

present is fatigued, burdened or ill'. What is under discussion here is precisely not the illness or absence of one or other, but the presence and wish to make love of *both*. Does the wish to make love become a mere urge to genital satisfaction because it is the wrong time of the month? And while many couples do have to endure long absences, what seems to be hardest from this point of view is not the absence itself, but the occasion when they are re-united outside the safe period (especially if the reunion has to be a short one). As I have said, all this does not make contraception right *if it is wrong*, but there is nothing base, or selfish, or out of control in finding it agonizingly difficult; and the tensions that can result in a marriage are very real, and not surely to be dismissed as merely failures in 'control'. It is, in any case,

an extraordinary over-simplification to lump together the control required because of the absence of one's partner, that required because of consideration for his or her feelings or state of health, and that demanded of both partners together in the practice of periodic continence. They are three very different things, and to see them as the same is to cloud the issue hopelessly. It is also out of keeping with the humanity and clarity of so much that the author himself has to say.

This is a curate's egg of a book – but if one reader's reactions are anything to judge by, it should certainly fulfill its author's hopes that it may 'perhaps contribute something to a final solution'.

ROSEMARY SHEED

WITTGENSTEIN AND MODERN PHILOSOPHY by Justus Hartnack, translated by Maurice Cranston, *Methuen & Co., 21s.*

This study by the Professor of Philosophy at Aarhus University, Denmark, is meant 'to give a general survey of Wittgenstein's thought, considering both the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*, and also to give some account of the influence which these two very different books have exercised' (ix). In general, it will be a useful introduction for someone untrained in modern philosophy. I should, however, warn the reader that in its earlier portions, the author has in some respects misrepresented Wittgenstein.

After a 'Biographical Introduction' (1–7), he proceeds to an exposition of the central themes of the *Tractatus* (8–35), and here he sometimes fails to show how Wittgenstein's doctrines hang together. Thus we read 'one elementary proposition cannot contradict another elementary proposition' (14), and on the very next page: 'He also holds that the constituent elements of the world, what he calls "states of affairs" are logically independent of one another. . . . Hence, as Wittgenstein himself pointed out, a proposition that denies an elementary proposition is not itself an elementary proposition'. 'A "state of affairs" is a fact that in itself does not consist of facts' (13); how then are we to understand that 'a state of affairs is a combination of possible facts' (ib.)? Wittgenstein 'did not think there was any need to construct a new language because he held that there is only one language. From a logical point of view, all languages are one language, one language with respect to the

logical conditions they must satisfy' (11). How is this compatible with Hartnack's confrontation of the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*: 'According to the earlier work, a proposition may be in a correct or an incorrect form, according to the later work, a proposition has neither a correct nor an incorrect form . . .' (63)? Hartnack sums up the account of language in the *Philosophical Investigations* thus: 'Every sentence is, as Wittgenstein puts it, "in order as it is"' (62). But, unfortunately, Wittgenstein is here quoting from the *Tractatus* (5.5563).

This positive attitude towards ordinary language, however, does not prevent the *Tractatus* from postulating absolutely simple objects. Hartnack fails to consider the bearing on ontology which Wittgenstein assigns to logic in this question (13, esp. fn. 3). In other respects, too, the picture theory of language does not get a fair treatment: 'To say that an elementary sentence is a model or picture of a state of affairs is to say, among other things, that a state of affairs exists' (14); but further on we learn: 'A picture is still a picture whether it depicts a truly existing fact or only a possible fact' (17). What Wittgenstein says is that a picture *depicts reality* truly or falsely, but the *states of affairs* it *represents* 'it represents independently of its truth or falsity' (cf. 2.17, 2.22, 4.031). The author finds it 'hard to see why one proposition should not be able to state anything about the logical form of another proposition' (21–22). But this is a consequence of the picture theory: that alone

which could also not be the case can be pictured (a picture in colours cannot say *that*, but only *how*, certain objects are coloured); but the logical form of a proposition is precisely what is necessarily given when its elements are given: their meanings determine their logical forms and thereby that of the proposition.

Wittgenstein assumes a radical distinction between the internal properties of an object, unalterable and constituting its essence, and its external properties, which alone are capable of being predicated of the object by propositions. This central idea is touched upon (18–19), but the author fails to point out its relevance to the distinction between what can be said and what can only be shown (20–23). If Wittgenstein himself succeeds in communicating something that can only show itself – so much the worse for the picture theory. There is no escape in maintaining that ‘to be nonsensical is not to be incomprehensible’ (23); for what cannot be said cannot be thought either, as Hartnack himself says (44).

His criticism of Wittgenstein’s account of general propositions in the *Tractatus* is based on a misapprehension of material implication and does not show up the real errors of this account. It is misleading to say that ‘logical necessity or logical impossibility are not determined by the world, by what is ‘depicted’, but by what “depicts”, namely, the proposition’ (28). The view expressed in the *Tractatus* is that in tautologies (logical propositions) the (necessary) logical form of reality itself expresses itself, whereas the (contingent) structure of a state of affairs is represented by the structure of a (meaningful) proposition. A confusion in this vital point (29) is regrettable. ‘It is only about facts that anything can be said . . . But one can say nothing about the universe as a whole, for the universe is the totality of facts, and it cannot without paradox (cf. Russell’s theory of types) be maintained that the totality of fact is itself a fact’ (32–33). In the first place, according to Wittgenstein, we cannot say anything about facts (only about objects); and secondly, Wittgenstein is bound to say, even, that the world, the totality of facts, is itself a fact, since any combination of facts is a fact (the reference to Russell suggests that Hartnack takes the universe to be the *class* of all facts). *That* there is a world, on the other hand, is not a fact; and therefore, it cannot be said, either. All metaphysical propositions are of this kind, and therefore they are meaningless. This is a result of the picture theory, and there is no need to squeeze a verification principle out

of the *Tractatus*, as Hartnack does in his third chapter ‘The *Tractatus* and Logical Positivism’ (39–42).

Chapter IV *The Philosophical Investigations* and chapter V *Contemporary Philosophical Investigations*, which constitute the remainder of the book, seem to me more valuable and freer from mistakes. Hartnack here deals with the later Wittgenstein’s ‘conception of language as so many language-games (rather than a picture of facts); his theory that language can serve many different purposes – describing, commanding, asking, appointing, etc., as well as naming – and that the meaning of a word is governed by the language-game in which it figures; his argument that philosophical problems are rooted in misunderstandings of the type of language-game in which a particular word occurs: all this, as we have seen, leads to his claim that the proper business of philosophy is to remove these misunderstandings by elucidating the correct language-game in which such words are used’ (87). He repeatedly – and rightly – points out Wittgenstein’s radical change in attitude to language and philosophy. But one should not forget that important features are shared by the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*. The chief concept of the *Tractatus*, e.g., that of logical form, has survived in the logical use of such words as ‘can’, ‘cannot’, etc. in the *Investigations*: ‘Only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it. In one way this is wrong, and in another nonsense’ (para 246). In so far as it is nonsense it is an attempt to express an analytical necessary truth about my pain; and is called a grammatical proposition by Wittgenstein (para 251; cf. paras 248, 252). Hartnack’s examples do not always clarify: ‘I see there is a table in the room’ (84) is, precisely, *not* a typical example of a proposition which admits of a mistake, as opposed to one like ‘I am in pain’ which does not.

Wittgenstein’s influence on contemporary philosophers is illustrated by reference to Ryle’s inquiries into the categorial status of certain mental concepts, such as vanity or attention (*The Concept of Mind*); Strawson’s distinction between the meaningfulness of a sentence, and its having a truth-value when used as a statement (*On Referring*); Hart’s theory of ‘defeasible’ concepts, such as murder or my property, concepts which have no positive, and an infinity of negative, criteria of applicability (*The Ascription of Responsibilities and Rights*); and Urmson’s paper *On Grading*, which argues that ‘good’ signifies neither a set of properties varying

according to its use, nor a non-natural property, but is irreducibly a 'grading label'.

There are two topics dealt with shortly in this fifth chapter which may be of special interest for theology. First, Hartnack considers 'performatory utterances' (cf. Austin, *Other Minds*), like 'I swear that . . .', which effect what they seem to state (115–116). It might be useful to ask how far the words spoken at the administration of a sacrament are of this kind ('I baptize you . . .'). Secondly, he mentions Geach's paper *Russell's Theory of Description*, which deals with what he calls 'the fallacy of many questions'. 'Suppose somebody is asked if he is happier since his wife's death. In order for a man to be able to answer this question with a yes or no, two other questions must already have been answered affirmatively, namely, whether he has been married and whether his wife is dead. If the answers to these questions are negative, the answer to the original question is neither yes or no, because that question cannot be asked at all' (110–111). Now, there seem to be relevant

questions about statements of faith which have some resemblance to the question about the dead wife. It is agreed that the fathers of the Council of Trent did not intend to canonize Aquinas' philosophy when they defined the chapters and canons on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. But one may still ask the question: 'Did those fathers intend to imply in their definitions *some* philosophy (the one presupposed in a meaningful use of such terms as "substantia" or "species"), or did they not?' This question seems to imply an alternative. But there is no real alternative unless we can give an affirmative answer to the question: Did those fathers (even implicitly) realize that there was such an alternative? (And we must not think that the religious beliefs of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries may not be liable to future interpretations whose possibility or impossibility are not prejudged even by our tacit assumptions.)

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MAN AND SIN by Piet Schoonenberg, S.J., Eng. trans. Joseph Donceel, S.J. *Sheed and Ward*, 1965. pp. ix + 205, 12s 6d.

' . . . within our evolutionary view of the world and of man Christ's first function is that of fulfilling. This is sometimes so strongly emphasized that little attention remains for his other functions: restoration, salvation, and the destruction of sin. Such oneness is one of the few things which may not be charged against the present book' (p. 194). Sad to say, it is precisely this sort of charge which must be levelled against this attempt of the Nijmegen dogma professor to confront the theology of sin with the world view offered by Teilhard de Chardin, whose influence is apparent throughout. Clearly the acceptance of an evolutionary (which is not to say a Teilhardian) world picture makes imperative a reconsideration of the scope and significance of the Church's teaching on original sin, for example in the meaning of the 'state of innocence' as a historical state; *Humani Generis* too by the very caution of its wording seems to invite theologians to examine again the relation between the universality and transmission by propagation of original sin and the biological history of mankind. The suggestions put forward here, however, seem to entail too many further difficulties really to point the way forward.

In the first half of the book Schoonenberg considers sin in the individual, first in its essence and

then in its results. He makes a number of worthwhile points. His threefold distinction of sins into Sin unto death, Mortal sin and Venial sin is a timely warning against the increasingly common opinion that it is almost impossible to commit a mortal sin. The still not uncommon practice of allocating degrees of seriousness to sins solely on the basis of gravity of matter (despite what even the Penny Catechism has to say) is corrected by the author's insistence on sin as the negative response from the heart of a free person to the offer of God's grace, a response that may take shape more or less adequately in external behaviour. Most welcome is the contention that sin may often be a matter more of refusing to help in establishing and building up new norms of moral behaviour, of eluding one's responsibility for shaping the future of society, of being anti-historical, than of refusing to toe the line of ready-made norms. Much of this first half, though, is frankly dull.

It is in the third and fourth chapters that the book becomes exciting. Here is its real theme, the explicitation of the Biblical concept of the sin of the world and the ecclesiastical concept of original sin. Central to the discussion is the notion of *situation*, 'the totality of the circumstances in which somebody . . . stands at a certain