area of Wittgenstein's thought is quite different from what is looked for by those who find it so inadequate?

I am not deep in contemporary issues in philosophy of mathematics, the way somebody like Juliet Floyd or Hilary Putnam is. So, although Wittgenstein's philosophy of mathematics does come up in my writings and is important for me, it is an area where I feel I need to not say things about issues that I don't really master. So, for instance, I don't think I ever got into Wittgenstein's discussion of Gödel – I'll leave that to Juliet and other people. One of the aspects of the lectures on the foundations of mathematics that was very important for me is the discussion of *proof*: the significance of the fact that there may be many proofs of the same proposition, what happens when a proposition first gets proved, whether this is an answer to a pre-existing question, and so on. All this fed *directly* into my paper on riddles¹⁵, which I wrote in 1975-1976.

What led you to move back to the US?

This happened gradually. Michael and I came to Charlottesville to spend a year, with me as visitor at the University of Virginia. We came in 1969-1970, which was in the middle of the Vietnam War. It was a very tense time in many ways. Every male student had some kind of question about how he was going to deal with the draft. I had one student, for example, who went off to some place where there was somebody who could set things up so that when you saw a blood-pressure device, your blood-pressure would go up; in this way, when you were examined for the draft, you would come out as having very high blood pressure, and you would get exempt. This was one of the possibilities; other people were hoping to be conscientious objectors, and so on. But one definitely had the idea that the draft was an issue for every male student. *All* the undergraduates at the University of Virginia were male at that time (the University started to admit female students only in 1970, under legal pressure), and the graduate students were to a large extent men. Also, in the spring of that year, there was a student strike here in Virginia, in response to the Kent State shootings¹⁶. During the strike, my students met in the house that

¹⁵ C. Diamond, *Riddles and Anselm's Riddle* (1977), reprinted in Ead., *The Realistic Spirit*, pp. 268-289.

¹⁶ The Kent State shootings occurred at Kent State University, Ohio, on May 4, 1970. Some unarmed students were protesting against the Cambodian Campaign, which Nixon had just announced. The Ohio National Guard fired on the students, killing four students and wounding nine others. The episode was followed by a strike of four million students across the United States.

Michael and I were renting, so as not to break the strike. It was a very fraught sort of time, and very interesting in its way.

Also, my family was directly involved. During the spring, my sister and brother-in-law were here in Charlottesville as visitors. It turned out that my brother-in-law had been thinking about organizing a hiding place for Daniel Berrigan¹⁷ out in the country here. My brother-in-law, Eqbal Ahmad, was at that time very much involved in the Catholic anti-war movement, including the Berrigan brothers, Dan and Philip Berrigan. In the spring, Dan Berrigan was hiding from the FBI. At that time, Dan did things like suddenly appear and give a sermon in a church, in a totally unannounced way, and then disappear; Eqbal was helping to organize all of this. Just before Michael and I went back to Scotland, we were up in the country in Connecticut, at my family's place. My parents were away, but my sister and brother-in-law were there, as well as a whole bunch of other people who had to do with the anti-war movement. We were talking about the situation of Philip Berrigan, who was then in prison; in particular, we were discussing whether it should be said that he was depressed, or whether that would be insulting to the suffering that he was going through. Just to give you a sense of the situation, all these people could not make any telephone call, because their phones would be tapped, so they would go out to use public telephones. 1969-1970 was a year when this country was in turmoil. And my family, especially my brother-in-law, was particularly involved in those issues.

In the summer of 1970, Michael and I went back to Scotland, and during that year my brother-in-law was charged with conspiracy to kidnap Henry Kissinger. This came up at another meeting at my parents' house in the country. My brother-in-law came up with the following idea. Using their acquaintances in Washington, maybe they could get invited to a dinner party attended by Kissinger, and at the end of dinner, they would announce something like this: «Mr. Kissinger, you are under arrest; this is a citizen's arrest for your war crimes!». So this was talked about. One of the people at the meeting was a nun, Elizabeth McAlister, who was in love with the priest Philip Berrigan. (They later got married, and had some young anti-war activists!) Elizabeth wrote a note to Philip, who was then in prison, describing Eqbal's idea. She gave this note to a man called Boyd Douglas, asking him to bring it to Philip. She did *not* know that Douglas was a spy for the FBI. He was a prisoner in the same prison as Philip. He was there for nothing to do with the war: he was there for fraud, I believe, or for some kind of cheating/

¹⁷ Daniel Berrigan (born in 1921) is an American Catholic priest and peace activist. In 1968, he and his brother Philip were put on the FBI Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list for their involvement in antiwar protests.

lying kind of offence. He was allowed out of prison to take classes at Bucknell University. But that was the cover: actually, he was let out of prison to spy on the anti-war movement at Bucknell University. He was a real creep. Just to give you an idea, stories came out later that there were various women who were approached by him saying that he was dying of cancer and that the last thing he wanted to do was to sleep with them! This is the sort of guy he was. Anyway, Douglas made a copy of the note that Elizabeth gave him and handed it over to the FBI before he gave it to Philip. So the FBI had this letter from Elizabeth to Philip describing Eqbal's idea. In fact, nothing came out of that idea. But the letter was the basis for an indictment of seven or eight people, plus five or six un-indicted co-conspirators.

What eventually happened was that the case went to trial in 1972. The prosecution made its case and the defense decided to make the claim that the prosecution had not created a case that was even good enough to try to answer. On that basis, the case went to the jury and the jury then voted 10 to 2 for acquittal. At that point, the government had the option of starting a new trial. But they had already spent about a million dollars to get, *without any defense being offered*, a 10 to 2 vote for acquittal. In terms of whether it was worth going forward and trying again, they ultimately decided not to. So they dropped the case. But it was very frightening at the time because there was a huge government machinery that, as far as we knew, could have put Eqbal as well as all the other people involved in prison for years.

While Michael and I were in Scotland and all this was happening to my family, we received a phone call from Anthony Wozzley, who was the chair of the department here at the University of Virginia, saying that it was possible for them to offer me a permanent position. They needed to know very quickly; in fact, we had essentially *one* day to decide. I think that our decision to move back was very much shaped by the fact that my brother-in-law was under indictment and that this was a very strange time for the United States. Though I had been living in the UK for many years, I was very moved, during the time we were in Virginia the year before, by the way people were deeply involved and concerned about the war. So I accepted what was then a tenured associate professorship at the University of Virginia, starting in the fall of 1971.

Obviously, that decision made a huge difference for my professional life, and eventually for my marriage with Michael. Michael and I separated in the fall of 1975, actually before I got together with Tony Wozzley. I was in Charlottesville alone in 1975-1976, and then I spent a sabbatical year in the UK, first in Shetland and then in London. It was during that year that Tony and I started writing to each other and eventually got together.

What were you working on, during those years?

I wrote the riddles paper, which I think was an important step in the development of my thought, during the summer of 1976. I had just finished editing *Wittgenstein's Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics*, and the paper is closely connected to that material. I wrote the paper in Shetland, in a little cottage in the middle of nowhere. I remember that I had only *one* copy of it. Eventually, I paid a professional typist in Lerwick (Shetland's main town) to do a second copy for me. But in the meanwhile, I was very nervous about the situation and I kept the only copy of my paper in the loo, which was not part of the main building, thinking that if the house would burn down, I could still save the paper from the fire!

In those years, I also started to work on Frege, in relation to the question of nonsense. *Frege and Nonsense*¹⁸ was written around 1978 and came out in 1979, in the volume in honor of Elizabeth Anscombe that Jenny Teichman and I edited¹⁹; the paper *What Nonsense Might Be*²⁰, which is closely related, was also written in those years. Those two papers together then fed into *Throwing Away the Ladder*²¹, which I wrote in the Eighties.

Here I would like to mention another thing that was very important for me as the background of my thinking about Wittgenstein. I mentioned earlier Stanley Cavell's paper. Another paper that had a comparable importance for me was Anscombe's essay *On the Reality of the Past*²², which is about her discussions with Wittgenstein concerning questions of sense and nonsense. That paper of Anscombe's was very much in view in a lot of the material that I was trying to work through on my own in the late Seventies and Eighties.

In the late Seventies, I was also working on ethics. The paper *Eating Meat and Eating People*²³ comes roughly from that period. I think I gave a version of that paper in Warwick, during my sabbatical in 1976.

¹⁸ C. Diamond, *Frege and Nonsense* (1979), reprinted in Ead., *The Realistic Spirit*, pp. 73-94.

¹⁹ C. Diamond and J. Teichman (eds.), *Intention and Intentionality. Essays in Honour of G.E.M. Anscombe*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1979.

²⁰ C. Diamond, *What Nonsense Might Be* (1981), reprinted in Ead., *The Realistic Spirit*, pp. 95-114.

²¹ C. Diamond, *Throwing Away the Ladder. How to Read the Tractatus* (1988), reprinted in Ead., *The Realistic Spirit*, pp. 179-204.

²² G.E.M. Anscombe, *The Reality of the Past* (1950), reprinted in Ead., *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind*, vol. 2 of *The Collected Philosophical Papers of G.E.M. Anscombe*, pp. 103-119.

²³ C. Diamond, *Eating Meat and Eating People* (1978), reprinted in Ead., *The Realistic Spirit*, pp. 319-334.

How did you become interested in vegetarianism and animal ethics?

Ah, animals! We need to go back – if that’s all right – to Michael and me in Oxford. We meet in the winter of 1959-1960, and we gradually become interested in going out in the countryside around Oxford, looking at the flowers, looking at the birds, and so on. I finished my B.Phil. in the summer of 1961. Michael and I and five or six other people rented a derelict chateau in southwest France. (It was the Chateau de Tombebouc, in the Lot-et-Garonne Department. We found out only later that in fact it had been used as an internment camp for Jewish refugees from Austria and Germany who were ultimately sent off to Auschwitz.) So we were there, wandering around that wonderful countryside, having wonderful meals, and in that derelict chateau, the doves were flying back and forth through the broken windows. It was very lovely. The last night, just before we left, we had dinner at a local restaurant, and the patron served us pigeons. We had been seeing and enjoying the pigeons, and now here are the pigeons; it was sort of... funny. That was one episode. Next stage in our life, we go to Swansea and we rent a little flat in a very old house, about ten miles out in the countryside. We lived on a slope of a large hill, where sheep were wandering about. You couldn’t go out without hearing their bleat, and there was always the smell of sheep in the air. As we were wandering about, the sheep were always there. Meat was extremely cheap at that time. We were having bacon for breakfast, and maybe kidneys for lunch, or brains on toast, and then mutton for dinner! It was a very meaty kind of life that we were living. The following year we go to live in Sussex, and on October 2nd, which is Michael’s birthday, he said: «I don’t know what you are going to do, but I am not eating meat any more». That was a decision. Somehow, the kinds of tensions that had been present in our lives issued in that decision. It wasn’t that he had thought through any argument. He certainly hadn’t. He just felt: «No, enough of this».

At this point, in 1962, there are basically no vegetarians, there are no vegetarian restaurants, there are no vegetarian cookbooks, there is basically *nothing*. It was not the way it is now. We did not know what we were going to do. How do you eat when your typical dish was potatoes, veggies, and meat, and now you take away meat, so that you have potatoes, veggies, space? We didn’t have any idea of what vegetarian cooking would be. We did go on eating fish for a while, which I think made a lot of sense given the way things were. But anyway we managed, and gradually got into cooking things without meat.

At the same time, Michael and I began to think about *arguments* and *reasons*: What’s there to be said about this decision, one way or the other? I think the ways I have come to think about animals were originally shaped by conversations with Michael at that time. I believe he thought for a while

he might write a pamphlet on the topic, so he was trying to formulate ideas and we were discussing the issues. I think one of the ideas that you get in *Eating Meat and Eating People* is that we have various concepts that come from our moral life with other people, and these concepts are given an application to animals. That way of looking at things comes out of those discussions with Michael.

In the early Seventies, there were books on vegetarianism coming out, but of a very different sort. Peter Singer's work²⁴ came out around that time, as well as the Godlovitch and Godlovitch's book²⁵. So one source of my thinking about animals was the fact that Michael and I became vegetarians for reasons that had nothing to do with the *philosophical* situation, but with our *personal* situation: we became vegetarians, and then began thinking about it. But also, what got into the mix was the presence of a way of thinking about vegetarianism that was very different. It was out of that mix that came *Eating Meat and Eating People*.

The essay *Experimenting on Animals*²⁶ is also from that period. As I said, Michael and I became vegetarians in the early Sixties. A good friend of ours for many years, David Sperlinger, would come out to visit us and we often talked about vegetarianism. Eventually, he became a clinical psychologist and in the Seventies he invited me to a meeting of the British Psychological Association, where I read the *Experimenting on Animals* paper, at roughly the same time as I read the *Eating Meat and Eating People* paper in Warwick.

Was the discussion of animals and vegetarianism your first work in moral philosophy?

Yes, except for the bit of material on ethics contained in the essay on secondary sense. I should also say that part of the reason I came to work on ethics had to do with my teaching. When I was at Swansea and Sussex, I was teaching stuff all over the map, including ethics. But when I went to Aberdeen, I was actually in the Moral Philosophy Department. Aberdeen, like all the other ancient Scottish universities, had at that time a Moral Philosophy Department separate from what you might think of as a metaphysics and epistemology department, which they called the «Logic Department». So, for example, when Tony was at St. Andrews, he was Professor of Moral Philosophy, and he actually taught a course in the Logic Department without

²⁴ P. Singer, *Animal Liberation* (1975), New York, Harper, 2009.

²⁵ S. Godlovitch, R. Godlovitch and J. Harris (eds.), *Animals, Men and Morals. An Inquiry into the Maltreatment of Non-humans*, New York, Grove Press, 1971.

²⁶ C. Diamond, *Experimenting on Animals. A Problem in Ethics* (1981), reprinted in Ead., *The Realistic Spirit*, pp. 335-365.

the knowledge of the Professor of Logic; it was through his doing that the Logic Department and the Moral Philosophy Department came to have a building that they shared and a single library. When I was in Aberdeen, we did have a single library, and I taught several classes in the Logic Department; but the organization of especially the first two years of the undergraduate teaching was totally separate in Moral Philosophy and Logic. Since I was in the Moral Philosophy Department, I was doing basically moral philosophy teaching. I taught Rousseau for years, I taught Hume, and I used to teach an advanced class on contemporary problems in ethics. This is, I think, an important part of the background of my work in moral philosophy.

Would you like to mention any other biographical event that had a significant impact on your philosophical development?

The whole development of my collaboration with Jim Conant has obviously been very important over a good number of years. I met Jim when he was a graduate student at Harvard, when I went there to give a talk. This would have been the mid Eighties. I presented a version of my paper *Losing Your Concepts*²⁷, before it was actually published. I don't know whether Jim knew at that time of my paper *Throwing Away the Ladder*, which I had presented at Berkeley shortly before I gave the talk at Harvard. I think Jim wrote me a letter after that. So we started to exchange letters, on actual pieces of paper – technologically, this was before you do nothing but emails. Gradually, as the conversation developed, we did move into a combination of emails and phone calls; but the emails were quite useful because you could keep records of the exchanges.

One way in which this was fairly important for me concerns the development of my thought from the *Throwing Away the Ladder* paper to the *Ethics, Imagination and the Method of Wittgenstein's Tractatus* paper²⁸, which was the first time I had tried to say anything at all about Wittgenstein and ethics, apart from my few early remarks in the paper on secondary sense. I had never specifically tried to deal with the *Tractatus* on ethics. The conversations I had with Jim motivated me to broach this topic, but at the same time showed me how difficult it was actually to say anything about what was... unsayable!

Those conversations with Jim toward the end of his Harvard career were very important and developed into a long-term collaboration over the years when he was a fellow at Michigan and then a professor at

²⁷ C. Diamond, *Losing Your Concepts*, in «Ethics», 98 (1988), pp. 255-277.

²⁸ C. Diamond, *Ethics, Imagination and the Method of Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (1991), reprinted in A. Crary and R. Read (eds.), *The New Wittgenstein*, London - New York, Routledge, 2000, pp. 149-173.

Pittsburgh and Chicago. We are obviously still in touch with each other, and have a lot of plans to do things together, and sometime maybe we will. We have got one paper that we wrote together, *On Reading the Tractatus Resolutely*²⁹, but we would hope to do more.

Another thing that was important for my approach to Wittgenstein, before the Jim period, was a class on the *Tractatus* I taught in 1976-1977 in England, at King's College, during a sabbatical year from the University of Virginia. Rhees came to the class. He objected to a lot of what I was saying and put a lot of pressure on me. I was quite specifically interested in the ways in which you could *give* a sense to a proposition which did not have a sense. Rhees, on the other hand, was trying to push me into looking at a quite different angle: questions about what different ways of saying the same thing had to have in common in order to be able to express that content, rather than questions concerning the ways in which you could use a single sign-combination to say different things. Rhees's presence in the class was very stimulating.

I propose to conclude here the more biographical part of the interview and move on to some questions more directly concerned with your philosophy. Let's begin with a very general question. In your first collection of essays, The Realistic Spirit, you introduce two notions that are central to your appropriation of Wittgenstein: the idea that in philosophy we tend to «lay down requirements» on how things must be, rather than looking at how things are; and the idea that in philosophy we should aim to look at things «in a realistic spirit»³⁰. Now, if philosophy is to a considerable extent a struggle against the tendency to lay down requirements on our thought and experience, where does this tendency come from?

That's a very hard question. The tendency is certainly something that Wittgenstein saw as having been at work in his own earlier philosophizing. It is connected to themes discussed in §§ 89-133 of the *Philosophical Investigations*, where he is talking about philosophical method and the way in which we *impose* a model on a whole range of cases and we see the same thing in *all* these cases, underneath the surface, because we think that it *has* to be there. So this conception of how we go wrong in philosophy is certainly very important in understanding the difference between early and later Wittgenstein.

²⁹ J. Conant and C. Diamond, *On Reading the Tractatus Resolutely. Reply to Meredith Williams and Peter Sullivan*, in M. Kölbel and B. Weiss (eds.), *Wittgenstein's Lasting Significance*, London, Routledge, 2004, pp. 42-97. See also the Italian collection of essays: J. Conant and C. Diamond, *Rileggere Wittgenstein*, edited by P. Donatelli, with a Foreword by P. Donatelli and an Afterword by S. Bronzo, Roma, Carocci, 2010.

³⁰ See C. Diamond, *The Realistic Spirit*, Introduction II and chap. I.

I am not sure how one would try to connect it up with other kinds of elements in our thought. The inclination is to say that it has to do with the «scientific spirit of the age», since in science we come to see something in common between phenomena – say the law of gravitation – that is explanatory. Thus the tendency to lay down requirements in philosophy might be connected to a desire for explanation that we see satisfied by modern science. However, I am not sure it is correct to say that the tendency I talk about *derives* from the attempt to model philosophy on modern science. I really feel somewhat hesitant in making grand claims of that sort.

There might be a difference here between your work and the work of other philosophers who share important elements of your understanding of Wittgenstein. I am thinking especially of Stanley Cavell and John McDowell. They both provide general diagnoses of the source of philosophical problems. Cavell gives us what looks like a philosophical anthropology, epitomized in the dictum: «Nothing is more human than the wish to deny one's humanity»³¹. McDowell sketches a more historical answer, tracing the philosophical problems that most concern him – which have to do, broadly, with the place of the mind in the natural world – to the rise of modern science³². But the attempt to provide general diagnoses of this sort does not seem to be very prominent in your writings.

I think there is a certain amount of that where I talk about the way philosophers do ethics. I do have generalizations about how we tend to read literary texts as illustrations of theories, rather than looking at the variety of forms of moral thought that you can see exemplified in literary texts. So I do make claims about philosophy's failure to deal adequately with the phenomena, as well as general claims about why this is so. I think these claims surface in the piece on *The Difficulty of Reality and the Difficulty of Philosophy*³³, and in other places where I am talking about philosophy in relation to literature³⁴. There I get near the question: What's the matter with us as philosophers? But I do not have an explanatory

³¹ S. Cavell, *The Claim of Reason. Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy*, New York - Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 109.

³² See J. McDowell, *Mind and World*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1996², especially Lecture 4.

³³ C. Diamond, *The Difficulty of Reality and the Difficulty of Philosophy* (2003), reprinted in S. Cavell *et al.*, *Philosophy and Animal Life*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2008, pp. 43-90.

³⁴ See C. Diamond, *The Realistic Spirit*, chaps. XI, XII and XV; Ead., *Moral Differences and Distances. Some Questions*, in L. Alanen, S. Heinämaa and T. Wallgren (eds.), *Commonality and Particularity in Ethics*, New York, St. Martin's Press, pp. 197-205.

picture that ties it to something like a philosophical anthropology. It may be that there are various actual elements in us that lead us toward philosophical theorizing.

One of the things I do mention in the *Moral Differences and Distances* piece, is that at least *some* theorizing in moral philosophy expresses a kind of *moralistic* impulse which is shared, I think, by a lot of moral philosophers – a moralizing impulse that thinkers like Nietzsche or Bernard Williams are very much reacting against. The desire to have one's philosophizing tied into a preconceived view of how we ought to be, I think, plays a very significant role in moral theorizing. However, it doesn't explain very much if you are trying to talk about philosophy more generally.

I do think that there is an incredible desire to *oversimplify* in philosophy. This is not so much a part of the anthropology of human beings, but of the self-selection process of philosophers. People who take introductory philosophy classes and find things very simplified, and they want to work differently, and they don't think there is room for themselves in philosophy – well, they go off and do literature instead, or whatnot. It may very well be that if you don't find yourself comfortable with certain kinds of abstract simplifications – if you think that there is something that is getting ignored in abstract simplifications which is important in your life – this may very well lead you to do another major.

Some people are perplexed by your work and by your reading of Wittgenstein because they think it is «quietistic». Some concede that you are actually right about Wittgenstein's «meta-philosophy», but they argue that this is the least interesting part of his thought – a part that should be carefully isolated and dismissed. One of the things that strike me about this discussion is the animosity with which the issue tends to divide the philosophical community. It seems that this is not a purely intellectual disagreement, but one of those disagreements that «cause hatred and anger», as Socrates said to Euthyphro. What do you think is involved in the charge of «quietism», and how would you respond to it?

There is certainly a kind of serious *resentment* that comes out not infrequently in responses to Wittgensteinian or Austinian conceptions of philosophical method. This is connected also with some of the reasons why the history of analytic philosophy is something that a lot of people, in a sense, really do not *want* in their departments, because what it is saying are things like: «Are your questions really intelligible as questions? Do your questions really make sense?» And they, as it were, want to say: «Let's forget that and let's get on with the job! We have a good research project here, we have debates, this is what's on the table, and so on». But then you have someone like Austin arguing that an awful lot has been taken for granted

by the time you get to the end of page one. This sort of attempt to raise issues about what might be built into your philosophical method is very uncomfortable-making. The situation here is in some respects similar to the widespread antagonism to feminist philosophy. Sally Haslanger, for example, has spelled out how a perfectly respectable thinker, say Jennifer Saul, writes two articles, a feminist one and a non-feminist one, and she sends them to the same journal, and one comes back the same day, whereas the other one gets taken seriously³⁵. The same thing would happen with Wittgensteinian philosophy. Graduate students who are on the job market and can do both Wittgenstein and some other field (say ethics, or M&E) are often advised to claim Wittgenstein as an area of competence, not an area of specialization, because that would count *against* them. I am not really answering your question, but simply elaborating it: there is indeed a great deal of emotional investment that surfaces in discussions of quietism.

I think «quietism» is an unhelpful term, because it is understood in so many different ways, and is often used just as a kind of battering ram: «Wittgensteinians simply refuse to take philosophical problems seriously; their methodology is a form of evasion». There are elements in Rorty's philosophy which could be described as refusals to take philosophical problems seriously, but this is not at all true of Wittgenstein's own ideas about how philosophical problems should be treated. Wittgenstein is after understanding, and this includes understanding what is at stake in what we take to be philosophical problems. So I see as very important his remark that you have to untie a philosophical knot by philosophy which is as complicated as the knot it is trying to undo³⁶.

There is a piece by Marilyn McCord Adams³⁷ which illustrates part of what is at issue in discussions of quietism and Wittgensteinian philosophical method. She maintains that it must be possible to compare our language-games with reality itself in order to see whether they should be changed or not: there must be a position of criticism *external* to *all* our language-games. The implicit idea here is that if you don't hold this sort of position, you are essentially *conservative*. What is taken for granted in that line of thought is that the idea of serious criticisms that start from within the ways in which we deal with our concepts, and work with that, and criticize *from*

³⁵ See S. Haslanger, *Changing the Culture and Ideology of Philosophy. Not By Reason (Alone)*, in «Hypatia», 23 (2008), pp. 210-223.

³⁶ See L. Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1967, § 452. See also C. Diamond, *How Long Is the Standard Meter in Paris?*, in T.G. McCarthy and S.C. Stidd (eds.), *Wittgenstein in America*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2001, pp. 104-139, at p. 120, where Diamond uses the remark from *Zettel* in arguing against Malcolm's way of cutting off the problems raised by Kripke's criticism of Wittgenstein on the standard meter.

³⁷ M. McCord Adams, *God and Evil among the Philosophers*, in «Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Society», 85 (2011), no. 2, pp. 65-80.

there, don't count: any genuine criticism must be external and cannot be an appeal to – and a development of – what we are already doing.

I think this comes out in various sorts of criticism that I have come across as a moral philosopher. Some people see the way in which I want to do moral philosophy as if it involved just «stipulating» the validity of current values, as opposed to taking them as genuinely open for discussion and criticism. That's because I don't think we need for criticism the kind of theoretical apparatus that belongs to the official moral-philosophical view. But I don't think that if you are rejecting that framework for criticism, you are therefore rejecting the idea that your views are open to criticism and are not just simply «stipulated».

For example, it has been maintained that I simply *stipulate* that human beings, as such, are morally significant: I am read as holding a conservative view and refusing to recognize that there are serious moral questions about the moral status of animals³⁸. Consider also the so-called «argument from marginal cases», which is a closely related issue. Again, my refusal to accept that argument seems to some philosopher just a matter of being conservative in my evaluations of human beings. The «rescue vs. safety» range of cases in moral philosophy is also instructive in this connection. People who are, let's say, theoretically motivated reformers, often of a utilitarian sort, maintain that it is simply *irrational* of us to take extremely seriously the person who is immediately in need and to devote to her resources which, if used in a different manner, might perhaps prevent accidents down the road that involve a much larger number of people. This issue, I think, raises the same type of questions that come up in the discussion about the moral status of animals, namely questions about what is allowed to *count* as morally relevant.

So it seems that critics who take your moral philosophy to be «quietistic», because you refuse to engage in a certain form of philosophical theorizing, also take it to be conservative.

That's definitely the case. I should also say that, in fact, part of that criticism goes with descriptions of what I hold that are totally untrue. For example, I am sometimes taken to maintain that the terms «just» or «unjust» cannot be applied to the ways in which we treat animals; but this is not at all what I would want say³⁹. That is a serious misreading of *Eating Meat and Eating People*.

³⁸ See D.A. Dombrowski, *Is the Argument from Marginal Cases Obtuse?*, in «Journal of Applied Philosophy», 23 (2006), pp. 223-232.

³⁹ See E. Aaltola, *The Anthropocentric Paradigm and the Possibility of Animal Ethics*, in «Ethics and the Environment», 15 (2010), pp. 27-50.

Let's switch to your reading of Wittgenstein's Tractatus. Your seminal essay, Throwing Away the Ladder, opened up a new way of approaching the book, which is now known as the Resolute Reading. A defining feature of this approach is that we should take seriously, indeed resolutely, the penultimate remark of the book, where Wittgenstein writes that in order to understand him, we must overcome and throw away his own propositions, recognizing them as mere nonsense. According to traditional readings, the Tractatus aims to articulate and convey a number of philosophical doctrines – about, say, the nature of thought, language, logic, inference, mathematics, ethics, etc. Any such substantive doctrine, according to the resolute approach, is intended to be part of the ladder that we are eventually supposed to throw away. How would you sum up your alternative view about the goal of the Tractatus? If it is not trying to convey a philosophical doctrine, then what does it seek to achieve?

I think there is a false alternative here between reading the book as giving us a body of doctrines, on the one hand, and claiming that the only point of the book is to get the reader to throw away the book, on the other. This latter view is often ascribed to Jim Conant and me, but it is a very weird reading of either of us⁴⁰. There is certainly a question about what do we see the book as accomplishing. I have tried to put this in different ways. One way I have tried to put it is that we need to take very seriously the remark about philosophy as an activity of clarification⁴¹ and that the book is intended to help us to see how to engage in that activity. It is an activity that does not itself involve doctrinal views⁴². It does involve, however, a kind of logical-seeing-what-is-in-common.

I am not exactly sure how to put this, but an example that I think is very helpful in this connection is Frege's understanding of what a concept is. I take it that the Fregean understanding of a concept is not intended as an account of what we ordinarily mean when we use the word «concept»; in fact, it is perfectly right to say, as Benno Kerry did, that the concept

⁴⁰ See e.g. P.M.S. Hacker, *Was He Trying to Whistle It?*, in A. Crary and R. Read (eds.), *The New Wittgenstein*, pp. 353-388, especially p. 359; M. McGinn, *Elucidating the Tractatus*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006, Preface and chap. I; G. Schönbaumsfeld, *A Confusion of the Spheres. Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein on Philosophy and Religion*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, chap. III.

⁴¹ See L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1922, 4.112.

⁴² On Diamond's understanding of Wittgenstein's conception of philosophical clarification, see for example her *Criss-Cross Philosophy*, in E. Amereller and E. Fischer (eds.), *Wittgenstein at Work. Method in the Philosophical Investigations*, New York - London, Routledge, 2004, pp. 201-220; Ead., *Addressing Russell Resolutely?*, forthcoming in «Philosophical Topics».

horse is a concept easy to acquire⁴³. However, as Frege at some point said, everyone is free to use words the way one wants, and he wants to get us to use the word «concept» for something he wants us to see *logically*⁴⁴. There is a kind of *logical insight* that we can have if we work with him and see what he is after. We then *see* something in common, and we may label it with the word «concept», but the word itself is then not as important as getting us to the point of seeing a logical-in-common-ness. The activity that Frege is practicing, of enabling his reader to see something logically in common, gives you something very close to what Wittgenstein is doing in the *Tractatus*.

Interestingly, a version of the idea of seeing something logically in common comes up in the *Investigations*, when Wittgenstein invites us to think of the Indian mathematicians who say: «Look at this!»⁴⁵ Here we are not supposed to come up with a proposition stating what we have been shown, but to be able to *see* something in what we have been presented with. Of course, metaphorical notions of sight have played an enormous role in philosophy since Plato. But I think that Wittgenstein is working with a more specific idea that is present in Frege: the kind of putting before you a notion (say the notion of a concept) that does not correspond exactly to anything you already have, but that elucidates part of what is already at work in your judgment-making and inferential thinking. Frege's clarification of what a concept is, in the logical sense, brings to the surface something that is already at work when you judge and draw inferences. That's a start, I would say, for understanding what the activity of philosophical clarification amounts to according to the author of the *Tractatus*.

Philosophical clarification according to the *Tractatus* is a matter of seeing logical-having-in-common, and this is likely to be confused with having-in-common: having-in-common is sharing a property, and sharing a property is something you can *say*. Logical-having-in-common is a very bad expression in a way, because it *isn't* a case of having-in-common, anymore than an internal relation is a relation. So, whenever we are trying to explain what the *Tractatus* is trying to do, it's very difficult *not* to use words that are going to get cancelled out in some way or another, because we are using metaphors that do not really work.

A logical-seeing-in-common is also a matter of logical-seeing-differences. I take it, for example, that the distinction between «function»

⁴³ G. Frege, *On Concept and Object* (1892), in M. Beaney (ed.), *The Frege Reader*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1997, pp. 181-193, at p. 184.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 181-182.

⁴⁵ L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), Oxford, Blackwell, 2001³, § 144.

and «operation» plays a major role in the *Tractatus*⁴⁶. This is a matter of two different modes of using words. This difference is one of the things that the *Tractatus* is trying to make clear. In the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein emphasizes that differences are important. Obviously he is critical of his earlier work in many ways, but seeing similarities and differences is really very deep in what he is doing as a philosopher in both his early and later work.

Making clear similarities and differences may make possible a re-thinking of our philosophical problems themselves, so there is a connection here with the issues we were talking about in relation to quietism. What motivates the *resentment* that we were discussing is the critique of questions. A lot of what Wittgenstein is doing as a philosopher is getting you to see that your question is phrased in a way that suggests that what you really want is such-and-such, while you may perhaps be led to recognize that there is *confusion* in your own understanding of what you wanted. In this sense, what Wittgenstein is trying to do is to get you to *rethink* what you are after in your philosophical activity. But if you are a philosopher, you might very well not *want* somebody who comes along and says: «You need to rethink what you are doing here, since what you really want might be different from you *think* you want». This is an attempt to connect what I am saying about clarification in the *Tractatus* with the theme of quietism and the widespread hostility to Wittgenstein's philosophy. Part of that hostility is the hostility to a philosopher who tells you that what you want isn't what you *think* you want.

Some resolute readers have tried to answer the question about the point of the Tractatus along the following lines: «The point of the book is to achieve a certain transformation of the reader, rather than to put forth a body of doctrines». Would you agree?

To just say that the *Tractatus* is aimed at a transformation of the reader is fine but doesn't really go far enough. One of the things that are transformed is what the reader thinks of philosophy itself as doing. We need to account for the prominence in the *Tractatus* of the idea of philosophy as clarification. It may be that the clarity which the reader achieves is a transformation of her. But we need to explain what the activity of clarification is like, how it works, and why metaphors of *seeing* are so important in this connection.

I hope this indicates something about why we can take perfectly seriously proposition 6.54, without thereby regarding as useless all the wonderful stuff that is happening earlier in the book. It is tempting to protest that we don't want to throw away all this wonderful stuff. But part

⁴⁶ See L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 5.25.

of the problem here is what you are actually doing when you throw away the propositions of the *Tractatus*. When you throw them away, what you throw away is the idea that you have got some kind of *necessary truth*, or something of that sort. I believe that you can hold on to the idea that there is something you can do *with* the propositions of the *Tractatus*, say the 3.3s, without having to think that they are giving you something like a *body of truths*. What they give you is a body of ways of attempting to straighten out things in philosophy, and a kind of sensitivity about where there is a need for philosophical clarification. After all, one of the things the 3.3s are about is the ways in which you can respond to situations in which there is a need for philosophical clarification⁴⁷. So it is fine to say that the aim of the *Tractatus* is to achieve a transformation of the reader; but that leaves out the details of what is supposed to go on in this transformation, and in what ways it is connected with the apparent doctrines of the book.

*Elizabeth Anscombe and Peter Geach report a conversation that Wittgenstein had with Frege the last time he saw him. Wittgenstein asked Frege whether he didn't find any difficulty with his theory that numbers are objects. Frege replied: «Sometimes I seem to see a difficulty, but then again I don't see it»⁴⁸. Don't you ever find any difficulty in the penultimate remark of the *Tractatus*? More specifically, don't you ever think that there is something forced, or artificial, or unmotivated in that remark?*

I think that 6.54 reflects a very sharp sense of the kinds of ways in which there are things that are profoundly misleading in the vocabulary in use in the rest of the book. I have used a couple of examples in my own writings to illustrate this point⁴⁹. One example is the use of the word «proposition» when the *Tractatus* says: «Propositions are truth-functions of elementary propositions»⁵⁰. What is the first word of that sentence doing? Are you saying that truth-functions of elementary propositions are truth-functions of elementary propositions? If not, what do you mean? You certainly don't mean that everything that *looks like a proposition* is a truth-function of elementary propositions. There

⁴⁷ Diamond discusses the role of the 3.3s (which comment on a version of Frege's Context Principle) in *Addressing Russell Resolutely?*

⁴⁸ G.E.M. Anscombe and P.T. Geach, *Three Philosophers*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1961, pp. 129-130.

⁴⁹ See C. Diamond, *Criss-Cross Philosophy*, pp. 204-205; Ead., *Reading the Tractatus with G.E.M. Anscombe*, in M. Beaney (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Analytic Philosophy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, forthcoming; Ead., *Addressing Russell Resolutely?*

⁵⁰ L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 5.

is no way of making clear what the first word of that sentence means, without going the whole hog and saying that what it means is «truth-function of elementary propositions», in which case the whole sentence does not carry its force at all. On the other hand, if it means anything that we ordinarily mean by «proposition», it is false – in the same way in which what Frege says about «concepts» is false, if we take him to speak about what we ordinarily mean by that word. So there is a sense in which the remark works in the book, but is profoundly misleading. The imagination that the sentence is telling you something involves trying to see the word «proposition» at the beginning of the sentence both as something that you grasp, and yet as *not* meaning any of the things you might actually mean by it. It is a *blur*. An *essential blur*. 6.54 is telling you: «Watch out for the way *sheer blur* is essential for the way this book is put together». And once you have obtained an awareness of such blur, you can still have the book working with you to get you into the activity of clarification.

The other word that I have used as an example that functions in a very similar manner is the word «occur». When the *Tractatus* says, in 5.54, that «propositions occur in a proposition only as bases of the truth-operations», the word «occur» does not mean «turn up in»; it means «logically occur». But what does «logically occur» mean? There is no account of logical occurrence apart from the one which is just being given in the *Tractatus*. The subject matter of the proposition is given by the clarification provided by the *Tractatus*. In 5.54, it only *appears* to us that the *Tractatus* is saying something *about* something because the subject itself is a blur, in our mind, between a logical use that we don't have yet, and a non-logical use that is in a sense irrelevant. So if you are aware of the role of this blur at the heart of the propositions of the book, you are going to see 6.54 as drawing attention to the way the book works.

I think that if you want to see what is true and interesting in Frege's discussion of concepts, you *need* to see that there is no subject-predicate sentence of the form: «Concepts are such-and-such». Frege is introducing a logical conception of what a concept is, and such a conception cannot be a genuine predicate, in the same way in which an internal relation cannot be a relation. Similarly, I don't think you can see what is going on in most parts of the *Tractatus* if you don't recognize the misleading character of the vocabulary it employs. This is what 6.54 is trying to draw attention to.

Let's move on to your work on later Wittgenstein. An important aspect of your writings on later Wittgenstein is the emphasis on the essentially creative nature of language – on the fact that we use words and apply concepts in radically new ways, which do not fall within the scope of pre-

established rules. In this connection, you have written that our practices, or our language-games, are «exploratory»⁵¹. Could you expand on this remark?

Your comment touches on several interconnected issues. Yes indeed, I do want to emphasize the creativity, the openness, of language. But I want to pick up on the issue of how we use the notion of a language-game in philosophy.

For Wittgenstein, the notion of a language-game is itself something that is helpful in *certain* philosophical contexts, and not in others. In doing philosophy, it is very easy to think of «what can be said within the language-game» as more or less settled by a fixed set of rules. In response to this sort of philosophy, I am not sure that the best approach is to say «Our language-games are exploratory». Maybe what I should say is: A lot of what we do in language fits a certain conception of language-games very badly. Many of our language-games are in many ways deeply *unlike* the little language-games that Wittgenstein discusses at the beginning of the *Investigations* or in the *Brown Book*, in that there are no rules which work in anything like the kind of way that Wittgenstein is talking about. This is not going against what Wittgenstein is doing: it is simply a matter of using the notion of a language-game as one tool among others in doing philosophy. I think that getting carried away and turning it into a «language-game theory of language» is a real danger.

We do all sorts of things with language, many of which are not rule-governed in any discernible sense⁵². Wittgenstein has a nice example that illustrates the point: We ask what color is the table, what color is the floor, and then we go on to ask *what color is the mirror*⁵³. One could play with that question in various kinds of ways. Our language-games, in general, are not closed to that sort of activity. What should be said, therefore, is that there is a limit to the usefulness of a certain picture of language-games that we may get when we read Wittgenstein.

What Cavell called the «Manichaeian conception»⁵⁴ of what lies inside and outside language-games, which I sometimes call the «in-and-outy picture» of language-games, may have *very limited* usefulness in certain philosophical contexts; but it is very misleading in many other contexts. One of the respects in which that conception or picture is misleading is in connection with questions of relativism and truth, because it makes it

⁵¹ C. Diamond, *The Realistic Spirit*, p. 27.

⁵² For further discussion of this point, see C. Diamond, *Riddles and Anselm's Riddle* and Ead., *Losing Your Concepts*, p. 268.

⁵³ This example is mentioned in Margaret Macdonald's notes to Wittgenstein's lecture on January 27, 1936, unpublished.

⁵⁴ S. Cavell, *The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy*, p. 47.

seem that something can be true only *in a language-game*, as opposed to being plain old true.

Let me try to spell out this last point, if I may. According to the «Manichæan» or «in-and-outy» picture of language-games, what counts as rational and true is defined by the constitutive rules of each language-game. Consequently, those rules may not be changed on rational grounds, but only by arbitrary decision or blind causal influence. In opposition to this picture, you argue that we can and do change, revise, extend, or even completely reject our language-games on rational grounds, without having to rely on any pre-established set of rules; and the possibility of this sort of criticism, you argue, is precisely part of what goes to build our concepts of reality and truth⁵⁵.

I think this is one of the things which are important with post-Kuhnian thought. What Kuhn did was to make us profoundly aware of the very complicated relation that our conception of the world has to earlier ones, and the complex ways in which we *reason* in getting from where we are to a different view. There certainly is reasoning involved in these changes: it is not simply that at one time there is a bunch of people holding a certain view, and then they die off and are replaced by another bunch of people who hold a different view. That may sometimes have a role; but there is an enormous amount of reasoning involved as well.

It is interesting, for example, to focus on the role that the telescope played in the abandonment of the old astronomical system. The telescope is a fantastically interesting device that comes on the scene in the 17th century. The first thing that people do with it is to spy on armies. Suddenly, you are able to see how many ships there are over there, how many men, how many guns, etc. So you are certainly taking for granted that this is a truth-revealing device, an extension of perception. That it is an extension of perception is essential to its integration in human life, as a tool of war, of spying on one's neighbor, and so on. This was crucial to the role that the telescope played in astronomical argumentative contexts. You can't

⁵⁵ Diamond has explored these issues in *Truth. Defenders, Debunkers, Despisers*, in L. Toker (ed.), *Commitment in Reflection*, New York, Garland Publishing, 1994, pp. 195-221; *How Old Are These Bones? Putnam, Wittgenstein and Verification*, in «Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes», 73 (1999), pp. 99-134; *Unfolding Truth and Reading Wittgenstein*, in «Sats. Nordic Journal of Philosophy», 4 (2003), no. 1, pp. 24-58; *The Skies of Dante and Our Skies. A Response to Ilham Dilman*, in «Philosophical Investigations», 35 (2012), no. 3-4, pp. 187-204; *Criticising from «Outside»*, in «Philosophical Investigations», 36 (2013), no. 2, pp. 114-132; *Putnam and Wittgensteinian Baby-Throwing. Variations on a Theme*, forthcoming in *The Philosophy of Hilary Putnam*, in the *Library of Living Philosophers* series, Open Court; *Between Realism and Rortianism. Conant, Rorty and the Disappearance of Options*, unpublished.

just say that the devil makes it the case that when you take this tube and put it up in Jupiter's direction, you have the illusion of seeing a certain number of moons. That move is really not going to work if you are *also* using the same tube to look at the armies and navies over there. Of course, this is not a topic that can be discussed in two minutes; but what it shows, I think, is that we are deeply responsive to various things in the world as we change the ways in which we find we need to think about them.

You want to vindicate sayings such as «Truth is one», or «There is one reality», or «Truth is different from being taken to be true, whether by one, by many, or by everyone». But according to some philosophers, for example a Richard Rorty, the very fact that you don't want to reject these sayings shows that you are embracing some kind of naïve or metaphysical form of realism. How would you respond to this charge?

I think there are problems with this charge. If you focus on Rorty, he is not exactly saying that forms of realism are *naïve*. Rorty presents the issue in terms of a notion of «human maturity». There is an ethical vision that is important to Rorty according to which just as people were permanent adolescents when they worshipped God, so there is a kind of failure to grow up in thinking that one ought to turn truth into the new thing that you are responsible to out there, as opposed to just talking to each other and making what one says persuasive to other people. Such a conception of respect for truth as immaturity plays a very big role in why Rorty thinks that his view is to be recommended. But the idea of maturity that is involved in Rorty's argument against realism is, I think, profoundly questionable.

An additional problem with Rorty's view is his conception of what the alternatives are to his anti-realist view (Rorty would not use this label to characterize his view, but I will do it anyway). He does not leave room for the kind of respect for truth that in various ways I want to take seriously. Rorty has a very limited conception of what the possibilities are, which is tied to a particular model that he wants to impose.

Rorty is imposing a model of what it is to use language within a language-game. According to his model, the way in which a term is applied is a matter of what you can get your fellow users of the language to accept. If you are talking about, let's say, what comes next in the series «2, 4, 6, ...» after 1000, there isn't room to say that it *really* is 1004, even though all the members of your community say 1002. It's being 1002 is not separable from the ways in which we do in fact go on. According to this model, going on correctly in the series – and in the application of words more generally – is a matter of going on in the way that is accepted by the community. I say 1002 after 1000 and they buy it. They buy what

I say and I buy what they say. And since we play our language-games in a world that acts causally on us, it «pays off» to have language-games that warrant certain assertions and not others. That's a one-minute account of Rorty's model.

Now, Rorty's model leaves no room for the idea that, in playing our language-games, we are responsible to reality, to the features of the things that we are talking about. For Rorty, the picture of responsibility to the world inevitably involves some questionable metaphysical view – such as a scheme/content dualism, or a form of realism in which things in the world have determinate features independently of *any* representational activity of ours. And he also holds that our ordinary talk of truth, or about what is or isn't real, constitutes no sort of challenge to his overall understanding – any more than ordinary talk of the sun rising or setting constitutes a challenge to a Copernican view of the solar system.

In response to Rorty, I want to criticize the model that he works with, which rules out the existence of any alternative to his own view apart from metaphysical realism. This means also that we can take far more seriously than Rorty wants to the various ways in which we operate with notions of truth, the complex roles they have in our thinking, the possibilities there are of connecting with what other people say, the possibilities that we might think there should be, given that we are thinking about the same world. These are pictures that are in use in our lives, embodied to some degree in grammar and in the ways we talk about, among other things, history. In any case, that is part of how I want to look at the grammar or grammars of talk about how things are.

There is an example discussed by Murdoch that may be worth mentioning here. Murdoch talks about the case of a person who asks herself whether it is really *remorse* that she is feeling. But she notes that you can raise the same sort of question even with a word such as «red». An artist, for example, may remark: «Ah, I finally see what *red* is!»⁵⁶ This brings us back to the exploratory character of our language-games. The exploratory character of our language-games goes with new sorts of uses of even terms as *prosaic* as «red». The most prosaic term in the language is «red». When Wittgenstein wants to give an example of the *most prosaic* language-game, he considers language-games involving the use of the word «red», for instance the language-game of asking whether the object we are pointing to is red. Well, *even there* it is possible to put pressure on our established patterns of use. There is no ground for saying to the artist that he *can't* make his claim, because it is not allowed by the language-game that we learnt. Here you can see how the exploratory

⁵⁶ See I. Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970), New York - London, Routledge, 2001, chap. I.

character of our language-games is connected with notions of openness and responsiveness to reality.

Do you see any sort of unity between your theoretical writings and your moral philosophy?

There are several different things I'd want to say about that. First, there is what I called the realistic spirit, a spirit in which one can think about philosophy, and which is not specifically tied either to theoretical issues or to what one might categorize as moral philosophy. It would be hard to show what this comes to except through examples, and I will just mention one example from my discussion of following rules, in the paper *Rules: looking in the right place*⁵⁷, and one example from ethics, my criticism of much of the writing on animal rights, for example in *Eating Meat and Eating People*. The second thing I'd want to mention, in thinking about your question, is the role in a whole bunch of my papers of the theme of truth and realism, where there are explicit as well as implicit connections to ethics. I was thinking in particular of *Truth. Defenders, Debunkers, Despisers*, as well as the more recent series of papers on realism: the paper *Putnam and Wittgensteinian Baby-Throwing, The Skies of Dante and Our Skies, Criticizing from «Outside»* and *Between Realism and Rortianism*, and this is also what I am working on right now. The third thing I'd want to mention is not so much a connection between my theoretical writings and my moral philosophy, but between thinking about themes in Wittgenstein's theoretical writings and thinking about questions in moral philosophy. For example, in Wittgenstein's discussions of the foundations of mathematics, there is a discussion of the motley of mathematics. This idea of the motley, and of differences, has been extremely important for the ways in which I have tried to work on ethics: moral thinking, and moral life, involves a variety of very different *kinds* of thinking. We were talking earlier about the impulse in philosophy to impose a single model. There is certainly a *huge* impulse to impose a single model of moral thinking that is characteristic of contemporary ethical theorizing.

Another connection concerns Wittgenstein's idea that having a logical role, in mathematics, depends on the *use* that you give to what you say. (I have discussed this connection especially in *Wittgenstein, Mathematics, and Ethics*⁵⁸.) «Six apples plus three apples equals nine apples» might be

⁵⁷ In D.Z. Phillips and P. Winch (eds.), *Wittgenstein. Attention to Particulars*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1989, pp. 12-34.

⁵⁸ C. Diamond, *Wittgenstein, Mathematics, and Ethics. Resisting the Attractions of Realism*, in H. Sluga and D.G. Stern (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 226-260.

an arithmetical truth, but it might also be an empirical truth. In general, apples don't do very much when you put them together: six plus three of them *stays* six plus three, i.e. nine, and this is an empirical rather than an arithmetical truth. In order to see whether what you say is an arithmetical or an empirical proposition, you need to look at the way you are using it. I have argued that, in a similar manner, the ethical significance of what you say depends on the use that you are giving to your words. In this respect, it has been very fruitful for me to reflect on the fact that Wittgenstein, in a famous letter to Ludwig von Ficker, says that the point of the *Tractatus* is an ethical one⁵⁹. In order to see in which sense the *Tractatus* can be a work in ethics, you need to ask what it is for something (whether it is the *Tractatus*, or *Hadji Murat*, or something else) to belong to ethics. The answer I have proposed is that there is an analogy between this question and Wittgenstein's approach to mathematics, when he says that for something to be mathematics is a matter of how it is used. Thus the ethical significance of the *Tractatus* will depend on the way in which you apply it. There is here also an important connection with Iris Murdoch and her suggestion that what it is for something to be part of our moral life – what it is for a thought to have weight in our moral thinking – is a matter that requires investigation; it does not have a single and pre-established form.

*Murdoch is a tremendously important figure for your work in moral philosophy*⁶⁰. *What are the elements of her thought that you have found most interesting and fertile?*

First of all, the idea that I have just mentioned: problematizing our conception of what moral thinking *is*. That alone makes her so hard to fit into the picture of the field of ethics in contemporary moral philosophy. Determining what belongs to ethics is generally not taken to be a serious problem. It is a common view that the domain of ethics can be isolated in terms of a few basic concepts: right and wrong, good and bad, and maybe virtue and vice. Murdoch is profoundly insistent, in different ways at different stages of her life, that there is *already*

⁵⁹ Wittgenstein to L. von Ficker, undated, in C.G. Luckhardt (ed.), *Wittgenstein. Sources and Perspectives*, Hassocks, The Harvester Press, 1979, p. 94.

⁶⁰ See especially C. Diamond, *The Realistic Spirit*, chap. XV; Ead., «We Are Perpetually Moralists». *Iris Murdoch, Fact, and Value*, in M. Antonaccio and W. Schweiker (eds.), *Iris Murdoch and the Search for Human Goodness*, Chicago - London, The University of Chicago Press, 1996, pp. 79-109; Ead., *Murdoch the Explorer*, in «Philosophical Topics», 38 (2010), no. 1, pp. 51-85; Ead., *Murdoch Off the Map. Or Taking Empiricism Back from the Empiricists*, unpublished. See also the Italian collection of essays: C. Diamond, *L'immaginazione e la vita morale*, edited by P. Donatelli, Roma, Carocci, 2006.

something extremely problematic in this kind of delimitation, tied in with an equally problematic picture of the nature of the world in which we do our moral thinking.

I also see as important in Murdoch the idea that moral philosophy should aim to respect our moral experience and try to illuminate it.

Concerning this second idea, do you see a connection with Wittgenstein's insistence that in philosophy we should try to look at the actual phenomena, rather than impose on them our own preconceptions?

I think, actually, that Murdoch's emphasis on *experience* and what illuminates it is different from anything clearly present in Wittgenstein. «Looking» is certainly important for both Wittgenstein and Murdoch. But I think the notion of experience enters her own *specific* way of interpreting this philosophical command.

One of the basic criticisms that she mounted against her fellow philosophers, both in the UK and in France at the time, was that they focused exclusively on the dimension of action and behavior, dismissing the experience of moral life. This is the point of her famous example of M and D in *The Sovereignty of Good*⁶¹. For Murdoch, there are elements in moral experience that are of great importance, but have no place in either existentialist or mid-twentieth century English thought. I don't think that this emphasis is clearly present in Wittgenstein.

Is there any aspect of Murdoch's thought that you don't find very promising?

I see many things in Murdoch, which have to do with what I take to be her *religiosity*, to which I don't pay any attention. This may be very bad. If somebody has a very unified thought, pulling it apart – which is essentially what I do with Murdoch – may be misleading in various kinds of ways. So, for example, I *don't* like what she does with the ontological argument, or what she does with Buddhism. The Christian theologian Stanley Hauerwas once remarked that the problem with Murdoch is not that she is not religious, but that she is *too* religious⁶², where «religious» is used, in a very Barthian kind of way, as a term of criticism⁶³.

⁶¹ I. Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, pp. 16ff.

⁶² See S. Hauerwas, *Murdochian Muddles. Can We Get Through Them If God Does Not Exist?*, in M. Antonaccio and W. Schweiker (eds.), *Iris Murdoch and the Search for Human Goodness*, pp. 190-208.

⁶³ See K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 4 vols., Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1956, vol. I, part 2, «Religion as Unbelief», pp. 297-325.

I would like to ask you the same sort of question about another philosopher who has been very important for you: Elizabeth Anscombe. What aspects of her philosophy are most significant for you?

Anscombe has been significant for me in several ways.

First, there is the way in which I have learnt from her about reading Wittgenstein. I will give an example of it. I was reading last night the piece by Candlish and Damnjanovic in *Wittgenstein's Early Philosophy*⁶⁴. It's about the *Tractatus* and the unity of the proposition. When I think about the *Tractatus* and the proposition, one of the really important things for me is Anscombe's point about the reversibility of the sense of a picture. One of her very basic claims is that the Tractarian conception of picturing gives you an understanding of negation, and negation is absolutely crucial for understanding the *Tractatus*⁶⁵. The Candlish-Damnjanovic piece was very interesting about the *Tractatus* in many ways, but what was entirely left out was the significance of the reversibility of the sense of a picture. There was nothing in the essay that reflected the connection between picturing and negation, and this made it very flawed by my lights. So my understanding of the importance of negation for the understanding of the *Tractatus* is deeply shaped by reading Anscombe. Her and Geach's discussion of Frege has also been important to me. In fact, she has been significant even for the question of how to read a philosopher in general – of how the history of philosophy and contemporary philosophy hang together.

Then there is her moral philosophy. There I find very interesting her attempts to think through a position which is at odds in many ways with contemporary thought, going back to pieces like *Modern Moral Philosophy* and *War and Murder*⁶⁶, as well as the article where she discusses her objections to Truman's decision to use the atomic bomb against Japan⁶⁷. On that whole range of subjects having to do with human life, Anscombe is very interesting. Why is murder wrong? I think it is because I read Anscombe that I find so many discussions of what is

⁶⁴ S. Candlish and N. Damnjanovic, *The Tractatus and the Unity of the Proposition*, in J.L. Zalabardo (ed.), *Wittgenstein's Early Philosophy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 64-98.

⁶⁵ See G.E.M. Anscombe, *Introduction*, chaps. III and IV. For further discussion of the significance of this aspect of Anscombe's reading of the *Tractatus*, see C. Diamond, *Finding One's Way Into the Tractatus*, in «Sats. Nordic Journal of Philosophy», 4 (2003), pp. 165-182; Ead., *Reading the Tractatus with G.E.M. Anscombe*.

⁶⁶ G.E.M. Anscombe, *War and Murder* (1961), reprinted in Ead., *Ethics, Religion and Politics*, pp. 51-61.

⁶⁷ G.E.M. Anscombe, *Mr Truman's Degree* (1956), reprinted in Ead., *Ethics, Religion and Politics*, pp. 62-71.

at stake in murder so totally inadequate. I do find Anscombe interesting about life, death, and sexuality. I say *interesting*, i.e. worth thinking about, worth taking very seriously. I won't say that I can agree with much of what she says, but I take her to be very significant in what she has to say about these issues. There is a piece by her about twenty things in contemporary thought which she objects to⁶⁸. It's a quite fascinating list. I think the piece was addressed to Catholics, but the actual items are not specifically Catholic doctrines.

Then there are the things that are very central in my work right now: Anscombe, Wittgenstein, and the question of how thought is related to reality. I think her paper on linguistic idealism⁶⁹ is very important in relation to the issue that we were talking about earlier, about the «Manichaeian view» of what lies inside and outside language-games, because that's very much *not* the way she is thinking. She is aware of how you could see that view in Wittgenstein, but she does not ultimately want to say that that's what he is doing with the notion of a language-game. I think the paper on the intentionality of sensation⁷⁰ is also interesting about the grammar of thought about reality, and about the way we may be speaking about the *same thing*, although we may be understanding what it is we are speaking about in very different ways. So I would emphasize those two papers and the stimulus of someone writing about these topics from a point of view that is profoundly influenced by Wittgenstein and is far away from the Manichaeian view of language-games, but not in exactly the Cavellian way. Anscombe's approach to this topic is different, and supplements, I think, what you get in the more Cavellian sort of approach.

Finally, I find Wittgenstein's approach to ethics in the *Tractatus* extremely interesting. I find Anscombe's Aristotelian approach, further developed by Philippa Foot and Michael Thompson, also very interesting⁷¹. These are *totally different* ways of thinking about ethics. This is for me a tremendous issue, a problem, a question. How do I want to see these different approaches as hanging together? *Can* I see

⁶⁸ G.E.M. Anscombe, *Twenty Opinions Common among Modern Anglo-American Philosophers* (1986), reprinted in Ead., *Faith in a Hard Ground. Essays on Religion, Philosophy and Ethics by G.E.M. Anscombe*, edited by M. Geach and L. Gormally, Exeter - Charlottesville, Imprint Academy, 2008, pp. 66-68.

⁶⁹ G.E.M. Anscombe, *The Question of Linguistic Idealism* (1976), reprinted in Ead., *From Parmenides to Wittgenstein*, vol. 1 of *The Collected Philosophical Papers of G.E.M. Anscombe*, pp. 112-134.

⁷⁰ G.E.M. Anscombe, *The Intentionality of Sensation. A Grammatical Feature* (1965), reprinted in Ead., *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind*, pp. 3-20.

⁷¹ See especially Ph. Foot, *Natural Goodness*, New York - Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, and M. Thompson, *Life and Action. Elementary Structures of Practice and Practical Thought*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2008.

them in relation to each other? If I say things like «Truth is one», that's all very well; but *how* do these totally different approaches to ethics fit together, if at all they can? One of them (the Anscombean approach) deeply puts moral discourse into the language we live with every day; the other one (the Tractarian approach) distances ethics from the language we speak every day. If I want to see both of these approaches as significant, how do I live with this difference? That's a fourth way in which I see Anscombe as important to me: she is part of the setting of this problem for me.

There is actually another point that I would like to add about my relationship to Anscombe. What Anscombe, Murdoch, and Cavell have in common is that, in very different ways, they are all analytic philosophers, *but...* They are all «analytic-philosophers-but». There is a sense in which I am also an analytic-philosopher-but. What I get from them is that I can read them, they speak my language; I am not reading Heidegger when I read them. There is a language that I have learned philosophically and that I can work with with them. Anscombe, Murdoch, and Cavell are all speaking my language in that they are analytic philosophers, but they are also very deeply outside analytic philosophy, all three of them. It's that sort of being inside and outside analytic philosophy which I think is so important for the way I try to do philosophy. I don't know that in my writing I *am* totally accessible to analytic philosophers. I do try. And I do sometimes lose patience, as in some of the responses to Onora O'Neill⁷². It is very difficult, it seems to me, to try to be responsive to analytic philosophers, and yet also not to be sharing the conception of philosophy that they are operating with.

In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in Anscombe's philosophy of action and moral philosophy. Some of her substantive moral views, however, are quite controversial; think for example about the theses that she defends in her piece on contraception and chastity⁷³. Her militant writings on Catholic ethics pose a problem for many people working on Anscombe's ethics. A strategy that has been adopted for dealing with these writings is to argue that Anscombe's corpus divides into two separable parts: the exoteric writings, addressed to the general philosophical public, and the esoteric writings, addressed to a Catholic audience. What do you think about this proposal?

⁷² See C. Diamond, *Anything but Argument?* (1982), reprinted in Ead., *The Realistic Spirit*, pp. 291-308.

⁷³ G.E.M. Anscombe, *Contraception and Chastity* (1972), in Ead., *Faith in a Hard Ground*, pp. 170-191.

I don't think that it is easy to divide Anscombe's corpus in that manner. I have recently re-read an excellent essay by Sabina Lovibond which addresses part of this question⁷⁴. The paper is on Anscombe's absolutism, an instance of which is her critique of contemporary philosophers willing to take seriously the idea that it might be morally right, in certain circumstances, to frame an innocent person and have her condemned to death. The absolute ruling out of this option, within the context of Anscombe's thought, *can* be tied in with her Christian beliefs. Lovibond, however, discusses the question of whether one can take seriously that absolute prohibition, if one does not share Anscombe's religious background. The absolute prohibition on framing the innocent is an example of something that has all sorts of ties to Anscombe's religious views, but it is also tied to her conception of how modern moral philosophy was different before, roughly, the year 1800. Before then, the idea that it might be morally required to frame an innocent person would not have been on the cards at all. Anscombe argues that it is worth asking what has changed. So she does not see the absolutist view that she defends as necessarily tied to Christian beliefs. There is certainly a question about whether somebody who does not accept Christian beliefs can intelligently hold that kind of view. I think the answer is «Yes», but it is an issue that requires discussion and is by no means obvious.

There is also Anscombe's discussion of issues such as contraception and chastity. Although the papers in which Anscombe addresses those topics were delivered to Catholic audiences, they are meant, I think, as bits of moral philosophy, defensible independently of any specifically Catholic premise. There are some essays of Anscombe's which are obviously addressed to a specifically Catholic public; for example, when she is talking about transubstantiation⁷⁵. But when she is talking about contraception, she is arguing that the view she recommends is not something that has to be derived from revealed truth. She argued that her position was backed up by rational considerations. That is where she was taken up, in one way, by Peter Winch, and in another way, by Bernard Williams and Michael Tanner⁷⁶. They took her up on it because she was *not* making claims that were meant to be limited to Catholicism.

⁷⁴ See S. Lovibond, *Absolute Prohibitions without Divine Promises*, in «Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement», 54 (2004), pp. 141-158.

⁷⁵ See G.E.M. Anscombe, *On Transubstantiation* (1974), reprinted in Ead., *Ethics, Religion and Politics*, pp. 107-112.

⁷⁶ See P. Winch, B. Williams, M. Tanner and G.E.M. Anscombe, *Discussion of «Contraception and Chastity»*, in «The Human World», 9 (1972), pp. 41-51.

Her views on sexuality – as well as, in a different way, D.H. Lawrence’s views on sexuality⁷⁷ – are radically different from those that tend to be current. Take her view about casual sex. Her remark that having sex isn’t like picking a mushroom and casually eating it⁷⁸ is very interesting. This is certainly something where she is out of touch with a lot of contemporary thinking. With her on this is Lawrence, decrying what he calls «cocktail sex»⁷⁹. Cocktail sex and mushroom sex are, in a sense, the same image. Lawrence’s view about certain kinds of sexual behavior as «dishonoring the body» invokes concepts that constitute alternatives to what is generally secularly taken for granted. I think it is important to have them in view. Thinking hard about sex is difficult. I don’t want to say I want to buy into what Anscombe says about these issues, but I do want to treat her – along with somebody like Lawrence – as taking the discussion in a direction that needs to be explored.

I think that what they show – or especially Lawrence shows – is that it is possible to avoid a moralistic perspective, and yet to see the issues raised by sexuality as involving what Bernard Williams once called a «specifically sexual morality»⁸⁰. Is there a specifically sexual morality? That’s possibly a way of phrasing what is going on in this discussion. For a lot of contemporary thinking, there are moral issues about the way in which you respect another person’s integrity, her desires, her autonomy, etc.; but there aren’t specifically *sexual* moral issues. *Anything goes* provided that you are respecting the other person in all the kinds of ways in which non-sexual morality requires respect for other people. What Anscombe and Lawrence and I think somebody like Stanley Hauerwas⁸¹ are doing is keeping open, as something which we ought to see as an issue, questions of specifically sexual morality.

⁷⁷ See for example D.H. Lawrence, *A Propos of «Lady Chatterley’s Lover»*, in Id., *Phoenix II*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1968, pp. 487-515.

⁷⁸ See G.E.M. Anscombe, *Contraception and Chastity*, p. 186.

⁷⁹ See D.H. Lawrence, *A Propos of «Lady Chatterley’s Lover»*, p. 491-492.

⁸⁰ See B. Williams, *Morality. An Introduction to Ethics*, New York, Harper and Row, 1972, p. 27.

⁸¹ See for example S. Hauerwas, *Sex and Politics. Bertrand Russell and «Human Sexuality»*, in «The Christian Century», 95 (1978), pp. 417-422.

Cora Diamond. Philosophy in a Realistic Spirit. An Interview by Silver Bronzo

In the first half of the interview, Diamond discusses various aspects of her intellectual biography, including her first encounter with philosophy, what it was like to study philosophy at Oxford in the early Sixties, the way she gradually came to Wittgenstein, the decision to become a vegetarian, how this relates to her interest in animal ethics, and how the political climate during the Vietnam War influenced her decision to move back to the US. In the second half, Diamond discusses major aspects of her philosophy: her reading of Wittgenstein and why it is misleading to call it «quietistic»; her views about conceptual change, rationality and truth; the unity of her theoretical and moral philosophy; and what she finds most attractive in Anscombe and Murdoch.

Keywords: Ludwig Wittgenstein, Resolute Reading, Conceptual Change, G.E.M. Anscombe, Iris Murdoch.

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