Radical Philosophy Thirteen
Winch, Wittgenstein and Marxism

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A Introduction

This paper suffers from a certain 'instability' deriving from its having been written some years ago, and then substantially modified more recently to serve quite different purposes. This modification has, unfortunately, been insufficiently thorough, although the instability of the paper may be itself of some interest.

The work for the original paper was produced in the late '60s, in a context of extensive political radicalisation of 'intellectual' youth in the advanced capitalist countries, and also in the Eastern Block. The realisation of the complicity of the US intellectual establishment in the imperialist war against Vietnam was of particular significance. It led, both in the USA and in Britain, to students questioning not only the social relationships within which 'knowledge' was 'transmitted' in the universities and colleges, but also the very content of that knowledge. In this, philosophy students were no exception and attempts were made to establish precisely what was the social/political significance of philosophy. The dominant tendencies of 'linguistic philosophy' and 'linguistic analysis' at that time were not always clearly distinguished, and those on the neo-Marxist left tended to reject the whole of their philosophy curricula as 'bourgeois ideology'. Either, following Marcuse, linguistic philosophy was conceived as merely a new variant of empiricism, so that it could be subjected to the already well-established general critique of empiricism, or, following Perry Anderson, Wittgenstein and other linguistic philosophers were regarded as professional defenders of the conceptual status-quo, and so as, intentionally or not, politically conservative. In that general context, I wrote this paper in order to defend what I considered to be genuinely intellectually liberating aspects of Wittgenstein's philosophy against this tendency to submerge its particular characteristics into an ill-defined and amorphous 'bourgeois culture'. It was also my objective to indicate a path from Wittgenstein to Marx which could be followed, I thought, without turning away from some of the central philosophical advances present in Wittgenstein's work.

Since I wrote the original paper there have appeared several defences (or partial defences) of Wittgenstein from a leftist and even Marxist standpoint by academic philosophers on the left. It therefore now seems to me to be necessary to conduct a series of distinct investigations:

(i) What, if anything, justified the original dismissal of Wittgenstein as a 'bourgeois philosopher'?
(ii) What, if anything, is in the more recent attempts to uncover a 'progressive' Wittgenstein and connect him with Marx?
(iii) Can we use the answers to these questions to achieve a more reliable and objective assessment of the place of Wittgenstein in British intellectual history?

In the course of these investigations, I hope, some steps are made towards the development of an adequate conception of ideology - a conception which would, in my view, be a necessary condition of any satisfactory situating of Wittgenstein's work in its social and intellectual context. The present paper, then, is to be understood as simultaneously an exercise in critical history of ideas and an attempt at conceptual analysis and production.

B The Effects of Wittgenstein's work: the case of Peter Winch

In order to conduct the first investigation - 'What justified the rejection of Wittgenstein as a bourgeois philosopher?' - it is necessary to distinguish the philosophical achievements present in Wittgenstein's work from the assimilation/appropriation of Wittgenstein's work by British intellectual culture - particularly in the fields of philosophy, ethics and sociology. To quote the Italian philosopher, Rossi-Landi: 'Don't look for the meaning of a philosopher, look for his use: the meaning of a philosopher is his use in a culture.'

I want to argue that in the particular case of Wittgenstein there are important differences between the meaning of the philosopher and his use in the culture. To illustrate this point I shall consider one text only: Peter Winch's Idea of a Social Science. My argument will be that the general methodology of the social studies which Winch argues for in The Idea is not only misconceived on its own account, but more importantly for present purposes, that quite opposite methodological conclusions for the social sciences can be drawn from a development of aspects of Wittgenstein's work which Winch

1 N. Chomsky, American Power and the New Mandarins, Pelican, 1969
2 H. Marcuse, One Dimensional Man, Sphere Books, 1968, Ch. 7
3 F. Anderson, 'Components of the National Culture' (originally in NLR50 and reprinted in Student Power, ed. R. Blackburn)
4 See, for instance, Tony Manser, The End of Philosophy: Marx and Wittgenstein, Inaugural Address, Univ. of Southampton, 1973; John Moran 'Wittgenstein and Russia', NLR73; K T Fann, 'Wittgenstein and Bourgeois Philosophy', RP8; Also relevant are E. Burke, 'Wittgenstein's Conservatism', RP10; and the contributions by Richard Norman and Tony Skillen to RPI
5 F. Rossi-Landi, 'Per un uso Marxiano di Wittgenstein', trans. Prof. Tony Manser. I am greatly indebted to Tony Manser both for his translation, and for the stimulation of his excellent inaugural address on Marx and Wittgenstein.
neglects.

Winch represents his task in The Idea as extending Wittgenstein's treatment of the notion of 'following a rule' from the analysis of linguistic meaning to forms of interaction other than speech - to non-linguistic social actions and interactions which can nevertheless be said to have a symbolic character. In this way, it should be possible to develop a conception of sociological understanding along the same lines as Wittgenstein's conception of what it is to 'understand the meaning of' in connection with linguistic meaning. Already there are difficulties with this method of procedure:

(i) 'Social action' is not, generally, taken as the sole object of knowledge in the social studies. Winch seems to suppose that it must be without justifying his assumption.

(ii) It can not be correct for Winch to characterize this task as extending the application of Wittgenstein's treatment of linguistic meaning to 'forms of social interaction other than speech', since Wittgenstein's account of linguistic meaning already involves the concept of social action: 'I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the 'language-game'.' (P. I, Part 1, §7)

and

'Here the term "language-game" is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life.' (P. I, Part 1, §23)

We should rather view Winch as offering a further elucidation of Wittgenstein's conception of meaning by developing the notions of language-game and form of life beyond their rather primitive and gestural status in Wittgenstein's own work.

(iii) Winch, without ever making it explicit, presupposes the validity of the argument: Social actions are meaningful. The social studies aim at the understanding of social action. Therefore: 'Understanding' in the social studies is understanding of the meanings of social actions.

Of course, the argument, once explicitly formulated, can be clearly seen to be invalid, but Winch's whole project of using Wittgenstein's work to shed light on the proper method in the social studies depends upon it.

My main purpose in this section is to examine Winch's presentation of the implications of Wittgenstein's philosophy for the methods of the social studies. I shall try to show (1) that these implications, as presented by Winch are, indeed, intellectually and politically conservative. It is, perhaps, 'appropriations' of Wittgenstein's work such as Winch attempts which formed the basis (such as it was) for a rejection of Wittgenstein's work itself as 'conceptual conservatism'. (2) I shall try to show that there are elements in Wittgenstein's work which could form the basis of a methodology for the social studies quite other than that proposed by Winch, and having none of the latter's conservative implications. It would be a methodology, indeed, having much in common with a certain way of understanding Marx's method. Such a presentation of Wittgenstein's work may be thought to justify more recent claims to the discovery of a 'progressive Wittgenstein'.

(1) I suggested above that implicit in Winch's position was the assumption that to understand a social action was to understand the meaning of that social action. I shall begin by outlining a conception of what it is to 'understand the meaning of' which (a) is present explicitly or implicitly in much of the argumentation of The Idea and which (b) would carry, as implications of its being, accepted as the only conception of sociological understanding, some of Winch's most extreme and controversial methodological prescriptions. The proposition '2 x 2 = 4' is a meaningful arithmetical proposition. Let us suppose that a teacher wishes to discover whether a pupil understands the meaning of the proposition. Perhaps he may do this by getting the pupil to carry out various movements with pairs of counters or other objects on a desk, maybe by getting him/her to carry out other arithmetical exercises involving the use of 'x' and '=' signs, as well as the numerals 1-4. Consistent success in these exercises will satisfy the teacher that the pupil understands.

Being able to perform certain tasks which involve the relevant arithmetical rules, then, may be allowed to count as 'understanding the meaning of' a proposition such as '2 x 2 = 4'. Similarly with the meanings of words. To be able to use words in the correct contexts, according to the grammatical and other rules for their use, is to qualify as 'understanding the meanings of' those words.

Similarly, we might go on to give an account of what it is to 'understand the meaning of' a social action in terms of the ability to perform those practices which form the context of the action in question. The performance of a social action (like the utterance of a statement) will generally occur within a definite social situation and with the expectation of some kind of response. Only a limited range of responses will count as meaningful responses to the original act. 'Responses' outside that range indicate a failure to understand the meaning of the original act.

An obvious example here is provided by the multiplicity of ways in which acts of economic exchange can be performed. Where, for instance, the eventual sale-price of articles is customarily arrived at by a complex process of bluff, counter-bluff and negotiation, the outsider who innocently takes the first demand of the salesman as a statement of the price of the article may be said to have 'misunderstood the meaning of' that social act. In general, then, it may be said that someone understands the meaning of a social act if he/she is able to participate successfully in the social practice to which that social act belongs. In this sense, the ability to understand the meanings of social acts is a precondition for living any kind of social life at all.

It is understanding of this kind, which Winch has in mind when he compares the sociologist's understanding of social phenomena with the engin-

ABBREVIATIONS

R.F.G.B. - L Wittgenstein - Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough, trans A R Manser (University of Southampton, Philosophy Department)
P.I. - L Wittgenstein - Philosophical Investigations
eer's understanding of his colleagues' activities: his (the social student's) understanding of social phenomena is more like the engineer's understanding of his colleagues' activities than it is like the engineer's understanding of the mechanical systems which he studies. (I.S.S. p98)

If this is, indeed, the conception of understanding which Winch has in mind, then the apparently very extreme restrictions which he places on the formation of concepts in sociology become intelligible. This is what he says:

Now if the position of the sociological investigator can be regarded as comparable, in its main logical outlines, with that of the natural scientist, the following must be the case. The concepts and criteria according to which the sociologist judges that, in two situations, the same thing has happened, or the same action performed, must be understood in relation to the rules governing sociological investigation. But here we run against a difficulty; for whereas in the case of the natural scientist we have to deal with only one set of rules, namely those governing the scientist's investigation itself, here what the sociologist is studying, as well as his study of it, is a human activity and is therefore carried on according to rules. And it is these rules, rather than those which govern the sociologist's investigation, which specify what is to count as 'doing the same kind of thing' in relation to that kind of activity. (I.S.S. pp86/7)

Now, this restriction on the sociologist - that he must accept the criteria of identity for actions of those who participate in the social activities he studies is regarded by most sociologists correctly I think, as the denial of the possibility of the scientific study of society. Why does Winch say it?

Well, it does follow, I think, from the conception of 'understanding the meaning of' which I just outlined. Someone who did not distinguish between kinds of acts in more or less the same way as others with whom he/she participated in social practices would not be able to participate successfully in those practices (cf. my example of the misunderstanding of the practice of 'bargaining')

[I overlook here the complexities of the concept of 'ability' but I don't think this affects my argument.]

A condition of successful participation in a social practice, then, will be that the participator accepts (in his/her practice, at any rate) the criteria of identity for actions of those with whom he/she participates.

To identify sociological understanding with participants' understanding will thus involve restricting the concept of identity - to the classifications - of actions employed by those whose activities he/she studies.

It is true that Winch goes on to qualify this view, and I shall consider his qualification later, but for the moment it will be worthwhile to consider this unqualified statement of his. It is this statement, suggesting, as it does, that sociological understanding of a form of social activity, in order to count as 'understanding' at all, must be couched in terms of only those concepts involved in the activity itself, which has led to most of the controversy surrounding Winch's work.

I shall consider here only one (central) difficulty with this (unqualified) 'Winchian' notion of what it is to understand social activity. This difficulty is that it seems to follow from what Winch says about the nature of the understanding of social life that certain sorts of mistake about the character of one's own social life would be impossible (compare the orientation of most of the debate over Winch towards the question of understanding 'alien' societies).

There are at least two fairly obvious ways in which, even on Winch's terms, someone could be mistaken about the meaning of an act. Such a mistake could occur as a result of a misperception of the physical movement involved (e.g. the dispute over the famous Harvey Smith 'V'-sign). This would be analogous to mis-reading or mis-hearing a word. Alternatively, someone may be insufficiently well socialised, or familiar with an established way of life, to recognise an act for what it is. This would be analogous to having insufficient grasp of a language - to not yet being 'master of the technique' (p.I.199).

However, there is no conceptual room at all in Winch, as so far expounded, for this sort of situation: a situation in which all, or most of the participants in a form of life are, not just occasionally, but quite generally, mistaken about the character of their social life. This is ruled out by Winch, I think, because his conception of participants' understanding makes the last arbiters as to the character of any social action those to whose social life the act belongs. No sense can be attached to their misunderstanding such acts since, in general, their practice provides the criteria by which all attempts to understand their social life are to be judged.

Now, it is precisely this sort of situation ruled out by Winch, which many sociologists (and anthropologists) believe it to be their task to detect and expose. This is essentially the point which MacIntyre makes (Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Proceedings, 1967) when he says that Winch's conception of sociological understanding, if accepted, would require sociologists to cease using the concepts of 'ideology' and 'false consciousness'. It would also rule out any cross-cultural social science. The sense in which Winch's drawing out of the methodological implications of Wittgenstein's work is conceptually, and hence politically, conservative is fairly clear. The notion of social science as a critique of the dominant (or even 'all-pervasive', since cultural uniformity is also a presupposition of the Winchian methodology) ideology by which a given social order understands and justifies itself is a conceptual impossibility.

The story of Winch's 'appropriation' of Wittgenstein's work to support a conservative methodology in the social studies could be paralleled by other examples of Wittgensteinian moral philosophy, philosophy of religion, philosophy of education and so on. The relatively superficial observer of the philosophical scene, assuming he takes these readings of Wittgenstein to be authentic, might well be justified in concluding that Wittgenstein's main intellectual concern was with conceptual apologetics. Hence, the 'bourgeois' Wittgenstein!

(2) But is the Winchian appropriation of Wittgenstein the only plausible one? There is in Winch's work itself a conception of understanding which seems to go beyond 'participants' understanding as described above, but which plays a relatively small role. The relatively superficial observer of the philosophical scene, assuming he takes these readings of Wittgenstein to be authentic, might well be justified in concluding that Wittgenstein's main intellectual concern was with conceptual apologetics. Hence, the 'bourgeois' Wittgenstein!

6 For a useful collection of some of the key items in this debate see B R Wilson, Rationality, Oxford, 1974
and a distinction that goes with it, is, I shall argue, quite central to the philosophy of Wittgenstein.

Early in Winch's *Idea of a Social Science* he claims that it is the central problem of both sociology and epistemology to 'elucidate' or 'throw light on' the concept of a 'form of life'. Winch does not give an account of what 'elucidation' is, but presumably it amounts to more than merely participation, or the capacity to participate, in that of which elucidation is sought. Again, following his analogy between social studies and engineering, Winch says:

*I do not wish to maintain that we must stop at the prescriptive kind of understanding of which I gave as an instance the engineer's understanding of the activities of his colleagues. But I do want to say that any more reflective understanding must necessarily presuppose, if it is to count as genuine understanding at all, the participant's unreflective understanding.* (I.S.S. p89)

Sometimes Winch characterises this more reflective kind of understanding as involving technical concepts which presuppose the concepts of unreflective understanding, whilst elsewhere it seems that he might have in mind the distinction between reflective and unreflective application of a rule; the distinction between being able to follow a rule and being able to make explicit, or give an account of, the rules one is following.

This distinction is given much more prominence in Wittgenstein's work, and is connected with the distinction between depth and surface grammar. To return to the example of the arithmetical proposition *2 x 2 = 4*, a criterion of 'unreflective' understanding of this proposition would be the ability to correctly manipulate the symbols of which the proposition consists. A criterion of reflective understanding would be the ability to state the rules of arithmetic in which these are different conceptions of understanding is indicated by the possibility that someone quite unskilled at arithmetic might well satisfy the second criterion and, equally, that a highly skilled mathematician might well be entirely incapable of satisfying it.

Winch's linking of propositional meaning with the meaning of actions suggests the further question: might not successful participants (or participant-observers) in forms of life remain quite incapable of making explicit or giving accounts of the rules that govern their practice? Provided it is accepted that the intellectual distance separating participation in forms of life and elucidating, or giving accounts of such forms of life may sometimes be very great, this distinction between participants' 'unreflective' understanding, and reflective understanding might have yielded methodological implications quite contrary to the ones which Winch actually drew. The conception of the task of the social studies which might have been developed would have been analogous to Wittgenstein's own conception of philosophy as the description of language-games (P.I. Part 1, §109), though it would not get its pose from specifically philosophical problems.

But this task of describing language-games is not such an innocent exercise as it sounds. Wittgenstein also described philosophy as a battle against the 'bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language' (P.I. Part 1, §109). It is one thing to be a language-user, quite another to be able to give an adequate account of the uses of language. One is constantly misled, for instance, by the superficial grammatical forms of sentences. From the grammatical similarity of 'I have a sharp pain in my knee' and 'I have a sharp pencil in my pocket' we may be led to think of 'pains' as a strange kind of 'thing' which we cannot share with others, which no-one else can perceive, and so on. In this way philosophers, psychologists and others are led to think of 'mental' predicates as referring to strange 'private' objects which may be investigated only by introspection or may be entirely inaccessible to other persons.

Although most of us are quite capable of using such words as 'pain' quite correctly in everyday contexts, we are readily misled by the grammatical forms of our sentences, and fall into confusion when we attempt to give accounts of their uses (P.I. Part 1, §64). Giving an account of the use of any item of language in such a way as to avoid these confusions involves describing the part it actually plays in human social interactions ('forms of life' and 'language-games'). This is to give what Wittgenstein calls the 'depth' as distinct from the 'surface-grammar' of the expression. Again, if linguistic expressions have both a depth- and a surface-grammar perhaps social actions, and forms of social action, too, have depth- and surface-grammars? Might not the surface appearance of some social actions and relationships between their true characters, and so 'bewitch the intelligence' of anyone who would give an account of them?

If this were so, then at least part of the task of the social scientist could be characterised as exposing mistaken interpretations of forms of social activity in so far as they result from the 'bewitchment of the intelligence' by the superficial appearance of those forms of interaction. The complementary task of providing 'correct' interpretations would consist in laying bare the 'depth-grammar' of forms of social interaction. It would consist in giving what Wittgenstein calls 'perspicuous representations' of the activities whose interpretation is in dispute. Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy as a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language, together with his distinction between depth- and surface-grammar could, then, plausibly found a conception of 'understanding' in the social sciences which amounts to exposing ideologies as misrepresentations of social life.

This, perhaps, is that underlies the claim that, Winch, Phillips and co notwithstanding, there is a 'progressive Wittgenstein' awaiting his presentation on the philosophical scene.

C. Wittgenstein and Marx; Wittgenstein or Marx?

In this section, I shall begin by drawing attention to three areas of enquiry in which Marx and Wittgenstein are similar or analogous positions. These apparent similarities are due to giving the same more basis to the 'progressive Wittgenstein' interpretation. I shall, however, conclude the section with a brief statement of some of the fundamental differences between the theoretical positions of Marx and Wittgenstein.

1. Wittgenstein and Marx

(a) The relationships between language and social life. An insistence on the practical character of language, on language as an assortment of instruments or 'tools' which have a variety of uses is present in the work of both thinkers. The dispensably social character of language was also argued by Wittgenstein through his analysis of the notion of 'following a rule' and the connected 'private-language' argument. The concepts of
'language-game' and 'form of life' which appear in Wittgenstein's later work are also introduced at least in part to establish this point. The same point is made in a strikingly similar way by Marx and Engels:

Language is as old as consciousness,'language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men, and for that reason alone it really exists for me personally as well; language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men. (G.I. Part I, p51)

There is even, in Wittgenstein's notes on Frazer's Golden Bough, the elements of a materialist conception of ritual practices and even of general intellectual life:

There can have been no trivial reason, i.e. on the whole no reason that caused certain races of men to venerate the oak tree except that they and the oak tree were united in a form of life; thus it developed not from a choice but like the relation of the flea and the dog with each other. (If the flea developed a ritual, it would be concerned with the dog).

It could be said that it is not the union (of oak and man) which caused the ritual, but in a certain sense their separation.

For the awakening of the intellect goes with a separation from the original soil, the original foundations of life itself.

(R.F.G.B. Manser tr. pp8/9)

Compare this with two quotations from Marx and Engels in the German Ideology:

1 The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the, direct efflux of their material behaviour.

2 Division of labour only becomes truly such from the moment when a division of material and mental labour appears... From this moment onwards consciousness can flatter itself that it is something other than consciousness of existing practice,... from now on consciousness is in a position to emancipate itself from the world and to proceed to the formation of 'pure' theory, theology, philosophy, ethics, etc. (G.I. p47)

For Marx and Engels, then, 'pure' theoretical disciplines arise from a separation of mental and manual labour, whilst for Wittgenstein 'the awakening of the intellect' goes with a parallel 'separation from the soil'.

(b) The Conception of Philosophy. Philosophy, like other intellectual disciplines, arises from a separation of language, or of intellectual practices involving language, from practical life, from social practice. This is so for both Marx and Wittgenstein. Compare Marx and Engels (and in quote 2 above):

Hitherto men have constantly made up for themselves false conceptions about themselves, about what they are and what they ought to be. They have arranged their relationships according to their ideas of God, of normal man, etc. The phantoms of their brains have got out of their hands. They, the creators, have bowed down to their creations. (G.I. p37)

with Wittgenstein:

The confusions which occupy us arise when language is like an engine idling, not when it is doing work. (P.I. Part I, §132)

Again, for both Marx and Wittgenstein, the resolution of philosophical puzzles is to be achieved by bringing language, thought, and social practice back into contact with one another. Compare Marx and Engels:

For philosophers, one of the most difficult tasks is to descend from the world of thought to the actual world... The philosophers would only have to dissolve their language into ordinary language from which it is abstracted, to recognise it as the distorted language of the actual world (G.I.)

Finally, for both Marx and Wittgenstein, this method of resolving philosophical puzzles also spells the end of philosophy, strictly speaking, and the beginning of a new practice. Compare Marx and Engels:

... When reality is depicted, philosophy as an independent branch of knowledge loses its medium of existence. (G.I. Part I, p48)

with Wittgenstein:

The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to. (P.I. Part I, 133)

(c) What is to replace philosophy? The battle against the bewitchment of the intelligence that Wittgenstein proposed, involving the description and invention of language-games so as to display the depth, as distinct from surface-grammar of expression could, I argue, be extended to found a social-science methodology of ideological exposure. Such a methodology is closely analogous to Marx's way of representing his own critique of certain categories of Classical Political Economy. Particularly relevant here are Marx's treatment of the ideological effects of the commodity-form (Capital, Vol.1, Ch.I) in the well known concept of 'commodity-fetishism, and the similar treatment of the wage relation and the category of 'value and labour' (Capital, Vol.1, Ch.XIX).

If we substitute for Marx's distinction between 'phenomenal forms' and real or 'essential' relations Wittgenstein's distinction between surface- and depth-grammar, Marx's argument can be represented plausibly enough. In the case of the wage-relation, Marx can be represented as arguing that the 'surface grammar' (Marx actually speaks of 'the surface of bourgeois society') of the relationship between capitalist and worker has 'bewitched' the intelligence of Smith, Ricardo and their followers, as well as capitalists and workers themselves. Marx's battle against this bewitchment is to display the 'depth-grammar' of the relationship - to display it as principally a production-relation, and only in virtue of this an exchange-relation. This exposure of the dual-character of the wage relation enables Marx to distinguish between 'labour' and labour-power, and to expose the wage-relation as exploitative.

2 Wittgenstein or Marx?

Despite these similarities and analogies, there are nevertheless fundamental differences between

7 I am indebted to Prof. A R Manser for this translation. The 'Remarks' were first published in Synthese, Vol.XVII, 1967, with an introductory note by Rush Rhees. A partial translation, omitting the passage I quote, by A C Miles and Rush Rhees was published in The Human World, No.3, May 1971
the theoretical positions of Marx and Wittgenstein. Unfortunately I have space only to summarise these:

(a) The typified episodes of interaction which Wittgenstein gives as examples of language-games are not related by him to the more-or-less enduring social practices from which he abstracts them. Moreover, there is no conception of the relationships of such practices to the social totalities ('forms of life') which they constitute. The notion of 'form of life' itself has an extremely shadowy existence in Wittgenstein's work. There are no criteria of identity and difference for 'forms of life', nor any conception of what constitutes the unity of a social formation (these questions become crucial for Winch, for whom the unity of a 'culture' becomes surreptitiously identified with the unity of a social formation). There are, in the Marxist tradition, at least attempts to solve these problems with concepts such as mode of production, articulation or modes of production, juridico-political superstructure, determination-in-the-last-instance, and so on.

(b) There is the merest recognition in Wittgenstein that language-games, and thus forms of life, are subject to change:

... but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten. (P.I. Part 1,§23)

also:

The sickness of a time is caused by an alteration in the mode of life of human beings, and it was possible for the sickness of philosophical problems to get cured only through a changed mode of thought and life, not through a medicine invented by an individual. (R.F.M. p57, quoted in Manser 1973)

But there is in these occasional references to the 'fact' of change no conception of the causes of historical and cultural changes, no conception of the historical process, nor even of language and culture as themselves historical products. The timelessness of the forms and language and thought in the Tractatus remains in the Investigations conception of language.

(c) There is, in Wittgenstein, no connection between 'the bewitchment of the intelligence by means of language' and the interests of antagonistic social classes, as there is in Marx. Indeed the whole notion of 'shared' forms of life, central to Wittgenstein's conception of language and meaning is quite inconsistent with any conception of class remotely resembling the Marxian one.

(d) For Marx, the relations between thought, language and social relations are theorised as part of a general theory of history - of social formations and their transformations. By contrast the philosophical practice of the later Wittgenstein - the description and invention of language-games and forms of life - has a deliberately ad hoc character. There is no attempt at a general theory, the interest in forms of social life and their description getting 'its light, that is to say its purpose, from the philosophical problems'. (P.I. Part 1,§109)

(e) Finally, both Wittgenstein's notion of philosophical practice, and the representation of Marx's methods of ideological exposure which I have given, fall foul of epistemological objections - but of rather different sorts. In the case of Wittgenstein, the questions arise: how do we know when a 'puzzle' has been resolved, when a language-game has been perspicuously presented, or accurately described? Surely this cannot be something that is just spontaneously recognisable - or why speak of a 'battle' against bewitchment? Wittgenstein's answer, presumably, is: 'The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to' (P.I. Part 1,§133). One trouble with this is that it is a purely personal and subjective criterion - some are prepared to stop doing philosophy earlier than others. Also, it fails to come to grips with the persistence of several mutually incompatible accounts of particular language-games, and forms of life. Each account may be seen, from the standpoint of the others as the result of a bewitchment of the intelligence.

In the case of Marx, the conception of scientific practice as 'ideological exposure', as a stripping away of the veil of appearance to reveal the underlying reality seems to suggest, again, that reality (='depth grammar') is somehow just spontaneously recognisable as such. But not only does this conception, like Wittgenstein's threat to descend into epistemological relativism, but it also has the defect of concealing the work of theoretical production of new concepts with which to grasp the nature of social reality in a scientific way (at least in Wittgenstein there is no claim to scientific status). There are, however, other, perhaps more fruitful ways of reading Marx on these questions. In particular, the attempt to build upon Marx's own conception of sciences as a distinctive mode of theoretical production (outlined, not in Capital, but particularly in the 1857 Introduction to the Grundrisse) seems to hold out most hope of real progress.

D Situating Wittgenstein

Finally, the attempt to adequately situate Wittgenstein in British intellectual culture is clearly well beyond the scope of this paper. A number of memoirs and biographical documents, together with investigative reports, are now available, and between them they contain the raw materials for some such future attempt. But lest the latter parts of this paper have tended to re-insate the 'conservative' Wittgenstein, perhaps I had better conclude with an extract from Wittgenstein's own assessment of his intellectual debts:

Even more than to this - always certain and forcible - criticism I am indebted to that which a teacher at this University, Mr P. Sraffa, for many years increasingly practised on my thoughts. I am indebted to this stimulus for the most consequential ideas of this book. (P.I. Preface, pvi)

'Mr Sraffa' is a Neo-Marxist economist.