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Abstract

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Wittgenstein directly addresses the nature of philosophy (and philosophical problems) both in the Investigations and in much of his writing and conversation outside that text. I will argue for an interpretation of Wittgenstein’s philosophical method in the Philosophical Investigations based on 1) his conversations and lectures during his years at Cambridge, 2) his views expressed in the Blue Book and 3) his views expressed in the Big Typescript. My goal is to ‘take Wittgenstein at his word’ and examine his comments on philosophy in many different contexts. Given the cohesive nature of Wittgenstein’s views on philosophy in the 1930’s, I will argue that §§109-133 in the Philosophical Investigations represents the coherent method that Wittgenstein employed throughout his ‘later’ years.

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Someone once said that working on philosophy “is actually closer to working on oneself.” I think he was right.
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Abbreviations

I will draw heavily on the following texts and will refer to them by the abbreviations below:


Wittgenstein’s Method in §§109-133 of the Philosophical Investigations

There are many Wittgensteins. In fact, the trend in recent literature seems to be to give an account of the growing number of accounts of Wittgenstein.\(^1\) This growing literature has even spawned further debates about classifying types of approaches to Wittgenstein.\(^2\) Much of the modern literature focuses on understanding the method(s) at work in the writings of Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein directly addresses the nature of philosophy (and philosophical problems) both in the Investigations and in much of his writing and conversation outside that text. I believe that much of this contextual material is beneficial in understanding the methodology at work in the Investigations and as Savickey points out, this biographical emphasis is quite underrepresented in the current literature on Wittgenstein.\(^3\) Since the majority of scholars agree that during the mid-1930’s there was a noticeable shift in Wittgenstein’s approach, I will focus on records beginning in this time period.\(^4\)

In Chapter One, I will argue for an interpretation of Wittgenstein’s philosophical method based on his conversations and lectures during his years at Cambridge in the 1930’s. My goal is to ‘take Wittgenstein at his word’ and examine his various comments on philosophy in many different contexts. My hope is that by assembling a wide range of


\(^3\) Beth Savickey, Wittgenstein’s Art of Investigation, (London: Routledge, 1999), 2-3.

material, I can shed light on later parts of his work where his comments on philosophy seem more obscure.

In Chapter Two, I will examine the *Blue Book*. This text was produced as a dictation during Wittgenstein’s time at Cambridge in the 1930’s. Since it was dictated to students during Wittgenstein’s lectures at Cambridge, I will treat it as an auxiliary lecture. Although not intended for a wide audience, The *Blue Book* is an important resource since it makes several explicit references to philosophy in a rather direct style. I will argue that there is a strong correlation between many statements in the *Blue Book* and those in §§109-133 of the *Philosophical Investigations* and that they represent the same position regarding philosophical method.

In Chapter Three, I will examine several comments in the *Big Typescript*. The final assembly of the *Investigations* is a complex affair, but a large number of the comments in the ‘Philosophy’ section of the *Investigations* were taken directly from the *Big Typescript*, which was assembled in 1933 from manuscripts and notebooks written as early as 1930. Given the cohesive nature of Wittgenstein’s views on philosophy in the 1930’s, I will argue that §§109-133 in the *Philosophical Investigations* represent the coherent method that Wittgenstein employed throughout his ‘later’ years.
Chapter One- Wittgenstein’s Method in his Lectures

In this chapter, I will outline Wittgenstein’s broad view of philosophy from 1930 onwards. Wittgenstein frequently commented on philosophy (in general) and his particular methods in philosophy. However, in many cases, he was responding critically to problems that he saw with philosophy as it was traditionally practiced. I will present Wittgenstein’s ‘later’ methodology and the product of this method.

Wittgenstein on the History of Philosophy

It is important for any interpreter of Wittgenstein’s methodology to make sense of his comments on philosophy and his relationship to the philosophical tradition. As I will show, Wittgenstein seemed divided on whether what he was doing should be thought of as ‘Philosophy’ in any traditional sense.

The clearest description of this comes from Moore’s account of Wittgenstein’s lectures (published in *Mind*). Moore notes that Wittgenstein said he was “doing a ‘new subject,’ and not merely a stage in the ‘continuous development’” of philosophy.\(^5\) However, Wittgenstein suggested that the subject he was doing was very similar to traditional philosophy in three respects: 1) it was “very general” 2) “it was fundamental both to ordinary life and to the sciences” and 3) “it was independent of any special results of science.”\(^6\) Ambrose’s class notes taken during 1932-33 support Moore’s account of a ‘new subject.’ Wittgenstein asks:

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\(^6\) Moore, 26.
Why do I wish to call our present activity philosophy, when we also call Plato’s activity philosophy? Perhaps because of a certain analogy between them, or perhaps because of the continuous development of the subject. Or the new activity may take the place of the old because it removes mental discomforts the old was supposed to.\(^7\)

According to Moore and Ambrose, Wittgenstein seems more content admitting an analogy (or resemblance) between the work of Plato (or Berkeley) than a direct connection.\(^8\) It is important to note that Wittgenstein’s conception of philosophy ‘removes discomforts’ in a way that he thought the traditional conception did not.

Malcolm recounts that in this regard Wittgenstein believed “that he had produced an important advance in philosophy.”\(^9\)

Since Wittgenstein viewed philosophical problems as problems with language, this ‘new subject’ must say a great deal about language. However, according to Moore, Wittgenstein was not concerned about linguistic points which had no direct bearing to a philosophical problem.\(^10\) In fact, “it was only necessary for it [the new subject] to deal with those points about language which have led, or are likely to lead, to definite philosophical puzzles or errors.”\(^11\) This is important, since it weighs against any idea that Wittgenstein was trying to map out a clear set of rules or procedures for ‘proper’ language use.

On several occasions students mentioned that Wittgenstein was disdainful of “traditional modes of philosophizing” and often poked fun at the “abstract talk” of

\(^7\) CL 2, 27-28.
\(^8\) It’s not easy to say what might constitute a ‘direct connection.’ Since Wittgenstein suggests that his new subject removes the discomforts that the old ‘was supposed to,’ perhaps the new subject is like traditional philosophy, without the confusion and discomfort.
\(^9\) POW 3, 83.
\(^10\) Moore, 204.
\(^11\) Ibid., 204.
academic philosophers.\textsuperscript{12} Karl Britton recounts that Wittgenstein compared the results of popular books on philosophy to imaginary worlds that children create for themselves.\textsuperscript{13} Later in his life, Wittgenstein comments on the detective magazines that Malcolm had sent him, saying “I often wonder how anyone can read ‘Mind’ with all its impotency & bankruptcy when they could read Street & Smyth mags.”\textsuperscript{14}

The only ‘wrinkle’ in this picture is a conversation with his friend M. O’C. Drury. Drury notes that he suggested to Wittgenstein the general title ‘Philosophy’ for the book that Wittgenstein was working on (a draft of the \textit{Philosophical Investigations}).

Wittgenstein responded angrily: “Don’t be such an ass---how could I use a word like that which has meant so much in the history of human thought? As if my work was anything more than just a small fragment of philosophy.”\textsuperscript{15} The implication here is that Drury had suggested Wittgenstein’s philosophy ought to be thought of as the philosophy rather than a philosophy. So why are Drury’s comments a ‘wrinkle’?

The problem is that Wittgenstein is not always clear when he uses the term ‘philosophy.’ On some occasions, he uses the term ‘philosophy’ as a foil for criticism (in Moore’s account), but on other occasions, he appears to hold his own ‘philosophy’ (Drury’s account). As I have noted, Wittgenstein thought his ‘new subject’ was similar to the philosophy he criticized, but not the same.\textsuperscript{16} I think Wittgenstein’s comment to Drury can be interpreted as saying that Wittgenstein’s ‘new subject’ or philosophy is not the only (or perhaps even best) manner to deal with these sorts of problems, rather it is the

\textsuperscript{12} POW 3, 132.
\textsuperscript{13} POW 2, 210
\textsuperscript{15} POW 3, 172. Unfortunately, this account is not directly dated by Drury. Monk notes that Wittgenstein met Drury in 1929, so we can assume it falls sometime after that (Monk, 264).
\textsuperscript{16} According to Moore and Ambrose.
best that he can do. Understood this way, Wittgenstein’s philosophy is a ‘small fragment.’

While Wittgenstein reacted strongly against the notion that his approach represented ‘Philosophy,’ *simpliciter*, his numerous references to his own method as ‘philosophy’ in his lectures or texts suggest that he was nominally content with this description. It is for this reason that I will suggest that we make the distinction between T-philosophy, understood as ‘Traditional’ philosophy (the object of Wittgenstein’s criticisms) and W-philosophy, understood as Wittgenstein’s own view or method.

Wittgenstein’s Method

1. T-Philosophy presents us with muddles/confusions/puzzles/tensions.

Wittgenstein would typically begin a lecture with some comments on the problems or puzzles of T-philosophy. For example, in his first lecture at Cambridge in 1930, he began with these words:

Philosophy is the attempt to be rid of a particular kind of puzzlement. This ‘philosophic’ puzzlement is one of the intellect and not of instinct. Philosophical puzzles are irrelevant to our every-day life. They are puzzles of *language*. Instinctively we use language rightly; but to the intellect this is a puzzle.

Here, the initial ‘philosophy’ that Wittgenstein references should be understood as W-philosophy. According to Moore, Wittgenstein taught that often in T-philosophy we get

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17 Wittgenstein was frequently unhappy about his progress. He notes in the *Preface* to the *Investigations* that he “should have liked to produce a good book.” He then states that this “has not come about.” (vi).
18 In CL 2, 27-28, Wittgenstein states that: “My method throughout is to point out mistakes in language. I am going to use the word ‘philosophy’ for the activity of pointing out such mistakes.”
19 See CL 1, 21. CL 1, 4. CL 1, 42. CL 2, 3. CL 2, 43. CL 2, 119.
20 CL 1, 1.
into “a muddle about things” and this results in “intellectual discomfort.” An example of a muddle might be a statement like, “Santa Claus does not exist.” While this statement is easily understood by most people, it can cause much deeper concerns. Surely, Santa Claus exists in some sense, at least on the paper (or our mind) since we are talking about him. So, we seem forced to conclude that something that exists, also doesn’t exist. This is a puzzle!

Wittgenstein thought that it was “only necessary” for W-philosophy “to deal with those points about language which have led, or are likely to lead, to definite philosophical puzzles or errors.” The ‘only’ clause of this latter statement suggests that W-philosophy has no other concern than particular philosophical problems. There are a number of implications here that will be clearer when Wittgenstein states his concerns with T-philosophy. For now, let’s focus on the sources of philosophical problems.

In his lectures and public conversations, Wittgenstein identified various causes of philosophical puzzles and problems. A central problem for T-philosophy is a ‘craving for generality.’ He suggests that this problem is the result of a number of related tendencies associated with philosophical confusions. The first is the tendency to look for the common characteristics of all things that we name with a general term. Wittgenstein illustrates this craving for generality with philosophical questions like ‘What is length?’ ‘What is meaning?’ or ‘What is the number one?’ In each of these cases, Wittgenstein

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21 POW 2, 203.
22 POW 2, 204.
23 One is that Wittgenstein’s method is not an attempt to enumerate a complete grammar. Another is that his method is not necessarily productive (i.e. he does not need to provide a theory of meaning or language in order to deal with philosophical problems).
24 There are many possible ways to be confused or puzzled. Wittgenstein’s comments are directed toward the type of puzzlement that arises when doing T-philosophy.
thinks that they produce in us “mental uneasiness,” since we want to find something that they refer to, but we have trouble.\textsuperscript{25}

For Wittgenstein, it isn’t difficult to point to individual examples to attempt to answer these questions. One might point out a length or a drawing of the ‘number one.’ The difficulty arises when we cannot point to ‘one’ in the sense that we can point to ‘Mr. Smith’ (assuming Mr. Smith is our friend and sitting nearby). This causes us to look for the object ‘one’ “in another sense.” According to Wittgenstein, this is a trap that philosophers constantly “fall into.”\textsuperscript{26}

A second cause of confusion occurs when we think that someone who has learnt a generic term has come to possess a kind of “general picture.”\textsuperscript{27} Wittgenstein thinks this introduces several problems. The main problem is that the same word can be used quite disparately. Consider the word ‘games’ in these examples: i) a cat playing games with a mouse, ii) two nations rehearsing war games, iii) children’s games in a playground, and iv) the Olympic games. The word is the same, but it does not appear to function in a completely similar manner in each phrase. Another problem with this ‘picture’ view of language is that it often entails a theory of the world whereby individual words are necessarily connected with general mental pictures.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{25} CL 1, 22. However, his lectures include similar references. CL 2, 34 has a discussion on the misleading nature of the general term ‘good’.

\textsuperscript{26} CL 2, 44. The example of ‘Smith’ is taken from this lecture.

\textsuperscript{27} CL 2, 78.

\textsuperscript{28} Sometimes Wittgenstein seems to be talking about the view where we actually have mental visual pictures that (somehow) generally represent things, a visual universal. This general picture contains the essence of whatever it pictures (the leafiness of leaves) (e.g. BB 18, CL 2, 78). However, most of his criticism of ‘pictures’ seems to be directed at a mindset or expectation. A general picture is what we expect of things, or what kind of questions we ask about the world (e.g. BB 23, 25-26).
Thirdly, a related source of the ‘craving for generality’ comes from “our preoccupation with the method of science.”\textsuperscript{29} Here, Wittgenstein means the method of reducing natural observed phenomenon to a small number of simple laws. According to Wittgenstein, this desire to practice philosophy in the vein of scientific investigation leads philosophers to formulate metaphysical truths in an attempt to generalize their philosophical discoveries. Wittgenstein comments in his lectures that it “is not the results of science which are of interest to philosophy, but its methods.”\textsuperscript{30} This is an important point, since Wittgenstein viewed the results of science as generalizations based on particular observations. The traditional scientific method, divorced from its results, would simply be the examination of individual cases, something Wittgenstein believed he was doing.\textsuperscript{31}

Another related problem arises from analogies in language. An example of this occurs in some of his discussions on time. Wittgenstein thought that the admixture of analogies of time and motion led to strange philosophical problems. When these two analogies are mixed, one might speak of time ‘flowing’, but then ask ‘from where’ or ‘where to’? In this case, one has been misled by the extension of an analogy.\textsuperscript{32} We can multiply our problems further by confusing names of things with those things (This ball is red, but what \textit{is} ball?)\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{29} BB 18. This point is best illustrated with the \textit{Blue Book}, which I’ve done, but other statements, like CL 1, 21 or CL 1, 34 also make similar points.
\textsuperscript{30} CL 1, 35. Wittgenstein compares the practice of science to building a house, but the practice of philosophy to tidying a room (CL 1, 24).
\textsuperscript{31} Although Wittgenstein never directly states this view, I understand him to hold it based on his previous comment (see note 30).
\textsuperscript{32} CL 1, 60.
\textsuperscript{33} CL 1, 35.
So, why exactly are we so easily misled in philosophy? Most of these problems do not seem that confusing! In fact, many of the problems that Wittgenstein details seem like they would be fairly obvious mistakes to many philosophers. Wittgenstein’s solution to philosophical problems is illuminating in this regard. He believes that in T-philosophy we have often been “misled by a picture” of the world.\(^{34}\) He suggests that these pictures arise “by not using language practically but by extending it on looking at it. We form sentences and then wonder what they can mean.”\(^{35}\)

For example, when I consider ‘time’ as a substantive, I might then be lead to ask about the creation of time. I can also ask a whole series of questions like “Where is time?,” “When is time?” and “Does time ever end?” While these are phrased as questions, they might have no acceptable answer. Another example of this sort of problem arises with self-reflexive questions. I might ordinarily ask, “What is the meaning of this!” in reaction to someone pounding on my door at 3 A.M. This doesn’t seem problematic, but if I take the same form of question and ask, “What is the meaning of meaning!” I am immediately puzzled. I’m not even sure how to begin to answer this new question. Wittgenstein examines this latter sort of confusion as he presents his solutions to philosophical problems and I will examine this more in the following section.

2. To solve a particular puzzle we must give new pictures, analogies.

\(^{34}\) POW 3, 79. Also see note 27.
\(^{35}\) CL 2, 15.
Wittgenstein suggests that in W-philosophy our goal is to “tidy up notions, to make clear what *can* be said about the world.”\(^{36}\) This process of ‘cleaning’ is not laying foundations for anything, but is more like “tidying up a room.”\(^{37}\) But, how exactly does tidying up our philosophical ‘room’ resolve a philosophical problem?

According to Wittgenstein, philosophical problems arise from a multitude of sources, but all stem from:

constantly trying to construe everything in accordance with one paradigm or model. Philosophy we might say arises out of certain prejudices. The words ‘must’ and ‘cannot’ are typical words exhibiting these prejudices. They are prejudices in favor of certain grammatical forms.\(^{38}\)

W-philosophy works by presenting new analogies, pictures, rules or notations to remind the philosophically puzzled that their questions are the result of a certain picture of the world. Wittgenstein suggests that his method is “to take a parallel case where one is not initially puzzled and get the same puzzle about it as in cases where one is always puzzled.”\(^{39}\)

Does this suggest that we ought always to be puzzled? I think that Wittgenstein is suggesting that we *can* be puzzled by a lot of things, but that it is a certain way of thinking that produces a puzzle in philosophy. By using parallel cases and analogies, Wittgenstein is trying to show that our way of thinking in the initial case (the one that causes puzzlement) can be applied to other cases (where we were not puzzled). This does

\(^{36}\) CL 1, 22. Wittgenstein thought that the results of science were generalizations. Since he argues that this general method leads philosophy into confusion, philosophy can only clarify and tidy our language. In his lectures, he compares science to building a house and philosophy to tidying a room (CL 1, 24).

\(^{37}\) CL 1, 24. In the *Blue Book*, Wittgenstein also uses the picture of rearranging a bookshelf to illustrate what he is doing in W-philosophy (BB 44-45).

\(^{38}\) CL 2, 115.

\(^{39}\) CL 2, 58.
not mean that everything is confusing and problematic, but that there was something about the way we approached the initial case that caused the puzzle.

How is this strange process supposed to help clear up philosophical problems? In response to this question, Wittgenstein makes the following comment:

Now you may question whether my constantly giving examples and speaking in similes is profitable. My reason is that parallel cases change our outlook because they destroy the uniqueness of the case at hand.⁴⁰

Here, Wittgenstein is suggesting that W-philosophy is the fight against a certain picture of language, which appears to be any picture of language that leads to philosophical confusion.⁴¹ The ‘uniqueness at hand’ is the strong grip of a picture on the philosophically confused. As a way out of this philosophical puzzlement, Wittgenstein can “only give examples, which if you think about them you will find the [mental] cramp relaxes.”⁴²

Some of Wittgenstein’s statements on the resolution of philosophical problems sound like he is advocating an ideal language, such that philosophical problems are resolved by reference to the correct (or final) application of grammatical rules. In fact, Wittgenstein’s solution to philosophical problems is completely different. I will quote a lecture at length to support this claim:

In philosophy we give rules of grammar wherever we encounter a difficulty. We might feel that a complete logical analysis would give the complete grammar of the word. But there is no such thing as a completed grammar. However, giving a rule has a use if someone makes an opposite rule that we do not wish to follow. When we discover rules for the use of a known term we do not thereby complete our knowledge of its use, and we do not tell people how to use the term, as if they

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⁴⁰ CL 2, 50.
⁴¹ This might seem trivial, but Wittgenstein often seems to assume that when there is a philosophical puzzle, something is malfunctioning in language.
⁴² CL 2, 90.
did not know how. Logical analysis is an antidote. Its importance is to stop the muddle someone makes on reflecting on words.\textsuperscript{43}

This series of thoughts is revealing for several reasons. First, Wittgenstein states that, “there is no such thing as a completed grammar.” Since any ideal language requires a completed grammar, Wittgenstein appears not to think that an ideal language is possible. Secondly, his method examines the use of the puzzling words in a philosophical investigation. Thirdly, his method gains its importance by the dissolution of (or antidote to) philosophical problems.

He later emphasizes these points when he states, “there isn’t a philosophical grammar and ordinary English grammar, the former being more complete…” He goes onto to say that there are different aims “for which the study of grammar [is] pursued by the linguist and the philosopher” and that our job as philosophers is “to get rid of certain puzzles. The grammarian has no interest in these; his aims and the philosopher’s are different.”\textsuperscript{44}

It is important to emphasize Wittgenstein’s goals in philosophy because his method arises from his desire to eradicate philosophical puzzles.\textsuperscript{45} His appeal to the various uses of language was just one expedient method to remove a philosophical tension. Ambrose’s memoir of Wittgenstein suggests that he didn’t necessarily have one set procedure for dealing with philosophical problems, but that the goal was the end of the philosophical confusion. She quotes Wittgenstein:

\textsuperscript{43} CL 2, 21. In this section, Wittgenstein begins by stating that we give rules of grammar when we’re in a difficulty. His conclusion that logical analysis is an antidote (for muddles) suggests that he is using ‘logical’ in the same way that he uses ‘grammatical’ or ‘linguistic.’

\textsuperscript{44} CL 2, 41. Here Wittgenstein’s ‘philosopher’ is the W-philosopher.

\textsuperscript{45} I think philosophical problems were an obsession to Wittgenstein. In CL 2, 98, he says that a philosophical problem “is an obsession.”
Suppose someone said ‘My craving is to get a comprehensive picture of the universe. Can you satisfy this craving?’ I would say ‘No’…Let us see whether doing such and such, or thinking such and such will, not satisfy the craving, but make you cease to have it.” 46

Here again, Wittgenstein is rejecting the need for a comprehensive, complete or general picture of the universe. He also states that his method works to “make you cease to have” the desire for this sort of picture.

Wittgenstein’s students often noted with some confusion the bizarre examples and pictures that he proposed to counter certain philosophical problems. Theodore Redpath likened Wittgenstein’s lectures to the services of a “masseur.” Redpath remembered Wittgenstein suggesting that if any of his students suffered from a mental cramp, he might be able to help them.47 Another student, Wolfe Mays recalls that he was often bewildered by the “bizarre” examples that Wittgenstein would use to illustrate his arguments.48 Mays notes that these were used “to shake one out of an established philosophical position…”49

A close friend of Wittgenstein’s, M. O’C. Drury, remembers Wittgenstein’s view that there was no “central problem in philosophy, but countless problems” and that in W-philosophy each problem must be dealt with “on its own.”50 Gasking and Jackson (two other students at Cambridge), initially found Wittgenstein’s technique bewildering. They noted that he dealt with particular problems by piling example upon example.51

46 POW 2, 265.
47 POW 3, 5.
48 POW 3, 130.
49 POW 3, 132.
50 POW 3, 200.
51 POW 4, 142.
How would bizarre examples help to dissolve T-philosophical problems? I think that Wittgenstein was trying to challenge any picture (or presumption) that leads us to raise a T-philosophical question. His bizarre examples are an attempt to shake away a particular picture of the world. In a short talk given at the Moral Sciences Club in 1946, Wittgenstein argued that:

A question may be answered by either one of two ways: by giving an explicit answer to it, or by showing how the question is a muddled one, and therefore should not have been asked. Philosophical questions are answered in the second way, for the general form of a philosophical question is, I am in a muddle; I don’t know my way.

So philosophical questions arise from a certain picture in language (and different questions disguise different pictures). Wittgenstein thought that one way to cure this problem was to think of words the way we think of tools, as having different uses.

Let us consider Wittgenstein’s approach to some of the problems raised earlier. For example, the question “What is number?” (number could be replaced with ‘being’, ‘time’ ‘space’ etc). Wittgenstein says that a question like this might tempt someone to think of “an ethereal object”. But, how exactly should this question be answered? As a way out of this difficulty, Wittgenstein suggests we examine the use of the word rather than try to define its meaning, per se. He states that this “has the advantage of showing us something about the queer philosophical case where we talk of an object corresponding

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52 Perhaps even any philosophical question.
53 WIC, 404. Wittgenstein did not think that being muddled was a sufficient condition for being philosophically muddled. If I get into a muddle and take your coat, no one would suggest that this is philosophical. The sorts of questions Wittgenstein raises as muddles are about much broader issues (time, being, essence, propositions, meaning), which Wittgenstein thought led to further confusions.
54 CL 2, 46.
55 CL 2, 44.
The benefit of examining various uses is that it dissuades us from asking questions like, “What is the essence of a number?”

Wittgenstein has a similar suggestion for games. He states that they may not be called ‘games’ because of any particular common element, but rather due to “correlations…between members of a series of games.” Perhaps there is a game that only has something in common with a handful of other games. These may be related with other games that themselves bear a similar few traits with surrounding games and so on. In each case, W-philosophy will examine the particular cases which will lead to the unraveling of the philosophical puzzle. In both of these examples, Wittgenstein does not conclude with some generalized moral. His method is focused on dissolving particular puzzles. He reminds his students in a lecture that “it is very important to see that philosophy always turns upon nonsensical questions.” He later argues in a meeting of the Moral Sciences Club, that when certain contradictions are avoided, “the question is not answered, but the mind no longer perplexed ceases to ask it.”

When Wittgenstein appeals to the use of a word to work through a philosophical puzzle, it is tempting to attribute a certain theory of meaning to him. Namely, that ‘meaning is use’ in the strong sense of identity. This was the subject of several meetings of the Moral Sciences Club in 1938-39. On a discussion about using the Verification Principle to discern the meaningfulness of a statement, Wittgenstein states that, “[t]he main point of asking the verification of a statement is to bring out distinctions.”

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56 CL 2, 44.
57 While games might seem like a particular case, there are plenty of general terms that seem to behave in a similar manner. Think of what is common to all: chairs, pies, books or cars. In each case, a definition can nearly always be unsettled by another strange example.
58 CL 2, 44.
59 CL 2, 106.
60 WIC, 296.
indicate that Wittgenstein, “did not like calling the statement that the meaning of a statement is the method of its verification, a principle.” He thought that this “made philosophy look too much like mathematics. There are no primitive propositions in philosophy.”

Here Wittgenstein seems to be suggesting that his examination of use is not a principle, but a method of making distinctions. Wittgenstein held that in “a vast number of cases it is possible to replace ‘the meaning of a word’ by the use of a word.” While this may sound rather like a principle, I think Wittgenstein was working to avoid the kind of axiomatic (or foundational) principles that characterize mathematics (and often T-philosophy). Wittgenstein is always careful not to assert his views as statements of universals (or in this case strict identity, use = meaning).

In the notes of the Moral Sciences Club, Wittgenstein calls this view (in a vast number of cases...) a slogan. He then notes that:

Sometimes it [the slogan] is ridiculed: sometimes it is boosted. Both wrongly. If one does philosophy it is natural one should come to certain sorts of step which it is advisable to take. Philosophical investigations are tedious and difficult, and slip the memory. Slogans are easy, and stick in the memory. If the use goes but the slogan remains it is ridiculous.

The notes then indicate that, “Dr W said that although he had often used the words of the slogan, he had never had need to call [it] anything.” This suggests that Wittgenstein was not trying to develop a theory, but solve individual problems. The ‘use’ of the slogan is to remind the philosopher to examine individual cases, which Wittgenstein believed could remove the tensions of certain sorts of philosophical problems. He thought the

61 WIC, 289.
62 WIC, 296.
63 WIC 296.
slogan was not to be ‘boosted’, suggesting he was not positively advocating it as a theory, but using a certain procedure to cure philosophical puzzles. As he states in a lecture, “I only describe the actual use of the word if this is necessary to remove some trouble we want to get rid of.”\textsuperscript{64} The result of W-philosophy is simple. Philosophy, “by clarifying, stops us asking illegitimate questions.”\textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{64} CL 2, 97.
\textsuperscript{65} CL 1, 111.
Chapter Two- Wittgenstein’s Method in the Blue Book

According to Ambrose, Wittgenstein dictated the Blue Book to a select group of students during 1933-34. In the Blue Book (some of which was later edited by Wittgenstein), we find more doctrinal and dogmatic assertions of Wittgenstein’s methodology. In a letter to W.H. Watson in 1934, Wittgenstein offered to send him a copy of Blue Book so that he might see what they were doing in class. A year later, Wittgenstein wrote a similar letter to Bertrand Russell and included a copy of the Blue Book. Given Wittgenstein’s aversion to being misunderstood, his willingness to disseminate copies of these dictations suggests that they were representative of his views on philosophy during these years.

There are several advantages in appealing to the Blue Book when examining Wittgenstein’s methodology. The most important is that the Blue Book acts as a bridge between the conversations and lectures of Wittgenstein and his later work in the Investigations. The Blue Book was dictated to students while Wittgenstein was lecturing in Cambridge and could be considered a lecture. However, since the Blue Book was a series of dictations (frequently stopped for discussion and clarification), the written style is more direct and clear. Since Wittgenstein’s lectures at Cambridge were not always

66 According to Monk, the selected students were Skinner, Louis Goldstein, H.M.S. Coxeter, Margaret Masterman and Ambrose (Monk, 336). According to Redpath’s memoirs, he was also allowed a copy. In 1935, in correspondence from Ambrose to Wittgenstein, Wittgenstein asked that Moore be sent a copy as well. Monk states that by the end of the 30’s copies of the text were being copied and distributed around Cambridge, so much so that even faculty had read the text.
67 Stern suggests this himself. Stern (2005), 223.
68 WIC, 216.
69 Preface to Blue Book.
70 More clear and direct than the text of the Investigations.
particularly lucid, the *Blue Book* helps support my thesis that Wittgenstein was working methodically throughout the 1930’s.

According to David Stern, the “open-ended and programmatic remarks about method” in the *Investigations* “are some of the most variously interpreted remarks” in the entire book.\(^7^1\) Studying §§109-133 of the *Investigations* in light of Wittgenstein’s earlier lectures, conversations and texts like the *Blue Book* helps demonstrate the continuity of Wittgenstein’s philosophical method throughout these years. Moreover, since Stern admits that the *Blue Book* is “often much more systematic and dogmatic” than the *Investigations*, it is likely that the former will be a useful aid in interpreting the remarks in the latter.\(^7^2\)

I will argue that the method outlined in the *Blue Book* is the same as that in §§109-133 of the *Philosophical Investigations*. In my comparison of the *Blue Book* and the *Investigations*, I’m focusing on §§109-133 of the *Investigations*, since they contain the most explicit remarks on philosophy in the text.\(^7^3\) I have divided §§109-133 into three broad categories since the structure of the *Investigations* makes this the most obvious: 1) a picture has misled philosophers, 2) philosophy is purely descriptive and 3) the dissolution of philosophical problems. In both (1) and (2), Wittgenstein suggests that the

\(^7^1\) Stern (2005), 225.

\(^7^2\) Ibid., 223.

\(^7^3\) There is not a clear reason why the comments on philosophy fall so far into the text of the *Investigations*. The first draft of the *Investigations* (§§1-189), was produced during 1936-7. This draft would have put the section on philosophy toward the end of the text. Over the next few years, Wittgenstein added new sections to this early draft and slowly lengthened the book. He eventually gave up his attempt to write a book in linear fashion and suggests in the *Preface* to the *Investigations*, that the text is “a number of sketches of landscapes that were made in the course of…long and involved journeys.” (PI, v). So, while there may be some importance to the organization of sections, the overall structure of the book may not be purposeful. (In TS 213, a typescript organized with chapter titles and table of contents, the section on ‘Philosophy’ falls \(\frac{3}{4}\) into the text.)
results will be muddles and confusions.\(^7^4\) In the case of (3), I will argue that the solution to T-philosophical problems is the same as that outlined in Chapter One. So, (1) and (2) here roughly correspond to a) \textit{T-Philosophy presents us with muddles/confusions/etc.} and (3) corresponds to b) \textit{To solve a particular puzzle we must give new pictures, analogies.}

1. A picture has misled philosophers (\textit{Investigations})

In the \textit{Investigations}, Wittgenstein states that “a simile has been absorbed into the forms of our language,” which produces a false appearance and thereby “disquiets us.”\(^7^5\) As an example, he gives a rather cryptic dialogue, “‘But \textit{this} isn’t how it is!’—we say. ‘Yet \textit{this} is how it has to \textit{be}!’”\(^7^6\) In isolation, these comments are vague, but in §113 he appears to extend this thought: “‘But this is how it is—’ I say to myself over and over again. I feel as though, if only I could fix my gaze absolutely sharply on this fact, get it in focus, I must grasp the essence of the matter.”\(^7^7\)

I think Wittgenstein is suggesting that the simile that has misled philosophers is the tendency to seek the essence of a particular word or concept. The false appearance (what causes us the mental discomfort) is when our forms of language suggest that ‘\(x\) isn’t how it is’ and yet we feel that ‘\(x\) is how it has to be.’ This false appearance that disquiets us is what Wittgenstein often calls a ‘muddle’ or a ‘puzzle.’

\(^{7^4}\) In 1), Wittgenstein thought that misleading pictures led to philosophical puzzles. In 2) unless T-philosophy remains descriptive (and avoids generalizations) it will lead to philosophical puzzles. In the case of 3), I think Wittgenstein’s final solution for T-philosophical problems is the same as previously stated.
\(^{7^5}\) PI, 112.
\(^{7^6}\) PI, 112.
\(^{7^7}\) PI, 113.
Consider again the problem of negative existentials. It does not seem immediately problematic (or confusing) to assert that “Santa Claus does not exist”. However, someone might point out that I have just written ‘Santa Claus’ and referenced his non-existence, so in some sense he must exist. We then appear to be trapped in the situation that Wittgenstein described in §112. We know that Santa Claus doesn’t exist, but our view of existence appears to commit us to the view that he does. This isn’t how it is, yet this is how it has to be! I think this is a good example of what Wittgenstein is trying to illustrate in §§112-113.

The view that a picture misled us is reiterated in §114. Here, Wittgenstein criticizes a certain way of understanding propositions. He suggests that when we make propositional statements (i.e. This is how things are…) we often think we are tracing the outline of “nature” when we are actually “tracing around the frame through which we look at it.” If we accept this particular picture of language (i.e. that it captures the essence of things), then many problems in philosophy will seem perennial. Wittgenstein’s view is that this is because the cause of our problems lies in “our language.”

1a. A picture has misled philosophers (Blue Book).

The view that a picture has misled philosophers is well supported by Wittgenstein’s comments in the Blue Book. He notes toward the end of the book that:

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78 PI, 114. Wittgenstein makes this visual parallel in CL 2, 15. He says, “Philosophical troubles are caused by not using language practically but by extending it on looking at it.” Perhaps he thought that philosophers spend too much time reading the text (and looking at the words) since he frequently uses visual language. We have a ‘picture’, we are looking through a ‘frame’ and are prevented from ‘seeing facts’ with ‘unbiased eyes.’

79 PI, 115.

80 PI, 115.
The scrutiny of the grammar of a word weakens the position of certain fixed
standards of our expression which had prevented us from seeing facts with
unbiased eyes. Our investigation tried to remove this bias, which forces us to
think that the facts must conform to certain pictures embedded in our language.  

Here Wittgenstein states that his investigation attempts to remove (dissolve) the ‘bias’
that facts must conform to particular pictures in our language.

An example of this ‘bias’ in the *Blue Book* occurs in a discussion on ‘thinking as
an activity.’ Wittgenstein suggests that there are several meaningful answers to the
question: ‘Where does thinking take place?’ It could be correct to answer: on the paper,
in our head or in our mind. But, he warns against seeing any of these expressions as
naming the location of thought. He states that, “by misunderstanding the grammar of our
expressions, we are led to think of one in particular of these statements [on thinking] as
giving the real seat of the activity of thinking.”  

Again, Wittgenstein states his aversion
to essentialist formulations in philosophy, which he believed often resulted in
philosophical problems.

Famously, in §109 of the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein states that “Philosophy is a
battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language.” In Baker and
Hacker’s study of the manuscript sources, the earliest source referenced is dated 1936. 

I’d like to suggest that a comment in the *Blue Book* bears enough resemblance to §109
that the source of the comment for §109 could be placed several years prior. In the *Blue
Book*, Wittgenstein states that, “Philosophy, as we use the word, is a fight against the

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81 BB 43. There are several references to misleading forms (or ways) of expression in the *Blue Book*. See BB 23, 26, 41 and 48.
82 BB 16.
83 Baker & Hacker (2005), 198.
84 At the earliest 1933 and the latest 1935.
fascination which forms of expression exert upon us.”85 If we remove the ‘as we use
the word’ clause we have:

PI: Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language.
BB: Philosophy is a fight against the fascination which forms of expression exert upon us.

Wittgenstein held that it was certain forms of expression that forced us into
philosophical puzzles (or the bewitchment of our intelligence). In both of these
statements, philosophy is described as an activity (fight/battle) against the often
misleading nature of language. While the wording is slightly different, I think the
comments can be interpreted in a similar fashion. While the exact source of §109 is open
to debate, the two passages share enough affinities to further support my case that
Wittgenstein’s view of philosophy being ‘misled’ by certain pictures can be found in both
the Investigations and the Blue Book.

2. Philosophy is purely descriptive (Investigations)

   In the Investigations, Wittgenstein is quite clear that philosophy (W-philosophy)
does not give explanations.86 In §109, Wittgenstein states that “our considerations could
not be scientific ones.” He goes on to say that “we may not advance any kind of theory.”
We must “do away with all explanation, and description alone must take its place.” This
description gets its purpose “from the philosophical problems.” The last statement is a
little vague, but I think Wittgenstein is suggesting that it is in light of philosophical

85 BB 27.
86 Perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that that philosophy should not give explanations, something
that Wittgenstein seems to suggest in §124.
problems that description (as part of a method) has a use. Its use will be to help
dissolve a particular philosophical problem.

In §124 Wittgenstein states, “Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual
use of language; it can in the end only describe it.” In order for this statement to be
correct, philosophy should be understood as W-philosophy and the word ‘may’
understood in a normative sense (as something like ‘should’). I make this note because
many philosophers have introduced new terms into ‘ordinary language.’ Consider the
philosophical significance of capitalizing the first letter of a word: form vs. Form, being
vs. Being, time vs. Time, truth vs. Truth. If Wittgenstein means in §124 that T-
philosophy cannot introduce new terms like ‘qualia’ into our language, then he is plainly
wrong. My normative reading avoids this problem and makes more sense in light of the
surrounding paragraphs.

It is of interest that Wittgenstein does not provide any further explanation in these
sections of the Investigations as to why philosophy “neither explains nor deduces
anything.” Given Wittgenstein’s views on misleading pictures in philosophy (already
stated in the Investigations), it’s not hard to imagine that in asking for the explanation of
a philosophical concept (say of Being), someone is actually asking for the reason (or
definition) of something, a picture that Wittgenstein thought would end in philosophical
puzzlement. However, while the motivation for Wittgenstein’s views on description are

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87 I will say more on this in the following section.
88 PI, 126.
not particularly clear in the *Investigations*, his motivations for it in the *Blue Book* are clearer.\(^89\)

2a. Philosophy is purely descriptive (*Blue Book*).

In the *Blue Book*, Wittgenstein holds that this essentialist picture or “craving for generality” stems in part from a “preoccupation with the method of science.”\(^90\) Several times, Wittgenstein references this admixture of philosophy and science. He says that philosophers “constantly see the method of science before their eyes, and are irresistibly tempted to ask and answer questions in the way science does.”\(^91\) Given the success of the sciences, it makes sense that philosophers would be interested in scientific methodology, but why exactly is asking philosophical questions like scientists so problematic?

Part of Wittgenstein’s response turns on the form of scientific questions. He poses the question: “What is the object of a thought?” He finds this problematic because it has the same form as many scientific questions (like “What are the ultimate constituents of matter?”).\(^92\) When we ask a question like, “What is the object of thought?,” Wittgenstein thinks that we are asking a question that ought to be resolved by a grammatical investigation (talking about our language and language use), but the form of the question suggests a response: “An object of thought is…”\(^93\) This answer will be overly general and lead to philosophical confusions.

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\(^89\) I’ll suggest shortly that his views on description are the result of his assumption that one ought to avoid philosophical problems.

\(^90\) BB 18. In Wittgenstein’s comments on science, he seems to presuppose that the method of science is to reduce the explanation of natural phenomenon to the smallest possible number of laws.

\(^91\) BB 18(b).

\(^92\) Examples are from BB 35.

\(^93\) Questions like ‘What is the object of thought?’ are really expressing “an unclarity about the grammar of words in the form of a scientific question.” (BB 35). Wittgenstein likely believed that the scientific answer
Wittgenstein gives only one explicit example of this sort of muddle in the texts where he discusses philosophy and science. At the end of a short discussion on philosophy (practiced by the methods of science), he states, “it can never be our job to reduce anything to anything, or to explain anything. Philosophy really is ‘purely descriptive’.”94 He says, “[t]hink of such questions as ‘Are there sense data?’ and ask: What method is there of determining this? Introspection?”95

These rhetorical questions are not simple to answer. What method is there to determine whether something ‘exists’? The most obvious answer would be some form of the scientific method. Although the questions are left without an answer, I don’t think Wittgenstein thought they could be answered in this form without treating philosophical findings as scientific ones and thus giving explanations in philosophy. Let me try to illustrate why I think Wittgenstein thought this philo-scientific approach was problematic by appealing to Wittgenstein’s previously stated view. As I’ve argued, Wittgenstein thought that a picture misleads us when we think that there is a way something must be expressed.96

1. Necessarily, a general picture x implies y form of expression.

I’ve argued that Wittgenstein’s method (and solution) for philosophical problems works to unsettle the view that things must be expressed a certain way, or:

2. It is not necessary to use y form of expression.

These two claims, modus tollens, entail:

to this particular question would cause us to look for some object of thought (an idea?) and this would be a misguided search since there are not ideas in the same way that there are chairs.

94 BB 18(b).
95 BB 18(b).
96 Chapter 1b and Chapter 2, 1-1a.
3. The general picture $x$ is not necessary.\(^{97}\)

Wittgenstein does not state that there are not general pictures, or that certain pictures are false, but that they need not be the case. The picture in question is not a visual picture, but the tendency to ask questions in a certain sort of way and expect a certain sort of answer.\(^{98}\) Taken alone, this argument does not take a particular position on the general pictures.

However, while I think that Wittgenstein’s views on the scientific method (applied to philosophical investigations) are analogous to the previous argument, they require a normative assumption which does suggest that we take a certain position on some general pictures if we do not want philosophical confusion:

1. When we ask philosophical questions scientifically then T-philosophy must give explanatory answers.
2. If we give explanatory answers in T-philosophy then we will have philosophical confusions (BB 18).
3. T-philosophy asks philosophical questions scientifically.
4. T-philosophy must give explanatory answers (1, 3).
5. T-philosophy results in philosophical confusions (2, 4).

Wittgenstein’s assumption and conclusion

6. We ought to avoid philosophical confusions (Assumption).
7. We ought to avoid explanatory answers in philosophy (2, 6) (§109)\(^{99}\)

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\(^{97}\) Understood modally, the necessary claim entails the truth of the conditional in all possible worlds. Since I have argued that Wittgenstein held (2), then it follows that there is at least one possible world (this one), in which one need not use the general picture $x$. Thanks to Chris Hall for the clarification on this issue. That being said, I don’t think Wittgenstein subscribed to this sort of picture of the world. I think he would have understood necessity in an everyday sense as meaning something ‘has to be.’ He was focused on showing that certain pictures need not be the case.

\(^{98}\) See footnote 28.

\(^{99}\) These premises entail: We ought not to ask philosophical questions scientifically, but Wittgenstein does not infer it (1-4, MT). I think that Wittgenstein held that (7) applied to both T-philosophy and W-philosophy.
Wittgenstein’s argument turns on the normative assumption (6). In Chapter One, I suggested that Wittgenstein is working to dissolve T-philosophical problems. Here, it looks like the only way that this argument follows is to grant Wittgenstein the assumption that we ought to avoid philosophical confusions.\(^{100}\) (1)-(4) “led to no result” (5) and “made the philosopher dismiss as irrelevant the concrete cases, which alone could have helped him to understand the usage of the general term.”\(^{101}\) If we grant (6), then (7) follows from the other premises. But interestingly, Wittgenstein never states that we ought not to ask philosophical questions scientifically (antecedent of (1)), just that it leads to confusion and “darkness” when affirmed.\(^{102}\)

Since he is committed to the view that philosophy is a battle (or ought to be) against puzzles and confusions, he does not want to practice philosophy in any way that produces confusion. Asking philosophical questions scientifically leads to philosophical confusions (5). If assumption (6) is granted (and thus (7)) we can make sense of Wittgenstein’s direct statements in both the *Investigations* and the *Blue Book* that philosophy is “purely descriptive” and that we must do away with “explanation” in philosophy.\(^{103}\)

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100 This doesn’t seem extravagant. It’s Wittgenstein’s choice if he wants to avoid confusion.
101 BB 19.
102 BB 18(b). This is the case during the 30’s, but in 1946 at a meeting of the Moral Sciences Club Wittgenstein does state that philosophical confusions that are muddled “should not have been asked.” (WIC, 404).
103 BB 18, PI §109.
3. The dissolution of philosophical problems (*Investigations*).

In Chapter One, I argued that Wittgenstein held that the solution to a T-philosophical problem entailed its dissolution. Wittgenstein is quite clear about his view of the ends of W-philosophy in §133, but there are several other passages that support this view. He asks, “Where does our investigation get its importance from, since it seems to destroy everything interesting, that is, all that is great and important?”\(^{104}\) Since this investigation is a philosophical one, we can infer that Wittgenstein is suggesting that he thinks he is destroying the problems of T-philosophy.

This destruction is informed by Wittgenstein’s need for clarity. Wittgenstein notes that we do not command a “clear view of the use of our words” and he stresses the “importance of finding and inventing intermediate cases.”\(^{105}\) Why exactly do we need a clear view of the use of our words? I’d like to suggest that without some clarity in this area, we will end up in philosophical confusion. I think that the ‘intermediate cases’ that Wittgenstein references are the various everyday (and even imaginary uses) that he proposed to displace the idea that the answer to a philosophical question would come from asking questions of the form, “What is….?” I think this is the same process mentioned in §127 when he says that the “work of the philosopher consists in assembling reminders for a particular purpose.” This otherwise rather enigmatic remark makes better sense if we imagine the purpose of the investigation to dissolve problems and the reminders being (in some cases) the uses of words.

\(^{104}\) §118.  
\(^{105}\) §122.
Wittgenstein’s statement in §122 about the need for a clear view of our language sounds again like he is advocating an ideal grammar. This view is clearly rejected in the next several paragraphs. He states in §130 that his “language-games are not preparatory studies for a future regularization of language”, but rather “objects of comparison” which are meant to “throw light on the facts of our language.”

In §131 he suggests that we can:

…avoid ineptness or emptiness in our assertions only by presenting the model as what it is, as an object of comparison—as, so to speak, a measuring-rod; not as a preconceived idea to which reality must correspond. (The dogmatism into which we fall so easily in doing philosophy.)

The last sentence (before the parentheses) is important, since Wittgenstein again states his aversion to the stronger language of necessity (must), and suggests that this is the ‘dogmatism’ that we fall into in T-philosophy. This statement is reaffirmed in §132, when Wittgenstein comments that we “want to establish an order in our knowledge of the use of language: an order with a particular end in view; one out of many possible orders; not the order.” Since I’ve argued that the end that Wittgenstein has in view is the dissolution of T-philosophical problems, §132 is a further reminder that Wittgenstein did not attempt to present a final solution to a problem, but rather just one solution that dissolved the problem.

Perhaps the best illustration of Wittgenstein’s view on this subject is the last paragraph of the section on philosophy in the *Investigations*. Here I quote §133 at length:

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106 I mentioned in the first chapter that Wittgenstein can be interpreted as advocating an ideal or final set of grammatical rules for words usage. He states that this is not the case in CL 2, 21.

107 I should mention that Wittgenstein’s use of the phrase ‘language-games’ is not a particularly new term in his philosophical vocabulary. They are mentioned several times in the *Blue Book* (BB, 17, 81, 91, 92, 106) and five times before §130 in the *Investigations*. (§7, 23, 24, 65, 77).
It is not our aim to refine or complete the system of rules for the use of our words in unheard-of ways. For the clarity that we are aiming at is indeed complete clarity. But this simply means that the philosophical problems should completely disappear. The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to. --The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring itself in question. --Instead, we now demonstrate a method, by examples; and the series of examples can be broken off. --Problems are solved (difficulties eliminated), not a single problem.

There is not a philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies.

Several comments need to be made here. The first is to draw attention to Wittgenstein’s qualification of “complete clarity.” Here he suggests that his aim is the dissolution of philosophical problems. This is demonstrated by examples, which can be “broken off” when the W-philosopher no longer feels mental uneasiness or puzzlement. The second is that Wittgenstein does not think there is a single (or central) problem in philosophy, but that there are a number of problems. This is directly connected to the last line of §133, which suggests that there is not a method, but methods.

At first sight, the statement that “there is not a philosophical method” seems rather damning to a thesis which is arguing that Wittgenstein had a coherent philosophical method. However, these sentences are not particularly problematic. Wittgenstein emphasizes that there is not “a method,” which is directly related to his previous comment that there is not a “single problem” in philosophy, but rather a variety. Unfortunately, Wittgenstein is not always himself particularly clear when he calls for clarity! In §133, I think Wittgenstein is suggesting that there isn’t just one procedure
(series of questions, or logical maneuvers) for dealing with a given philosophical puzzle. There are a variety of ways (or “methods”) for dealing with philosophical puzzles.\textsuperscript{108}

3a. The dissolution of philosophical problems (\textit{Blue Book}).

Wittgenstein’s dissolution of T-philosophical puzzles is well evidenced in the \textit{Blue Book}. Something that is very apparent in the \textit{Blue Book} is Wittgenstein’s hesitancy to make (or endorse) statements about the essence of anything.\textsuperscript{109} This is directly related to his method for dissolution of philosophical problems. A good example of this is BB 16, where Wittgenstein comments:

\begin{quote}
If we say thinking is essentially operating with signs, the first question you might ask is: ‘What are signs?’--Instead of giving any kind of general answer to this question, I shall propose to you to look closely at particular cases which we should call ‘operating with signs’.\textsuperscript{110}
\end{quote}

This comment is a very compact statement of Wittgenstein’s method. First, we begin with a certain picture of the world in T-philosophy, which seems fixed or necessary. Here, the view is that ‘thinking is essentially operating with signs.’ This view often implies a certain series of questions, in this case: ‘What are signs?’ Wittgenstein suggests that we don’t try to answer the question generally (scientifically?) but rather examine the cases where the phrase ‘operating with signs’ is used.

\textsuperscript{108} One might be to answer ‘Depends?’ to every philosophical question. Another might be to ask for a definition of every word in the problematic statement. Sometimes, examining the use of the term might shed light on the situation. Another way would be to ask how a puzzling word is learned. Wittgenstein’s practice of philosophy is saturated with examples of these sorts of suggestions.

\textsuperscript{109} Some examples of this sort of language are: BB 2, “surely it can’t be essential”, BB 3 “it is not at all essential that…” BB 4 “it may seem essential” BB 15 “Let us go back to the statement that thinking essentially consists in operating with signs. My point is that it is liable to mislead us…” BB 32 “One might object to this by saying that the essence of copying is the intention to copy. I should answer that there are a great many different processes which we call ‘copying something’.”

\textsuperscript{110} BB, 16.
Wittgenstein doesn’t conclude that ‘thinking is essentially operating with signs’ is false, rather an enumeration of uses reminds us that there are other ways to understand thinking. As he comments earlier in the *Blue Book*, “putting it in this immediately shows you that it need not happen. This, by the way, illustrates the method of philosophy.”\footnote{BB, 12.}

Although Wittgenstein frequently examines the actual use of different words as a means of solving problems, this method isn’t exclusive in the *Blue Book*.

Wittgenstein also suggests that we invent new notations “in order to break the spell of those which we are accustomed to.”\footnote{BB, 23.} These made up notations can be absurd (or in Wittgenstein’s case, often confusing), but so long as the “mental cramp is loosened” then the method in successful.\footnote{BB, 59.} The new notations (perhaps new situations, or a strange set of rules) are introduced to challenge the existing picture. Wittgenstein strongly disliked confusion and was always working to clear up philosophical problems rather than create more.

The final goal for Wittgenstein was not just to block or ignore T-philosophical questions. Wittgenstein’s belief was that philosophical confusions were the result of a particular view of language (and the answers we expect when we ask questions). By enumerating ordinary usage and even inventing new notation to clarify our problem, we realize that the particular view of language that led to our initial questions is not necessary. It doesn’t mean that we are barred from asking those questions, but we should expect similar confusions if we do.

\footnote{BB, 12.}

\footnote{BB, 23.}

\footnote{BB, 59.}
Chapter Three- Wittgenstein’s Method in The Big Typescript

In this chapter, I will argue that the relationship between the Big Typescript (TS 213) and the Investigations gives us a further reason to suppose that the view expressed in §§109-133 of the Philosophical Investigations represents Wittgenstein’s later philosophy (as I’ve outlined it in the first chapter). The Big Typescript was assembled in 1933 and Wittgenstein worked on several revisions of this typescript until about 1937. Many of the statements about philosophy in the Big Typescript were assembled into §§109-133 of the Philosophical Investigations.  

Below, I have listed the paragraph number in the Investigations, followed by the source in the Big Typescript (TS 213), then the original source manuscript if available:

§87- BT 200 (Original source, MS 112)
§88- BT 200 (Original source, TS 213)
§108- BT ? (Original source, MS 110)
§111- BT 305 (Original source, MS 110)
§116- BT 304 (Original source, MS 100)
§118- BT 304 (305?) (Original source MS 153b/ MS 112)
§119- BT 312 (Original source MS ?)
§120- BT 58 (Original source MS 110)
§121- BT 54?  
§122- BT 307 (Original source MS?)
§123- BT 310 (Original source MS 112)
§124- BT 308 (Original source MS 110)
§126- BT 309 (Original source, partly MS 110)
§127- BT 306 (Original source MS ?)
§128- BT 309 (Original source MS 110)
§129- BT 309 (Original sources MS 110, 112, 153b)
§132- BT 200 (BT 145?) (Original source TS 213)
§133-BT 316 (Original source MS 112)

114 Hilmy argues that the Big Typescript was “an important general source of remarks incorporated into Wittgenstein’s writings” and that it also “served as a significant source of remarks expressing his ‘new’ approach to philosophy-- remarks which he included unaltered in his master work.” (Hilmy, 34).
115 This table was assembled from information from Baker and Hacker’s commentary as well as Hilmy’s study ‘The Later Wittgenstein.’ The dates used are the standard dates from Von Wrights catalogue.
116 Hilmy’s catalogue misses the BT reference here. Hacker says BT 67 (BT 54 in Blackwell edition?).
Given the early nature of these comments, we can tell a simple story about Wittgenstein’s views on philosophy. Wittgenstein expressed a particular view of philosophical method (W-philosophy) in the 1930’s, both publicly and privately. In Chapter One, I argued that this view of philosophy is found in his public lectures (1930-35) and students’ recollections of his views around this time.

In Chapter Two, I argued that this method is found in the *Blue Book* (1933-35) and the *Philosophical Investigations*. We know that Wittgenstein had assembled §§1-189 of the *Investigations* by 1936, which would have included the most direct comments on philosophy (§§109-133). This early part of the *Investigations* (MS 142, §§1-189) was assembled from MS 115 and MS 140, both revisions of the *Big Typescript* (TS 213), which was itself complete in 1933. Many of the comments on philosophy in the *Investigations* were taken directly from the *Big Typescript*. Given my argument regarding Wittgenstein’s views on philosophy through this period, we could conclude that Wittgenstein’s view of philosophy was continuous through 1930-36.

While there are variants of the story I’ve outlined, some critics have opposed this picture of Wittgenstein. David Stern has specifically argued against this sort of reading in his recent introduction to Wittgenstein. I will outline Stern’s view and argue that it fails to deal with the direct nature of comments in §§109-133. Stern’s account also fails to deal with the clearest remark in the *Investigations* regarding Wittgenstein’s philosophical method. I’ll conclude this chapter with an examination of a quotation from Heinrich Hertz, which unites many of the manuscripts I’ve discussed and further supports

118 MSS 152, 157(a) and 157(b) also used here.
119 He argues this same case in a recent lecture at Bergen in 2005.
my argument that Wittgenstein had a unified view of philosophy throughout his ‘later’ years.

David Stern’s Wittgenstein

One of Stern’s recurrent complaints is that the “existence of manuscript sources from an early date does not, by itself, show that the later writing expresses the same view.”¹²⁰ Stern thinks that it is a mistake to compare the Philosophical Investigations to Wittgenstein’s earlier writings like the Blue Book or the Big Typescript. This is because the latter are “much more systematic and dogmatic.”¹²¹ He suggests that this entire interpretative process presupposes that Wittgenstein’s approach to philosophy “is the same in the 1930-31 manuscripts, the ‘Philosophy’ chapter of the Big Typescript, and the Philosophical Investigations.”¹²²

To begin with, Stern’s latter statement seems incorrect. One does not have to presuppose that Wittgenstein’s approach to philosophy is the same (throughout these texts) before interpreting him that way. It may be that studying Wittgenstein results in the conclusion that he had a method throughout these texts. Moreover, if Wittgenstein did use the same methodology throughout his ‘later’ period, then we would expect to see early manuscripts detailing this methodology. So, while a manuscript source with an early date is not sufficient to prove that Wittgenstein had the same view early and late, it is necessary if he did. Stern needs a convincing argument to the contrary if we are to accept his reading of the philosophy section of the Investigations.

¹²⁰ Stern (2005), 226.
¹²¹ Ibid., 223.
¹²² Stern (2004), 126. Stern uses the word ‘presuppose’ in the original context.
Part of the reason that Stern is resistant to there being a methodology in the *Investigations* is that he interprets the text as a philosophical dialogue.¹²³ He argues that the *Investigations* presents an “unresolved tension between two forces: one aims at a definitive answer to the problems of philosophy, the other aims at doing away with them altogether.”¹²⁴ Stern suggests that critics have “misread a book that has a profoundly dialogical character, mistaking voices in the dialogue for the voice of the author.”¹²⁵ He does not dismiss previous positions, he just argues that these represent only part of the interpretive picture. To sum up his view, Stern argues that the *Investigations* is best understood as:

> inviting the reader to engage in a philosophical dialogue, a dialogue that is ultimately about whether philosophy is possible, about the impossibility and necessity of philosophy, rather than as advocating either a Pyrrhonian or a non-Pyrrhonian answer.¹²⁶

Given this dialogical view of the *Investigations*, Stern is opposed to the idea that there is a section on philosophy in the *Investigations* that represents Wittgenstein’s actual views on the subject. He is especially resistant to the idea that the *Big Typescript* should be used to support any argument about Wittgenstein’s ‘later’ philosophy.

The significance of the *Big Typescript*

In partial support of his dialogical interpretation, Stern argues (contra Hilmy) that the usefulness of the *Big Typescript* in interpreting the *Investigations* is misguided. Primarily, he thinks that Hilmy has overstated the connection between the two texts. He

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¹²³ I will not outline all the details of Stern’s view.
¹²⁴ Stern (2005), 219.
¹²⁵ Ibid., 220.
¹²⁶ Ibid., 220.
argues that, “Hilmy’s claim that ‘the vast majority of [PI §§ 87–133] were originally written between 1930 and 1932’ (1987, p. 34) is misleading, at best. Less than half these remarks (17 out of 46) contain any material drafted during 1930–2.”

Stern is correct about the number of remarks, but his comments are themselves a little misleading. The majority of the remarks taken from the Big Typescript fall in the second section on philosophy in the Investigations (§§109-133). This second section contains the most explicit references to philosophy in the book. Counting just once per paragraph for ‘philosophy’ or a related term (philosopher, philosophical), there are 15 occurrences of ‘philosophy’ in sections §§109-133. Of the 17 remarks that Stern initially mentions, 14 fall within this section on philosophy in the Investigations. This structure supports my argument that much of Wittgenstein’s earlier methodology has been transplanted into the Investigations.

Stern is aware of this fact, but his response is quite puzzling, considering his dialogical view of the Investigations. He notes:

True, some of the best-known expressions of Wittgenstein’s later methods were drafted in the early 1930s (PI §§ 119–20, 123–4, 126–9, 132; also parts of §§87, 88, 108, 111, 116, 118, 122 and 133). However, the remarks that do date from the early 1930s are mostly concerned with a repudiation of the aprioristic, dogmatic methodology of the Tractatus and hardly amount to a blueprint for Wittgenstein’s later philosophy.

There are two related difficulties with this statement. The first is that it is not clear that any of these paragraphs in the Investigations are doing what Stern suggests they are. §114 is the only paragraph in §§109-133 to specifically mention the Tractatus and it was added

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127 Stern (2005), 225.
128 Baker and Hacker divide their commentary at §109.
129 Stern (2005), 225.
in 1936. Stern does not provide any further argument to support his claim that any of these paragraphs are specifically repudiating Tractarian theses.

Second, it is puzzling that these comments could be repudiating specific Tractarian theses in the 1930’s but the same comments in the *Investigations* are part of a dialogue with no voice the voice of Wittgenstein.\(^\text{130}\) Stern is working to make sense of the direct and dogmatic nature of the comments without giving up his wider commitment of a dialogical interpretation of the *Investigations*. Although in many cases the text is identical, Wittgenstein has dropped out somewhere along the way. This seems to be an inconsistency in Stern’s view of the *Investigations*.

Further problems with Stern’s view

Stern suggests that it is the “passage hunting” methodology of many commentators that makes it easy to “read the more doctrinaire assertions that are part of Wittgenstein’s writing in the 1930s and 1940s as statements of philosophical convictions that undergird the *Philosophical Investigations*.\(^\text{131}\) Rather, he suggests that the primary change in the *Investigations* out of previous material “is not the honing and refining of arguments, but is primarily a matter of making it more dialogical and less didactic.”\(^\text{132}\)

However, an examination of many of the comments in §§109-133 with sources in the *Big Typescript* does not suggest that these comments are particularly dialogical. Many

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\(^{130}\) The closest we get is called the ‘voice of correctness,’ the character which Stern suggests many commentators have mistaken for Wittgenstein’s own view.

\(^{131}\) Stern (2005), 227.

\(^{132}\) Ibid., 227. Stern’s use of ‘didactic’ here is a bit confusing, since it is possible to be more didactic while being more dialogical, but he has already set up the dichotomy of the dialogical vs. dogmatic in his reading of the *Investigations* (Stern (2005), 226). His dialogical reading suggests that the *Investigations* lacks the direct nature of a first person account and I’ve understood ‘didactic’ here as meaning something akin to ‘direct.’ Stern does not want to suggest that there is a ‘teacher’ in the *Investigations* although the reader might learn something through the process.
are quite direct statements and several are only one comment long. Here are some examples from §§109-133 that have early sources:

§109: “…Philosophy is the battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language.”
§116: “…What we do is bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use.”
§118: “…What we are destroying is nothing but houses of cards and we are clearing up the ground of language on which they stand.”
§119: “The results of philosophy are the uncovering of one or another piece of nonsense…”
§123: “A philosophical problem has the form: ‘I don’t know my way about’.”
§124: “Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it…”
§127: “The work of the philosopher consists in assembling reminders for a particular purpose.”
§128: “If one tried to advance theses in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree to them.”
§130: “Our clear and simple language-games are not preparatory studies for a future regularization of language…”

These statements are direct and the context for each does not suggest any kind of dialogue is at work. They certainly require some interpretation, but to interpret any of these paragraphs as an internal dialogue requires a more detailed argument. It is also not clear that placed together they form any kind of dialogue.

The only section in §§109-133 that resembles a dialogue is §§112-115. The earliest sources for these paragraphs are MS 142 (1936). At first glance, this later date appears to support Stern’s view that Wittgenstein may be working toward a less didactic text. I’ll quote the paragraphs at length and then suggest that although they have the marks of a dialogue, they actually clarify the method that I’ve argued that Wittgenstein used throughout his career.

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133 All texts here except §109 are originally from the *Big Typescript*. 
§112: A simile that has been absorbed into the forms of our language produces a false appearance, and this disquiets us. “But this isn't how it is!” —we say. “Yet this is how it has to be!”

§113: “But this is how it is—” I say to myself over and over again. I feel as though, if only I could fix my gaze absolutely sharply on this fact, get it in focus, I must grasp the essence of the matter.

§114: (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 4.5): “The general form of propositions is: This is how things are.”--That is the kind of proposition that one repeats to oneself countless times. One thinks that one is tracing the outline of the thing’s nature over and over again, and one is merely tracing round the frame through which we look at it.

§115: A *picture* held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably.

In §112, I think Wittgenstein is outlining one of the central problems that I’ve tried to illustrate in the first two chapters. Namely, a frequent cause of philosophical problems is a certain picture (here a ‘simile’) that leads us to ask certain sorts of questions. Wittgenstein illustrates the confusion that results from certain similes by giving an example of an internal dialogue (this isn’t how it is, yet this is how it has to be). The insistence that things must be a certain way is the crux of §113. Here, Wittgenstein is speaking as a traditional philosopher, or perhaps as himself at an earlier period. In each case, he is trying to get to the essence of some issue (if only I could fix my gaze).

This paragraph is followed by a quote from the *Tractatus* in §114, suggesting that the philosopher in §112 may have been Wittgenstein himself. The final line of §114 is revealing since Wittgenstein implies that the essentialism referenced in §§112-114 is misguided. A simile (§112) may have led to the desire to grasp the essence of something, especially in Wittgenstein himself (§113), but in fact we are “merely tracing round the frame” through which we see things. In other words, our philosophical troubles are caused by the insistence that we look at the world a certain way and ask a certain set of
questions. This dialogue can be read as a criticism of Wittgenstein’s own earlier views as well as those of many T-philosophers.

So, even if we interpret §§113-115 as a dialogue it’s not the case that §§109-133 represents a particularly dialogical view of philosophy. While Wittgenstein frequently used dialogical forms in the *Investigations*, it does not follow that the *Investigations* is best read dialogically as a whole. A further problem for Stern’s view is that some of the most striking comments in the philosophy section of the *Investigations* are exact repetitions of comments written in the early 1930’s. Many were re-edited without change throughout the 1930’s and 40’s until the final assembly of the *Investigations*.

The best example of this is the history of §132 and §133 of the *Investigations*. These comments are important because they are longer and appear to be self-contained. Stylistically, they do not appear to be dialogical and they contain what I have argued Wittgenstein thought about both T-philosophy and W-philosophy. Both comments were drafted early in the 1930’s and are first found together in the *Big Typescript*. They then follow each other consecutively (§132, then §133) in all major drafts of

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132. We want to establish an order in our knowledge of the use of language: an order with a particular end in view; one out of many possible orders; not the order. To this end we shall constantly be giving prominence to distinctions which our ordinary forms of language easily make us overlook. This may make it look as if we saw it as our task to reform language. Such a reform for particular practical purposes, an improvement in our terminology designed to prevent misunderstandings in practice, is perfectly possible. But these are not the cases we have to do with. The confusions which occupy us arise when language is like an engine idling, not when it is doing work.

133. It is not our aim to refine or complete the system of rules for the use of our words in unheard-of ways. For the clarity that we are aiming at is indeed complete clarity. But this simply means that the philosophical problems should completely disappear. The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to.---The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring itself in question.---Instead, we now demonstrate a method, by examples; and the series of examples can be broken off.---Problems are solved (difficulties eliminated), not a single problem. There is not a philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies.

135 I presented my interpretation of these comments in Chapter Two (29-32).
Wittgenstein’s work after the early draft in 1936 (MS 142, TS 220, TS 239). Here I’ve presented the main sources for both these comments:

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<td>MS 115 (1933) (Attempted revision of TS 213)</td>
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<td>MS 142 (1936) (Early Draft) (from MS 115 and MS 140, both revisions of TS 213)</td>
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<td>TS 220 (1937-38) (Based on MS 142)</td>
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<td>TS 239 (1942-43) (Revised TS 220)</td>
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In the case of §§132-133, Stern cannot make the case that commentators are reading a particularly ‘new’ view into these comments. They were written by Wittgenstein early in his career and after being assembled into the first draft of the *Investigations* in 1936, remained until the first part of the *Investigations* was completed in 1945. Throughout this time, they were neither changed nor moved around within the *Investigations*.

While Stern does not discuss many of the statements about philosophy in §§109-133, he does comment specifically on §133 and his response is very puzzling. He quotes Stanley Cavell’s response to an earlier series of paragraphs (§89) and applies them to §133 of the *Investigations*. I’ll quote his ‘response’ at length:

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136 I’ve used Baker and Hacker’s index with Von Wright’s catalogue dates. Baker and Hacker, 198. I’ve also indicated in the red when the comments were assembled together. From 1936, they remained in this order.  
137 He does make several comments on various interpretations of §116, §122 and §126, as well as his enigmatic discussion of §133. However, his commentary jumps from comments surrounding §90 to §428! He calls §90-120 a “free indirect discourse” without much discussion (Stern, 132).
“And then appears one of those dashes between sentences in this text, which often mark a moment at which a fantasy is allowed to spell itself out. It continues:

The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which brings itself in question.—Instead, a method is shown by examples; and the series can be broken off.’ (§133c)

Is Wittgenstein fighting the fantasy or granting it? Then the larger dash, and following it:

Problems are solved (difficulties eliminated), not a single problem.’ (§133c)

But again, is this good or bad, illusory or practical? Then finally:

There is not a philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies.’ (§133d).

So something in this philosophical fantasizing turns out to be practical after all, and something that winds up sounding like a self-description of the Investigations. 138

To begin with, this response to §133 is baffling. It is not clear exactly what the commentary on this text even means. Stern earlier states that the ‘fantasy’ is the Tractarian view of a solution to philosophy, but what reason do we have to believe that this is in question here? 139 Cavell’s note that the dash mark signals when the ‘fantasy is allowed to spell itself out’ seems to presume that the text is best read as a dialogue. However, the odd consequence of this is that Wittgenstein’s ‘later’ method by examples (second part of §133c) could take the place in Cavell’s system of the ‘fantasy,’ which Stern had noted was the Tractarian view. It is plainly false to equate the Tractarian view of philosophy with a philosophical method ‘by examples.’

I think Wittgenstein uses dash marks (--) the way most writers use the three dot convention (…). The dash allows him to pause, pose a question, or think. To suggest that the dash marks a change in voice strains many of the paragraphs in the Investigations.

139 Ibid., 131.
particularly in §§109-133. As I’ve just suggested, the text immediately following Stern/Cavell’s first comment then seems to imply that Wittgenstein’s later method is somehow the Tractarian fantasy, a thesis that is clearly incorrect.

A difficulty with Stern’s response is the limited context for these comments. The preceding sentence in §133 states that philosophical problems “should completely disappear.” Although Stern does not directly reference this line, his comments about the ‘fantasy’ being Tractarian imply that he is reading this line as a Tractarian thesis. While Wittgenstein states in the introduction of the *Tractatus* that he believed he had found “the final solution” of the problems of philosophy, it is not clear that Wittgenstein is referencing this view in the *Investigations*.

In §132, Wittgenstein states that we “want to establish an order in our knowledge of the use of language: an order with a particular end in view; one out of many possible orders; not *the* order.” This is strongly contrasted with the Tractarian view of language, in which our clear propositions “show the logical form of reality.” While Wittgenstein sought clarity in the *Investigations*, he certainly does not imply that this is the result of laying the logical form of reality bare. I have suggested in the first two chapters that the ‘end in view’ is the solution of individual philosophical problems, rather than *the* logical ordering that will solve all philosophical problems.

I argued in Chapter One, that we have good reasons to think that the goal of W-philosophy is the dissolution of T-philosophical problems. After Wittgenstein finished the *Tractatus*, he stopped writing T-philosophy, believing he had essentially solved the

140 §§129-133 are all good illustrations of the confusion that would arise from taking the dash marks to indicate a change in voice.
141 *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 4.
142 Ibid., 4.121.
problems of philosophy. Since the Tractarian picture of philosophy was final, I don’t think that it’s being referenced in §133. Here, philosophy is “tormented by questions which bring itself into question.” There is no room for philosophical torment from questions in the Tractarian world, since all the questions have been solved.

I’d like to suggest that the best way to read §133 is as proposing a method to dissolve the problems of T-philosophy. Interestingly, the last line in Stern/Cavell’s commentary seems to support this view. Wittgenstein thought that T-philosophy leads to philosophical puzzles, which makes certain philosophical problems seem to be perennial. Wittgenstein’s method (‘by examples’) is the therapy that allows the W-philosopher to find peace. This method by examples is posed in response to the troubles and torments of philosophy. Again, no such method by examples was evident in Wittgenstein’s Tractatus.

Stern/Cavell goes on to question whether problems being eliminated (not a single problem) is a good or bad thing. As I’ve previously argued, Wittgenstein spent most of his career trying to eliminate problems. I also argued in Chapter Two that the only way to make sense of his direct statements about philosophy being descriptive is to suggest that he held that we ought to avoid confusion. I don’t see how else this statement could be interpreted (that Wittgenstein thought that problems were good?) For now, I think it is enough to say that Stern’s response to §133 is inconclusive at best and certainly does not establish his case that §133 should be read as dialogical.

143 Wittgenstein completed the Tractatus in 1918 and his biographers note that he stopped work in philosophy and from 1919-1926 he taught at various schools in Vienna. By 1920, Wittgenstein had informed Russell that he personally was no longer working to get the Tractatus published and that Russell could do with it what he liked.
144 Perhaps there might be torment in having to remain silent on the things that Wittgenstein thought were most important.
145 What kind of philosophy would Wittgenstein reference that didn’t allow peace and that constantly brought itself into question? The most obvious answer is T-philosophy.
I’ve argued that Stern’s dialogical view of the *Investigations* is internally inconsistent and fails to deal with perhaps the most direct statement of Wittgenstein’s ‘later’ philosophical method (§§132-33). It also fails to account for why Wittgenstein’s comments on philosophy in the *Big Typescript* and *Blue Book* are to be read as ‘doctrinaire’, but the same comments in the *Investigations* are to be read as ‘dialogical.’

As I’ve pointed out, in assembling §§109-133 Wittgenstein drew heavily on the *Big Typescript*, especially when assembling his most direct comments on philosophy. Since the most direct material on philosophy in the *Investigations* was written in the early 1930’s, we have further reason to believe that the views on philosophy in the *Investigations* are those of the ‘later’ Wittgenstein, continuous with the views expressed in his lectures and the *Blue Book*.

Concluding Remarks: The Hertz quotation

I’d like to conclude with a short examination of a quotation that Wittgenstein referenced in several of his writings and conversations. The quotation is from Heinrich Hertz’s introduction to his *Principles of Mechanics* and is important since Wittgenstein stated on several occasions that it ‘summed up philosophy’ for him. The original quotation is the conclusion to a wider discussion about force, but the section that Wittgenstein often referred to is:

146 The fact that critics disagree about how to read certain passages does not itself suggest that these sections are a dialogue.
When these painful contradictions are removed, the question as to the nature of force will not have been answered; but our minds no longer vexed, will cease to ask illegitimate questions.  

The first mention of Hertz appears in 1933, in the *Big Typescript* section on philosophy. Wittgenstein states: “As I do philosophy, its entire task is to shape expression in such a way that certain worries disappear. ((Hertz.))” This is a grand statement about the purpose of philosophy and it supports the view that I have suggested Wittgenstein held throughout his writings.

Several years later Wittgenstein references Hertz again in the *Blue Book* (1933-35) without quoting him directly. In the middle of a discussion he says:

We are only expressing this puzzlement by asking a slightly misleading question, the question: ‘What is...?’ This question is an utterance of unclarity, of mental discomfort, and it is comparable with the question ‘Why?’ as children so often ask it. This too is an expression of a mental discomfort, and doesn’t necessarily ask for either a cause or a reason. (Hertz, *Principles of Mechanics*.)

In the *Blue Book*, Wittgenstein is discussing his own view of the source of our questioning and not a particular solution for it. However, the allusion to Hertz (and what follows) suggests that Wittgenstein thought philosophical questions often arise from conflicting analogies or pictures.

One year later, Wittgenstein writes in the *Brown Book* (1936):

And yet what answer can we expect to this question? It is the form of this question which produces the puzzlement. As Hertz says: “Aber offenbar irrt die Frage in Bezug auf die Antwort, welche sie erwartet” (p. 9, Einleitung, *Die Prinzipien der Mechanik*). The question itself keeps the mind pressing against a blank wall, thereby preventing it from ever finding the outlet. To show a man how

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148 BT, 310. The editors note that the word ‘worries’ has a variant of ‘problems’ in the manuscripts.
149 Blue Book, 26.
150 In the text that follows Wittgenstein discusses the problems that arise when we apply ‘measurement’ in terms of lengths to time (in terms of past, present and future). Wittgenstein suggests that these particular problems can be resolved by talking more about what we mean by ‘measure.’
to get out you have first of all to free him from the misleading influence of the question.\textsuperscript{151}

Here, Wittgenstein specifies that in order to remove a problem or puzzle, we must be able to ‘free’ ourselves from the influence of the question at hand. As I have tried to illustrate in the first chapter, this process involves demonstrating to the puzzled that there is nothing necessary about the question at hand.

Wittgenstein also referenced Hertz several times in public. In 1939, at a meeting of the Moral Sciences Club, the minutes note that:

[Wittgenstein] cited a passage from Hertz’s Principles of Mechanics, in which the latter said that people ask about the essence of matter etc. because a lot of defining criteria have been heaped on these notions, and these criteria are in conflict. This irritates our mind, and makes us ask ‘what is the essence of so and so’? The answer is not given by further criteria, but by giving less criteria. When these contradictions are avoided, the question is not answered, but the mind no longer perplexed ceases to ask it. Dr W said he must confess this passage seemed to sum up philosophy.\textsuperscript{152}

I assume that the ‘defining criteria’ that Wittgenstein mentioned are related to Hertz’s original discussion, but the problem sounds analogous to what Wittgenstein often discussed. Sometimes a conflicting analogy or use of words causes us to ask questions that irritate our mind. By avoiding these contradictions and giving less criteria (instead of more definitions) we are no longer led to ask particular questions. The minutes note that the view expressed by Hertz in the short quotation seemed to ‘sum up philosophy’ for Wittgenstein.

In 1946, Wittgenstein expressed this sentiment again at a meeting of the Moral Sciences Club. The minutes state that:

\textsuperscript{151} Brown Book, 169. The German here reads, “But the very manner in which this question is posed clearly presupposes the wrong sort of answer.” Thanks to Dr. Zucker for finding this translation.  
\textsuperscript{152} WIC, 296.
…he [Wittgenstein] quoted with approval what Hertz said about such questions as, “What is force?” Hertz thought that people ask such questions, but not “What is iron?”, e.g., are [?] the puzzling features of “force”; and when these puzzling features are classified the mind, satisfied, will stop asking the question.153

Here the notes are broken in the middle and we’ve lost the context for this particular conversation. However, the conclusion (the puzzler stops asking a particular question) is the same as earlier occasions.

I noted in the second chapter that during the 1930’s, Wittgenstein never stated that we ought not to ask the sort of questions that led to muddles, he just states that explanations in philosophy lead to philosophical confusions and we ought to avoid confusions. By 1946, Wittgenstein does state that we ought not to ask these sorts of questions:

A question may be answered by either one of two ways: by giving an explicit answer to it, or by showing how the question is a muddled one, and therefore should not have been asked. Philosophical questions are answered in the second way, for the general form of a philosophical question is, I am in a muddle; I don’t know my way…154

This suggests that toward the end of his career, Wittgenstein had perhaps moved toward some form of philosophical quietism.155

Wittgenstein last references Hertz in a late draft of the *Investigations*. He had selected the initial Hertz quotation (in German) to be the motto of the book. However, for the final version of the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein replaced the Hertz motto with a quote from Nestroy: “The trouble about progress is that it always looks greater than it really...

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153 WIC, 404.
154 WIC, 404.
155 This requires more argument and is only a suggestion.
This certainly doesn’t seem to be a repudiation of the sentiment expressed by Hertz, but emphasizes another great concern of Wittgenstein’s; the worth of his work.

The numerous supportive references to the Hertz quotation throughout his career suggest that Wittgenstein held this view right until the last draft of the *Investigations*. The goal of W-philosophy is the removal of problems that vex us. The individual methods (and even questions) vary, but the goal is the same. I’ve argued that we find evidence of this method throughout Wittgenstein’s career and that the best way to interpret §§109-133 of the *Investigations* is as an expression of this method.

Ironically, Wittgenstein’s last edit of his motto is rather ambiguous. It can be interpreted as being a statement of pride or humility. It could be paraphrased, ‘My work represents progress, but it’s not really as great as you think’ (Proud reading). It could also be understood as saying, ‘My personal philosophical progress has not really achieved that much’ (Humble reading). I think this motto is a fitting preface to the final work of the enigmatic philosopher.

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156 Baker and Hacker (2005), 30. This last motto was edited into the manuscript on April 25th, 1947.
Bibliography


