University Press, 1963); for criticisms of Almond and Verba, see Alasdair MacIntyre "The Essential Contestability of Some Social Concepts" *Ethics* 84 (1973) 1-9; Edward N. Muller and Mitchell A. Seligson, "Civic Culture and Democracy: The Question of Causal Relationships" *American Political Science Review* 88 (1994): 635-52.

    8.   Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

    9.   George Will "Conservatism and Character" in his *The Morning After* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), pp. 365-68, p. 365.

    10.   See Murray, *op. cit.*, pp. 103ff. In these passages, Murray relies upon Adolph A. Berle, Jr. *Power Without Property* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1959), pp. 98-116, where the issue of legitimacy is more explicitly addressed than in his own discussion.

Wittgenstein: A Religious Point of View?, by **Norman Malcolm,** edited with a response by Peter Winch. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994. Pp. xi and 140. $30.50 (Cloth).

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This work of Norman Malcolm is more a lengthy essay than a book. It was, according to Peter Winch's "Preface," Malcolm's last complete piece of philosophical work before his death. Winch believes that Malcolm did want it published, but that he would have worked on it more before submitting it. Because of its length, about 94 pages, the publisher requested that Winch add commentary in order to bring it to book length. In his commentary, Winch has "sharp disagreements" with Malcolm's claims. I will not discuss those disagreements in this review. I will say that Winch's commentary adds the aspect of an on-going philosophical dialogue to the book and that his objections seem carefully made, accurate, and strong. Nevertheless, Malcolm's thesis is quite interesting, and I would not have him withdraw it for Winch's objections.

    Malcolm, then, has written another book on themes in his teacher's work. This one compares Wittgenstein's thinking to the kind of thinking that religious people do when actually living and talking in "a religious point of view." According to Malcolm, this is meant to be an analogy. It is not that Wittgenstein takes up religious themes or discusses religious language. Rather, there is something about his thought that reminds Malcolm of the way in which religious people think. Malcolm then interprets the following remark of Wittgenstein according to his understanding and comparison of how religious people think to Wittgenstein's philosphy. The remark is quoted from a conversation with M. O'C. Drury: "I am not a religious man but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view" (Rush Rhees editor, *Ludwig Wittgenstein, Personal Recollections*, p. 94). Malcolm's question is: What did Wittgenstein mean by this remark?

    A quick glance at the book would seem to indicate that the subject matter was Wittgenstein's philosophy of language. After a chapter in which Malcolm puts Wittgenstein forward as having said or written certain things which show that he was in fact thoughtful about religion, the

remaining chapters appear to discuss non-religious subject matter such as the picture theory of meaning, language-games, essences as meaning, and Chomsky's theory of how we generate grammar. But this apparent subject matter is really in the service of another hypothesis. That hypothesis is complex. It invloves: 1) that Wittgenstein's work on language reflects his understanding that philosophical explanations come to an end somewhere; and 2) that Wittgenstein thought that religious people also looked at their world from this point of view. A religious point of view, that is, would be one that, like Wittgenstein's, acknowledged a terminus in its accounts.

A terminus in a religious point of view might be seen in the following. When a tragedy strikes in a religious person's life, he or she *might* be calmed later with the thought that it was God's will. This should be regarded as a response or an attitude as opposed to an explanation. A religious response to a tragedy is not an hypothesis developed and tested which aims at explaining why such a thing happened. There is, to be sure, a question: Why did this happen?, which has the grammatical form of the question calling for an explanation. But it is more of an outcry than a philosophical question. The conception of a religious response involves that a demand for an explanation from God is meaningless or presumptuous. Malcolm writes: "There is a religious attitude which would regard as meaningless, or ignorant, or presumptuous, any demand for God's reason or justification, or any attempt to explain why He willed, or permitted, this disaster to occur" (2). He goes on to relate the story of Job as an illustration of this point. Job rejects the logic of his accusers who hear the question: "Why did this happen?" as a calling for an explanation of the mind of God. By contrast Malcolm claims that the story of Job "shows that the notion of there being a *reason* for His deeds has no application to God; nor the notion of there being a *justification* or *explanation* for God's actions" (3).

It is by way of an analogy to this religious attitude that Malcolm puts forward such views of Wittgenstein as language-games and forms of life. In the chapter "The Essence of Language," Malcolm reviews Wittgenstein's discovery of language-games as a way through the confusions of the *Tractatus* in which he sought an explanation to meaning. The language-game shows that there is no general form of propositions as he had supposed in the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein later realized that propositions are not the only form of language. He also came to understand that propositions do not have a logical essence—a picture—as their meaning. The same is true for the meaning of a word. The meaning of a word is not an essence—a mental object. What do all cases of the uses of a word have in common? "Don't think but look!" Look at the language-games and see what the similarities and differences are. In the language-games, one sees all there is to see. There is no further hidden essence. "Nothing is hidden." In this sense language-games may be seen as what brings the felt need for an explanation to a stop. There is no further explanation of the meaning of a word or sentence than the language-game in which it is used.

In the chapter "Failed Explanations," Malcolm provides a half-dozen

examples from Wittgenstein's thought of how philosophical explana-
tions fail when they explain what does not need an explanation. In phi-
losophy we are smitten by puzzlements which seem to call for explana-
tions where none is really needed. The resulting explanations are confu-
sions based on confusion. One such example, Malcolm believes, is
Noam Chomsky's theory that "the mastering of a language is due to the
innate possession of the grammar of all possible languages" (72). This
theory is the result of the question: How is it possible that we can learn
a language? This question arises out of the awe felt in considering the
fact that babies cannot speak but seven-year-olds can chatter. What
explains this ability to learn a language? Is it a capacity? —an imprint-
ing and associating of ideas? It is a basic fact that human children do
learn to speak a language. What further explanation could there be?
Could learning a language be a kind of miracle? One might explain how
a child came to know the word 'chair' or "red," but this would not satis-
fy the felt need to erase the awe expressed by the question. Notice that
any explanation of that would come in a language. The latter is an
insight into the queerness of the question.

Another example of failed explanations is the theory of memory,
based in a materialist conception of mind, which explains "that memory
and recognition would be magical without the existence of physiological
memory traces" (72). This theory, of course, is one that Malcolm himself
spent much effort to expose as confused. Again, the feeling of awe or
the sense that such a thing would be magic is at the source of the ques-
tion. The felt puzzlement is expressed in the question: How is it possi-
ble for us to remember? But it is simply a remarkable fact about humans
that we remember. Could memory too be a kind of miracle? We are still
inclined to ask if there must not be a single physiological event in the
brain which corresponds to some particular memory—the cause of the
effect. Otherwise we have magic—a mental event with no cause. In this
connection, Malcolm quotes one of Wittgenstein's most radical and
mind-clearing remarks: "Why shouldn't there be a psychological regu-
larity to which no physiological regularity corresponds? If this over-
throws our conceptions of causality, then it is time they were over-
thrown" (Zettel #610). Here Wittgenstein shows no respect for what he
regards as the tyranny of science. Malcolm's point is that such a lack of
respect comes from seeing everything from what Wittgenstein calls "a
religious point of view."

A religious point of view, whatever else it is, is one that sees the hand
of God in everyday life. Kierkegaard describes the knight of faith as one
who believes that God is concerned with the details of life. The philoso-
pher's god, by contrast, is a nameless abstraction. The God of Abraham
has a covenant with Abraham and his children. How is this thinkable?
How is it possible that from a religious point of view one sees the pres-
ence of the eternal in the finite? A religious point of view is not a philo-
sophical explanation to this puzzle. However, a religious point of view,
if apprehended philosophically, acknowledges and preserves this para-
dox—the presence of God in everyday life. It is only from a religious
point of view that a miracle can be seen. Seeing a miracle is seeing the

hand of God in the ordinary. A secular point of view sees the ordinary as explainable soley in terms of science. It is Wittgenstein's critical attitude toward science of the sort reflected in the remark about memory traces which makes him the natural ally of the religious point of view. Malcolm's book grasps this attitude by focusing on the concept of the terminus of explanations and the failure of explanations which excede the terminus.

In 1949, Wittgenstein, at Malcolm's invitation, taught a seminar and led discussions at Cornell. Malcolm also had invited his undergraduate teacher O.K. Bouwsma to Cornell that summer. Bouwsma walked and talked with Wittgenstein then and over the next two years. Upon showing his diary of those talks to Malcolm, Malcolm wrote the following in response to a story about Wittgenstein's surprise at an iron mesh bridge they had crossed: "I like ... his striking comment that in order to understand the Mormons a certain obtuseness is required—like needing big shoes to cross a bridge with cracks in it! This latter seems to me a most penetrating image." Malcolm saw in this story the same idea of terminus and paradox. The combination of the iron mesh and the big shoes is the terminus for Malcolm. It is possible to cross the bridge if one ignores the holes. The Mormon's faith, like all religious faith, requires a certain obtuseness in order not to ask questions calling for an explanation for the presence of God in the ordinary.

I am willing to ignore in this book whatever Malcolm wrote of Wittgenstein that is simplified or overly direct or even mistaken in order to have him present this comparison of elements of Wittgenstein's work to a religious point of view. There could be other interesting interpretations of Wittgenstein's remark. Malcolm's interpretation, however, is penetrating in the same way he thought Wittgenstein's remark about the bridge penetrating. I, for one, am appreciative of the stimulus he has provided those of us captivated by Wittgenstein's philosophical work.