REALISM AND RESOLUTION: REPLY TO
WARREN GOLDFARB AND SABINA LOVIBOND

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If realism is a main theme of The Realistic Spirit, it is also a topic on which I have learnt much from Warren Goldfarb’s work and Sabina Lovibond’s: from Goldfarb’s criticism of readings of the Tractatus as putting forward a kind of realism, and from Lovibond’s writings on the implications for realism and ethics of Wittgenstein’s later work. I would like to thank both commentators for their thoughtful and extremely thought-provoking remarks, and for their very clear and helpful summaries of the main themes of the book.

I turn first to some important points made by Goldfarb.

In discussing Frege and nonsense, Goldfarb raises the question whether my treatment of the logical elements of sentences commits me to the adoption of a semantic stance towards our language. The papers of mine that he is discussing (“Frege and Nonsense” and “What Nonsense Might Be”) were written before I had seen clearly the issues that come up in connection with Frege and the possibility of a semantic stance. My conception of the questions which I took myself to be answering in those papers was shaped in part by my reading of Michael Dummett, and to a degree reflected presuppositions of Dummett’s. It is in fact through Goldfarb’s own work, and that of Thomas Ricketts and of Joan Weiner, that I have come to see how important for our reading of Frege the issue is of his avoidance of a semantic stance.

Goldfarb has a suggestion about how my line of thought can be preserved if I give an account of how sentences can be segmented on the basis of their inferential relations; I think that he is absolutely right. That is, the identification of expressions as logical units of sentences goes by way of the applicability of logic. This then can be connected directly with the following remarks of Frege’s:
Only in a sentence do the words really have a meaning. The mental pictures that may float before our minds need not correspond to the logical elements of the judgment. It is enough if the sentence as a whole has a sense; it is through that that its parts also have their content.¹

It may well seem puzzling how it can be through the sense of the sentence that its parts have content. Following Goldfarb’s suggestion, we have this account: the sentence with a sense expresses a judgment standing in inferential relations to other judgments, and the inferential relations of the judgments determine the segmentation of the sentences expressing the judgments; they thus determine sentential parts which genuinely have meaning (as opposed to having mere psychological suggestiveness). This account may still appear to leave us with problems. It may make it appear that general linguistic knowledge (of the meanings of individual words) has no role to play in our understanding of new sentences. A mistake here would be to think that the only way to deal with this problem is by some account involving what Goldfarb refers to as a semantic stance. But that would lead to misunderstandings of Frege’s thought.

I turn now to Goldfarb’s brief remarks about the historical influence of Frege and Russell on the *Tractatus*.

When I was writing “Throwing Away the Ladder,” I wanted to see how far we could get in understanding the *Tractatus* by following through on some very Fregean ideas. I agree with Goldfarb that the result was to play down too far the importance to Wittgenstein of critical thought about Russell, including in particular criticism of his theory of judgment. But the *Tractatus* itself is remarkable in how far it knits together with its most fundamental ideas a large number of apparently separate issues. The *Tractatus* is written by someone who did not want to spare anyone the trouble of thinking things out for himself—and the more one actually works at it, the more of these fundamental interconnections seem to move into view. I shall give an example, below, of these interconnections, although one which does not connect directly with Goldfarb’s playing down of the Fregean influence on the *Tractatus*. (There is not space here to discuss the question how deeply Wittgenstein was engaged with Frege’s ideas in the writing of the *Tractatus*. I would want to argue that some of the early ideas in the development of the *Tractatus*, connected with the shaping of what Wittgenstein later referred to as his fundamental thought, do show a complex working through of the implications of Frege’s views.)²

Goldfarb mentions Wittgenstein’s “intense involvement in the details of Russell’s philosophical logic, in particular the theory of judgment”—I want now to add to that. Wittgenstein was also deeply involved with the question: How does Russell go wrong in his epistemology and metaphysics because he has not got the philosophical logic straight? Wittgenstein disliked Russell’s book *The Problems of Philosophy* and was distressed by Russell’s having (in 1913) taken up writing on the theory of knowledge without the clarity he needed in philosophical logic.³ Let me briefly indicate how very important this line of thinking is in the *Tractatus*.

Russell’s epistemology in the period in which he and Wittgenstein were working together was tied to the distinction between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description; the account of knowledge by description was an application of Russell’s theory of descriptions. About knowledge by description, Russell wrote that its chief importance was that it enables us to pass beyond the limits of our private experience.⁴ Russell’s idea is that private experience has its limits; and the world, about which we can have knowledge, does not have the same limits as does private experience. The theory of descriptions helps us to escape from the prison of private experience.⁵

Wittgenstein took Russell’s treatment of these issues to be radically confused; and the *Tractatus* is, I think, as much concerned with the effects of getting philosophical logic wrong as it is with the significant details of philosophical logic itself. The effects of getting philosophical logic wrong include Russell’s conception of two limits: the limit of private experience, and, beyond that, the world so far as it is distinct from what we directly know. We escape beyond the inner limit via descriptions. — That is, from Wittgenstein’s point of view, the bad effect of bad philosophical logic. And the issues here are obviously very important in Wittgenstein’s overall conception of his book, the concern with limits.⁶

Wittgenstein leaves most of this to be worked out by the reader for himself. My reason for choosing his involvement with these issues to illustrate the interweaving of questions within the *Tractatus* is that it is also relevant to the question Goldfarb asks towards the end of his remarks about the *Tractatus*, about what guidance if any there is in the *Tractatus* about how logical analysis should proceed. While there are some *Tractatus* remarks which are apparently intended to give some general guidance, the book does, I think, take the guidance necessary for logical analysis to be largely negative. Clarity about logic (of the sort the *Tractatus* aims at) is meant to head us off from wrong paths in analysis—where wrong paths in analysis might be exemplified by Russell’s treatment of things outside our own experience, in the essay “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description,” and again in the book *Problems of Philosophy*. The wrong-headed Russellian approach to analysis is being criticised, I would suggest, even in the Preface to the *Tractatus*, in the remarks there about the limits of language and the limits of thought. What we are speaking about is shown in the language we use; if we grasp that point, we shall give up philosophical speculation like Russell’s about what we are acquainted with, and what we really want our judgments to be about (which had guided his analysis). More detailed guidance for logical analysis (beyond that provided in remarks like 3.24 and 3.261-3.262) was not then the task of the *Tractatus*.⁷
I turn now to the fundamental questions Goldfarb raises in the main body of his remarks, about the contrast between ‘resolute’ and ‘irresolute’ readings of the *Tractatus*.

I appreciate Goldfarb’s suggestion of the vocabulary of “resolute” vs. “irresolute,” as opposed to my own use of “chickening out.” The expression “chickening out” emphasizes failure to have the courage to stick to what one has committed oneself to; “irresolute,” though it has that failure-of-courage element, emphasizes also another element, a kind of dithering, which reflects not being clear what one really wants, a desire to make inconsistent demands. And this is what Goldfarb explains using the metaphor of *inside* and *outside* intelligible language: we are *irresolute* in thinking we understand a view, an ‘outside’ view which we take to be Wittgenstein’s, although at the same time we do not want to give up the idea that there is no language in which we can *think* this view. Inside intelligible language, where we are, we cannot think it, but we are convinced we grasp what it is we cannot think.

The irresolution within this kind of reading of the *Tractatus* as a whole thus resembles closely the kind of irresolution within the idea of reified possibilities: following out what we want in that case, we can come to see a lack of coherence in the want itself. So Goldfarb’s word “irresolution” helps us to see the resemblance between the *particular* philosophical views which we may think we find in the *Tractatus*, and the *overall* view which we may find ourselves taking for granted as we read the *Tractatus*, that there can be a conveying of ideas about the nature of reality and language despite those ideas not being sayable (and that the intention of the book is the conveying of such ideas).

I would want to suggest a possible connection here with Frege. I read Wittgenstein as combatting our tendencies towards irresolution in our thought about philosophical issues; and I see a related kind of concern in Frege. Frege’s concern is explicit in, for example, his discussion of the ‘futile struggles’ of B. Erdmann and his argument that formal arithmetic can be maintained only by failure on the part of its proponents to hold coherently to their own views.8

I’ll turn now to the big question raised in the latter part of Goldfarb’s remarks, about how far we can go with being resolute. His argument, as he presents it, depends on treating different cases of apparent doctrines of the *Tractatus* differently. Thus he argues that it is relatively easier to see how to deal with Wittgenstein’s remarks about *possibilities* and about *logical form* than it is to see how to deal with his discussion of *objects*. Goldfarb examines my treatment of “A is an object,” and tries to show difficulties in my reliance on a contrastive constraint on meaning. So let me briefly try a different tack.

Much later on, Wittgenstein said that we should regard the *craving for generality*, the contemptuous attitude towards the particular case, as a great source of philosophical confusion. But what I am going to do is see where we get by letting the *Tractatus*’s own craving for generality suggest a method of treatment for all the things that look like doctrines in the *Tractatus*.

In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein tells us that nonsense is produced when we take words which signify what he calls formal concepts, and put them into sentences in which they are treated as ordinary concept-words (4.1272).

The word “object” is exactly a word of this sort. When I say “Smith saw an object on the windowsill, about three inches high,” the word “object” there really functions as a variable, not (that is) as a word functioning like “potato” but differing from “potato” in meaning a concept with a larger extension than that of the concept *potato*. When we use the word “object” in philosophy, we want it to have the kind of logical significance which it has in the use-as-variable, but we also (and incoherently) want the word to mean some property which we can ascribe to things—we do want it to have a use logically parallel to “potato” but with a much vaster extension than the concept *potato*. Philosophical uses of “object” *dither* between wanting the word to have the kind of logical significance it has functioning as a variable and wanting the word to mean some property, to be a genuine property-word. The idea of a notation in which, instead of the word “object,” we always did just have a variable is then supposed by Wittgenstein to be possibly helpful: we should come to see that the notation enables us to say everything we want to say—and so we may be cured of the *irresolute dithering* use of “object.” The notation itself then helps achieve the therapeutic goals Wittgenstein describes at *Tractatus* 6.53. The ordinary language use of “object” as a variable goes over into that notation in one way; and the use of “object” as a genuine property word goes over differently. The translation into the logical notation thus reveals that the use of “object” as a word logically parallel to “potato” involves no logical error, but does involve using a word which, in that use, has been assigned no meaning. The importance of translation into logical notation is thus that the notation doesn’t, as ordinary language does, make it easy to conceal one’s dithering from oneself.

The same treatment could, supposedly in principle, be given for the word “possible.” In the quotation Goldfarb gives from *Tractatus* 5.525, Wittgenstein says that the possibility of a situation is not expressed by a proposition, but by an expression’s being a proposition with sense. The sensful sentences of our language are all values of a variable, and that variable is what corresponds in a conceptual notation to those uses of the word “possible” in ordinary language in which it genuinely contributes to what a sentence says. (Here I ignore some ordinary-language uses, notably the use of “possible” to mean probable enough to be worth considering.)—Again, what represents a *logical form* will be a variable, the values of which are all propositions which share that form. The philosophical use of the terms...
possible,” or “logical form,” where they don’t go over to variables, is then frequently an indication of a kind of philosophical dither, that is, of wanting a word to retain the logical significance which it has when it works as a variable and at the same time wanting not to use it as a variable but as a substantial concept-word.

My aim now isn’t to defend this general account of how irresoluteness can be revealed for what it is, but simply to suggest that the Tractatus can be taken to have a general account of how irresoluteness in reading its propositions can be overcome through being clear about how the Tractatus propositions themselves put words for formal concepts into positions where they are not being used as variables but as proper concept-words. These words, in such uses, have been given no meaning; thus (as 4.1272 says) the propositions are unsinnige Scheinsätze.9

The approach I have suggested may not, though, be adequate as an answer to Goldfarb’s questions about irresoluteness. We can see the problems here if we consider the question why we supposedly cannot have a word like “object” working as a variable in some contexts, and in others as a genuine predicate applicable to all the values of that variable. This question arises for me because of the way I have been trying to construe the Tractatus as having a general approach to the issue of irresoluteness, but the question itself, if we tried to follow it through, would lead fairly directly to the questions about the contrastive constraint about meaning, raised by Goldfarb in connection with the possibility of a resolute approach to the specific case of “A is an object.” Wittgenstein treats these issues in his pre-Tractatus discussions of the principles of symbolism and of types; and there is a question what the role is of the contrastive constraint on meaning in these discussions.10 The question is whether he is appealing to the constraint (implicitly or explicitly) as a principle of a theory of the meaning of propositions. In the Notes on Logic discussion, he insists that a word for what our subject-terms have in common, i.e., their being words for objects, cannot be introduced at the point at which we introduce expressions for saying something about the things named by our subject terms. “A is an object” isn’t going to be a value of the sentence-variable the values of which in general are sentences naming A and saying something about it, the sentences in which “A” stands for an object. As I read him, Wittgenstein wants the basic principle of the argument to be that a sign cannot be contained in itself. The overall question is whether Wittgenstein’s approach to the sort of generality indicated by a variable was intended to make clear, and does make clear, a general way of recognising and avoiding irresoluteness in the reading of the text. Another way of putting the question would be whether a case can be made that there are inconsistent demands being made on syntax in all cases in which we attempt an irresolute reading of the Tractatus. But I cannot here go further into these questions. I turn now to Sabina Lovibond’s paper.

REALISM AND RESOLUTION

II

Sabina Lovibond’s writings on ethics are invariably stimulating, drawing as they do on her own experience and on her sense of the complex ties between one’s own experience and that embodied in the resources of one’s community. I shall be able to comment on only three of the issues raised by her very interesting paper. My comments are, in each case, intended to indicate the far-reachingness of these issues.

First, a general comment about Lovibond’s characterization of one of the themes of The Realistic Spirit. In summarising this theme, she speaks of our understanding of such notions as the world or reality, and refers to “the fantasy that there must be more to our concept of ‘reality’ than could be gathered simply from an investigation of how we actually distinguish between the real and the unreal within our (putative) experience. The ‘reality’ that can counteract [that fantasy], and indeed the only worthy of the name, is an attitude of respect for these methods as fully adequate to their role in our life”—not anyway to be criticised on radical philosophical grounds.

That fine summary of the aim of the book enables me to make a connection with something brought up by Warren Goldfarb. He raised the issue of continuities in Wittgenstein’s thought, early and late. Lovibond’s summary expresses something which I had drawn from Wittgenstein’s later philosophy; but there is an important continuity in Wittgenstein’s thought which we can see if we consider, together with Lovibond’s summary, Wittgenstein’s response to Russell in the Tractatus.

In the years in which Wittgenstein was developing the ideas that were finally expressed in the Tractatus, one of the central things which he objected to in Russell’s writings was the idea of experience as something which we need to escape beyond. As I mentioned in Part I, Russell thought that experience would be a sort of prison, were we not able to use logical devices that enable us to get beyond it.11

In Lovibond’s summary of what I was seeing in Wittgenstein’s later philosophy, the central idea is the criticism of the fantasy that notions like reality and world involve getting beyond the recognition of what is real and what isn’t, within experience; and the Tractatus, as I see it, is concerned among other things with Russell’s idea of world and reality as what we get to by getting beyond the prison of our own experience.

There is then a parallel, though only a partial one, between these early and late concerns of Wittgenstein; and the parallel should not be pushed too far. But it is there and important. Lovibond’s use of words like “reality” and “world” as tied to the real as we discover it in our lives and experience points to something Wittgenstein was also trying to do with those words “world” and “reality” much earlier. Later, of course, he was critical of how he had seen the issue in his earlier writings; but there is an important connection of aim between the earlier and later thought. (Lovibond’s discussion of the importance of our ordinary propositions with sense marks
another point of connection: compare Tractatus 5.5563, and Wittgenstein’s claim there that the propositions of our everyday language are not in any way logically faulty. As Goldfarb notes, it is (for example) through our understanding of them, our capacity to operate with them, that we have our understanding of possibility. No metaphysics of possibilities is necessary to back up or explain this understanding."

The second general point I wanted to make about Lovibond’s remarks concerns the attention she gives to conceptual change, and to the possibility that historical changes may be working against the moral imagination, and may be weakening our capacity to appropriate cultural tradition. It may, that is, be harder for us to understand our own experience through the kinds of application of moral concepts that have in the past been available, and through innovative kinds of application of these concepts (where, in the past, such innovative kinds of application of available concepts have been important as we develop forms of understanding of experience). At the very end of her remarks she mentions the tendency that some people may have to think that any emphasis on the resources of a culture for finding and making moral significance is inherently conservative; and here she is leading us into questions of great significance, both on their own and also because of their interesting connections with the debate about whether Wittgenstein’s later work is inherently conservative. She briefly questions the idea that there is such an implication of conservatism, and these brief comments of hers seem to me just right.¹²

I am bearing in mind here not just the accusation of ‘inherent conserva-
tivism’ levelled at Wittgenstein, but also some remarks of J.B. Schneewind’s addressed to me, remarks that make clear the kinds of problem lurking here.¹³ By drawing attention to the significance of cultural tradition, aren’t you, he asked, supporting just those elements in cultural life that had kept Jews and women marginalised, and that would (for example) have kept you out of any university? Isn’t it the universalistic approach of just those philosophers and thinkers whom you criticise that has made possible the real gains that the last two centuries have seen? — Schneewind’s suggestion is, then, that appeal to cultural tradition is indeed conservative, and that, to avoid the conservatism, we must have recourse to concepts which (despite their historical ties to the Enlightenment) make possible a deeper criticism of existing cultures. I have no brief reply; here I am only noting the question. I am sorry also not to have been able to say more about Lovibond’s very interesting comments about Fredric Jameson.

The final point on which I want to touch is a kind of tension which I think I find within Lovibond’s remarks.

She speaks of the business of representing events to oneself in such a way as to make them morally interesting. It is clearly not her intention to suggest that only events can be represented in such a way as to make them morally interesting. Certainly she means to include such other things as human character. So there is this business of representing things in such a way as to make them morally interesting—and I don’t think she would want to suggest that there is in principle some limit on the kinds of things that might be so represented as to have moral interest. Here I’ll supply an example. Alexander Wat, the Polish writer, in his reminiscences of his prison life in Russia, describes a twisted tree which he glimpsed on a trip between prison cell and prison cell. The radiance of the tree, its serene dignity, he saw as a kind of triumph over the anti-world of prisons.¹⁴ His perception of the tree is imbued with his moral sensibility. So, I’m suggesting, a response to a tree can be a moral response; a representation of a tree can be morally interesting.

There seems to me to be a connection between this point, that there is no limit to what sorts of thing talk about which might in some context be morally interesting, and a point which can be associated with both Wittgenstein and Iris Murdoch—the point that ethics is not one subject matter alongside others. It’s not that trees are a subject for botany, and human character a subject for ethics, but rather that human character in many circumstances, and trees in somewhat rarer circumstances, can be so described as to be morally interesting. And, in any case, how and in what spirit we engage in description or representation can always itself reveal something of our own moral understanding of the world, our own moral being.¹⁵

So there is a line of thought which moves from Lovibond’s remarks about how representation of an event can make it morally interesting to the idea of ethics as not a subject matter alongside others, to the idea that ‘moral discourse’ isn’t a branch of discourse with its own subject matter. And yet Lovibond does in her remarks (and in her other work on ethics) treat moral discourse as a branch of discourse with a subject matter of its own, which may indeed be narrowly or widely understood, but which at any rate doesn’t, presumably, include everything. In The Realistic Spirit I’m also working with some such idea of ethics as a sphere of discourse which we could at least try to characterise; and I think that the tension which I have just suggested that there is in Lovibond’s remarks is also in my discussion of ethics in the book. The tension, to repeat, is between the idea of moral discourse as a sphere of discourse, with its subject matter, and the idea that there are no limits to what may be thought of in such a way as to be morally interesting, that is, to belong to ethics. The attractive response to this tension would be to suggest that it is present in Lovibond’s essay and in my book, not so much because we are confused and indecisive, but because both ways of thinking about ethics are present and important in what we both want to pick out as ethics; something would be lost if we were to leave out either of the two modes of thought.

This issue has connections with a theme of Lovibond’s in the mid-section of her remarks: that Wittgenstein’s anti-foundationalism is neutral with respect to subject-matter. We can, she suggests, see the application of his remarks to any subject matter within which there are ways of distinguishing
getting things right from failing to do so. If ethics can be looked at both as Lovibond does there (as having its subject matter) and, as I think Wittgenstein at least sometimes did, as not a subject alongside others, then there will be a question how far it is helpful to see his discussions of various other topics as implying a kind of topic-neutral anti-foundationalism which can be applied, fairly straightforwardly, to ethics.

Wittgenstein’s own discussions of ethics in his later philosophy are very few and far between. The most extensive was apparently in lectures in 1933, in which he puts ethics alongside aesthetics; but he interestingly never suggests in On Certainty or other fairly general later discussions that what he is saying about how we establish things in history or the sciences, etc., can be applied also to ethics.

What also tells against a general treatment of all areas in which there is some distinction between getting things right and not getting them right is his insistence on the enormous distinction between mathematical propositions and experiential propositions. What he is concerned with in his discussions of mathematics is how, if we speak about ‘description of reality’ both in connection with mathematical investigations and in connection with empirical investigations, we will miss that what is getting called description is in the two cases very different indeed.

My point then is that the idea of a kind of topic-neutral anti-foundationalism that applies to various subject matters, including that of ethics, gives one way of trying to see how Wittgenstein’s later writings help us to understand moral thinking, but that there is another approach, quite different, also suggested in Lovibond’s remarks, the idea that ethics lies more in how we imaginatively take something up into our lives, how we make and use descriptions, than in any distinctive subject matter. And there is then the question of the possible tension between these two lines of approach.

ENDNOTES


2. I discuss some of this in “Inheriting from Frege: the work of reception, as Wittgenstein did it,” to be published in The Cambridge Companion to Frege, ed. Thomas Ricketts. Goldfarb mentions that Wittgenstein’s early discussions of the bipolarity of the proposition involve criticism of both Frege and Russell. I think there is a ramified criticism and rethinking of central Fregean views tied to Wittgenstein’s understanding of bipolarity (including here the idea that the very fact that makes a proposition true, if it is true, makes its negation false, and vice versa), and this rethinking is important in shaping his own ideas. Particularly important is his reflection on the duality of sentences (the possibility of ‘reversing’ the relation of sentences to reality, so that each sentence is used to say what had been said with its negation, and vice versa, without altering the meaning of any name, or of the negation sign). See on this P.T. Geach, “Truth and God,” Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, vol. 56 (1982), especially p. 89. Wittgenstein links the logic of duality with his ‘fundamental thought’ in Notebooks 1914-1916 25.12.14.


5. “Prison” is Russell’s metaphor, Theory of Knowledge, the 1913 Manuscript, p. 10.

6. I discuss these issues further in “Does Bismarck Have a Beetle in His Box? The Private Language Argument in the Tractatus,” unpublished. Here I would only want to comment that the Tractatus critique of Russell moves at first from Russell’s two distinct limits to the idea of a single limit, but it then treats the talk of limits as something to be ‘overcome’, reflecting as it does the very misconceptions from which Russell’s questions arise. (I am indebted to G.E.M. Anscombe for comments on the translation of ‘überwinden’; see also Goldfarb, note 13.)

7. In “Does Bismarck Have a Beetle in His Box?,” I discuss the question what implicit guidance there is in the Tractatus about the analysis of statements about other minds, once the Russellian analysis has been given up. The basic principles involve the identification of signs which can be ‘dissected’ (see 3.24) and the following out of inferential relations (the ‘application’ of the signs, the noting of internal relations between sentences about complexes and sentences about elements of complexes). I believe the Tractatus conception of analysis also reflects an early version of the idea that there must be criteria for anything for which there can be inductive evidence.


9. Philosophical dither about this has been encouraged by the Ogden-Ramsey translation of the Tractatus, which does not treat “unschwing” and “sinnlos” consistently. Readers of the Ogden-Ramsey version are likely to get the impression (from 4.1272) that sentences in which a logical term like “object” is used as a proper concept-word have a status resembling that of tautologies (since the translation says that such sentences are senseless); and (from 6.54) that this then applies also to the propositions of the Tractatus. The translators may appear to have taken the view that Wittgenstein should have used “sinnlos” in some of the places in which he did in fact use “unschwing”; and I have heard it argued that his failure to correct the translation indicates that he accepted their shift in the application of the distinction (see 4.461 and 4.4611) between “unschwing” and “sinnlos.” But this is quite unconvincing. He had the opportunity to correct the German of later printings; he left the use of the two German words exactly as it had been, while he did make other corrections. (See C. Lewy, “A Note on the Text of the Tractatus,” Mind 76 (1967), pp. 416-423.) Whatever the explanation may be of his not correcting the translation, it can hardly have been that he took his own earlier German to be an incorrect application of his own distinction. We can also note that the Ogden-Ramsey translation
makes it virtually impossible to see how 6.53 and 6.54 hang together. It is possible that the Ogden-Ramsey translation does not represent any attempt to correct Wittgenstein, but simply the translators’ unclarity about Wittgenstein’s distinction; compare Lewy (“Note,” p. 420) on the first printing of 4.4611.

**Letter to Russell, January 1913; Notes on Logic; Notes Dictated to G.E. Moore.** The explicit reference to the contrastive constraint comes at the end of the discussion of types in the Notes on Logic.

**See note 5 above.**

**Cf.** also Alice Crary, “The Injustices of Philosophy: Wittgenstein and the Concept of Criticism,” unpublished manuscript.

**He** had specifically in mind my “Losing Your Concepts,” *Ethics*, vol. 98 (1988), but what he said applies equally to the essays in *The Realistic Spirit* to which Sabina Lovibond was referring.

**My Century** (New York, 1990), chap. 21.

**That ethics is not one subject matter alongside others is a theme of Iris Murdoch’s *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*. (I discuss her conception of ethics in “We are perpetually moralists”: Iris Murdoch, Fact and Value,” in *Iris Murdoch and the Search for Human Goodness*, ed. W. Schweiker and M. Antonaccio (Chicago, 1996).** What Wittgenstein’s view was is harder to establish; but see, for example, the letter of 20.9.45 to Norman Malcolm, in Malcolm’s *Ludwig Wittgenstein: a Memoir* (Oxford, 1984), p. 98, in which Wittgenstein speaks of Tolstoy’s moral response to life as entirely latent in some of his stories. I would want to suggest that this 1945 talk of ethics as possibly latent in a story is close in some ways to the *Tractatus* conception of ethics as not something that gets expressed in ‘ethical propositions’, a point which G.E.M. Anscombe explains by taking as an example the story *Hadji Murad*, which Wittgenstein had also referred to in the correspondence with Malcolm.

**ABSTRACT:** Traditionally conceived, introspection is a form of nonsensuous perception that allows the mind to scrutinize at least some of its own states while it is experiencing them. The traditional account of introspection has been in disrepute ever since Ryle argued that the very idea of introspection is a logical muddle. Recent critics such as William Lyons, John Searle, and Sydney Shoemaker argue that this disrepute is well-deserved. Three distinct objections to the traditional account of introspection are considered and rejected. It is argued that critics of the traditional account of introspection fail to adequately distinguish potential objects of introspection. Further, it is argued that at least two cognitive states are properly understood as objects of introspection. The conclusions reached suggest that there are sufficient reasons to reconsider their merits of the traditional account of introspection.

As it is traditionally conceived, introspection is a form of intentional, nonsensuous perception that allows one to deliberately scrutinize at least some of the states and operations of one’s mind while one is experiencing those states. Introspection has been thought to differ from sensuous perception because the objects of introspection are not public in the sense that things looked at or listened to are public; because it does not involve the functioning of a bodily organ; and because its reports have been considered infallible. The traditional account of introspection has been in disrepute ever since Ryle attempted to demonstrate that the very idea of introspection is a logical muddle. Recent critics, such as William Lyons, Sydney Shoemaker, and John Searle, have argued that this disrepute is well-deserved, because, to put matters simply, humans have no introspective perception of anything whatsoever. The aim of this essay is to show that the traditional account of introspection is not as foolish as it has been made to seem.