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WITTGENSTEIN ON FORMS OF LIFE

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Wittgenstein on Forms of Life

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Abstract: The question of what Wittgenstein meant by “forms of life” has attracted a great deal of attention in the literature, yet it is an expression that Wittgenstein himself employs on only a relatively small number of occasions, and that he does not explicitly define. This Element gives a description of this concept that also explains Wittgenstein’s reluctance to say much about it. A short historical introduction examines the origins and uses of the term in Wittgenstein’s time. The Element then presents a survey of Wittgenstein’s employment of it, and an overview of the literature. Finally, it offers a methodological reading of this notion, interpreting it as a conceptual tool in Wittgenstein’s wider inquiries into the workings of our language.

Keywords: Wittgenstein, forms of life, language, language games, practices

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