

The most striking feature of Dickerson's interpretation of the Deduction is that it deprives assumptions about self-consciousness and the self of any role in it. According to Dickerson, what Kant means by such terms as 'apperception', 'self-consciousness', and 'the I think' is nothing but the act of cognizing complex objects in one's own representation, and the so-called 'unity of apperception' is always the unity of the represented complex object rather than the unity that representations have insofar as they are all ascribable to one and the same self. Dickerson defends this claim by using it to solve a certain exegetical difficulty with the beginning of section 16 (see 100–106), and then takes it for granted against all further textual evidence. Even if we admit that within the Leibnizian tradition the term 'apperception' or maybe even 'self-consciousness' would not necessarily have to mean some form of self-ascription of representations, it is obvious that Kant's pivotal claims about "the identical self" (B 138; cf. A 108, A 129), the a priori consciousness of the "thoroughgoing identity of ourselves" (A 116; cf. B 408) or the "abiding and unchanging I (of pure apperception)" (A 123) simply do not fit in Dickerson's reading. Dickerson somehow tries to smuggle some notion of the self back into his interpretation by the repeated claim that grasping complex objects in one's own representations results in a consciousness of a "point of view on the world" (105, 110–112, 118, 124), but he does not address the question of what it could mean that the self is such a "point of view," or that a "point of view" retains its identity with respect to all our representations. I think that one should (and could) answer these questions in a way that takes Kant's remarks about the self at face value and is nevertheless compatible with Dickerson's very insightful comparison between the Kantian notion of synthesis and the problem of the unity of the proposition.

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Michael N. Forster, *Wittgenstein on the Arbitrariness of Grammar*.
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When Wittgenstein dismantled the philosophy he had set out in the *Tractatus*, perhaps the greatest casualty was the idea that the structure of any possible language reflects the metaphysical structure of the world, which logical analysis can therefore disclose. This is the idea Wittgenstein expressed when he described logic as "a mirror-image of the world" and when he claimed that the propositions of logic represent "the scaffolding of the world." It led him to say, with a mixture of astonishment and pride, "My work has extended from the foundations of logic to the essence of the world."

Wittgenstein on the Arbitrariness of Grammar is about the ideas with which this "mythology of symbolism"—as Wittgenstein later called it—was replaced. In particular, Forster examines Wittgenstein's concept of grammar post-1929, the ways in which he considered grammar to be "arbitrary" and "nonarbitrary," and his views about the extent to which grammatical or conceptual systems can differ from one another, or from our own. The discussion throughout is lucid, subtle, and intellectually scrupulous. The book is entirely free of the convoluted musings about method we have come to expect in recent Wittgenstein studies—about whether Wittgenstein was resolutely resolute or irresolutely resolute, and how many kinds of nonsense he could talk at once.

Forster begins with a discussion of Wittgenstein's conception of grammar. As he points out, Wittgenstein's use of the word 'grammar' was idiosyncratic. He used it to refer to all of the rules that govern the use of words, not only syntax, and he claimed—in a remark that is diametrically opposed to the essentialism of the *Tractatus*—that "the only correlate in language to an intrinsic necessity is an arbitrary rule." Forster links Wittgenstein's thought about necessity with Kant's in an interesting way, which recalls Hacker's *Insight and Illusion*. But I was not convinced by his claim that Wittgenstein's philosophy can be regarded as a form of idealism since "many fundamental, necessary features of our experience which we are prephilosophically inclined to ascribe to a world independent of our minds— . . . such as the impossibility of two colours being in the same place simultaneously, or the 'fact' that $2 + 2 = 4$ —turn out instead to have their source in our minds" (15).

It is undeniable that there is a striking parallel between Wittgenstein's change of mind and Kant's Copernican revolution. "Thus far," Wittgenstein might have written in the 1930s, "it has been assumed that grammar is a shadow of metaphysics." And he does indeed argue that we cannot explain the necessity of mathematics except by turning this relationship around. Even so, "idealism" is the wrong label. Nowhere does Wittgenstein suggest that reality is mind dependent. It is only the essential lineaments of reality postulated by metaphysicians that he now holds to be a shadow of grammar, not reality itself. And on the question of whether the impossibility of two colors being in

the same place has its source in the world or in the mind, he is deliberately evasive in the very remark Forster appeals to to confirm that he is an idealist: "Do the systems reside in our nature or in the nature of things? How are we to put it? *Not* in the nature of things." If we need a label, "nominalism" is a better one than "idealism." But in fact both labels miss his main concern, and his evasiveness is part of an attempt to change the subject.

Wittgenstein's main concern is to "make a radical break with the idea that language always functions in one way: to convey thoughts, which may be about houses, pains, good and evil, or anything else you please." Needless to say, anything else includes colors and numbers. In Wittgenstein's view, if we think of language as always functioning in this one way, the sentences 'Red and green cannot be in the same place simultaneously' and ' $2 + 2 = 4$ ' will seem to convey thoughts about necessary features of the world. (If we think of all sentences as descriptions, they will seem to describe necessary features of the world.) But if we consider carefully how these sentences are used, we shall see them for what they are—expressions of rules that we have collectively, and for the most part implicitly, devised to regulate the use of words. The impression of representing an unalterable reality, which these sentences can convey, is caused by our own adamant adherence to these rules—or so Wittgenstein argues.

Although he regards Wittgenstein's philosophy as a form of idealism, Forster is sharply critical of the idealist interpretation originally proposed by Bernard Williams and defended by Jonathan Lear. Williams and Lear argue that in his later philosophy, Wittgenstein retains a version of the transcendental solipsism we find in the *Tractatus*, only replacing the individual "I" with the collective "we." Accordingly, his examples of strange communities whose logic and mathematics differ substantially from ours are not intended to reveal the contingency of our concepts, customs, and worldview; on the contrary, they are supposed to show that any attempt to conceive of alternatives to them are bound to fail.

Forster argues at length that the Williams/Lear interpretation is completely at odds with Wittgenstein's intentions. Wittgenstein, he argues, meant to show that "in all areas of our grammar, alternatives are either actual or at least possible and conceivable" (3). Forster calls this "the diversity thesis," and the second part of the book is devoted to exploring it in detail, both from the point of view of exegesis and as a substantial and contentious claim in its own right. Forster is only partly successful here. He argues convincingly (against Williams and Lear) that Wittgenstein fully accepted the diversity thesis. (However, he also held that some rules of grammar, such as the law of noncontradiction, are definitive of thinking and reasoning and therefore cannot be abandoned except at the cost of abandoning thinking and reasoning.) For example, Forster rightly points out that when Wittgenstein says of his imaginary wood sellers—who set the price of a pile of wood according to the area it covers, regardless of how much wood the pile contains—that they have "a quite dif-

ferent system of payment from us" (112), he does not mean that they have no system at all. (Whether the story is really intelligible is another matter. Forster—rightly again, in my view—doubts whether it is.)

However, he also argues that, according to Wittgenstein, we cannot *understand* concepts or systems of concepts that differ radically from our own—a view that Forster himself does not accept. Wittgenstein, he maintains, held that "we can never understand an alternative grammar" because "understanding a grammatical principle requires *commitment* to it . . . [and this] must be exclusive of alternative grammatical principles" (60). But he does not provide convincing textual evidence for this interpretation or explain clearly what Wittgenstein meant by "commitment"—on the one, or at most two, occasions in 1930 when he spoke of a commitment associated with the use of a word—so that we can see why "commitment" limits our intellectual scope in this way. And besides, Wittgenstein says explicitly that we *can* imagine concepts that are "essentially different" from our own (Zettel, § 388) and that the formation of concepts "different from the usual ones" becomes intelligible as soon as we "imagine certain very general facts of nature to be different from what we are used to" (*Philosophical Investigations*, p. 230).

Apart from the two points of interpretation I have challenged, my only serious complaint is that Forster does not compare Wittgenstein's views with Quine's (as Hanjo Glock has done), with Kuhn's (as Vasso Kindi has done), with Davidson's (as Hacker has done), or with Gadamer's, which he mentions at the very end of the book. It is of course unfair for a reviewer to complain that the author wrote his own book rather than a different one. At the same time, this is a major topic in twentieth-century philosophy and one that attracted philosophers with quite different interests and commitments. A comparative dimension would have added substantially to the book's value and possibly its readership as well. However, I do not want to detract from the interest and importance of this book. It is a fine piece of scholarship on a fascinating topic, it is argued with subtlety and care, and it is unusual in being both sympathetic to Wittgenstein's ideas and critical of them.

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