DAVID PEARS

David Francis Pears
1921–2009

David Pears squeezed into his rich and colourful life more than enough for two people, and certainly made of it something very different from the typical biography of an Oxford philosopher of the later twentieth century. He was born in Bedfont, Middlesex, on 8 August 1921 to a businessman, Robert, and his wife Gladys. He was the second of four brothers, and grew up in west London. The family was one of a large group that shared in the proceeds of the sale of Pears Soap to Lever Brothers. For some years his family owned a second house in Devon. Pears remembered idyllic childhood holidays in the countryside there, and he aimed many years later to create the same experience for his own children. He was educated at Westminster School, where he overlapped with Patrick Gardiner and Richard Wollheim, both of whom became his lifelong friends.

Pears went up to Balliol College in 1939, to read Classical Moderations and Greats, in their shortened wartime form. He was called into the army soon after going up. He was assigned to artillery training, and he characteristically appreciated the geometric and visual aspects of his tasks. While stationed in Wales, he was one of a group involved in a misconceived gassing experiment. He was required to run, without wearing a mask, through a tent into which gas was released. The dosage of gas was too high, and he was seriously injured. As a consequence, he was not sent to North Africa with the rest of his regiment. Casualties there were so heavy that, he said, this accident may have saved his life.

After the war, Pears returned to Balliol to complete his degree, having had Jonathan Cohen and Kenneth Dover as tutorial partners. He was unsure what to do next. The Master of Balliol thought he should aim for

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an Assistant Lectureship in Latin at Glasgow. Pears's indecision was resolved in unexpected fashion. He attended a social occasion in the Randolph Hotel in Oxford that turned into a fracas. Pears escaped it by jumping out of a window to what he thought was the ground outside. In fact the window opened on to a well to the basement, Pears broke his leg, and was hospitalised. There he listened to philosophy talks on the radio and read Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. This started a fascination with Wittgenstein's thought that lasted throughout his life. He resolved to study philosophy, and started on the new Oxford B.Phil. course.

He was appointed Research Lecturer at Christ Church in 1948. This meant that he did not have to complete the B.Phil., and he reported that this was a relief to him. He did not flourish in examinations at the graduate level. He had earlier been disappointed in losing out to A. G. N. Flew in the competition for the John Locke Prize. In not winning, he joined a list of distinguished philosophers. From 1948 onwards, Pears plunged eagerly into a life of teaching and writing. Two years later, he became Fellow and Tutor at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he remained for a decade.

In the early 1950s Pears published papers with such titles as 'Synthetic necessary truth' (*Mind*, 1950), 'Hypotheticals' (*Analysis*, 1950), and 'Universals' (*Philosophical Quarterly*, 1951), and often gave joint seminars with other members of the Philosophy Subfaculty, including Stuart Hampshire and Bernard Williams. One of these was a joint seminar with Brian McGuinness on Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. Ryle also gave a class on it, and expressed his dissatisfaction with the English translation then available. Ryle recommended that Pears and McGuinness produce a new translation, and he secured a Special Lectureship from the university to allow them time to work on the project. In a move of considerable generosity, Pears insisted that the lectureship be assigned only to McGuinness. Pears made a trip to visit Russell, in a successful effort to allow Russell's original Introduction to appear in the new translation. For a time, Pears and McGuinness envisaged producing a joint commentary on the *Tractatus*; but there proved to be such a divergence between their readings that they could not agree on a final version. Their translation appeared in 1961 (London), and has been in regular use throughout the Anglophone world ever since.

Pears was an unusually sociable academic. He held regular lunch parties in his rooms in Corpus, was a fine cook and connoisseur of wine, and a legendary teller of stories, about himself and others. These stories, always entertaining and curiously not quite the same on each telling, were often centred on others' motives and thoughts. He had a diagnostic cast

of mind in human relations, and was ever entertained by the personal aspects of the passing social and academic scene. He was a valued member of a dining club. His philosophical friends included Iris Murdoch, who dedicated her novel *The Unicorn* (London, 1963) to him, and who is widely believed to have included some aspects of Pears's personality in the characters Dave and Hugo in her first novel, *Under the Net* (London, 1954).

In 1960, he moved from Corpus to Christ Church. This was an unusual transition, but there was a group at Christ Church that had always wanted Pears back, and he was pleased to move. He was a Student (Fellow) of Christ Church until his retirement in 1988. During his years there—besides having one of his rooms converted into a kitchen—he was elected to a Fellowship of the British Academy (1970), and later promoted to one of Oxford's then new *ad hominem* professorships (1985). He served as a Delegate for Oxford University Press. After his retirement, he was elected a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (1998), and was President of the Institut Internationale de Philosophie (1988–90).

The move to Christ Church coincided with Pears developing a more intensive focus on the philosophy of mind, along lines rather different from his prior interest in Wittgenstein. Independently of Donald Davidson, and at about the same time, Pears discovered the case for a causal theory of action, against the widely accepted view that a causal treatment could not be correct. Pears's exposition of the view is not as concise as Davidson's; but it is also more liberal, in allowing for the possibility of psychological laws. Pears lectured and gave seminars in the philosophy of mind for many years, through until his retirement from Oxford. His material was full of original ideas, often at an early stage of development. The audience was not presented with a well-fortified structure developed over many years. This made the material highly suitable for fruitful discussion. These events attracted many younger philosophers of thought and action, and Pears was always eager to engage them in discussion. Michael Bratman reports his experience as a graduate student visiting from another university of Pears thinking about his (Bratman's) questions so carefully that sometimes Pears would open a later session with a considered, detailed, and extended response to them. Pears nurtured his intellectual relationships with younger philosophers carefully, extended his hospitality and support to them, and guided academic visitors, both the young and those already famous, through Oxford's idiosyncratic ways. Both Pears and his younger philosophical acquaintances gained from these interactions. I myself first

interacted with Pears in discussions in the philosophy of mind in 1977. He proposed a joint seminar on intention and action that we gave in Trinity Term 1978, and I experienced for myself the intellectual stimulation, sheer enjoyment, and wit that others had described to me in their joint seminars with him in earlier decades.

To his own graduate students, he was even more generous. It was a point of pride for him that his graduates were not recognisably his students. He encouraged whatever was best in them, whatever direction it took. He never regarded philosophical discussion as a form of intellectual combat. He was highly effective in placing his students in positions, and equally adept at remedying the situation when they were victims of some injustice. He supported not only those students who were obviously likely to go on to professional success but also those who felt marginalised, either by the then current apparent agenda of philosophy, or by hostile or problematic attitudes in their university. Female graduate students found his advice particularly helpful in an Oxford which in earlier years presented many obstacles, some obvious and some unobvious, to their progression. If a student was not flourishing, and he saw potential, he was quite ready to recommend that she abandon, say, the Midwest to spend a year in Paris.

He cared not only about individual students, but also about the design of graduate programmes within which they worked. He was an energetic and valuable member of an international committee recommending changes in the Oxford graduate programme that I chaired three years after Pears retired from his Oxford appointment.

Pears is one of the best counter-examples to the thesis, widely held amongst their families, friends, and acquaintances, that all philosophers are to be found at the autistic end of the spectrum. In 1963 he married Anne Drew, a teacher and more recently a photographer. They had two children, Rosalind and Julian, and Pears seemed exceptionally close to his family. Many in Oxford experienced the happy family atmosphere at the regular dinner parties he held at his house. The sheer quantity and variety of activities that Pears fitted into each day, and in so many different places and institutions, must have required some extended accommodation from those close to him. Anne was a loving presence, and also entirely prepared to tell David when he was doing too much.

He loved visiting the United States. Over the years, in the east he taught at Harvard, Yale, Rockefeller, Princeton, and City College New York. He was still in demand as a visitor, and accepting visiting appointments with substantial teaching duties, well into his eighties. One memorable early visit was a semester spent at Harvard in 1959. He taught a

course on perception, which was attended by Saul Kripke, Barry Stroud, and Laurence Tribe. Kripke and Tribe were undergraduates, and spoke up frequently and incisively. Pears said that his impression after the first few meetings was that if this is what even the undergraduates were like at Harvard, then the faculty must be bursting with geniuses.

In Oxford, Pears was noted for taking every possible leave permitted by the rules. This, together with his apparently permanently sun-tanned state, led to the circulation of such riddles as 'What's brown and has two leaves a year?' It would be quite wrong to conclude that he did not enjoy Oxford. Some of its social practices exasperated him, but he cared about individual teaching, tutorials, and the maintenance of standards. While he enjoyed the freewheeling character of academic life in the States, he commented while there on aspects of Oxford that he missed. He established deep roots on both sides of the Atlantic, and he needed both worlds. He said in 2004 that he felt privileged to have lived and worked in Oxford in decades in which philosophy there had some of its best years.

Pears especially enjoyed California, visiting Berkeley twice, and teaching regularly at Los Angeles (UCLA). One of his visits to UCLA was in the autumn of 1981, when I was also visiting the same university. I had some difficulty in finding an apartment at short notice, and since Pears was already renting Philippa Foot's house in Westwood while she was away, I proposed to Pears that I share the house and the payment of the rent with him. He accepted; and I came to know him better. He told me then that the way he worked was governed by his approach to 'unconscious thinking'. The important thing about getting new work done, he said, was to be in a good mood; and as long as that condition was met, probably unconscious thinking was occurring that would surface later in consciousness. To this end, he went whenever he could to the beach at Santa Monica, sat down with a copy of Aristotle or Wittgenstein, and some white wine, and proceeded to get in a good mood. Yet all the same, the work was done. In fact he always rose early: when I stumbled down for breakfast at seven-thirty in our shared house, he had often been at work for three hours. His sociability came after what was for him the end of the working day. He worked as hard as any philosopher I know; he could be impatient with those he thought were not putting in the required effort.

So far, this description of a life would fit someone who was simply an unusually outgoing Oxford philosopher. But Pears had another life too, in the world of the visual arts. Christ Church owns a magnificent art collection, containing works by such artists as Dürer, Michelangelo, Raphael and Rubens. When Pears arrived at Christ Church, this collection was not

properly housed or displayed. He was active in persuading Christ Church to commission a design for a gallery for the paintings from the architectural firm Powell and Moya. It is reliably reported that when he saw their first design, he said that it would look better if it were turned upside down. The gallery was eventually built, and opened in 1968. Pears was formally Curator of Pictures from 1975 to 1988. Throughout his time at Christ Church, he fought for the gallery, its activities, and its staff. He had to deal with the often-suspicious Students of Christ Church, who variously felt that the gallery was a drain on the House's resources, or a decadent luxury. His skill in dealing with opposition from Keith Batey over the years became legendary. Pears was willing to engage in full-scale battles, now cajoling, now defusing issues with a witty remark, to promote the gallery. He engaged in these battles only when he had to, but he also had a taste for the psychological aspects of the conflicts. He enjoyed making and acting on the assessments of people's attitudes and emotions that were necessary if he was to prevail. These abilities also served him well in the occasional skirmish in the Philosophy Section of the British Academy.

At Christ Church, he encouraged a series of grateful assistant curators, who went on to important positions in museums and in the administration of the arts, after their time at the gallery. He arranged for the showing of the work of contemporary artists such as Elizabeth Frink and Anthony Caro; he promoted educational programmes at the gallery. At times, when funds were short, he did the physical labour himself, at one time painting the furniture used in the display of some drawings.

He played a prominent role too in the activities of the Museum of Modern Art at Oxford, serving for a time as Chairman. He was a successful and ambitious fund-raiser. On one occasion late in 1981, he even managed to arrange for fund-raising for the tiny Oxford Museum at a grand occasion in New York for donors to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Pears's interest in the visual arts was not merely an isolated hobby, and went beyond a respite from the demands of philosophical work. It was partly a product of Pears's deeply spatial and visual way of thinking about the world. He had an extraordinary visual memory, of the kind psychologists sometimes label 'photographic', which allowed him to recite hundreds of lines of Greek poetry after a single reading of a text. He told colleagues that his philosophical writing came so easily to him because he saw the sentences written out in his visual imagination, and in writing them down he felt like no more than a copyist.

His spatial, visual mode of thought infuses his characterisation of philosophical problems, his philosophical reasoning, and his style of writing. This can be illuminating. It also carries risks. Bill Brewer reports that in supervisions, Pears described the change from Wittgenstein's earlier philosophy to the later philosophy as one in which there were certain fixed points, around which everything else was rotated through 180 degrees. Here one can see what Pears means: certain constraints on meaning are the fixed points, what is rotated through 180 degrees is the conception of meaning, its nature and its relations to what is public and social. A metaphor can sometimes provide illumination not so easily available from other sources. But if it is to aid in philosophical understanding, an exposition that uses the metaphor must make clear the mapping from the metaphorical to the non-metaphorical domain, in a way that allows the philosophical thesis in question to be formulated explicitly and without metaphor. It is not always clear how to do this with the metaphors in Pears's writings. In the first volume of *The False Prison*, Pears writes of the solipsist that he 'is like someone who tries to use a pair of compasses to draw a circle without choosing a centre, and so the circumference remains no more than a vague aspiration' (p. 39). He writes of one of the positions which Wittgenstein considered, 'Direct, independent reference, made by each of us to his own sensations and their types, cannot possibly support a common language [. . .] This theory puts too much weight on isolated sensation-types and they drop through the floor' (pp. 47–8). Whether the constraints tacitly appealed to here are constitutive or whether they are verificationist, a matter of the first importance, is left unclear. We are given a metaphorical specification of what should be in a correct theory, without a statement of what that correct theory is. It is a fair response to say that perhaps in some difficult cases, the metaphor can help in seeing what the destination of a sound philosophical conception of some subject-matter needs to be like. But the philosophical task of saying how we reach that destination, and even specifying it explicitly, will still remain.

Authors of these Memoirs of Fellows are asked to include 'an assessment of the scholarly work'. A convenient starting point is provided by Pears's monograph *Wittgenstein* (London, 1971). This short book gives an overview of Pears's conception of what is distinctive and important in Wittgenstein's thought, and in its very brevity also makes salient certain fundamental issues about Pears's own positions. The book was much admired. In an important critical review in *The Journal of Philosophy* (69 (1972), 16–26), Barry Stroud described it as a 'remarkable achievement',

saying that its introductory chapter 'should be required reading for anyone wishing to learn something about twentieth-century philosophy'. (Pears was also amazed to receive, out of the blue, a letter from Igor Stravinsky congratulating him on the book.) Its introductory chapter provides a synoptic view according to which the later Wittgenstein's contribution is to introduce an anthropocentric component into critical philosophy. Critical philosophy is conceived as philosophy which, since Kant, takes as its task systematic criticism and understanding of human thought as a whole. Pears contrasts such a critical philosophy with 'metaphysical philosophy' that he regards as the target of both Kant's and Wittgenstein's critiques. Pears regards 'metaphysical thinking' as 'a natural and inevitable transgressor' (p. 30), of which both Kant and Wittgenstein 'think that much can be learned from its excesses' (p. 30). Some of these themes are developed in much greater detail, and taking into account subsequent literature, in Pears's two-volume work *The False Prison* (London, Volume One 1987, Volume Two 1988). The second of these two volumes contains an extended treatment of rule-following and of Wittgenstein's private language argument. There are also comparisons between the later Wittgenstein's naturalism and that of Hume, another parallel that exercised Pears over several decades.

More than forty years after the publication of *Wittgenstein*, the landscape looks different. In particular, some clouds have cleared to allow views of possible directions of thought and options that are not apparent in Pears's treatment. I mention four such issues.

1 In his discussion of rule-following, Pears sees a great struggle between mythological, 'Platonist' accounts of understanding and rule-following, on the one hand, and a Wittgensteinian view that regards a correct description of understanding as being anthropocentric. Wittgenstein's position on rule-following is for Pears an instance of the effect produced in critical philosophy 'when philosophy is centred on man' (*Wittgenstein* p. 31). An option seems to be overlooked in Pears's extended discussion of these matters. That someone understands an expression is of course a feature of his psychology. The question is whether we can give an account of sense, and of grasp of sense, which formulates a condition for understanding a particular expression that does not at its core make reference to anthropocentric properties. Not only is it not at all obvious that this is impossible, there are specific proposals in more recent literature that flesh out this abstract possibility in more detail. Anyone who thinks that understanding consists in tacit knowledge of the fundamental reference rule for a concept, for instance, will hold that there is a legitimate intermediate

position here between the mythological and the anthropocentric. Under such approaches, the material in the content of the fundamental reference rule will contribute to the philosophical explanation of what are good reasons for applying the concept. Some kind of tacit knowledge of that fundamental reference rule can contribute to the understander's ability to appreciate those reasons. In certain very special cases, the material in the fundamental reference rule for a concept may concern states that only human beings, and psychologically similar beings, can enjoy. That concept would be genuinely anthropocentric. It would, however, be an instance of a special kind of case, not something that would support a universal anthropocentrism about concepts.

In the discussions on the philosophy of language in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly the debates between Davidson and Dummett on truth, meaning, and understanding, Pears was not a participant, and that seems to me to be a cause for regret. The reader can obtain a sense of the intellectual content of these debates (though not of the entertaining personal interactions between Davidson and Dummett) from Davidson's article 'Truth and meaning' (*Synthese*, 1967) and Dummett's paper 'What is a theory of meaning?' (in S. Guttenplan, ed., *Mind and Language*: Oxford, 1975). Reflection on those debates, and the possible positions that emerge from them, make the possibility of a non-anthropocentric conception of sense and intentional content a natural candidate for consideration. If such a position is viable, it is then of intense interest to see what remains, and what does not, in the later Wittgensteinian position.

2 The synoptic view summarised above from Pears makes it sound as if any form of metaphysics that is not anthropocentric must involve some kind of error. But there is a conception of metaphysics on which it has an explanatory priority in philosophy over the theory of meaning, of intentional content, and of epistemic norms. The metaphysics of a domain constrains the kind of relations in which a thinker can stand to elements of that domain. A non-anthropocentric account of sense will say what relation a thinker must stand in to an element of that domain in order to be thinking of it under that particular sense. So in the nature of the case, the metaphysics must constrain the theory of sense and meaning. For example, the metaphysics of material objects will, amongst other things, describe them as mind-independent objects that are in states that can be causally explanatory of the properties of other objects and events. Because this is the correct metaphysics, material objects and their properties can feature in the representational content of perceptual experiences. The account of what it is for them to so feature—a complex and philosophically interesting

matter—will plausibly presuppose such causal, mind-independent properties. Any account of a concept which is individuated in part by its relations to the content of perceptual experience will then be philosophically posterior, in the order of philosophical, constitutive explanation, to the metaphysics of material objects. Similarly, to take a case in which it is implausible that there is any role for causal powers in the metaphysics, a metaphysics of possible worlds will plausibly take them as something along the lines of sets of propositions, or sentences, or the like. If any metaphysics of that sort is correct, the theory of thought about modality must correspondingly respect it. To think of a state of affairs as possible is not to have any particular nexus of causal relations to a world or a state of affairs. It is, more likely, to think that the state of affairs corresponds to a set of propositions or sentences that meet whatever are the favoured conditions for joint possibility (something also addressed, in one way or another, by a metaphysics of modality). This conception of the relation between metaphysics and sense allows a genuine metaphysics to be part of a critical philosophy which thinks about knowledge and thought as a whole, and aims to conform to any constraints on knowledge and thought as a whole. These points can be made without any anthropocentrism either in the metaphysics, or in the theory of sense.

3 Pears denies that his own interpretation of the private language argument is verificationist: 'Wittgenstein is not using the verification principle to cut his adversaries' speculation down to the ground, as it were with a single hatchet blow' (*The False Prison*, p. 411). A few sentences later he says of Wittgenstein, 'He is making the more subtle point, that his adversaries must give it a meaning by tying it into their lives' (p. 412). It is not at all clear this really vindicates Wittgenstein's argument unless one endorses some more general verificationism about content and meaning. Take the case of a subject, considered by Wittgenstein, whose colour experience inverts, but who also changes his words accordingly. This subject continues to apply 'red' after the inversion to ripe apples, and 'green' to grass lawns. Wittgenstein says that we would be puzzled by someone who does not describe his experience over the transition as 'queer'. Agreed, but we need also to consider the case in which these switches of colour experience and colour vocabulary exist, but in which there is no memory of the difference in colour experience of ripe apples over time, or of the vocabulary reassignment. If this is said to be impossible, it is not clear what, other than a more general verificationism, would sustain the claim of impossibility. But if it is not impossible, why must, in Pears's phrase, the change 'tie into' people's lives to make sense—any more than belief in

some currently unverifiable hypothesis about what happened yesterday must 'tie into' their lives? If we can have a good non-verificationist theory of what it is to understand statements about the past, and statements about other minds, and so makes sense of our understanding of such possibilities, it is hard to see how Pears's case could be developed in anything like the way he intended without involving some endorsement of a rival verificationism. Moreover the seeming role of verificationism in his reading of Wittgenstein is something that is not special to sensations and experiences. It would apply equally to states and events thought of as physical. At one point in *The False Prison*, Pears attributes to Wittgenstein the view that 'It is only our inveterate tendency to assimilate them [sensation-types] to physical types that makes us push their identities beyond their natural limits' (p. 428). Yet some of these verificationist leanings in Pears's arguments apparently apply indifferently and uniformly to sensation-types and to physical-types.

These last points must also cast some doubt on Pears's reading of the private language argument. There does not seem to be a general endorsement of verificationism in Wittgenstein's later thought. Pears's emphasis in his discussion on phenomenalism as certain positivists' conception of experience as Wittgenstein's target has also seemed to many not to be true to the later texts either. It is arguable that some of these interpretational problems stem from Pears's insistence that Wittgenstein did not deny individual rule-following to be possible. That insistence means that for Pears, at least, replacement of verificationism by something emphasising the public, social character of concepts of sensation and experience as an interpretation of these texts is not available to him.

This is emphatically not to say that there is a completely clear and plausible alternative reading of these later Wittgensteinian texts that is an alternative to Pears's view. Sixty years after the publication of *Philosophical Investigations*, a reading of the private language argument that is both interpretationally correct and halfway plausible in its reasoning and conclusion remains elusive.

4 Pears was interested in a wide class of issues to which naturalist solutions have been canvassed. There is a range of domains in which there is an apparent gap between the grounds or reasons we normally have for making a judgement, on the one hand, and either the content of that judgement, or its status, on the other hand. This applies to Hume on causation; to Wittgenstein on rule-following; to Wittgenstein on necessity, the a priori, and the foundations of logic; and so forth. A unifying theme in Pears's thought is an inclination to identify and take seriously various

forms of naturalistic treatments of these apparent gaps. The naturalist treatments share the idea that we can do no more in closing the apparent gap than to specify the conditions under which we in fact make the judgements in question, or in fact attribute to their content a certain status. The naturalist aims to state these conditions without mentioning the modal or normative properties apparently distinctive of the content or status, the properties of a kind that set the problem in the first place. With sufficient care, the naturalist may hope to extract from her characterisation of these conditions some illumination of why there is an apparent gap. Pears emphasises that under his readings of them, both Hume and Wittgenstein were naturalists in this broad sense. In his book *Hume's System* (Oxford, 1990), Pears distinguishes between issues of meaning, issues of truth, and issues of evidence for truth: 'In this book the two questions will be kept separate from one another, and meaning will be taken before truth and evidence for truth' (p. viii).

Meaning, truth, and evidence are certainly to be distinguished. But they are internally related in philosophically significant ways. Meaning is plausibly a matter of truth-conditions; and what makes something evidence for something else is plausibly at least in part a matter of its relations to the meanings involved. (Even minimalists about meaning, who regard truth-conditional specifications as derivative if correct at all, will often endorse certain meaning/evidence connections.) This then becomes one of many points at which philosophical issues look different if one acknowledges the possibility of non-anthropocentric accounts of sense and grasp of sense, as briefly discussed in point (**1**) above. A fundamental reference rule for a concept, grasped by a thinker, would be the point at which theories of understanding, reference, truth, and justification intersect. The fundamental reference rules for concepts determine truth-conditions for contents built up from the concepts in question. The contents of the reference rules contribute to the explanation of what makes something evidence that an object falls under the concept in question. Under Pears's treatment, Hume holds that our belief in body is 'intellectually indefensible', and Pears remarks 'All the more credit to nature, which, nevertheless, forces us to hold it!' (p. 196).

There would be widespread agreement that Hume misdescribed our conception of body. There is a better account, with the metaphysics of body taken as first in the order of philosophical explanation as per point (**2**) above, and then used in explanation of our concepts of bodies. The approach can be developed in such a way that there is no need for a merely naturalistic solution. On a better treatment of the matter, there is not even

an apparent gap between our grounds for making judgements about body and the content of our judgements about them. That is perhaps relatively uncontroversial (radical scepticism aside). It is, however, an instance of a model that is in competition with Pears's sympathy with naturalistic treatment in the other cases he mentions. For if in the case of rule-following, and perhaps in the case of logical inference too, we can give a non-anthropocentric account of understanding which entails the correctness of certain judgements and transitions, then in these cases too the apparent gap disappears. There is no pressure to naturalism under such approaches. Such a position obviously has to be characterised in detail to be anything more than a bare possibility. But Pears's discussion of the various cases in which he finds naturalism tempting does not seem to leave room for its possibility.

Much of Pears's work in the philosophy of mind appears in his two books *Questions in the Philosophy of Mind* (London, 1975) and *Motivated Irrationality* (Oxford, 1984). Contrary to what one might have expected, and apart from one essay devoted to Wittgenstein's treatment of solipsism in the *Tractatus*, Wittgensteinian ideas play only a passing role in these works. The issues in the philosophy of mind are treated in their own right, rather than as material for application of Wittgensteinian techniques and ideas. *Motivated Irrationality*, though now over a quarter-of-a-century old, still reads as a fresh, highly accessible, and sharp contribution. The structure of the argument is clear at every point, there is no reliance on metaphors, and there is a successful engagement with writers from Aristotle to Freud and Sartre. The book is much strengthened by Pears's reflection on some of the then recent psychological work on apparent irrationality by Tversky and Kahneman (for example, in *Science*, 211 (1981)). In the theory of action, as elsewhere, the empirical literature has thrown up phenomena more surprising than any of the possibilities that emerge from imagination in the philosopher's armchair, and Pears was alive to their significance. The book leaves one with a desire for an account of how action is explained by appreciation of norms in the cases where motivation is rational, and also for a deeper account of the relations between philosophical and empirical enquiry in the psychological realm. But these are questions we are still addressing, and it is a merit of Pears's book that they emerge so clearly. There are other writings by Pears on the philosophy of action, notably 'Intention and belief' in *Essays on Davidson: Actions and Events* (edited by B. Vermazen and M. Hintikka, Oxford, 1985), that continue to be cited. Pears also wrote and lectured on Aristotle, and on Russell in his logical atomist phase.

Until the stroke that cast a shadow over his last three years (he died in Oxford on 1 July 2009), Pears was always seeking the new experience, the new destination, the new friend, the new idea, the new film. It was not only the United States that he enjoyed. He could be encountered anywhere from Moscow to Mexico City. The introductions to his books speak of work done in Bellagio, Jerusalem, Paris, Provence. While we were both working at UCLA, he discovered a small company prepared to take tourists to see the uninhabited island of Anacapa, twelve miles off the Southern California coast, with its distinctive sea and bird life, and its dramatic contours. He suggested we drop everything for a day, and we took the trip in a tiny boat across the perfectly flat sea in the October sunlight. There was a lot of time for talking as well as seeing; the distance from the coastline seemed to give us a distance from ordinary life, and Pears began to analyse his friends, his philosophical colleagues, Californian attitudes, Thomas Mann novels, the state of philosophy. This was all done with amusement, affection for his friends, while he absorbed the extraordinary natural world around us. He had an optimistic sense of the possibilities of every aspect of human life, be they sensory, emotional, intellectual, or social; and in his own life he made so many of those possibilities real.

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