

along similar lines.) Hanfling announces near the beginning of the book that his primary intention is to "get you thinking"; I am sure the text will accomplish at least that much, and that is all to the good.

— William G. Lycan

Philosophy of Language. Prepared by Oswald Hanfling. Bletchley, Bucks, G.B.: Open University Press, 1971. Vol. I, 68 pp., \$3.00, paperbound. Vol. II, 44 pp., \$3.25, paperbound.

These two booklets provide the basis for the introduction to the Philosophy of Language in the Open University's course on the Problems of Philosophy. In this section of the course, the later Wittgenstein's views on language receive careful scrutiny, with the *Blue and Brown Books* serving as the focus of attention. The central theme the booklets try to develop is Wittgenstein's attack on the view that "there is something there behind the use of words which explains how that use is regulated—some basic principle, or some relationship between things, or between things and words." (p. 33, II) Towards developing this theme, they examine, in turn, Wittgenstein's doubts about the picture theory, his views about language-learning, his attack on mentalistic theories of meaning, his account of the relationship between meaning and use, his notion of family resemblance, and his account of the rule-governed nature of language.

The format of the booklets usually involves a brief introduction to some topic in the philosophy of language; then the student is directed to passages in the *Blue and Brown Books* where the topics receive detailed attention. The body of the text is concerned to explain and develop the points raised in these passages. A variety of different tools are

employed—study questions, self-assessment tests, cartoons, diagrams, and philosophical dialogues. The result is a stimulating guide to the *Blue and Brown Books*, one that demands a great deal of the student but repays his efforts with a wide-ranging grasp of the later Wittgenstein's approach to problems in the philosophy of language.

What I find most remarkable about these booklets is their masterful pedagogy. They are clearly written and extremely well organized. Beginning with fairly elementary issues, the booklets work their way into progressively more difficult material. As I have suggested, they employ a wide variety of non-standard teaching techniques; but unlike the tricks and gimmicks of the "relevant" texts, these techniques are really effective. Cartoons aren't irrelevant exercises of the imagination; they actually succeed in providing *intelligent* illustrations of important points. The study questions don't call for boring regurgitation, nor do they recommend flights of non-philosophical fancy; they probe the student's understanding of Wittgenstein and deepen it. The dialogues may not always represent the highest in literary accomplishment; but they do an admirable job of clarifying the nature of various philosophical disputes about language; and, in the process, they exhibit the dialectical dimension of philosophical thinking.

The booklets were designed to meet the very special needs of the Open University, and there can be little doubt about their success in that context. Moving the booklets to a different educational environment might occasion some difficulty. The problem is that the booklets cover their material almost too well. Where the aim was merely to explain Wittgenstein's views on language, the teacher of a standard lecture course might be embarrassed to find that the booklets do too much of

the work for him. The booklets would, however, prove useful in a course where one wanted to assume a basic understanding of Wittgenstein's views on language; and they would be just the thing to recommend to the student who wants to work through Wittgenstein on his own.

But while the booklets do a splendid job of introducing the later Wittgenstein's view on language, they have a couple of shortcomings. For one thing, they are concerned almost exclusively with Wittgenstein's views about the nature of language; consequently, they tend to approach the *Blue and Brown Books* in something of a piecemeal fashion. The student is directed to read three pages here, four pages there, and two pages there again. Inevitably the integrity of the text is compromised in this "bits and snatches" approach. For another, the author never manages to gain much critical distance from the text. Wittgenstein's views are seldom criticized and never seriously. Occasionally, the author invites the student to depart from the text and disagree with Wittgenstein; but the invitation is only half-hearted, and, in any case, it's clear that the student accepts it only at his own risk.

These are shortcomings we shouldn't overlook, but given the overall quality of the booklets, it is tempting to do so anyway.

— Michael J. Loux

Other Minds. Prepared by Godfrey Vesey. Bletchley, Bucks, G.B.: Open University Press, 1971. Pp. 50. \$3.25, paperbound.

Godfrey Vesey has prepared for the The Open University series on problems of philosophy an interesting monograph concerning the problem of our knowledge of other minds. It is a companion piece to his filmed

discussion of the problem with A. J. Ayer, which is also available in the Open University series. While the film is relatively elementary, the booklet gives Vesey scope to provide a sophisticated critique of both the problem and its traditional "solution," the argument from analogy.

His discussion is divided into nine sections, varying from two pages to ten pages in length. A sprinkling of pictures of the philosophers discussed, drawings, and cartoon illustrations enliven the text. Vesey begins by pointing out that philosophers have become disenchanted with the argument from analogy as a solution to the epistemological question about our knowledge of the thoughts and feelings of others because there is a prior difficulty about the *meaning* of psychological words that the argument cannot handle. If we assume that statements which refer to experiences have meaning for me in virtue of my having learned to associate experience-words, such as "pain" and "sadness", with *my* experiences, then how can I attach a meaning to statements which refer to the experiences of others? It may seem possible for me to understand the idea of pain in others on analogy with my having pains, but Vesey argues that this is itself analogous to trying to understand what it means to say that it is afternoon on the sun on analogy with its being afternoon on the earth. "Having learnt that 'pain' means *this*, what on earth can I mean when I say there is pain in the absence of this?"

Vesey then critically examines what he takes to be the presuppositions of "the meaning problem," especially the idea that feeling-words get their meaning by naming essentially private "objects" known only to each subject. He traces this idea back to a "basically Cartesian framework of thought about what a person is." "If my body is not essential to my existence then I must be able to understand what thoughts and