The Fiber and The Fabric

An Inquiry into Wittgenstein's Views on Rule-Following and Linguistic Normativity

"Aber wenn ich mich auch in solchen Fällen nicht irren kann – ist es nicht möglich, daß ich in der Narkose bin? Wenn ich es bin, & wenn die Narkose mir das Bewußtsein raubt, dann rede & denke ich jetzt nicht wirklich. Ich kann nicht im Ernst annehmen, ich träume jetzt. Wer träumend sagt "Ich träume", auch wenn er dabei hörbar redet, hat so wenig recht, wie wenn er im Traum sagt "Es regnet", während es tatsächlich regnet. Auch wenn sein Traum wirklich mit dem Geräusch des Regens zusammenhängt.

Harry P. Stein

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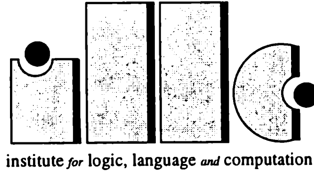
ILLC Dissertation Series 1997-05



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Cover: Wittgenstein's last written remark, two days before his death on 29. 04. 1951
"Aber wenn ich mich auch in solchen Fällen nicht irren kann, - ist es nicht möglich daß ich in der Narkose bin?" Wenn ich es bin und wenn die Narkose mir das Bewußtsein raubt, dann rede und denke ich jetzt nicht wirklich. Ich kann nicht im Ernst annehmen, ich träume jetzt. Wer träumend sagt "Ich träume", auch wenn er dabei hörbar redete, hat sowenig recht, wie wenn er im Traum sagt "Es regnet", während es tatsächlich regnet. Auch wenn sein Traum wirklich mit dem Geräusch des Regens zusammenhängt.
(Published as *Über Gewißheit* 676)

THE FIBER AND THE FABRIC

An Inquiry into Wittgenstein's Views on Rule-Following and Linguistic Normativity

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus
prof. dr. J.J.M. Franse
ten overstaan van een door het college van decanen ingestelde
commissie in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Aula der Universiteit

op vrijdag 21 november 1997 te 10.00 uur

door

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geboren te Dordrecht

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Opgedragen aan Paula,
wier komst me deed beseffen dat de kloof tussen kennis en besef slechts door ervaring overbrugd kan worden.

Acknowledgments

Arriving at this nexus where writers end and readers start, I am sharply aware that this thesis is a mere fiber in a historically and socially extended intellectual fabric. My interest in philosophy was kindled more than two decades ago when standing in front of the display-window of a somewhat seedy store that specialized in pornography and second hand books. Flanked by 'Konsalik' and some thumbed copies of *Pussy*, was a book called *The Antichrist*. I was both shocked and intrigued by this title, and bought the work. Nietzsche's diatribes proved an excellent introduction to philosophy, and lead to many new discoveries. One of these was Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, a book of 'crystalline beauty' that proved to be considerably harder than anything I had previously read. Determined to understand it, I did something I regarded as slightly perverse at that time - I bought a book about a book: Fogelin's *Wittgenstein*. To no avail. The *Tractatus* kept me bashing against the indomitable limits of my untutored understanding.

The insight that nothing I could do by myself would ever take me beyond these intellectual confines was one of the reasons for taking up a study in philosophy at the University of Amsterdam. I would like to thank the members of the 'Vakgroep Taalfilosofie en Logica' for the excellent education they provided. For what I learned during these years, I owe a particular debt to Herman Slangen and Martin Stokhof. To Herman, both for his classes that were pervaded by creative disorder, and for private conversations that first taught me the difference between studying philosophy and being a philosopher. To Martin, for practically demonstrating that philosophy is a 'techne' and that to think is to structure.

Still, graduation is trailed by a sobering awareness of the minute extent to which one has mastered this philosophical techne for oneself. In that respect, writing a thesis is a watershed and it is surprising to see how these years of monomania can yet be so educating. I want to thank the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) for giving the material support that made this investigation possible and my colleagues both inside and outside the University of Amsterdam for providing a stimulating context for such work.

My special thanks go to Martin Stokhof, for his truely Chinese way of teaching me: not by transferring propositional knowledge, but by inducing the desire to emulate his own example.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Mariette Huisjes, who is after all the best thing philosophy ever brought me.

A note on quotation

In quoting Wittgenstein, I have used the standard English translations of his works as they are listed in the bibliography. However, all quotations have also been compared with the original German text, and have been altered where I deemed an alteration desirable. Such amended quotations, in which the literal has precedence over the literary, are marked with an asterisk; e.g., (*PI* 43*).

Improving on a generally accepted translation has the odium of academic pedantry. But without wanting to pooh-pooh the Herculean labour performed by Wittgenstein's literary heirs Anscombe, Rhees and von Wright, I cannot help feeling that their work would have been even more praiseworthy had they been assisted by a professional translator. This claim might be supported by inspecting *Philosophical Investigations* #43, which contains Wittgenstein's well known 'definition of meaning', and is under that description being referred to in the index to the English edition. The English translation reads:

For a *large* class of cases - though not for all - in which we employ the word 'meaning' it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language.

The German original reads:

Man kann für eine *große* Klasse von Fällen der Benützung des Wortes 'Bedeutung' - wenn auch nicht für *alle* Fälle seiner Benützung - dieses Wort so erklären: Die Bedeutung eines Wortes ist sein Gebrauch in der Sprache.

It should be noted that the German words 'erklären' and 'Erklärung' usually mean 'to explain' and 'explanation' and *never* mean 'to define' and 'definition'. Considering that Wittgenstein stresses the difference between defining a word in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions, and giving a rough but workable explanation of it, translational accuracy on such points is imperative.

Overview

Everything is what it is, and not some other thing.
Boswell

Sometimes I think that something is some thing, but then Tom Poes thinks that something is some other thing. And in such cases Tom Poes is usually right.
Bommel

Some philosophical books are important, some are good; many are neither, a blessed few are both. Leaving the elusive category of the 'good' undefined, one might yet try to pinpoint some of the qualities that account for the importance, or rather, for a particular *kind* of importance a philosophical work might have. Firstly, the kind of work I have in mind brings a problem into the open that has for some time been a persistent conundrum just on the threshold of the 'collective philosophical consciousness'. Secondly, though, its treatment of this problem is far from conclusive or is even felt to be quite muddled or unacceptable. For the reader of such a work, the sudden recognition of the problem is thus paired with the certainty that he might yet improve on this particular handling of it. In this way, a philosophical work might well be important without being good and, paradoxically, its importance might even be increased by the fact that it is, in particular respects, not a good book.

Kripke's *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, out of which the present work grew, is undoubtedly an *important* book. Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following that Kripke singles out for discussion have always been regarded as a particularly hard and somewhat elusive part of the *Investigations*. Kripke succeeds in giving them a clear-cut and succinct interpretation. Furthermore, Kripke's exegesis highlights a persistent systematical problem concerning the possibility of giving a reductionist account of linguistic normativity that has usually been given less attention than it deserves. Now such reductionist issues - somewhat broadly defined - always turn on the question whether something indeed is what it is, or whether it is really some other thing. Concerning such problems, my general sentiment is that of Boswell, though I am not unfamiliar with the kind of surprise Bommel so well expresses. In fact, this thesis starts out in Boswell's spirit, while becoming more 'Bommelian' towards the end, as a short overview will make clear.

Chapter 1 presents a critical introduction to Kripke's *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* and lays the groundwork for a systematical discussion of Kripke's claims. Kripke interprets Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following as

endorsing a 'sceptical paradox' that leads to the conclusion that 'there is no such fact as anyone meaning anything by any word'. Kripke thinks that this paradox, all by itself, is 'obviously absurd', and he argues that Wittgenstein tries to mitigate its most destructive consequences by supplying it with a 'sceptical solution'. According to this 'solution', there are indeed no facts about meaning, yet on the basis of a communally shared agreement in 'blind inclinations' for language use one can at least account for our employment of words in general and the word 'meaning' in particular.

The first job we undertake is to analyse Kripke's paradox. It is argued that this paradox follows from the demand that any fact about meaning should meet two conditions. The first one we call the *normativity condition*. It requires that any putative fact about meaning should account for the normative features of our ordinary concepts of meaning or rule-following. Thus, on this condition a fact about meaning must account for the observation that someone who means something particular by a word *should* employ that word in a specific way, whether or not he in fact always does so. Secondly, facts about meaning must meet a *reduction condition*, which holds that one must be able to specify such facts in non-normative or non-intentional terms. If these two restrictions are accepted then it follows indeed - as Kripke claims - that 'there is no such fact as anyone meaning anything by any word'.

The remainder of the chapter gives an exposition of Kripke's sceptical solution and goes into some of the standard objections that have been raised against Kripke's arguments. It is shown that these objections are inconclusive.

Since Kripke claims that his paradox is only acceptable provided it can be given a sceptical solution, the solution that he offers obviously plays a pivotal role in his account. For if it proves to fail, the paradox becomes untenable and should have to be regarded as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the conjunction of the conditions that generate it. Kripke's sceptical solution is the object of our inquiry in Chapter 2. Firstly, it is shown by textual evidence that Kripke's solution, as it is actually presented, fails to meet the standards that any acceptable solution should meet according to Kripke. It therefor fails by Kripke's very own standards. Secondly, in order to give Kripke maximal benefit of the doubt, we embark on a somewhat tortuous attempt to remedy this shortcoming and improve on Kripke's solution. This turns out to be of no avail. Kripke's solution cannot fulfil its purported task of tempering the consequences of his paradox.

After this criticism, which is purely internal, we take a step back and scrutinize Kripke's solution from an external point of view. It is argued that the building stones of this solution - the 'blind inclinations for language use' that we allegedly possess - are largely fictional and that the possession of such 'blind inclinations' is neither necessary nor sufficient for ascribing a meaning to someone's words.

Now that the sceptical solution turns out to fail beyond all remedy, one is left with the sceptical paradox in all its unmitigated nihilistic force. Since this paradox

was derived from the simultaneous acceptance of a normativity condition and a reduction condition - as was explained in Chapter 1 - there are now several options for dealing with it, which are plotted out at the beginning of Chapter 3. Firstly, one might still hold that both conditions are acceptable, in which case either:
a. one comes up with a new fact about meaning that meets both conditions but has been overlooked by Kripke, or:
b. one grants Kripke that no such facts exist and one tries to live with the paradox .
It is argued that neither of these options is viable.

The second way of dealing with the paradox is to reject one of the conditions that generated it. In that case, either:
a. one rejects the reduction condition and holds that linguistic normativity is a primitive phenomenon that cannot and need not be reduced to non-normative facts, or:
b. one rejects the normativity condition.
In order to spell out a workable version of this last option one has to take some care. After all, the normativity condition held that our ordinary linguistic concepts have normative features, and this observation cannot plausibly be denied. However, in order to derive Kripke's paradox it is also necessary to hold that these normative features are intrinsic to any acceptable linguistic concept, and that they have therefore to be accounted for by anyone who intends to present an account of language, meaning, etc. Thus, there are two ways in which one might shrug the burden of the normativity condition without having to deny that our ordinary linguistic concepts have normative features. Either:
i. one pleads for a conceptual revisionism, and holds that our ordinary normative linguistic concepts can be replaced by 'scientifically improved' linguistic concepts that are non-normative and thus allow of a reductive treatment, or:
ii. one holds on to our ordinary linguistic concepts, but argues that normativity is a 'conceptual feature' of such concepts that is merely of interest to philosophers; the scientist should rather tell us what some such phenomenon as meaning 'really is'.

The remainder of chapter 3 is devoted to a discussion of these strategies for shrugging the normativity condition. Most attention is given to the first strategy: the revisionist one. We elaborately discuss Chomsky's detailed proposal for such a conceptual revision, and argue that his attempt is ultimately self-defeating. After that, the second strategy is critically discussed. The chapter ends with an attempt to further elucidate the problems confronting reductionism by modeling the several aspects featuring in the debate on a machine that sorts tomatoes according to a certain classification.

When Kripke's paradox cannot be defused by giving up the normativity condition, as is established in chapter 3, we must next look at the possibility of escaping from it by denying the reduction condition. Since, in my view, it is such a non-reductionist approach that Wittgenstein endorses we have now arrived at a point where exegetical questions about Wittgenstein's later work can be wedded to the systematical problem as it has thus far been developed. In the remainder of the book

we elaborate on the intricacies of a non-reductive stance towards linguistic normativity by taking Wittgenstein's work as our focus.

Before turning to Wittgenstein's views on rule-following and meaning Chapter 4 presents an investigation of Wittgenstein's philosophical method. We start with discussing a rather persistent interpretation of Wittgenstein, according to which *all* philosophical problems are in his view exclusively due to a misuse of ordinary language and can therefore only be (dis)solved by pointing out the semantical digressions in question and leading the philosopher back to the 'safe grounds of language'. Against this view, we argue the following points. Firstly, the idea that a misuse of language is the sole root of philosophical problems is itself of doubtful cogency. Secondly, this interpretation mislocates Wittgenstein's unease about traditional philosophy, which does not primarily stem from the view that such philosophy is not properly rooted in ordinary language, but rather, that it is not (ethically) rooted in ordinary life. Thirdly, to focus exclusively on Wittgenstein's linguistic qualms about philosophy is to make a caricature of his over-all view on philosophy, and threatens to set us on the wrong footing when it comes to understanding his remarks on meaning and rule-following. Alternatively, we explore a different and more interesting strand in Wittgenstein's conception of (doing) philosophy by focussing on his remarks about the non-verbal, pictorial representations that we - often unwittingly - employ. The role that pictures play in the later Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy is a relatively unexplored topic, and our treatment of it is therefore largely exploratory and exegetical.

In chapter 5 we turn to Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations proper. We start by applying the insights about pictures gained in the previous chapter to the opening section of the *Philosophical Investigations*, where, in contrast to Augustine's picture of the essence of language, Wittgenstein presents his alternative picture of a language without essence. In our unpacking of this section, we have occasion to mention and explain three features of the later Wittgenstein's global perspective that will reappear in the more detailed discussions that are to follow: his anti-foundationalism, his non-reductionist naturalism, and his philosophical anthropology that gives priority to action over thought and insight, to the social over the individual, and to phenomena that are extended over time over momentary phenomena.

Next, we try to get a proper grasp on the central problematic of the rule-following discussion in *PI* ## 138 - 242 by going into the relation between this part of the work and the preceding sections of the *Investigations*. We argue, *pace Kripke*, that in the rule-following discussion Wittgenstein does not present a sceptical argument against the factual status of rule-following or meaning in general. Rather, in this discussion Wittgenstein discusses an objection to his own, previously established view that the meaning of a word is its use in the language. The use of words is not basic, so the objection goes, but is rather grounded in an individual understanding that underlies the communal use of words while being itself use-independent. In

view of that, the main aim of the rule-following discussion, as we read it, is to settle the priority relation between, on the one hand, some allegedly foundational, use-independent, individual and momentary phenomenon such as a sudden flash of understanding and, on the other hand, the use of language as an ungroundable social phenomenon that is extended over time.

Section three then presents a detailed and exhaustive analysis of ## 138 - 142 and ## 201 - 202 that contain some of Wittgenstein's main arguments for settling this priority question in favour of our extended practices of language use. After this detailed exegesis of Wittgenstein's 'negative' arguments, section four presents an overview of Wittgenstein's 'positive' views concerning our normative practices of language use. The following points are isolated, explained and discussed:

* Meaning something or, more generally, following a rule is not grounded in anything transcending a practice of usage. It is not founded on anything an individual might grasp or possess, and it is not determined by reasons or justifications.
* The reasons and justifications that we have for using language as we do ultimately run out and terminate in a 'bedrock' of unpremeditated, immediate action. (Though it is a crucial feature of our practices that reasons and justifications can and must sometimes be given.)
* The process by which we (onto-genetically) become a member of a practice is by drill and dressage, not by any intellectual grasp.
* Our practices of language use presuppose a framework of natural and contingent conditions and regularities of both a human and non-human kind.
* Acting in accordance with a rule is primitive in the sense that it cannot be reduced to a more basic 'agreement in actions' or to 'objective' regularities.
* A practice is a temporally extended phenomenon, and single acts of meaning or intending require a proper embedding in such an extended practice.
* Our practices for using language are in fact of an intrinsically social nature. To the extent that our practices for language use are social practices, the 'facts about meaning' are social facts. And to that extent, facts about individuals are not constitutive for meaning.

We conclude this section by arguing that Wittgenstein's positive points primarily bear on philosophical anthropology, rather than on semantics.

The closing section of this chapter raises the question what implications these views about language have for our metaphysical conception of the individual person. Roughly put, if no set of individual facts is constitutive to a meaningful use of language, as Wittgenstein argues, and being in command of a language is nevertheless essential for being an individual person, as seems a reasonable assumption, then the time-honoured view of individual persons as autonomous, self-contained substances would seem no longer to be tenable. This is not a problem Wittgenstein seems to have been aware of, and it takes us to the confines of the present work.

Remaining within these confines, we may still, in an indirect way, throw some light on this question by investigating, in Chapter 6, Wittgenstein's remarks in *Über Gewißheit* on the relation between our endeavors to acquire knowledge and

the constitutive framework of certainties on which these are dependent. Starting from Moore's remarks on certainty and the traditional kind of scepticism to which these were addressed, Wittgenstein argues both against the cogency of such wholesale doubt and against the idea that 'certain knowledge' is the key to answering it. Knowledge and doubt, it is pointed out, both stand in need of reasons and justification procedures, and for that reason, both knowledge and doubt require the existence of a prior framework of convictions that are practically taken to stand firm. To be rational, in other words, is not to entertain certain doubts, and the attempt to turn sceptical paranoia into method destroys the very possibility of inquiry itself.

The embedding, constitutive context of our ordinary epistemic exploits is made up of what Wittgenstein calls 'certainties'; these things that are indubitable for us and constitute the 'hinges' on which our ordinary inquiries turn. In our enquiry, we try to bring some order to Wittgenstein's unedited remarks in *Über Gewißheit*, so as to get a firmer grasp on the nature and scope of this transcendental framework.

Table of Contents

1. Kripke on Rules - a critical exposition	1
I. Introduction	1
II. Kripke's Sceptical Paradox and its Solution	2
III. Kripke's Critics	16
2. Kripke on Rules - a refutation	35
I. Will Jones or Should Jones?	35
II. Reforming the Solution	45
III. Blind Inclinations	60
3. The Sceptical Charge	73
I. The Sceptical Paradox and Beyond	73
II. Eliminating 'Obscure Normative Factors'	80
III. Knowledge of Language	88
IV. An Interim Assessment	103
V. Knowledge and Normativity	107
VI. Language, I-language and Tomatoes	118
4. Wittgenstein's Philosophical Method	127
I. Introduction	127
II. The Language of the Philosophers	131
III. Pictures	139
5. Wittgenstein on Meaning and Rule-following	159
I. Wittgenstein's Picture	159
II. Wittgenstein's Rule-Following Considerations In Context	169
III. Settling the Priority Relation	184
IV. Practice and Normativity	207
V. Open Questions	233
6. Wittgenstein on Certainty	241
I. Introduction	241
II. Reasons for Knowledge, Reasons for Doubt	243
III. Moore on Certainty	248
IV. Certainty's Anatomy	257
Bibliography	271
Samenvatting	273

1

Kripke on Rules - a critical exposition

I. Introduction

The appearance of Saul Kripke's *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language - An Elementary Exposition* (for short: *WRPL*) is without question a landmark in the interpretation of Wittgenstein's later philosophy.[1] Where earlier expositions of the *Philosophical Investigations* tended to focus primarily on such topics as language games, family resemblance or private language, Kripke sees the remarks on understanding and rule-following in *PI* ##138 - 242 as central to Wittgenstein's later philosophy. In these remarks Wittgenstein purportedly questions the factual status of rule-following and linguistic meaning, and develops 'the most radical and original sceptical problem that philosophy has seen to date' (*WRPL*, p. 60), a problem that seems to force the devastating conclusion upon us that 'there can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word' (*WRPL*, p. 55). Yet, Kripke also takes Wittgenstein to give a 'sceptical solution' to this problem by presenting us with an alternative, non-factual account of meaning and rule-following. According to this new account, the application of such normative notions as *rule-following* intrinsically involves a whole speech community, and for that reason, such notions are inapplicable to an individual 'regarded in isolation'.

I will start the present investigation by giving an exposition of Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein as put forward in *WRPL*. I will then proceed to discuss this interpretation both as an account of rule-following taken on its own merits, and as an exegesis of Wittgenstein's views. As I will argue, Kripke's account is in both respects deeply flawed. This might give rise to the suspicion that my decision to treat Kripke at all must be inspired by a certain penchant for negativism. After all, if Kripke is wrong on both counts, why treat of him at all? I think that there are several good answers to this question. Firstly, it is in itself important to show that a subtle and stimulating interpretation such as Kripke's is nevertheless wrong. A close scrutiny of Kripke's interpretation sharpens our appreciation of Wittgenstein, in the same way as a puzzle in which one has to find the differences between two seemingly identical pictures sharpens our perception of both. Furthermore, I think that there are reasons for being dissatisfied with Kripke's account of rule-following that have not received proper attention. Where most commentators have criticized Kripke's paradox or his solution from an external point of view, I shall primarily

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[1] Without wanting to distract from the originality of Kripke's views, it may be pointed out that Kripke's reading of Wittgenstein is foreshadowed in Fogelin (1976) and Wright (1980). (An earlier version of WRPL has appeared in Block (1981)

present an internal criticism of his account. I will argue firstly that his sceptical solution only seemingly meets the demands which Kripke has set for it, and secondly, that this shortcoming cannot be remedied. In my view, Kripke's account fails by Kripke's very own standards.

A last reason for taking Kripke's interpretation seriously is that it raises questions about reductionism and the dichotomy between facts and norms that are pivotal to contemporary discussions in the philosophy of language and the philosophy of mind. Although the *Philosophical Investigations* has bearing on these topics, it does not explicitly discuss them. In order to come to terms with Kripke's interpretation, one therefore must explicate Wittgenstein's view on those issues and pay close attention to these aspects of Wittgenstein's philosophy that have a direct bearing on contemporary debates.

II. KRIPKE'S SCEPTICAL PARADOX AND ITS SOLUTION

According to Kripke, the pivot of the *Philosophical Investigations* is a sceptical problem about meaning. This problem arises from the alleged incompatibility of two features that are central to our semantic notions in general: their factuality and their normativity.[1] Both are aspects of semantic concepts as we ordinarily understand them. We talk for example about the *fact* that someone follows a certain rule or fails to follow it, and we presume that two people who follow different rules must somehow be *factually* different from each other. Furthermore, we usually regard such facts about meaning and rule-following as involving nothing besides the individual language user of which such facts are true. In other words, we adopt what Kripke calls a 'private model of language', that is, we regard ourselves as speaking a language 'the constitution of which depends on properties of each speaker taken in isolation'.

On the other hand, to follow a certain rule or to mean something by a word also has normative import. If someone means something by a word, then it follows that he *ought* to use it in a certain way, a way that usually does not completely coincide with how the speaker *actually* and sometimes erratically uses the word. Meaning something carries definite normative commitments in its wake, and therefore, considered in the light of what someone means by a certain word, some applications of the word can be said to be correct, while others can be said to be incorrect.

Kripke now develops a 'sceptical paradox' which is meant to show that these normative aspects of semantic notions are deeply problematic since no fact about an individual language user can account for them. When we confine ourselves to an

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[1] Kripke's paradox and solution have bearing on all semantical concepts which we take as factually applying to individual language users; e.g., *having a certain linguistic intention*, *following a certain rule*, *meaning something with a word*, *understanding a word in a certain way* etc. For Kripke's argument it is irrelevant to differentiate between these notions. In what follows I will not always use the cumbersome 'normative semantical notions' but will talk indifferently about 'rules', 'meaning' etc.

individual speaker 'taken in isolation', so Kripke claims, the most we can establish is that this person has certain 'blind' inclinations for the use of language. These inclinations may determine how he in fact uses his words, but they have no bearing at all on how he should use them. For that reason, not even the most exhaustive inventory of the facts about an individual speaker could give us a foothold for applying notions of correctness to his linguistic behaviour. Since our semantic concepts essentially involve such standards of correctness, it would seem that there is no factual support at all for the idea that semantic concepts apply to individual speakers. In other words: there can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word. (*WRPL*, p. 55)

In order to appreciate the bite of this rather devastating conclusion, one needs to take a close look at the sceptical problem from which it apparently follows. Yet, Kripke's presentation of this problem in *WRPL* is rather loose and intuitive, with the vines of rhetoric sometimes overgrowing the argumentative framework. In what follows, I will therefore sometimes break in on the exposition of Kripke's account of rule-following with my own comments, so as to provide us with a clear understanding of what his views are really about. Kripke's sceptical problem about rule-following, it will appear, is primarily an ontological problem that arises from subjecting any acceptable account of rule-following to a 'normativity condition' and a 'reduction condition'. In the present section of this chapter, I will set out the precise content of those two conditions and the pivotal role that they play in both Kripke's problem setting and in his positive account. In that way I will try to arrive at a sharp and clear cut view of the Kripkian dialectic. In the next section of this chapter, I will subsequently address some of the arguments against Kripke's views that have been brought forward in the literature. Firstly, I will discuss Wright's reading of Kripke's negative arguments. This reading differs from my own in giving a more prominent role to epistemological considerations. I will argue, though, that the ensuing problem can much easier be dismissed than the ontological problem that I take Kripke to endorse. Secondly, I will discuss and refute three proposals for giving a straightforward solution to Kripke's paradox. Thirdly, I will take a look at some of the reasons why commentators have rejected Kripke's sceptical solution and I will show that those considerations fail to do any serious damage to Kripke's account. In the next chapter, I will then continue to subject Kripke's account to a purely internal criticism.

Kripke begins his argument by asking us to consider a term such as 'plus', of which any speaker has only made a limited number of applications. Let us assume that I, for instance, have never added numbers that are greater than 56, so that the question 'how much is 57 plus 68' involves an application of 'plus' that is new to me. Let us also take it that I have never given myself any explicit instructions for this particular case. Of course, when asked about 57 plus 68, I will almost certainly answer '125'. After all, by 'plus' I mean addition, and 57 added to 68 gives 125. Given the fact that I mean addition by 'plus', '125' is the answer that I should give, and probably will give.

At this point, Kripke introduces a sceptic, who accepts that '125' is indeed the right answer given my *present* intentions for the term 'plus', but who also suggests that formerly I meant something quite different by 'plus', and that '5' is the right answer given these *past* intentions. Previously, the sceptic tells me, I did not mean addition by 'plus' at all. Rather, I meant *quus*, where quus is the function that coincides with the plus function for all my past applications, but that renders the value 5 for this particular instance.[1] The sceptic, as Kripke puts it,

> claims ... that I am now misinterpreting my own previous usage. By 'plus', he says, I always meant quus; now, under the influence of some insane frenzy, or a bout of LSD, I have come to misinterpret my own previous usage. (*WRPL*, p. 9)

Kripke concedes that the sceptic's suggestion is perfectly bizarre, but he also points out that it cannot be readily dismissed. The ball is in my court. I claim that it has always been a fact about me that I meant addition by 'plus'. The sceptic now challenges me to indicate what particular fact about me it is that can qualify as 'the fact of meaning addition by "plus"', and he wants me to explain how this fact makes '125' instead of '5' the correct answer to the question about 57 plus 68. If I am so certain that I still mean the same function by 'plus', then I should now give the grounds for this certainty. Thus the sceptic wants to know what kind of fact it is to mean something by a word, how such facts should be individuated, and how such facts can have the required normative consequences.

Before embarking on this quest for the facts that are constitutive of meaning addition by 'plus', I want to say something about the way in which Kripke presents the problem. In the first place, I think that Kripke's use of the 'Goodmanian' bent predicate 'quus' must be seen as merely a rhetorical device that should not blind us to the real question. The sceptic does not ask us to justify why we use normal, instead of bent predicates, and accordingly his problem cannot be solved by pointing out the existence of certain objective natural kinds and categories and the evolutionary value of attuning our language to them.[2] By means of 'quus', the sceptic intends to highlight the question what kind of fact it is to use a word with a definite meaning *at all* - be this meaning normal or bent. The sceptic does not so much ask me to exclude the possibility that I meant quus, as to ground the fact that I mean plus.

In the second place, I think that formulating the problem in terms of a distinction between past and present intentions is an unnecessary complication, that might give rise to the mistaken idea that our knowledge of past intentions is at stake here. Kripke himself gives the following reasons for presenting the sceptic's challenge in this way. Firstly, he notes that to exclude doubt about present usage is a precondition for stating the sceptical challenge at all.

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[1] Thus quus can be defined as follows: a quus b = a + b when a, b < 57 and a quus b = 5 in all other cases. Obviously, in order to make the sceptic's point one might take any function that coincides with the plus function for all applications one has previously encountered, but which gives some deviant value in a new case.

[2] See for such a Goodmanian interpretation of the sceptic's question Khlentzos (1993).

For the sceptic to converse with me at all, we must have a common language. So I am supposing that the sceptic, provisionally, is not questioning my *present* use of the word 'plus'. (*WRPL*, p. 12)

More importantly still, Kripke thinks that it is relatively easy to raise a genuine doubt about past usage, and so, presumably, he takes it that raising a real doubt about what we mean is necessary for making the sceptic's point:

... surely, if I use language at all, I cannot doubt coherently that 'plus', as I now use it, denotes plus! ... But I can doubt that my *past* usage of 'plus' denoted plus. The previous remarks - about a frenzy and LSD - should make this quite clear. (*WRPL*, p. 13)

I do not find this reason for drawing a distinction between past and present intentions very impressing. According to Kripke, the possibility that I might now be subject to some insane frenzy or that I might be under the influence of LSD is supposed to induce a real and genuine doubt about my past usage of 'plus'. Yet, I am not so certain about the possibility of such doubt. Someone who is actually on LSD might of course have good reason to doubt both his past and his present use of 'plus'. But I am not on LSD, and I lack any reasons for seriously entertaining such doubt. The fact that I might, counterfactually, have had reason for doubt, cannot lead to genuine, actual doubt. If, on the other hand, the sceptic is supposed to induce his semantical doubt by first making me doubt whether I am not actually on LSD, then I might as well let him take a blood sample and be done with it. Thus, Kripke distinguishes past from present usage because he thinks that it is easier to raise a genuine doubt about the former than it is about the latter. He forgets that genuine doubt requires genuine reasons, and such reasons we are simply not being given.

More importantly, though, one does not need to be in the fangs of tormenting doubt in order to appreciate the sceptic's question. The sceptic asks me to explicate what fact it is to mean addition by 'plus', and in order to take that question seriously I do not need to have any real doubt about what I meant in the past. I should be puzzled about what the fact of meaning addition does actually consist in, and how such facts are to be individuated. So I think that Kripke's attempt to introduce a real doubt about what I meant is unnecessary and that it tends to weaken, rather than strengthen his point. Instead of trying vainly to raise a real doubt about past usage, the sceptic can ask me straightforwardly what fact grounds my conviction that I mean something definite by the word 'plus'.

It should thus be noted that in spite of Kripke's presentation the problem is not really sceptical in the ordinary epistemological sense of the word at all. As will be more fully explained below, Kripke does place certain restrictions on what kind of fact could count as an adequate answer to the sceptic's challenge, but these have to do primarily with the nature of these facts, and not with how we could come to *know* them or how we could actually use them as a justification of the applications we make. In fact, when it comes to finding the appropriate kind of facts, Kripke completely abstracts from any specifically human epistemological limitations and the problem presented is therefore ontological in nature, rather than epistemo-

logical.[1]

To return to where I left off, the sceptic challenges us to specify the fact in which 'meaning addition by "plus" consists. According to Kripke, such facts about meaning should meet two conditions:

(i) Such facts must have normative consequences for someone's linguistic behaviour, and must allow us to explain why specific applications of a word are correct and others incorrect. In particular, such facts should make it possible to account for intuitively valid conditionals of the form *If a speaker s means such-and-such with a term t, then he should use term t so-and-so.*[2]

(ii) Those facts must be statable without invoking any normative, semantical vocabulary. Since such facts are supposed to ground meaning, their specification may not already take meaning or norms of linguistic correctness for granted.[3]

The reason Kripke adduces for accepting the first condition is that normativity is an essential component of our semantic concepts. Someone who means something with a word, it was already pointed out, is normatively committed to a certain use of that word. Someone who means addition by 'plus' may not always actually answer '125' when asked about 57 plus 68 - after all, he might make mistakes, but if he indeed means addition, then '125' is certainly what he *should* answer. Any fact that leaves such normative features unexplained, simply cannot be equated with the fact of meaning something with a word, and cannot account for meaning as we intuitively understand that notion. This first condition therefore functions as a conceptual constraint on any possible explication of meaning. In what follows, I will refer to it as the 'normativity condition'.

The second condition is motivated by Kripke as a methodological restriction on the investigation. The sceptic, Kripke points out, is questioning the very existence of semantic facts, and an attempt to answer him by invoking such very facts is therefore circular and question begging. And indeed, when the question is what fact about a person actually constitutes his meaning addition by 'plus', then it is hardly enlightening to be told that this is the fact of his meaning addition. However, I think that to motivate this condition as merely a methodological constraint would itself be begging the question. To see why, one might imagine that our sceptic, who questions the existence of semantic facts, has a brother of a rather Berkeleyan bend

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[1] In taking the paradox to make an ontological rather than an epistemological point I am in agreement with McGinn (1984) and Boghossian (1989). It should be noted however that Kripke himself is rather ambiguous on this point, vacillating between a more epistemological and a more ontological reading of the paradox. Wright (1984) stays rather close to Kripke's own presentation by regarding the paradox as leading to an ontological problem by epistemological means. However, as will become clear from a discussion of Wright's interpretation of Kripke in the next section, importing epistemological elements into the paradox seriously weakens it argumentative 'bite'.

[2] See for Kripke's formulation of this condition *WRPL*, p. 11.

[3] This condition is not explicitly formulated at the outset of the discussion. It is however formulated and extensively used at *WRPL*, p. 28 ff., where the attempt to give a dispositional answer to the sceptical challenge is being discussed.

whose favourite pastime it is to question the mind-independent existence of physical facts. Suppose that this latter sceptic were to make a similar demand: in order to avoid circularity, his doubts about the existence of physical facts should be met by explaining the nature of physical facts in non-physical terms. It is clear that anyone who believes in physical facts as an ontologically basic, independent category has no reason at all to accept this demand in the first place. In fact, accepting it would already amount to admitting defeat. The only proper reason one *could* have for demanding or accepting such a restriction from the outset, is that one believes that physical facts are at best a dependent ontological category, so that the legitimacy of physical facts must be demonstrated by reducing them to a more basic kind of facts. I think that a similar reductionist consideration is implicit in Kripke's endorsement of this condition with regard to semantic facts. Kripke presupposes from the outset that there can be no such things as primitive and irreducible semantic or normative phenomena, and for that reason he asks us to present our account in terms of a more basic kind of facts, such as dispositional, mental or physiological facts. I do not want to deny Kripke the right to make such a demand, and at this point I will not question the viability of it. But I do think that one should recognize this constraint for what it is: a substantial reduction condition rather than a sensible methodological gloss on the discussion. In what follows I will therefore refer to this restriction as the 'reduction condition'.

Now that the sceptic's problem and the restrictions on its solution have been put forward, Kripke argues that no set of mental, physiological or dispositional facts *can* meet the sceptic's challenge.

As a first answer to the sceptic, one might propose to regard meaning something as being in some introspectively accessible mental state, like having a certain picture in mind or like having an experience with a specific 'feel' or quale. Against this view, Kripke first argues that an introspective investigation such as Wittgenstein conducts in the Philosophical Investigations shows that such mental states are merely chimerical. There is simply no specific mental state in which I find myself every time that I mean addition by 'plus'. More importantly though, Kripke argues that even if there were such a state, it would be of no help at all in explaining what it is to mean addition, instead of 'quaddition' by 'plus'. In the first place because, as Kripke puts it, 'such a state would have to be a finite object, contained in our finite minds' (*WRPL*, p. 52). It is not easy to see how such a 'finite object' could determine an infinite number of correct answers to addition sums. Now of course it might be objected that this can be explained by claiming that we interpret the mental state every time that we make an addition. Kripke cuts this suggestion short with the observation that in that case I would of course have to interpret the mental state correctly, and that therefore nothing is accomplished by this answer. The sceptic could now simply rephrase his question, and ask me what kind of fact determines that I interpret this mental state correctly rather than incorrectly, e.g., as a 'plus-state', rather than a 'quus-state'. On pain of getting into a vicious regress, this question cannot be answered by pointing out yet another mental state, lying behind

the first one. So having a picture before your mind or any other mental state with definite qualitative features, Kripke concludes, cannot be the kind of fact constitutive for meaning. As finite objects, such mental states fail to determine the infinite amount of correct applications, and if one resorts to 'interpreted mental states', then one only shifts ground without solving anything.[1]

Finally, in view of our strong inclination to think that some such mentalistic account *must* be true, Kripke concludes this part of the discussion by looking at the mentalist's last ditch stand. As he introduces this position:

> Perhaps we may try to recoup, by arguing that meaning addition by 'plus' is a state even more *sui generis* than we have argued before. Perhaps it is simply a primitive state, not to be assimilated to sensations or headaches or any 'qualitative' states ... but a state of a unique kind of its own. (*WRPL*, p. 51)

The idea behind postulating such an absolutely sui generis mental state, is that it cannot and need not be further interpreted. It is as it were the ultimate self-interpreting interpretation, and it intrinsically determines which applications are to be made. Since there is thus an 'internal' relation between the mental state and the applications determined by it, such states do not allow of a description in terms of qualities which are logically independent of the applications. If it were asked what kind of fact constitutes meaning addition by 'plus', one could now simply answer that this consists in the fact of being in the mental state of *meaning addition by 'plus'*. And if it be asked how this mental state determines which applications are correct, it might be answered that it simply follows from the mental state of meaning addition by 'plus' that applications of 'plus' which are additions are correct and applications which are not additions are incorrect.

Kripke does not discuss this view elaborately. He remarks that such a primitive state of meaning addition still is subject to the objection that as a finite state it cannot determine an infinite number of correct applications. Furthermore, such a move 'seems desperate: it leaves the nature of this postulated primitive state - the primitive state of 'meaning addition by 'plus'' - completely mysterious' (*WRPL*, p. 51). In other words, a completely sui generis state of meaning addition would obviously not meet the sceptic's demand that the facts in question have to be specified without an appeal to meaning itself, and would therefore violate the reduction condition.[2]

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[1] In this argument, which is much inspired, if not a presentation of Wittgenstein's argument in *Philosophical Investigations* # 138 ff., Kripke puts a lot of stress on the discrepancy between the *finite* nature of a mental state and the *infinite* extension of 'plus'. Taking this to be the crucial distinction is, as I will show in chapter 5, rather a distortion of Wittgenstein's anti-mentalist argument, and threatens to make that argument less general than it actually is. The distinction that is relevant to Wittgenstein is not so much that between the finite and the infinite, as that between thing and action, or between 'item' and use. For that reason Wittgenstein's argument applies as well to a term with an infinite extension, such as 'plus', as to proper names that denote a unique thing only, such as 'Kings College'.

[2] It is worth noticing that if it were not for this condition, this 'sui generis approach' would effectively short circuit the sceptic's strategy. The sceptic's argument depends on giving logically independent descriptions of the mental state and the applications that are supposed to be determined by it. Once such a description is given, the sceptic can then go on to question the relation between

Mental states, be they introspectively accessible or not, fail to live up to the standards that are to be met by the fact of meaning addition by 'plus', and the sceptic subsequently turns his attention to a new candidate: dispositional views on meaning.

A dispositionalist would typically try to answer the sceptic by claiming that the fact of meaning addition by 'plus' is the fact of having a particular behavioural disposition, e.g., a disposition to give particular answers to addition sums. Kripke gives three, increasingly general arguments against this view. His first objection is that our actual dispositions involve finite human capacities, while meaning can determine an infinite amount of correct applications. Certainly there are addition sums involving numbers which are so large that to answer such a sum would take a human being a longer time than the universe has yet been in existence. With regard to such additions, one simply lacks any appropriate behavioural dispositions. Thus, looking at actual human dispositions for behaviour under humanly possible circumstances, we find that such dispositions inevitably underdetermine meaning. In order to remedy this shortcoming, the dispositionalist might turn to how a person would counterfactually behave. Instead of explaining meaning in terms of the behaviour a person can actually display, one would in that case appeal to the behaviour that a person would, counterfactually, display provided that certain conditions p apply. The problem with this suggestion, so Kripke argues, lies in spelling out those conditions p. Concerning very large addition sums one might, for example, appeal to the answer that a person would give, if he were to stick with what he now means by the word. Yet, defining a disposition by means of such a provision would presuppose a prior determination of the very meaning that the disposition is supposed to fix. Such a disposition would therefore blatantly violate the reduction condition. On the other hand, one might try to avoid this shortcoming by talking about the answer that a person would give provided he lives long enough or provided his brain capacity was greatly extended. Such suggestions, Kripke argues, are empty. At best they belong to the domain of science fiction, since we can only speculate and fantasize about how a person would behave under such circumstances. Thus, Kripke concludes, the gap between our actual, finite dispositions and the infinite nature of meaning cannot be bridged, unless by an

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state and applications. Taking mental states to be sui generis in the sense explained above, short-circuits this strategy by giving a description of the mental state which is logically dependent on the description of the applications that are supposed to follow from it, and for that reason it no longer seems possible to drive a wedge between the mental state and the applications. Therefore, the point is not that as a matter of fact - which might possibly be remedied, this sui generis option leaves the nature of these mental states mysterious. Rather, it belongs to the very essence of this option to severely restrict the descriptive apparatus with which we may individuate such states and thus to reject the reduction condition that the sceptic endorses. I take this sui generis approach to be defended by McGinn in (1984), and to be very close to the position that John Searle defends in the first chapter of *Intentionality*. As we shall see in Chapter 5, where Wittgenstein's anti-mentalist argument is extensively discussed, views like these cannot and need not be rebutted by a dogmatic endorsement of the sceptic's reduction condition.

illicit appeal to meaning itself.[1]

Secondly, Kripke argues that a dispositional account cannot, in a non-question begging way, cope with the everyday observation that humans sometimes make mistakes. His point is similar to the previous one. Since a mistake is an application of a word that is incorrect in the light of what a person means by that word, the dispositionalist can only account for such behavioural deviations by already taking meaning for granted in his specification of the relevant dispositions.

Yet, even if all our words had finite extensions, and our applications were always true to what we mean by our words, then still the dispositional account would fail. This, Kripke claims, follows from his third and most important objection to the dispositional view: dispositions can at best account for the applications someone *would* make, not for those one *should* make. A disposition determines what answers a person *will* actually give to an addition sum, but it has no bearing at all on what he *should* answer if he is to mean a certain thing. In other words, a disposition merely stands in a descriptive relation to usage, and not in the required normative relation. For that reason, the dispositionalist simply gives the wrong kind of answer, and cannot account for the normative features of our concept of meaning. So, the fatal shortcoming of a dispositionalist's view on meaning is that:

> the dispositionalist gives a *descriptive* account of this relation [between meaning and responding]: if '+' meant addition, then I will answer '125'. But this is not the proper account of the relation, which is *normative*, not descriptive. The point is *not* that, if I meant addition by '+', I *will* answer '125', but that, if I intend to accord with my past meaning of '+', I *should* answer '125'. (*WRPL*, p. 37)

Thus, in order to be conceptually adequate, the facts in question must meet the normativity condition specified on page 8. It was part of this condition that certain conditionals that capture our intuition that meaning has normative consequences would have to be accounted for. Summarily, it had to be shown why, if a person means such-and-such by a word, he *should* apply it so-and-so. Yet, the dispositionalist can at best account for a descriptive version of those conditionals. That is, he can merely explain why a person who means such-and-such by a word *will* apply it so-and-so, instead of accounting for what this person *should* answer. Since those normative conditionals represented a conceptual restriction on any possible answer, the dispositional account, therefore, in principle cannot be conceptually adequate.

I have treated Kripke's arguments against the dispositional view rather elaborately, because they clearly illustrate the importance of the two conditions mentioned earlier. In order to meet the reduction condition, the dispositionalist will have to appeal to behavioural regularities that can be described without using the notions of meaning or linguistic correctness. Yet, when he does so, he will encounter insurmountable problems when it comes to accounting for the normative features of

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[1] This argument against dispositional accounts of meaning has drawn a lot fire; see e.g. Blackburn (1984). I am not acquainted with a satisfactory solution to the problem that Kripke raises, but it might be pointed out that, since the argument is highly dependent on Kripke's choice of mathematical examples, it rather tends to confuse the general issue.

meaning that are a conceptual constraint on his solution. So it is not possible for a dispositional account to do justice to both conditions at the same time.

A last attempt at answering the sceptic would be to explain meaning in physiological terms. I can be brief about this option, since it is essentially covered by Kripke's knock-out argument against the previous view. At best, such theories can give a causal, descriptive account of a person's linguistic behaviour, and it is very hard, if not impossible, to see how they could ever account for the normative commitments that characterise meaning.[1]

So neither mental facts, nor dispositional, nor physiological facts can explicate what it is to mean addition by 'plus', since such facts either violate the reduction condition, or they leave the normative aspects of meaning unaccounted for and Kripke concludes:

> This, then, is the sceptical paradox. ... there is no fact about me that distinguishes between my meaning plus and my meaning quus. Indeed, there is no fact about me that distinguishes between my meaning a definite function by 'plus' ... and my meaning nothing at all. (*WRPL*, p. 21)

Or, more generally:

> There can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word. Each new application we make is a leap in the dark. (*WRPL*, p. 55)

This conclusion Kripke sees formulated in the first paragraph of *Philosophical Investigations* # 201, where Wittgenstein remarks:

> This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here.

And of course, where there can be neither accord nor conflict, there can be no genuine rule-following either. For that reason, the sceptic concludes that our talk about meaning lacks any factual content. However, from this it also follows that if we accept the common equation of a statement's meaning with its truth conditions, then not only the factual content, but the very meaningfulness of our semantic discourse is being threatened. If there is no such fact as Jones meaning addition by plus, then neither can the sentence 'Jones means addition by 'plus' have truth conditions. Thus, on the assumption that a declarative sentence is only meaningful when it has truth conditions, the sceptic's conclusion implies that our very talk about meaning now becomes meaningless.

This latter conclusion is obviously intolerable. Yet, before sketching in which way Kripke thinks to escape it, I want to break in on Kripke's account by making two short glosses on the sceptic's conclusion that there are no truth conditions for our semantic discourse. Firstly, Kripke uses the notion of a truth condition in a

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[1] In Chapter 3 an elaborate investigation of such a causalist position will be conducted.

strongly realist sense which he unfortunately does not explicate. A statement p about an object a, Kripke seems to hold, can only have truth conditions and thus be true in a 'literal' sense, when there is some fact 'in the world' expressed by p and involving a and nothing but a, in virtue of which the statement p is true. It should be noted that Kripke holds that such a realist commitment is lacking in the case of justification conditions. A statement p about an object a, I think that Kripke would claim, can have justification conditions and be fully justified, despite the absence of some fact 'in the world' expressed by p and involving a and nothing but a. I readily grant that this explication of Kripke's use of those notions is vague, but I do not want to elaborate where Kripke fears to tread. I merely want to remark that such a realist notion of truth conditions is necessary in order to infer from the sceptic's conclusion that there are no 'meaning facts' to the absence of truth conditions for our semantical discourse.[1]

Secondly, Kripke's conclusion that no truth conditions for statements about meaning can be specified because no 'meaning-facts' about an individual speaker can be found, may seem rather hasty. After all, shouldn't one first take into account the possibility of specifying truth conditions in terms of social facts? I think that this point calls for a comment on Kripke's approach and his terminology. In Kripke's argument we are dealing with two parameters: the facts that we take into account and the semantic approach that we want to adopt. Concerning the facts, Kripke draws a basic distinction between facts concerning nothing but an individual speaker and facts involving a whole speech community. On the semantic side, as will be discussed below, Kripke distinguishes between an account in terms of truth conditions and one in terms of justification conditions. Thus there are four possible approaches to the sceptic's question:

(i) a truth-conditional account in terms of 'individual facts'
(ii) a truth-conditional account in terms of 'social facts'
(iii) a justification-conditional account in terms of 'individual facts'
(iv) a justification-conditional account in terms of 'social facts'.

It is a salient feature of Kripke's discussion that in practice he collapses the distinction between the factual and the semantic parameter, and only countenances the first and the fourth approach. Option (i) is attacked as the private model of language by the sceptical argument. Option (iii) is not discussed at all, and it

[1] Whether such a conception of truth conditions is the correct one I do not want to pronounce upon. However, that it is not *obviously* correct might be illustrated by means of colour concepts. If it is indeed true that colours are secondary qualities, involving both objective features of the world and the human perceptual apparatus, then with Kripke's notion of truth conditions there is no such fact as snow being white, and neither does the sentence 'snow is white' have truth conditions or can it be literally true. After all, there is no fact in the world, involving snow and nothing but snow, that would make this sentence true. (I have sometimes been told in conversation that 'therefore, colour predicates must have a 'hidden variable''. This, I take it, is merely an attempt to tailor one's language to one's philosophy.) My point is not that Kripke's notion of truth conditions stands condemned because of such examples. But rather, that questions about the relation between semantics and philosophical ontology are intricate and elusive, and should be approached by means of arguments instead of presuppositions.

remains unclear whether it is also an instantiation of this private model. Option (iv), it will be shown below, is endorsed during the sceptical solution as the community view, while option (ii) is only summarily dismissed at the very end of the discussion (*WRPL*, p. 111). I think that some rather fundamental ontological and semantical problems are covered up by this equivocation, and in the sections to come I will try to give some indication of the reasons Kripke has for not going into the second and the fourth option. However, since I think that Kripke's account fails *even* if we grant him the collapse of the semantical and the ontological parameter, a full treatment of those issues will be reserved for a later occasion. Therefore, when discussing Kripke, I shall in my terminology comply with Kripke's bifurcation; when meaning option (i) I shall indiscriminately talk about a factual, individual or truth-conditional account of meaning, to option (iv) I shall refer as the non-factual, social or justification-conditional account.

As a consequence of the sceptic's argument - to return to Kripke's exposition - our very talk about meaning seems to become meaningless. Kripke himself regards this conclusion as 'obviously absurd'. It is one thing to say that our talk about meaning lacks factual content, but quite a different thing to claim that the very idea that we use language meaningfully is empty and that our talk about meaning is just so much empty chit chat. Therefore, Kripke takes Wittgenstein to show us a way out of this predicament by presenting a 'sceptical solution' to the sceptic's problem. This solution is *sceptical*, in as far as it concedes the sceptic that our semantic discourse is without any factual content. Yet, solves the intolerable sceptical predicament by showing how, despite the absence of *facts* about meaning, we can nevertheless be justified in *talking* about meaning and rule-following. Thus, this solution is meant to save our everyday semantic concepts, while conceding that those concepts lack any factual content. In this respect, Kripke claims, Wittgenstein's solution to the sceptical problem is on a par with Hume's solution to the problems posed by causality.

Kripke tells us that in order to see this solution in the proper light, we have to take into account the change in Wittgenstein's view on language. In the *Tractatus*, elementary propositions were regarded as concatenations of names that were directly hooked up with possible configurations of reality. The meaningfulness of molecular propositions could then be accounted for by their truth conditions. This general view on meaning is renounced in the *Philosophical Investigations*, and is in Kripke's view replaced by an account of meaning in terms of justification conditions. Such an account of meaning consists primarily in describing the circumstances under which an expression can be used, and in sketching the role that such usage plays in our lives. Kripke gives two motivations for this change from a truth-conditional to a justification-conditional view on meaning. In the first place, as can be learned from the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein was for several reasons dissatisfied with the Tractarian account of meaning in itself. But in the second place, so Kripke claims, the later Wittgenstein favoured justification conditions above truth conditions because the former can and the latter cannot be used to

account for the significance of our statements *about* meaning, and can therefore provide us with an answer to the sceptical paradox. For when meaningfulness is dependent on justification conditions, rather than truth conditions, then the observation that there are no facts that make true such statements as 'Jones means addition by 'plus'' need not jeopardize the very meaningfulness of such statements. As Kripke puts it:

> All that is needed to legitimize assertions that someone means something is that there be roughly specifiable circumstances under which they are legitimately assertable, and that the game of asserting them under such conditions has a role in our lives. No supposition that 'facts correspond' to those assertions is needed. (*WRPL*, pp. 78-9)

It is along these lines that Kripke envisages a sceptical solution to our initial problem. On the one hand, Kripke claims, it is true that an individual speaker is justified in claiming that he is following a rule correctly whenever he just does what he is inclined to do. Regarded in isolation from any linguistic community there is no other justification that a speaker could or should give. The most we can establish is that this individual has certain 'blind' (in the sense of 'non-normative') inclinations for the use of a word, and that these inclinations must be regarded as 'primitive', in the sense that they do not allow of any justification.

On the other hand, when we do not regard a speaker in isolation but as a member of a linguistic community, the situation is quite different. In that case his fellow-members will also ascribe rules and intentions to him, and the criterion *they* apply in making such ascriptions is not that the speaker simply does what he is inclined to do. After all, the other members of the speech community have their own blind inclinations. Therefore, they will only say that someone is following a specific rule for a word, when the applications of the word that this person makes, agree with the applications they themselves are inclined to make.

Thus, on the level of the individual 'in isolation', there can be no question of applying normative concepts, because there is no fact with which the blind inclinations of an individual could conflict or agree. However, when we turn our attention to a speech community as a whole, we can see that the blind inclinations of an individual speaker *can* conflict with the blind inclinations of his fellow speakers. According to Kripke, it is the possibility of conflict and agreement within the confines of a linguistic community that forms the foundation for a coherent use of such expressions as 'meaning', 'rule', and 'intention'.

Within this framework Kripke also tries to account for the normative conditionals that functioned as a conceptual restriction on the discussion about meaning and that proved to be central in developing the sceptical paradox. On first sight, these conditionals appear to state that if a certain fact holds of someone - the fact of his meaning such-and-such - that then certain normative consequences follow. Yet, the sceptic argued that there can be no such fact as meaning something by a word, because no fact could have those required normative consequences. Kripke concedes this sceptical point: there does not exist any such thing as an intrinsically normative or semantic fact. But he argues that our use of these normative conditionals does not presuppose the existence of such facts in the first place. Rather, Kripke claims,

these conditionals function as a restriction on the ascriptive practices of the linguistic community, and are actually used in their contrapositional form: 'If Jones does *not* come out with '125' when asked about '68+57', then we cannot assert that he means addition by '+''. (*WRPL*, p. 95) In other words, if another speaker does not answer the way we are inclined to do, then we do not take ourselves to be justified to ascribe the corresponding linguistic intention to him. The normative conditionals, rather than saying that certain facts obtain which vouchsafe correct linguistic behaviour, merely express the fact that if someone's blind use of some word sufficiently deviates from ours, we will not regard that person as a dependable member of our linguistic community when it comes to the use of that particular expression.

So Kripke's paradox was that there are no facts about meaning and that, consequently, there can be no truth conditions rendering our talk about meaning meaningful. His sceptical solution to the paradox consists in pointing out that, even though there are no such facts about meaning, it is still possible to specify justification conditions for the *ascription* of semantic competence in terms of a communal agreement in blind linguistic inclinations. The normative conditionals that proved such a stumble block to any factual, truth-conditional account of meaning can then be explained as laying down a restriction on this communal 'language game' of attributing meaning to each others words. Since such ascriptions of meaning and rule-following are made on the basis of a communal agreement in blind inclinations, this solution can of course only work in cases where it is objectively assessable whether in fact there is such an agreement. For that reason the solution only leaves room for a public language. It shows how we can cogently talk about public rules and public language, but it excludes the possibility of a so called 'private language'. After all, the expressions of such a private language are supposed to refer to internal items that are only accessible to the speaker himself, and thus there cannot be any publicly accessible criteria for the use of such expressions and it can in principle never be settled whether there is any communal agreement regarding their employment. For that reason, other speakers will lack justification conditions for ascribing a meaning to the words uttered by the speaker of such an alleged private language and, consequently, such concepts as *meaning* or *rule* are inapplicable in such a case. Agreement within a public communal practice is an essential feature of what we call 'following a rule' and 'meaning something', and therefore a private language is a *contradictio in terminis*.

To illustrate his point, Kripke reminds us of the controversy between Ayer and Rhees concerning Wittgenstein's private language argument.[1] Both Ayer and Rhees took it to follow from Wittgenstein's argument that a Robinson Crusoe, marooned on a deserted island, did not speak a language. Ayer took this consequence to be devastating to the private language argument, Rhees took it to be devastating to Robinson. Kripke's position is more subtle. As we saw, Kripke's sceptic claims that when we look at an individual speaker 'in isolation', that is, when we merely pay attention to the facts that apply to him and to him only, then the most we can

[1] *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Suppl. XXVII (1954).

establish is that this individual has certain blind, non-normative inclinations for the use of language. Obviously, in order to regard an individual 'in isolation' in Kripke's sense, it is irrelevant whether this person is physically isolated by being on a deserted island or whether he rather happens to be in the midst of a community of fellow speakers. The blind inclinations that do factually apply to a single speaker cannot all by themselves provide us with any justification for ascribing normative semantic concepts to this person. On the other hand, the justification conditions that we *do* use for such semantic terms are intrinsically social, and have to do with the agreement and disagreement of blind inclinations within a whole community of speakers. Since our semantic concepts are meaningful by virtue of those justification conditions, those social aspects are an intrinsic part of the very meaning of our semantic concepts. Concerning Robinson on his island, it is Kripke's view that we can perfectly well say that Robinson means something by his words, or that he is following a particular rule, provided that we can relate his inclinations to our own inclinations. By ascribing rule-following or meaningful language use to him, so Kripke claims, we thereby *ipso facto* take him 'into our community', and relate his linguistic behaviour to the framework of agreeing inclinations that obtain within our own community. So *pace* Ayer and Rhees, Kripke does not take Robinson to speak a private language in the first place. A 'real' private language would be a 'language' for which it could in principle not be established whether there is a communal agreement or disagreement in the inclinations for the use of its expressions. From the sceptical solution it follows that it is a conceptual impossibility to call such a set of really private inclinations a 'language'.

As was already mentioned, Kripke saw the sceptical paradox formulated in *Philosophical Investigations* # 201. In section 202 Kripke takes Wittgenstein to state the sceptical solution, and its consequences for an alleged private language, when it is said:

> Therefore "following the rule" is a practice. And to *think* one is following the rule is not: to follow the rule. And therefore one cannot follow the rule "privately", because otherwise thinking one was following the rule would be the same thing as following the rule. (*PI* # 202*)

III. KRIPKE'S CRITICS

In this section I want to discuss some of the main arguments that have been brought forward against Kripke. In my presentation of Kripke's paradox a central place was assigned to the ontological problem of specifying a fact which could constitute meaning. There is a general consent that this is indeed the kernel of the sceptic's argument, but there is no unanimity on this point. A dissenting voice is that of Crispin Wright. Wright's epistemological version of the paradox and the way in which he thinks to solve it will therefore first be dealt with.

Next, I will make a few comments on the possibility of straightforwardly solving

the paradox by coming up with a factual account that the sceptic has supposedly neglected or insufficiently refuted. Finally, some criticisms of Kripke's sceptical solution will be discussed.

Wright's Epistemological Version of the Paradox

Kripke, when expounding his paradox in *WRPL*, often alludes to the problems involved in justifying what you mean. Nevertheless, I have interpreted the paradox as resulting from an ontological problem, i.e., the problem of coming up with a kind of fact that can have the normative consequences we intuitively take meaning to have. Although this is the interpretation of the paradox which is generally favoured[1], it is not the only one around. A notable exception is the version of Kripke's argument that Crispin Wright offers in *Kripke's Account of the Argument Against Private Language*. Wright tries to reconcile the ontological and the epistemological strains in Kripke's exposition by regarding the paradox as making an ontological point by epistemological means. The sceptic's strategy, as Wright sees it, is as follows.

> We first plot the area in which the facts in question would have to be found if they existed and then imagine a suitable idealization, with respect to that area, of our knowledge-acquiring powers; if it then transpires that any particular claim about those facts still proves resistant to all justification, there is no alternative to concluding that the 'facts' never existed in the first place (Wright (1984) p. 762).[2]

On first sight this strategy seems cogent. If one is not able to justify statements about a certain alleged realm of facts, then this must either be due to a lack of knowledge, or to a lack of facts. So when we suppose for argument's sake that our powers for acquiring knowledge are 'ideal', then it must be the facts that are at fault when a justification proves to be impossible. This is what Wright takes the sceptic to argue.

Before addressing this argument, Wright takes a critical look at the conclusion that it purportedly forces upon us, e.i., the thesis that we need to adopt a projectivist, ascriptive view on meaning. This conclusion, embodied in Kripke's sceptical solution, is in Wright's view more drastic than Kripke makes it out to be. Since the truth of a sentence is a function of its meaning and the way the world is, a projectivism about meaning implies, as Wright argues, a projectivism about truth in general. If no sentence *really* (non-projectively) has a meaning, then no sentence can *really* (non-projectively) be true. But this conclusion must of course also apply to the kind of statements that appear in Kripke's sceptical solution, such as Jones associating a particular justification condition with a statement about meaning. Thus Kripke does not really succeed in solving the problem generated by the sceptical

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[1] See p. 7, n. 1.

[2] I remarked above that the point of the paradox is in fact ontological, since Kripke abstracts from specific epistemological limitations. Wright claims that such an abstraction is the means by which the ontological conclusion may be argued. This might seem to be the same point. It is not. The salient difference lies in how the sceptic can be refuted. In the first case by giving an explication of a certain kind of facts, in the second case by offering a justification.

argument, and therefore, Wright concludes, 'to sustain the sceptical argument is to uncage a tiger whose depredations there is then no hope of containing'. (Ibid., p. 771)

For this reason, Wright takes it that the sceptical solution is unstable, and he proceeds by taking a critical look at the sceptical problem that allegedly forces it upon us. Two things, Wright remarks, are particularly noteworthy about the sceptic's charge. Firstly, the sceptic's demand for a justification of our knowledge of what we mean presupposes that this knowledge is inferential, and therefore 'the methodology of the skeptical argument is appropriate, if ever, only to cases where it is right to view the putative species of knowledge in question as essentially inferential'. (Ibid., p. 775) Secondly, the sceptic assumes that the inferring in question has to be done from another, non-semantic kind of knowledge.[1] Wright notes that both claims are unmotivated. The sceptic offers us no principled reason for assuming that our knowledge about what we mean and about what intentions we have is inferential. Neither does he tell us why, even if such knowledge is inferential, it would have to be inferred from a different *category* of knowledge. Actually, as Wright points out with regard to perceptual reports, even in the most ordinary cases this latter claim would preempt any justification of knowledge at all.

If these two observations are correct, then there is, according to Wright, a simple way of blocking the development of the sceptical paradox. One might just invoke our ordinary concept of an intention, and hold that:

> ... a subject has, in general, authoritative and non-inferential access to the content of his own intentions, and ... this content may be open-ended and general, may relate to all situations of a certain kind. (Ibid., p.778)

Wright does not think that such an appeal to our ordinary concept of an intention is particularly *comfortable* from an ontological point of view, but he does think 'that the skeptical argument has absolutely no destructive force against that proposal'. (Ibid., p.777)[2]

I have laboured somewhat on Wright's own 'straight solution' of the paradox in order to make clear why his epistemological interpretation of the paradox must be rejected. As Wright's criticism of the paradox clearly illustrates, importing epistemological elements into the sceptical argument simply weakens it to such an extent that it can be readily dismissed. In particular, where an ontological construction of the paradox can adduce physicalism as a *prima facie* plausible motivation for the reduction condition, within an epistemological construction there no longer seems

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[1] This, the reader might notice, is Wright's epistemological reading of the remarks in which I have read an ontological reduction condition.

[2] Wright thus takes an approach to the paradox which is similar to that of McGinn (see p. 11, note 1); both argue that Kripke has failed to refute the 'sui generis' conception of (knowledge of) meaning, and both take this position as a viable answer to the paradox. The salient difference between Wright and McGinn is that the latter, interpreting the paradox as primarily raising an ontological problem, takes meaning to consist in a primitive, sui generis kind of *fact*, while the former is reluctant to accept such irreducible facts and primarily stresses that our *knowledge* of our intentions is sui generis in the sense of being direct and non-inferential.

to be any cogent reason for accepting such a stricture. Therefore, given the importance of this condition to the sceptic's argument, any interpretation that regards the sceptic's challenge as a demand for justifications, rather than facts, will make his line of reasoning quite wobbly.

To stress the point that an epistemological reading of the paradox weakens it to such an extent that it can readily be dismissed, one might think of some other argumentative defects of this version of the paradox that are not pointed out by Wright. Firstly, in Wright's view the sceptic argues as follows. If we cannot find a fact that actually justifies our semantic ascriptions, even if we assume that we have ideal knowledge acquiring powers, then it must follow that there is no such fact in the first place. Yet, it could be argued that making this assumption of possessing 'idealized knowledge acquiring powers' is an empty rhetorical device, and that therefore this line of reasoning is fallacious. For, to begin with, one is asked to imagine, *counterfactually*, that all relevant (categories of) facts are accessible - which of course they are not, and one is then asked to give an *actual* justification. One could easily rebut such an argument by claiming that if, counterfactually, the facts were really in, then, counterfactually, I could give a justification, and that the fact that I cannot actually give a justification only goes to show what we already know, i.e. that the facts are not actually accessible. So the sceptic's alleged epistemological strategy proofs to be rather fallacious. If Kripke is indeed making this point, as Wright thinks he does, we do not have to take it too seriously.

In the second place, however, I think there are good reasons why it cannot be exegetically correct to ascribe such a reading of the paradox to Kripke. The sceptic, according to Wright, argues as follows: if it proves impossible to find a fact that can justify semantic discourse, then there are no semantic facts and thus no truth conditions for such semantic discourse. But in that case, the sceptics claim that there are indeed no facts about meaning would have been refuted if it proved possible to find facts that supply us with a proper justification for our ascriptions of meaning. Presumably, the existence of such a justification would show that there are after all facts that are constitutive of meaning. Now, if this would indeed be the sceptic's line of arguing, then we might directly turn his own sceptical solution against him. For that solution specifies the facts that justify our ascriptions of meaning, and therefore, if the sceptic indeed argues as Wright takes him to do, the solution would not only supply us with justification conditions, but it would also prove the existence of semantic facts and truth conditions. In short, according to Wright, the sceptical conclusion that there are no facts about meaning follows from the impossibility of specifying facts that can justify our talk about meaning. In that case, there would in principle be no room for a sceptical solution. For this solution, in as far as it specifies justification conditions for our semantic discourse, immediately undercuts the sceptical argument (as Wright reads it) and would be a straight, rather than a sceptical solution.

Now this can certainly not be squared with Kripke's avowed intentions. So, unless Kripke himself does not understand what he is doing, there must be some additional consideration that prevents us from inferring the existence of semantic

facts from the existence of facts that can justify semantic discourse. That consideration would then be the winning trump up the sceptic's sleeve. But as far as I can see, this consideration can only be that the facts by which we justify semantic discourse are not *constitutive* for meaning. That, however, is an ontological point. Therefore we have no option but to regard the overruling considerations of the sceptic to be ontological, rather than epistemological in nature.

Straight Solutions to the Sceptical Argument

The most radical way in which one might deal with Kripke's sceptical argument is by rejecting one or more of the premisses on which it depends. Such an attack is at its strongest when it is backed up by a prior argument for the failure of the sceptical solution, for in that case we might regard the sceptical conclusion that there is no such thing as meaning anything by any word as a straightforward *reductio ad absurdum* of the premisses generating it. I want to delay an attack on Kripke's presuppositions until we have had occasion to scrutinize the sceptical solution. At this point I shortly want to take a look at the possibilities for diffusing Kripke's paradox by giving a 'straight solution' to it, that is, by giving a solution that does not question Kripke's assumptions but straightforwardly tells us which facts constitute meaning.

I may right away confess that I deem the prospects for such an approach rather bleak. Actually, most suggestions that have been passed off as straight solutions either rest on a misreading of Kripke's restrictions, or do violate these restrictions after all.

McGinn, for instance, presents us with no less than *three* straight solutions to the paradox: a 'causal chain of reference' account, a Grician solution, and a solution invoking capacities.[1] Unfortunately the notion of normativity which these solutions are able to accommodate is only a far cry from the one featuring in Kripke's original constraint. McGinn thinks that:

> The notion of normativeness Kripke wants captured is a transtemporal notion ... We have an account of this normativeness when we have two things: (a) an account of what it is to mean something at a given time and (b) an account of what it is to mean the *same* thing at two different times - since (Kripkean) normativeness is a matter of meaning now what one meant earlier. (Ibid., p.174.)

It is clear that this notion of 'normativity' indeed allows an unlimited proliferation of straight solutions. For instance, a 'theory of meaning' that equates meaning cube by 'cube' with having a picture of a cube in your pocket would at least not be ruled out by *this* condition. However, Kripke's concern with normativity does not primarily turn around the transtemporal identity of the fact in which meaning something is supposed to consist. It concerns the relation between meaning something at

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[1] McGinn (1984) pp. 164-170. It should be noted that McGinn's use of the word 'straight solution' is more liberal than mine and also covers solutions that violate the reduction condition. The three suggestions above are also 'straight' in my sense of the word by being, as McGinn calls it, 'reductive or quasi-reductive'.

a given moment and making a correct or incorrect application. This notion of normativity cannot be accommodated by McGinn's straight solutions.

Apart from the three suggestions for a 'reductive or quasi-reductive' solution mentioned above, McGinn's favourite rebuttal of the sceptic is to take meaning to be an irreducible mental state. (Ibid., pp. 158-64) This solution *is* able to meet the normativity condition as it was intended by Kripke, but this is exactly because it is avowedly not 'straight', and helps itself to an unexplained (and unexplainable?) notion of normativity. Such irreducible mental states can only account for the normative relation between meaning and application because, as McGinn claims:

> When a state has intentional content its causal productivity is coupled with a normative aspect which determines whether an event (say an utterance) is correct or incorrect. If it be asked how this normativity works, then the answer ... is that it is simply in the nature of meaning to have normative consequences. (Ibid., p.163, n.31)

Apart from being rather unenlightening, this 'solution' clearly violates the sceptic's reduction condition and can therefore certainly not be regarded as a *straight* solution to the paradox. As long as we accept Kripke's presuppositions, his reduction condition in particular, it is hard to see how we could straightforwardly answer the demands of the sceptic by coming up with such irreducible mental states.

Goldfarb probes several possibilities for a physicalistic solution to Kripke's paradox. Not all of these stay within the confines of Kripke's presuppositions. Those of Goldfarb's suggestions that do not, will be treated in Chapter 2. Here I want to take a short look at one of Goldfarb's suggestions that does pretend to be a straight solution to the sceptic's problem. According to Goldfarb, the real difficulty that the normativity condition presents for the physicalist, is to specify a physical state which allows of the right exceptions, that is, which allows us to account for occasional mistakes. To come up with such a physical state, Goldfarb concedes, is indeed a problem given the *present* state of science, but it is certainly not a *general* objection to a physicalist solution to the sceptic's problem. As he argues:

> A reductionist could claim [..] that future physiological psychology might reveal two mechanisms, separable on scientific grounds. States of the first amount to a person's linguistic competence, and would, if untrammeled, always cause correct responses; states of the second are identifiable with interfering features, which explain why on particular occasions the first mechanism does not issue in an appropriate response ... We can identify the physical states of the first mechanism as constituting meaning words in certain ways. To be sure, this is speculative; but nothing Kripke adduces rules it out in principle. (Goldfarb (1985) p.477)

And indeed, nothing that Kripke says rules out that there is some causal base which is productive of the answers that we give to addition sums. Actually, it would seem that Kripke's own 'blind inclinations' must be seen as precisely such causal mechanisms. However, Kripke does claim that such mechanisms, specified in purely physical terms, cannot be identified with meaning something, because there are always cases imaginable in which the answers caused by the mechanism start to diverge from the answers which are correct given the meaning of the word.

By means of that observation Kripke argues that causal relations between the mechanism and its effects cannot go proxy for the normative relation between meaning and responding.

Now the force of Goldfarb's suggestion does not so much lie in adducing a new kind of facts, but in denying Kripke the use of such modal arguments. The natural scientist, as Goldfarb points out, is not concerned with every conceivable case, but with how things *actually* are. Thus if the scientist, who is only concerned with what meaning something *actually* consists in, succeeds in discovering mechanisms which are causally productive of the applications which we regard as correct, he has every right to earmark such mechanisms as what meaning something *in fact* consists in.[1]

Now whatever the merits of this position may be once we have stepped outside the Kripkian framework, what is presently at stake is whether it is indeed a straight solution to Kripke's paradox and in particular, whether it can meet the normativity condition. I fail to see how it could. Suppose that a person is in possession of some neurological mechanism that causes him to answer '125' to the sceptic's question, unless his blood sugar level drops below a certain value in which case a second mechanism causes him to answer 5. We have no two physically identifiable mechanisms which causally account for the answers this person gives, but unfortunately we do not even have the semblance of an answer to such questions as why is the answer '5' a *mistake* or why the answer '125' is *correct* . Furthermore, such a proposal leaves the normative relation between what a person means and how he applies his words unexplained. This becomes clear when we substitute the description of those physical facts which are purportedly constitutive for meaning in the original normative conditionals:

> If Jones is in possession of some neurological mechanism that causes him to answer '125' when asked about 57 plus 68, unless his blood sugar level drops below a certain value and a second mechanism causes him to answer 5, then he should answer '125' when asked about 57 + 68.

I think that we have indeed little idea what to make of such a pronouncement, for it is clear that the mechanisms mentioned simply fail to bear the required normative relation to someone's applications of the word 'plus'.

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[1] In this construction of the argument 'meaning addition' and 'having mechanism α' do not mean the same; we do not talk about such mechanisms when we talk about meaning. It is just that the meaning and the mechanism are extensively equivalent and that someone who in fact means addition, as a matter of contingent fact happens to have such a mechanism. However, Goldfarb sometimes makes a stronger claim than this. Where the sceptic supposes that the physiologist would have to steer by the light of our prior grasp on meaning and its normative consequences, Goldfarb suggests that our grasp on meaning is in fact far from perfect and stands in need of being strengthened by a physiological account. On this view, 'the true justifications of our judgments of correctness of responses are hidden; they are matters of facts deep in the brain. ... it does not *feel* as if we are ... talking about hidden physical states; but that is exactly what we are doing, just as we are talking about molecular constitution when we say the glass is filled with water' (Goldfarb (1985) p.478) Just as a chemist might discover that something we all take to be water is in fact a different substance, so on this view the physiologist may presumably discover that something we all take to be a correct response is in fact incorrect. I will discuss this suggestion in Chapter 3.

So, I think it is safe to conclude that Goldfarb's solution fails to meet Kripke's normativity condition and cannot qualify as a straight solution. In chapter 3 we will investigate in how far Goldfarb's physicalist approach is viable once we no longer to accept Kripke's strictures.

We have now discussed two different attempts to meet Kripke on his own grounds by giving a straight solution to his paradox. A third possibility would consist in presenting a revised dispositional account. Here, one might take as a starting point the common-sense intuition that someone who, for example, means horses by 'horse', should certainly be disposed to call a horse a horse when standing in front of one in broad daylight. In other words, it might be thought that meaning can be captured by first specifying how one is disposed to use words under certain *optimal* circumstances. The problem of specifying what can count as a mistaken application may then presumably be dealt with on the basis of the account of such 'optimal dispositions'.

Of course one of the problems facing such a theory is how to meet Kripke's normativity demand. For even if we could specify a disposition for giving particular answers under optimal conditions, then one would still have to explain why the relation between this disposition and the responses given should be seen as a *normative* relation, instead of merely a descriptive relation. However, even if we were to disregard that problem, then there still seems to be a decisive reason why an extensively adequate optimal disposition cannot be specified reductively. For as Boghossian points out, any such account would have to deal with the trade-off between meaning and belief. (Boghossian (1989) pp. 539-40) After all, given the proper background beliefs, someone might be disposed to call a horse a zebra, even in broad daylight. A reductive specification of the optimality conditions would therefore have to guarantee that such background beliefs are absent. However, that could only be done provided we already have a reductive account of what it is to have a belief with a certain content, which would of course be exactly the kind of account we were after in the first place. Boghossian therefore concludes, rightly I think, that dispositional accounts offer no prospect of a straight solution to Kripke's sceptical argument.

This concludes my summary of straight or allegedly straight solutions. I know of no proposal which fares any better than the ones discussed above. Indeed, Kripke's restrictions seem too stringent to be met by any factual account of meaning. Once we accept both Kripke's reduction condition and his normativity condition, there seems to be no escape from the conclusion that there simply is no such fact as anyone meaning anything by any word. Now, the rather unintuitive nature of this conclusion might tempt us to think that Kripke's paradox should be regarded as a *reductio ad absurdum* of one of the two conditions that generate it. At this point however, such a way of attacking Kripke's sceptic is argumentatively rather weak. After all, by means of his sceptical solution, Kripke does show us a way in which we might live with this paradox. If his solution is indeed cogent, then our ordinary ways of talking about meaning remain unthreatened, even though any realistic or

factual interpretation of this meaning discourse stands condemned. If, on the other hand, this sceptical solution were to be untenable for some reason, then we could indeed plausibly argue that the sceptic's conclusion is merely a *reductio* of his presuppositions. So, argumentatively, the next step in our assessment of Kripke's account must be to subject his sceptical solution to a critical scrutiny.

The Sceptical Solution

Most critical evaluations of the sceptical solution focus on three questions:

1) Are the justification conditions that Kripke offers descriptively adequate?[1]

2) Does the sceptical paradox indeed force us to accept intrinsically social justification conditions?

3) Do the justification conditions that Kripke himself specifies indeed exclude the possibility that an individual 'taken in isolation' speaks a language or follows a rule?

With regard to the first question, concerning the descriptive adequacy of the justification conditions, it is not quite clear what Kripke's own answer would be, but it is clear that Kripke takes Wittgenstein to regard these conditions as a proper description our ordinary practices.[2] On the other hand, it has been claimed that since these justification conditions are in fact horrendously *inadequate*, we cannot possibly take Wittgenstein as endorsing them.[3] At this point I do not want to go into the descriptive adequacy of the sceptical solution. I will save this question for when we have gained a better systematical understanding of Kripke's account. Here I just want to discuss some reasons that have made people think that the other two questions should be answered negatively.

So let us start with a look at the second question posed above. As was remarked above, there are two parameters which function in Kripke's argument, and these in principle leave room for four possible accounts of meaning. Of those, Kripke refutes the 'individual truth conditional' account, and embraces the 'social justification conditional' option. The possibility of framing truth conditions in social terms is summarily dismissed by Kripke, and, as was pointed out above, the possibility of giving justification conditions for our semantic discourse in terms of 'individual facts', is not even mentioned. This, both McGinn and Goldfarb have argued, is an unwarranted omission; we can and do use justification conditions for

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[1] See for a specification of those conditions pp. 14 ff. above, and *WRPL* pp. 89 - 95 and pp. 107 - 109.

[2] Although most commentators have carefully distinguished between Kripkenstein and Wittgenstein, the distinction between Kripkenstein and Kripke has been given less attention. That there is such a distinction seems clear from the concluding sentence of the book:
'Considerations of time and space, as well as the fact that I might have to abandon the role of advocate and expositor in favor of that of critic, have led me not to carry out a more extensive discussion.' (*WRPL*, p. 146)

[3] Baker and Hacker (1984 a) pp. 33 ff.

the ascription of meaning which make no mention of a speech community.[1] Consider for instance the following justification condition (which I will call the 'star-condition'):

> (*) It is licensed to assert that a person means addition by 'plus' when that person has responded with the sum in every case so far attempted. (Goldfarb (1985) p. 482) [2]

This condition, Goldfarb and McGinn claim, only mentions the speaker, a mathematical fact and a certain non-normative relation between these two. Since these are things the existence of which Kripke does not deny, these star-conditions provide a counter-example to Kripke's claim that we can only use intrinsically social justification conditions.

However, Goldfarb and McGinn draw different conclusions from this observation. Goldfarb points out that Kripke does not so much attack the notion of a private language in Wittgenstein's sense - the notion of a language which is necessarily unintelligible to other people - but that he rather turns his attention to what Goldfarb calls 'a solitary language', i.e. a language 'the constitution of which depends on properties of each speaker taken in isolation'. Thus, Goldfarb takes it to follow from counter-examples as the one above that:

> Kripke's central claim, that his solution shows how public language is possible but solitary language is not, collapses. (Ibid., p. 483.)

I think that even if the star-conditions do provide us with viable, non-social justification conditions, then still this conclusion is confused and unwarranted, and depends on a misunderstanding of the dialectic of Kripke's argument. The notion of language that Goldfarb renames 'solitary language' was already introduced by Kripke as the 'private model of language'. This model of language was discredited when the sceptical paradox showed that there are no such individual facts about meaning as this model presupposes, and that therefore no truth conditions for statements about meaning can be given. The sceptical solution, by trying to give justification conditions instead of truth conditions, takes the demise of this model as its starting point and certainly does not mean to argue against this model all over again. So unless Goldfarb refutes the sceptical paradox by specifying truth conditions for ascriptions of meaning, no such conclusion as he draws can possibly follow.

McGinn draws a humbler conclusion from the possibility of giving star-conditions, and claims that:

> ... it is not *essential* to make reference to the community in giving the criteria for (e.g.) meaning addition by 'plus'; and it is the claim that it *is* essential that is supposed by Kripke to have the

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[1] McGinn (1984) pp. 184 - 7, Goldfarb (1985) pp. 482 - 4. Boghossian (1989) pp. 520 - 2 supports their claims.

[2] Goldfarb adds that the condition is of course incomplete as it stands and that (as is the case with Kripke's conditionals) some condition about acceptable exceptions has to be added. McGinn and Bogossian agree, and simply add to their condition that this person has to answer with the sum 'sufficiently often' (McGinn) or in respect to 'most arithmetical queries posed thus far' (Boghossian).

consequence that we cannot make *sense* of someone following a rule 'considered in isolation'. (McGinn (1984) p. 187)

I think that McGinn's conclusion would indeed follow from the viability of the star-conditions. If those conditions are correct, then, Kripke's claims notwithstanding, it will be perfectly sensible to talk about an individual in isolation following rules - even if there are no facts making such talk true. Yet, McGinn's conclusion is too humble in that it altogether disregards the consequences that such counter examples would have for the sceptical paradox. Indeed this counter-example does not lead to a straightforward *refutation* of the sceptical paradox - as Goldfarb seems to think, but it would lead to a through going *reevaluation* of it. Let me explain. The sceptical argument as Kripke presents it might be called 'an argument by inventory'. In response to the sceptic's charge, we are looking for a certain kind of facts, examine each and every candidate and we fail to discover a category of facts that can be equated with the supposed facts concerning meaning. Kripke does not explicitly tell us why our quest for the facts about meaning has remained unsuccessful. For all we know, our failure to come up with the appropriate fact might be due to the world contingently lacking a certain kind of facts, or to some conceptual incoherence appertaining to the project in the first place.

Yet, if the sceptical solution as Kripke presents it is correct, then this lack of an explicit evaluation of the paradox is merely an expository feature of Kripke's account and we can easily derive the principled reason behind the paradox from the sceptical solution. For this solution shows that our actual practice of attributing meaning to the words of our fellow speakers is an intrinsically *social* practice, while in our attempts to answer the sceptical argument we were merely considering facts about an *individual* speaker. So this is why the sceptic's demand for facts could not be answered; social concepts cannot be grounded in individual facts and the idea that facts about an individual speaker could constitute meaning is thus a conceptual impossibility.

On the other hand, if McGinn and Goldfarb are right, then our notion of meaning is not intrinsically social and the private model of language is at least not a *conceptual* misfit. The most Kripke could then claim is that this model is contingently untrue, in which case it might properly be objected that we all know it to be a fact that we mean something, and if science has as yet no story to tell about those facts, then that is too bad for science, not for meaning.

Since the counter-example provided by the star-conditions undercuts Kripke's claim about the social nature of meaning and seriously weakens his sceptical argument, it should be taken very serious indeed. So let me try to evaluate this proposal.

Three things are being claimed by Goldfarb and McGinn on behalf of the star-conditions:

(i) They are descriptively adequate.

(ii) They do not involve the speech community.

(iii) They abide by Kripke's reduction condition in as far as they do not depend for their specification on any semantic or normative concepts and they do not presuppose a prior determination of meaning.

Since the star-conditions specified above are in my view intuitively acceptable, I think that we may grant McGinn and Goldfarb the first claim. The third claim is not obviously violated either, and thus it seems that Kripke could only argue against Goldfarb and McGinn that the second claim is untenable and that implicitly those star-conditions *do* involve an illicit appeal to the speech community.

Suppose that Kripke were to take this line of argument, then in what respect exactly do the star-conditions illicitly appeal to a speech community? A first idea might be that the full-blown use of the word 'sum' somehow involves such an appeal. Perhaps it could be argued that we are not permitted to take language for granted in this way. Goldfarb tackles such objections by noticing that a similar objection could be made against any use of justification conditions whatsoever:

> Now an objection might be raised, broadly, to the use of assertibility conditions at all. One might argue, on Kripkean grounds, that nothing fixes the meanings of the words used in the conditions, and hence the project fails. This objection mistakes the nature of Kripke's solution. The assertibility conditions are descriptive; they are not intended to show how, from a standpoint of a world without meaning, meaning is constituted. That task was scrapped as a result of Kripke's challenge. Consequently, as Kripke says, it is no objection that the description is couched in language. (Goldfarb (1985) p. 482)

One can hardly disagree with this latter claim. If conditions are to be specified at all, a language is needed to specify them in. In order to make room for this point, we may imagine the conditions in question to be given by the sceptic, who has a full and unproblematic command of language and who can thus describe *our* practices.[1]

So indeed, it is no objection that *describing our practices* presupposes language, but it certainly would be objectionable if involvement in the *practices described* already presupposed a full-blown command of language. In other words, it is no objection that one needs to be in command of language in order to make a descriptive meta-statement like: 'we have the practice of ascribing meaning to an individual's words according to the star-conditions'. Yet, it would be objectionable if this ascriptive practice *itself* already presupposed a prior grasp of language. In order to appreciate this point we must clearly see what the sceptic is doing and why he is doing it. Certainly the sceptic does not intend 'to show how, from a standpoint of a world without meaning, meaning is constituted'. Goldfarb is right in claiming that this endeavour was ruled out by the sceptical argument. But this argument left us in a paradoxical situation, because now it also seemed impossible to talk sensibly about meaning or to make a coherent use of normative concepts. To show, 'from a standpoint of a world without meaning', how such practices involving normative semantic discourse are possible is what the sceptical solution is intended to show. Now it is clear that showing this cannot be done by giving a description of practices that already presuppose a full command of meaningful language. The sceptical paradox was: there can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word. It is no solution to this paradox to show that, provided we just mean something by our

[1] We might suppose that questions about the meaningfulness of the sceptic's language can be answered with an account that is similar to the one he is giving for our language.

words, our ascriptions of meaning can be accounted for. So in addition to the three conditions mentioned above, I think that there is a fourth condition which any justification-conditional account should meet in order to qualify as a *solution* to the sceptical paradox:

(iv) the practice described by the justification conditions must not presuppose a prior command of meaningful language and normative concepts on the part of the people involved in the practice.[1]

Kripke's justification conditions indeed meet this condition. They basically say that one is justified in applying a semantic or normative concept to someone if that person's blind inclinations match one's own blind inclinations (and those of the community at large). The important thing is that the application of such conditions does not presuppose a prior grasp of what 'the correct answer' is. You only must be able to determine whether your blind inclination matches that of someone else. Because of that, the sceptic indeed seems to be able to take the sceptical conclusion seriously, and still to provide an account of our use of semantic discourse. Yet, it is clear that the Goldfarb-McGinn conditions fail rather badly on this point. As Goldfarb himself admits:

> If we are to *apply* conditions like (*) ... we must make full use of our grasp of 'addition' and so on; we thus rely on *our* knowledge of the correct continuation according to various rules. (Goldfarb (1985) p.483)[2]

But this means that the star-conditions can only enter into practices which already presuppose a meaningful use of our language and a full knowledge of the correct extension of our predicates. The question how these very practices are possible in the light of the sceptical paradox thus remains unanswered and thus the star-conditions cannot be regarded as a viable alternative to Kripke's sceptical solution.

This concludes our discussion of the attempt to frame a solution in terms of non-social justification conditions and brings me to the third question that has often been raised about Kripke's sceptical solution: does Kripke's solution indeed rule out the possibility that an individual regarded 'in isolation' speaks a language? In other words, does the sceptical solution implicitly contain a private language argument?

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[1] McGinn remarks on behalf of his star-condition that 'this assertibility condition should not be read in such a way as to *presuppose* that the speaker has the concept of addition ... A test for whether someone has and is exercising a given concept should not be formulated in such a way as to presuppose that the concept is possessed' (McGinn (1984) p. 185, n.65). But this condition is too weak, and the reference to a *test* is misleading. The sceptic did not argue that it is doubtful whether *Jones* means anything (in that case a test might be useful), rather, he argued that there is no such thing as anyone meaning anything. Suppose that the sceptic had argued a similar point about intelligent behaviour; that there is no such fact as anyone ever behaving intelligently. In that case it would be no help to be given a description of the standard IQ tests used by psychologists. Even if such tests do not presuppose anything about the person being tested, they do presuppose a substantial amount of intelligence on the part of the psychologist executing the test. And his intelligence was of course just as much in question.

[2] Goldfarb does not think that this leads to any problems. This, I think, stems from his misunderstanding of the sceptic's purpose in giving these conditions.

As was already mentioned, Kripke sees both this particular claim and the sceptical dialectic in general epitomized in ## 201 - 2 of the *Philosophical Investigations*. In section 201 of that work, Wittgenstein remarks that the 'paradox' that arose during his previous discussion of rule-following turns out to be harmless once we realize that to follow a rule is a practice. This claim is directly followed, in # 202, by the conclusion that therefore one cannot follow a rule 'privately'. Kripke cites those remarks as a direct exegetical support for his own account. The paradox that Wittgenstein mentions is in Kripke's view the sceptical paradox which establishes that it is not a fact about an individual 'in isolation' that he means something by his words or that he follows any rule. In Wittgenstein's remark that following a rule is a practice, Kripke sees his sceptical solution epitomized: the justification conditions for such terms as 'meaning', 'rule' or 'language' intrinsically depend on the existence of a social practice that constitutes a framework within which the blind inclinations of an individual speaker may match or disagree with those of his fellow speakers. From this solution it then follows that an individual can only be said to follow a rule in as far as his inclinations are regarded within the context of this communal framework, so that he cannot follow a rule 'privately'.

Yet, some commentators have argued against Kripke that the justification conditions that the sceptic specifies do not at all imply that an individual 'taken in isolation' cannot be said to speak a language. If those critics are right, then the sceptical dialectic that Kripke reads into the *Philosophical Investigations* would be in disarray, and the status of Kripke's account as an exegesis of Wittgenstein would become rather questionable.

Criticism of the way in which Kripke derives the private language argument from his sceptical paradox and sceptical solution has firstly focused on Kripke's distinction between 'considering an individual in isolation' and 'considering an individual as a member of a speech community'. As already explained, Kripke deems this distinction of crucial importance when it comes to describing the cogent use of our semantic predicates. It is Kripke's claim that as long as we consider a person 'in isolation', we can find no reason to say that he speaks a language; considered in isolation, he merely follows blind inclinations to utter particular sounds. Only when 'considered as a member of our speech community' can a we find a justification for ascribing linguistic competence to someone; considered as a member of the Dutch speech community a person's blind inclinations match those of others, thereby justifying the claim that he speaks Dutch. However, in the case of an alleged private language there can by definition not be a speech community, and there is no other option but to regard the 'speaker' of such a 'language' in isolation. Consequently, a 'private language' is a conceptual impossibility, because in order to be called a *language*, we must be able to regard its putative speaker as a member of a speech community, while at the same time, the alleged *private* nature of this 'language' rules out that we can regard its speaker in this way.

These two ways in which Kripke thinks we might consider a speaker have lead commentators to puzzled comments. Baker and Hacker, for instance, demand to know how we could possibly manage to consider a shipwrecked monolingual

Tibetan as a member of our speech community, and whether, if we cannot manage to consider him thus, this failure on *our* side implies that *he* speaks no language. (Baker and Hacker (1984 a) p.39) Blackburn asks us why, if I may conclude that an island considered in isolation has a tree on it, I may not conclude that Robinson considered in isolation is following a rule? (Blackburn (1984) p.298) The problem these commentators see, is that Kripke's distinction seems to involve a hyperbolic projectivism, forced upon him by the sceptical conclusion. Kripke seems to hold that, since the facts *themselves* could not constitute meaning, it must be our way of *looking* at the facts that settles questions about linguistic competence. It might then seem that, according to Kripke, there is a particular way of looking at a person that prevents us from discerning any meaningfulness in his use of words, but that we just have to look a bit differently at him and - by lo! - the meaningfulness of his language becomes obvious to all. But since our way of looking at him does not make a difference to the actual facts, how could there really be a difference?

This charge is understandable when we take Kripke's phrasing at face-value. Still, I think that we can give a more plausible interpretation of Kripke's distinction. I would like to suggest that what is really at issue has nothing whatsoever to do with looking at the same thing in different ways, but rather with looking at different things.[1] Regarding a person in isolation, I take it, is taking notice of those non-contextual facts that are true of this person as a completely self-contained being. A person's command of language, one could grant Kripke, has by philosophers often been regarded as depending on precisely such facts about an 'individual substance' - to use a bit of philosopher's jargon. Without wanting to embark on a lengthy detour in the history of philosophy, one might for an extreme example think of Descartes, when he is exercising his 'methodological doubt'. Even when the external world, including other people and even Descartes' very own body, has been bracketed, still, no question at all arises about Descartes' command of meaningful language.[2] The meaningfulness of Descartes' words presumably is rooted in the self-sustained, context independent mental substance that he takes himself most basically to be. Whether one accepts this Cartesian notion of mental substance or not, the idea that a person's command of language is a feature of himself as an individual being on his own - or, as Kripke puts it, that we take ourselves to speak a language 'the constitution of which depends on properties of each speaker taken in isolation' - certainly has a long and distinguished philosophical pedigree. This basic intuition about the nature of language is in my view what Kripke is aiming at

[1] As I will argue in the final section of the next chapter, there is a kind of projectivism involved in Kripke's sceptical solution. However, this projectivism does not concern the distinction between regarding an individual in isolation and regarding him as a member of a speech community, but rather it involves the distinction between regarding one or more individuals as exercising blind inclinations, and seeing them as the subject of normative predicates.

[2] It might be objected that Descartes *did* doubt his ability to make correct inferences, and thus his actual ability to follow certain rules. Yet, that only underlines the fact that Descartes took it for granted that it was still somehow determined what counted as correctly or incorrectly following those rules.

when he talks about 'regarding a speaker in isolation'.

On the other hand, to 'regard a person as a member of a speech community' is to take also these features into account that hold of this person as part of a wider social fabric. Salient for our ascriptions of meaning, so the sceptic claims, are not the blind inclinations of an individual person, but the agreement or disagreement between those inclinations and those of the community at large. But in that case our ascriptions of meaning are not based on facts about an individual in isolation, but on facts that essentially involve the individual's fit within a broader social fabric. So, the sceptic does not so much claim that the meaningfulness of someone's words is merely in the eye of the beholder. Rather, the possibility of judging a person's words to be meaningful depends on what we behold. On this interpretation, Kripke's argument does not involve a kind of perspectivism but depends on a distinction between facts that are strictly individual, and facts that are not. To put Kripke's distinction like this gives us a glimpse of the far-reaching ontological questions that it raises. Kripke's break with the traditional 'private model of language' also implies a break with the philosophical notion of substance on which this model was founded. Yet, as will be extensively discussed below, one might doubt whether Kripke's break with the 'private model of meaning' is as radical as it should be. For even though Kripke urges us to broaden our scope beyond the facts about an individual 'in isolation', he seems to cling to a strongly reductionistic view on those non-individual facts. Actually, one might almost say that Kripke's language community is conceived along the lines of a 'billiard ball model'. The fact that billiard ball 1 is going to collide with billiard ball 2 is obviously not a fact about billiard ball 1 'regarded in isolation'. Still, it is a fact that is in some sense nothing over and above the separate facts about both billiard balls, their speed and their direction. I venture the claim that in Kripke's view the linguistic community stands to the speakers regarded in isolation, as the collision of the balls stands to the balls in isolation. It would then become clear why Kripke so easily dismisses the idea that our talk about meaning can be given truth conditions in terms of facts concerning a whole community. What we basically lacked on the individual level was a particular kind of phenomenon: normativity. One might think that what is needed to really accommodate that shortcoming, is a whole new category of facts, that irreducibly transcends the level of non-normative individual facts. But that is exactly what the speech community, conceived on the billiard ball model, fails to provide us with. Being a fabric woven out of the blind inclinations of its individual members, it does not provide any better foothold for genuine normativity than the individual level itself does. Thus, truth conditions for our semantical judgements would still be out of our reach.

This, of course, is not a motivation that Kripke explicitly gives. Yet, I think that it is very much the motivation that implicitly makes him discard the 'social truth conditions option'. At this point, this observation will merely serve to give us a better grasp on Kripke's argument. Its consequences will be pondered later.

A second point concerning Kripke's 'argument against private language' is whether this argument can indeed succeed in establishing the logical impossibility

of such an alleged private language. After all, the sceptic claims to give a purely *descriptive* account of our use of semantic predicates. He specifies which justification conditions we *actually* use, and in no way pretends to tell us which conditions we *ought* to use. Therefore, as Boghossian puts it:

> We ought to be puzzled about how the sceptical solution is going to deliver a conclusion against solitary language of the requisite modal force: namely, that there *could not* be such a language. For even if it were true that our *actual* assertibility conditions for meaning-attributing sentences advert to the dispositions of a community, the most that would licence saying is that *our* language is not solitary. And this would be a lot less that the result we were promised: namely, that any *possible* language has to be communal. (Boghossian (1989) p.520)

In making this criticism I think that Boghossian distorts the exact nature of the sceptic's endeavour. It is true that the sceptic pretends to give merely a descriptive account of the justification conditions that we use for our semantic discourse. But he also claims that such an account explicates the very meaning of this discourse. The paradox, it should be remembered, seemed to threaten the very meaningfulness of our semantic idiom and it was this problem that the sceptic takes himself to solve by giving a description of the justification conditions we use and by giving an account of the language games in which these conditions function. Such a description grounds and explicates the very meaning of our semantic concepts. Furthermore, the sceptic claims, from such a justification-conditional account of the meaning of our semantic discourse it can be seen that these notions are intrinsically social. Therefore these justification conditions do not only 'licence saying that *our* language is not solitary', they also licence saying that our *concept* of a language is not the concept of a *solitary* language. This is of course exactly the conclusion which Kripke needs in order to argue his point. Thus the sceptic's descriptive account allows of a conclusion of the proper modal force, in the same way as a 'mere' description of the actual meaning of the word 'bachelor' allows us to conclude that *of necessity* bachelors are unmarried.

So provided Kripke's intrinsically social justification conditions indeed correctly specify the meaning of our semantic discourse, he can cogently claim that it is a conceptual impossibility that an individual, taken in isolation, speaks a language. Nothing which an individual, thus conceived, might do could be subsumed under our semantic concepts. On the other hand, the non-social justification conditions that McGinn and Goldfarb formulate are unacceptable since they cannot meet the sceptical challenge in all its destructiveness.

So, not a single one of these three ways of arguing against Kripke's solution is successful. This does not mean that in my view the sceptical solution is sound. On the contrary. In the next chapter I will argue that the restrictions that Kripke placed on any acceptable account of meaning are such, that not only a truth-conditional, but also Kripke's own justification-conditional account fails to meet them, and that Kripke's solution therefore fails by Kripke's own standards.

In a Nutshell...

Before trying my hand at a refutation of Kripke's sceptical solution, I want to summarize the main points that have been argued in this chapter.

I have started with an exposé of Kripke's sceptical argument, which attempts to establish that there are no facts about meaning by exploiting an alleged tension between the factual and the normative aspects of our ordinary semantic notions. Kripke embarks on his argument by introducing a sceptic who raises a question about the correctness of our present applications in the light of our past linguistic intentions. This way of presenting the problem is to some extent rhetorical. The real point, we saw, does not depend on Goodmanian bent predicates such as 'quus', it does not presuppose any genuine doubt about our use of language, it does not concern our knowledge of our past intentions and, in fact, it can best be seen as not involving any epistemological conundrums at all. The sceptic's problem, I argued, is primarily an ontological one: what facts about a speaker are constitutive for his meaning anything by his words?

Next, I have explicated two conditions that any such fact is supposed to meet. Firstly, a normativity condition that demands that such a fact can account for the normative features of our semantical concepts, and, specifically, that it can explain conditionals of the form *If a means such and such with a word, then he should use it so and so*. This condition is motivated as a conceptual restriction. Secondly, one must be able to specify such facts in non-normative, non-semantical terms, and without supposing a prior determination of meaning. I have argued that this condition testifies to Kripke's reductionist presuppositions, and have therefore called it the 'reduction condition'.

The sceptic then proceeds with an argument by inventory; several categories of facts are scrutinized, and all prove lacking. The combined pressure of both the normativity and the reduction condition is too much for any fact to bear, and the sceptic concludes that there is no such fact as anyone meaning anything by any word. He takes this also to imply that our statements about meaning must lack truth conditions and cannot be true or false in any straightforward sense. In order to draw this conclusion, as I pointed out, the sceptic obviously relies on a strongly realistic, yet unargued notion of truth conditions. A second aspect of this conclusion that is worth noticing, is that the possibility of phrasing truth conditions in terms of social, instead of individual facts, is as good as overlooked by the sceptic. I have suggested that this oversight is in fact due to Kripke's atomistic or reductionistic view of social phenomena, and I have salted this issue for a fuller treatment elsewhere.

The conclusion that our semantical concepts not only lack factual content, but that they are literally meaningless can be escaped, according to Kripke, by means of a sceptical solution. This solution abides by the sceptical claim that there are no facts making our semantic statements true, yet it attempts to show that such statements can nevertheless be meaningful in virtue of their intrinsically social justification conditions. Those conditions Kripke frames in terms of a community wide agreement in 'blind inclinations' for language use. The normative conditionals that

proved so resistant to any factual account are explained as a restriction on our 'language game' of attributing meaning to each others words. We also saw that, according to this sceptical solution, we can only predicate a meaningful use of language of someone provided there is the possibility of assessing whether his use of words agrees with ours. From this it follows that a private 'language', where such an assessment is in principle impossible, cannot possibly be regarded as a language at all. In other words, a private language is ruled out because it is condemned by the sceptical paradox and cannot be redeemed by the sceptical solution.

Next we discussed some criticisms of Kripke's account. Firstly, we looked at Wright's epistemological interpretation of Kripke's paradox. It was argued that on this reading, the paradox is argumentatively less coherent and much easier to refute than on our ontological interpretation of it.

Secondly, we discussed several straightforward, factual answers to Kripke's paradox: McGinn's 'irreducible mental state' solution, Goldfarb's physicalist solution, and the solution in terms of 'optimal dispositions'. We argued that those 'solutions' do not really succeed in meeting the sceptic's terms, since they either violate the reduction condition or the normativity condition. Only when we have argued reasons not to accept the sceptic's conditions, can we put McGinn's and Goldfarb's suggestions back on the map. As long as we do stay within the sceptic's confines, their proposals are of no use.

Thirdly, we looked at a few of the reasons why people have felt dissatisfied with the sceptical solution. The question of the solution's descriptive adequacy was mentioned, but not pursued. Rather, we chose to go into the systematical side of the matter first by addressing the charge that Kripke completely overlooks the possibility of specifying justification conditions in terms of individual, rather than social facts. This objection gave us occasion to go deeper into the sceptical paradox and the immense task that the sceptic addresses with his solution, i.e. to show how, in a world without meaning or norms, a salient account of our *talk* about meaning and normativity can be got off the ground. This, we argued, is a task that an account in terms of 'individual justification conditions' is simply not up to. Finally, we addressed the objection that Kripke's distinction between regarding an individual 'in isolation' or 'as a member of a speech community' involves an unacceptable form of perspectivism or projectivism. Not at all - we argued. Kripke's distinction has nothing to do with different ways of regarding one and the same person. Rather, it concerns the difference between the time-honoured contention that a person can, as an individual, self-contained entity, qualify as a language user, and the sceptic's claim that only as an entity that is intrinsically integrated in a broader social fabric can someone count as a user of meaningful language.

This concludes our critical exposition of Kripke's account. In the next chapter, we will try our hand at a refutation of it.

2

Kripke on Rules - a refutation

I. WILL JONES OR SHOULD JONES?

The first question I want to address with regard to Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein is whether this account is in it's own right feasible as an account of linguistic normativity. The results of such an assessment can then help us to determine the exegetical correctness of Kripke's interpretation later on.

In scrutinizing Kripke's account, I will first turn my attention to his 'sceptical solution'. As Moore already pointed out in one of his many skirmishes with scepticism, any sceptical argument can in principle be turned on itself.[1] Where the sceptic presents us with a modus ponens argument, we might by modus tollens turn it into a reductio of his premisses. Where he insists that p and $p \supset q$, so q; we might accept the validity of his argument, but argue that since it is obvious that $\neg q$, it must follow that $\neg p$ or that $\neg (p \supset q)$. Such 'boomerang arguments' are hardly ever conclusive when they concern a real, epistemological scepticism, since it has to be argued that $\neg q$ is to be preferred over the sceptic's premisses. If we try to do so by claiming that we *know* $\neg q$ or are at least very *certain* of it, we are of course presupposing the validity of the very claims to knowledge the sceptic is questioning.

However, there seems to be a much better chance of arguing for the reductio character of Kripke's sceptical argument. In this case the sceptic does not primarily deny the validity of a claim to knowledge of meaning. Rather, his argument denies the existence of facts about meaning and even the very cogency of our concept of meaning itself, so that it becomes literally senseless to think that anyone means anything by his words. This latter conclusion is, as it stands, rather bizarre, as Kripke himself concedes. A straightforward argument from the self-defeating character of the sceptic's conclusion to the incorrectness of his premisses is however preempted by the sceptical solution. This solution is meant to show how we can be justified in talking about a distinction between meaningful and meaningless language, even when such talk lacks factual content.[2] By those means, the sceptic is offered a way out of his predicament. In order to see whether this route of escape is indeed open to the sceptic, I will start my consideration of Kripke's account by

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[1] Moore, *Some Main Problems of Philosophy*, Chapter VI.

[2] If we accept that knowledge as justified, *true* belief, then Kripke's view does raise serious problems about our knowledge of meaning after all. For Kripke's sceptical solution holds that assertions about meaning can only be justified but can never be straightforwardly true. In that case, we might be justified in saying that Jones means addition by 'plus', but it is not clear whether we can also *know* that he means addition. Kripke seems oblivious to this point and I will not pursue it.

taking a closer look at the sceptical solution.

As we have seen, Kripke's solution basically consists in sketching justification conditions for the ascription of semantic competence in terms of agreement in community-wide linguistic inclinations. In this way the sceptic can account for our practice of distinguishing meaningful language from gibberish, even though such a distinction is not based in facts concerning individual language users. Furthermore, Kripke makes the crucial claim that the sceptic can account for our normative intuitions about meaning as these are expressed by such conditionals as:

(i) If Jones means addition by '+, then he *should* answer '125' when asked '57 + 68?'.

We do well to remember how important those conditionals are to the sceptic's argument. Those conditionals, Kripke tells us, indicate that meaning something carries normative commitments, and thereby they express a feature that is essential to our semantic concepts. For that reason, their explication was a global conceptual constraint on any account of meaning, be it in terms of truth conditions or in terms of justification conditions. The former kind of account was then ruled out of court because the sceptical paradox showed that no fact about a speaker could explain those conditionals and therefore failed to account for the normative component of our concept of meaning. Kripke's assessment of dispositional theories of meaning pungently illustrates this point, and is worth repeating here in full:

> The dispositionalist gives a *descriptive* account of this relation [between meaning and responding]: if '+' meant addition, then I will answer '125'. But this is not the proper account of the relation, which is *normative*, not descriptive. The point is *not* that, if I meant addition by '+', I *will* answer '125', but that, if I intend to accord with my past meaning of '+', I *should* answer '125'. (*WRPL*, p. 37)

Any truth-conditional account of meaning has to interpret these conditionals as stating that a normative relation obtains between certain facts described by the antecedent and by the consequent of these conditionals or that some normative 'conditional fact' about the individual obtains. And it was just because no such facts could be found that any truth-conditional account, according to the sceptic, had to fail.

According to Kripke, the sceptical solution *can* meet the challenge. Not by coming up with certain facts upon which our normative intuitions about meaning could be founded, but by specifying the justification conditions of our semantic discourse, and by showing how the contrapositions of the fore-mentioned conditionals function in these linguistic practices. As Kripke explicitly puts it:

> It is in such a description of the game of concept attribution that Wittgenstein's sceptical solution consists. It provides both conditions under which we are justified in attributing concepts to others and an account of the utility of this game in our lives. (*WRPL*, p. 95)

Thus, we would expect the sceptic to give justification conditions for those conditionals as a whole, or to explain them compositionally in terms of the justification conditions of their antecedent and consequent. A description of the role of these conditionals in our language-games would then complete the account.

As we have seen, the account that Kripke actually gives is slightly different. He does give justification conditions in terms of an agreement in inclinations for such statements as 'I mean addition by 'plus'', or, 'Jones means addition by 'plus''. Yet, that only accounts for the antecedent of the normative conditionals. For the consequent of those conditionals, i.e., for such statements as 'Jones should answer '125' when asked about '57 + 68'' no justification conditions are specified. Nevertheless, Kripke claims to explain how such conditionals function in the language games we play. When we, the linguistic community, accept such conditionals, we actually accept them in their contraposed form, and as such they express a restriction on our game of attributing meaning to someone's words. In particular, they specify under which circumstances we are no longer justified in deeming a person's use of a word to be meaningful. Thus, the normative conditionals which wrecked havoc with the truth-conditional account, can presumably be accommodated by the sceptical solution: in our practice of ascribing meaning these conditionals themselves function, in their contraposed form, as a kind of justification condition.

This is at least what Kripke claims. However, a closer scrutiny of *WRPL* shows the surprising fact that the *normative* conditionals that featured so prominently in the sceptical argument, have been tacitly replaced by *descriptive* conditionals in Kripke's exposition of the community solution. To contrapose the original normative conditionals would give us statements like the following:

(i') If it is not the case that Jones *should* reply '125' when asked '68 + 57?', then it is not the case that he means addition by '+'.

Or, since the sceptic wants to develop his solution in terms of our *ascriptions* of meaning to Jones, and not in terms of it being *factually* the case that Jones means something, the sceptical version of this contraposition might also be:

(ii) If it is not the case that Jones *should* reply '125' when asked '68 + 57?', then we cannot assert that he means addition by '+'.[1]

Both statements (i') and (ii) are the contraposition of the straightforwardly normative conditional (i) about what Jones *should* do under certain circumstances. The conditional featuring in Kripke's exposition of the community solution is however:

(iii) If Jones does not *come out* with '125' when asked '68 + 57?', we cannot assert that he means addition by '+'. (*WRPL*, p. 95, my italics)

But given that we have to account for the normative conditionals, it is obviously beside the point whether Jones 'does not *come out* with '125'', '...*will [not] reply* '125'' (*WRPL*, p. 95) or '*fail[s] to come up* with the particular responses' (*WRPL*, p. 108). All those versions are blatantly descriptive, and are simply not the contraposition of our original normative conditionals. In order to do justice to the original conditionals which were supposed to circumscribe the conceptual boundaries within

[1] I will for the moment suppose that the sceptic is licensed to shift from conditionals about what Jones means, to conditionals about our ascription of meaning to Jones, because this is what Kripke tacitly presupposes.

which the whole discussion was conducted, the question should be how we are justified to ascribe semantic competence to Jones on the basis of what he *should* reply.[1]

I think that this change from normative to descriptive conditionals can hardly be seen as a minor oversight on Kripke's part. The role of the contraposed conditionals, as Kripke sketched it, was that they indicated circumstances which in a certain way regulate our ascriptive practices. It is clear that the descriptive conditionals which Kripke uses in his account might indeed play such a role. The contraposition of such descriptive conditionals would say that some *actual* linguistic behaviour of Jones would lead us to revoke certain ascriptions of meaning. Yet, it is exceedingly difficult to see how the sceptic could ever get such an account off the ground for normative contrapositions like (i') or (ii). For in that case our ascriptions would have to be based on the circumstance that Jones *should* or *should not* have to give a certain answer, and given the validity of the sceptical paradox, such circumstances simply do not exist. According to the sceptical paradox, the fact that Jones has certain inclinations to give particular answers does not at all imply that there are certain answers which he *should* give. Actually, there are no such facts that anyone should have to answer anything. For that reason, the sceptic is in principle unable to analyze conditionals like (i') or (ii) as specifying the circumstances under which we regard a person's word as meaningful, and so they cannot be explained as regulating our ascriptive practices. Despite his claim to the contrary, the sceptic does not account for the normative conditionals that he has to account for, but rather for descriptive conditionals. Furthermore, the account that he gives for those descriptive conditionals in principle cannot be given for the normative conditionals.

I think this point raises severe difficulties for the sceptical solution as expounded by Kripke. The sceptic has to account for the meaning of the original normative conditionals which wreaked havoc with the rival truth-conditional theories. However, the account that we are being offered does not concern these conditionals, but only their non-normative counterparts. Furthermore, the role Kripke assigns to these latter conditionals, can *in principle* not be played by the original conditionals, and so that the nature of the latter remains completely unexplained. For that reason, the sceptical solution only seemingly complies with a restriction that, Kripke assures us, any adequate answer crucially must have to meet. Pending an explanation of the original conditionals, the sceptical solution fails by its own

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[1] Actually, the account which Kripke presents is more opaque than I am suggesting here. In *WRPL* there is an elaborate presentation of the sceptical solution on pp. 86 - 95, the conditionals being treated on pp. 93 - 95. Furthermore there is a short summary of this solution on pp. 107 - 109. Now in the summary the normative conditionals *are* explicitly mentioned, and it is claimed that the sceptical solution explains how the contrapositions of *these* conditionals function. (A claim which, by the way, is not made good in the summary either.) The more elaborate account however, only treats of descriptive conditionals and their contraposition. I can explain this peculiar fact only by assuming that Kripke, when giving the summary, is clearly aware of the sceptic's commitments, while, when giving the elaborate presentation, he is primarily focussed on presenting a 'workable' account. As I will argue, the workable solution does not comply with the sceptic's commitments, while a 'solution' which *does* comply with them will not work.

standards.

Since this conclusion has far reaching consequences, I will repeat the problem once again. As we saw, the sceptic starts his argument by claiming that it is an essential feature of our concept of meaning that meaning has normative consequences. The normative conditionals give expression to this intuition. If we accept this claim, and we want to come up with the facts that constitute what it is to mean something, then we must demonstrate how such facts can have normative consequences or can stand to each other in a normative relationship. This, the sceptic argues, cannot be done. Thus he concludes that there is no such fact as meaning something by a word, and that, since our talk about meaning lacks factual content, the meaningfulness of our talk about meaning cannot be accounted for in terms of truth conditions. Now if a realm of discourse could only be meaningful in virtue of such a truth-conditional account, then our ordinary talk about meaning would not only lack factual content, but would turn out to be senseless itself. In other words, it would not merely turn out that a realistic, factual account of our semantic concepts is impossible, but rather, that those semantic concepts are completely obsolete. Even for the sceptic this latter conclusion is unacceptable, and it must therefore somehow be accommodated.

This is what the second step in the argument - the sceptical solution - is meant to accomplish. This solution still abides by the conclusion that there are no facts about meaning. But with regard to the meaningfulness of our semantic discourse, we are asked to shift our attention from truth conditions to the justification conditions of our statements about meaning and to the practices in which those statements function. If we do so, it is claimed, then we see that there is a definite set of circumstances under which we are justified to ascribe meaning to each others words. Furthermore, we can now explain the normative conditionals as embodying certain restrictions on this 'game' of meaning ascription. As Kripke would have it, the contraposition of those conditionals specify under which circumstances we are no longer justified to say that a person's words are meaningful.

But of course, the task of accounting for those normative conditionals is not accomplished when it has been shown how some *other* conditionals link non-normative circumstances to ascriptions of meaning. Nevertheless, when we look closely at what Kripke says, that is the only account that the sceptic offers us. Furthermore, given that there are no such factual circumstances as someone meaning something and that there are no facts about some unique answer that someone *should* give, the account which the sceptic offers for the descriptive conditionals cannot work for the normative ones.

So this is the problem: since the sceptic regards the normative conditionals as (partly) definitive for our concept of meaning, and because it is the meaning of this actual concept that he wants to account for, he simply must explain how these normative conditionals function. Kripke's claim that he does so is, as we saw, empty pretence. Therefore, the sceptic has failed to explain how our semantic discourse can be meaningful even if lacking factual content, and he has failed to escape from those implications of the paradox that he himself deems to be absurd.

If this situation cannot be remedied, it would be proper to conclude that the sceptical paradox is relatively harmless after all. It is merely a reductio ad absurdum of the set of premisses from which it is derived.

This conclusion, I think, should not be drawn too rashly. Before committing ourselves to it, we should first search in every nook and cranny for a possible way of escape.

Looking for a Loophole

In order to make the findings of the previous section stick, I first want to see whether one might not argue that there is no such problem as I discerned in the first place, and that Kripke's solution is in order as it stands. I will argue that this is not the case. In the next section I will then consider whether we can escape the problems I have raised by reforming Kripke's account of the solution.

There are two ways in which one could try to argue against the claim that Kripke's sceptical solution fails to meet its own standards. Since it is my claim that the sceptic has to offer an account of the normative conditionals but fails to do so, one might either deny that he has this commitment, or, granted that he does have it, one might deny that he fails to meet it.

The sceptic was accountable for the normative conditionals because these were held to express an essential feature of our ordinary concept of meaning. Accordingly, the first way of arguing might take one of the following two forms. Firstly, it might be held - Kripke's claim to the contrary notwithstanding, that these conditionals are after all *not* definitive for our concept of meaning. Secondly, admitting that they *are* definitive for our ordinary concept, it might be claimed that the sceptic is no longer interested in this concept.

I think it is clear that a simple endorsement of the first view would lead to a collapse of the sceptical paradox. If these conditionals, instead of being part and parcel of our concept of meaning, are of no particular importance whatsoever, then there is no longer any reason to think that the failure to account for them is damning to the factual theories which the sceptic attacks. In order not to uproot the sceptical paradox, it would rather have to be argued that the normative conditionals are implied by any factual theory, and by factual theories only. If this could plausibly be done, one might derive a moderated sceptical conclusion, i.e., that there is no such thing as meaning, if meaning is conceived along realist lines. The sceptic, not carrying the realist burden, would then be free to expound his solution without having to account for the normative conditionals. Cogent as this strategy looks, I fail to see how it could be executed. Although it is not logically impossible that factual theories have certain commitments - such as a commitment to these normative conditionals - which they intrinsically fail to meet, I cannot see any argument by which this could be established.

Furthermore, I think that any such conclusion would simply be wrong. The idea that meaning something carries certain normative commitments in its wake seems to be prior to any theory we might have about the nature of meaning. For these reasons I discard this possible line of reasoning, and take the conditionals as partly

definitive of our concept of meaning.

The suggestion that the sceptic, after developing the paradox, no longer takes an interest in our ordinary concept of meaning can be dealt with even quicker. Of course it is possible to fully accept the conclusion of the paradox, and to drop all reference to our ordinary concept of meaning. But this would plainly amount to admitting defeat and endorsing an eliminativist view of meaning. We would then without further ado embrace the sceptic's conclusion that there is no such thing as meaning anything by any word, and therefore there would no longer be any need for a 'sceptical solution' at all, since after the abolishment of our ordinary concept of meaning there would be nothing to solve anymore. Yet, eliminativism is at best a last-ditch stand, which might be adopted after the solution itself has been refuted, but it is certainly not a way in which this solution might be defended.

I think that these observations properly cut off the first line of defence, and that we may rightly take the sceptic to be committed to an explanation of the normative conditionals.

A second response might consist in boldly claiming that the account which Kripke offers *does* explain everything there is to be explained about these normative conditionals. Someone endorsing this view might point out that, as the sceptical paradox showed, there are no such things as normative facts or facts about meanings. It could be claimed that for that reason the justificatory element in the original conditionals cannot amount to anything more than a feeling of commitment due to the pressures inherent in the communal game we play and that as such they can be explained by a non-normative description of the game. In other words, Kripke would not directly have to address the question about the normative conditionals, because an explanation of such conditionals 'emerges' from the descriptive account which he actually offers.

Of course I completely agree that *if* a solution for the normative conditionals is to be offered, then, given the sceptic's commitments, it has to be in descriptive terms. But the claim which is now under consideration is much stronger, it is that the normative conditionals need not be explicitly addressed at all, because an understanding of the justificatory element present in these conditionals is a corollary of the descriptive account offered by Kripke. I find such a claim unsatisfactory and I think that any semblance of plausibility which such an 'evasive solution' might possess, is due to its impressionistic character. As soon as we try to give more substance and precision to such a claim, it will be apparent that what we have to explain is how these *normative* conditionals themselves fit into our language games and how *their* meaning can be explained.

Furthermore, this is exactly what Kripke takes himself to be doing, as will become clear from a short look at his summary of the sceptical solution:

> Instead [of looking for facts about the individual] we must consider how we actually use: (i) the categorical assertion that an individual is following a given rule ...; (ii) the conditional assertion that "if an individual follows such-and-such a rule, he must do so-and-so on a given occasion" (e.g., "if he means addition by '+', his answer to '68 + 57' should be '125'"). That is to say, we must look at the circumstances under which these assertions are introduced into discourse, and their role and utility in our lives. (*WRPL*, p. 108)

I take Kripke to claim in this passage both that the normative conditionals *need* to be directly explained, and that such an explanation is forthcoming. However, as I have argued above, this latter claim was never actually substantiated. As became clear by taking a closer look at Kripke's elaborate account of the solution, an explanation of the *normative* conditionals was conspicuously lacking. But also a further look at his summary of the solution, that follows upon the more elaborate account, cannot but lead to the same conclusion, notwithstanding the fact that the normative conditionals are explicitly mentioned at the outset:

> If we take into account the fact that the individual is in a community ... the role of (i) and (ii) above becomes apparent. When the community accepts a particular conditional (ii), it accepts its *contraposed* form: the failure of an individual to come up with the particular responses the community regards as right leads the community to suppose that he is not following the rule. On the other hand, if an individual passes enough tests, the community (endorsing assertions of the form (i)) accepts him as a rule follower .... (*WRPL*, pp. 108-109)

But, as was pointed out, the condition Kripke gives here is simply *not* the contraposition of (ii), i.e., 'if it is not the case that Jones' answer to '68 + 57' *should* be '125', then it is not the case that he means addition by '+''. For that reason, it remains obscure what Jones' not actually coming up with the answer the community comes up with, has to do with the connection between what Jones means and what he should answer.

Thus I think that it simply will not do to claim that the sceptic can ignore the normative conditionals because he accounts for normativity in some other manner. There is however a way in which a somewhat similar point can be made. It has been suggested to me in conversation that there is actually no such problem as I am pointing out because in Kripke's use of the conditionals the 'deontic operator' has wide scope over a descriptive conditional and the force of the operator is explained in terms of social pressures within the speech community.[1]

This objection comes to the following. Let 'O' be the deontic operator in question and let 'p' and 'q' be abbreviations for the sentences:

p: Jones means addition by 'plus'

q: Jones answers '125' when asked about '68 + 57'[2]

My reading of the conditional 'If Jones means addition by 'plus', then he should answer '125' when asked about '68 + 57'' should then be read as:

(i) $p \supset Oq$,

while it is now being objected that the proper reading should be:

(ii) $O\,(p \supset q)$

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[1] This remark was made by Drew Khlentzos at the 16th Wittgenstein Symposium in Kirchberg Austria, where an early version of this section has been read.

[2] It is of course a substantial presupposition that the 'should' which indicates normative linguistic commitment functions more or less as the standard deontic operator for moral commitment does. There might also be some unease about the propriety of discussing the logical behaviour of such an operator when the question about its very *meaningfulness* has not yet been settled. In order to give the opponent a foothold for expounding his counter argument, I shall disregard these two points.

Indeed, my argument against Kripke is completely invalidated if the conditionals should be formulated like (ii). For my point was that the sceptic is committed to the contraposition of (i), e.g. $\neg Oq \supset \neg p$, and that he neither offers us a straightforward justification condition for '$\neg Oq$', nor can the 'fact' that $\neg Oq$ itself be used by the sceptic to specify the circumstances under which $\neg p$ is justified. This argument no longer holds water if the contraposition that the sceptic is using has the form $O (\neg q \supset \neg p)$.

Now before going into this point, I emphatically want to make one thing clear. I am *not* interested in the bare question whether the sceptic can make sense of conditionals like $O (p \supset q)$. As said before, my point only concerns the internal consistency of the sceptic's argument. What I want to know is which commitments (if any) the sceptic takes upon himself when he presents us with his paradox, and whether these commitments are being met by his solution. Thus our question should not be whether a community solution can account for the normative force of the operator in conditionals like $O (p \supset q)$. It should rather be: can we, presupposing that the sceptic *can* account for $O (p \supset q)$, regard conditionals like $O (p \supset q)$ as the kind which generated the paradox?

To answer this question, we have to remember the claims that the sceptic made on account of those conditionals: such conditionals had to be accounted for because they were held to express an essential element of our intuitive notion of meaning, and they could not be accounted for along truth-conditional lines.[1] In this latter respect, conditionals like $O (p \supset q)$ seem to do okay. When Kripke objects to the dispositionalist that the relation between meaning and responding is normative and not descriptive (and thus cannot be expressed by $p \supset q$), we have interpreted him as endorsing conditionals like $p \supset Oq$, but he might just as well be read as claiming that the relation is expressed by $O (p \supset q)$.

However, things are rather different when it comes to the question whether the $O (p \supset q)$ version of the conditionals expresses essential features of our ordinary concept of meaning. In order to see this, it might first be shown how conditionals like $p \supset Oq$ express such features. Look at the following list of statements:

a. If Jones means addition by 'plus', then he should answer '125' when asked about '68 + 57'.
b. Jones means addition by 'plus'.
c. Jones should answer '125' when asked about '68 + 57'.
d. Jones does not answer '125' when asked about '68 + 57'.

In my formalization these statements form the consistent set $\{p \supset Oq, p, Oq, \neg q\}$. Statement c. follows by modus ponens from a. and b., as I think it intuitively should, and addition of d. to a., b., and c. does not lead to an inconsistency - the

[1] We do of course have standard model-theoretical semantics for deontic logics which gives us truth conditions for such formulas. But that semantics depends upon a primitive, normative relation of accessibility. That is another indication that a discussion of Kripke along these lines is slightly off the point.

fact that Jones *should* indeed answer '125' given the first two premisses does not exclude the possibility of him making a mistake (accidentally or deliberately).

Let us now have a look at the alternative formalization. Statements a. and b. above are now formulated as respectively $O\ (p \supset q)$ and p. Can we draw any conclusions from this? That obviously depends on whether we are working with a reflexive model, in other words, it depends on whether $O\ (p \supset q)$ implies $p \supset q$. For the sceptic the answer to this question is not simply a matter of taste. It should be noted that when it comes to the sceptical solution, the sceptic is supposedly using the contraposition of this conditional, $O\ (\neg q \supset \neg p)$, and that he wants us to conclude from the fact that someone does not give the proper answers (in a sufficient number of cases) to the statement that he does not mean addition by 'plus'.[1] Since we can only conclude $\neg p$ from $O\ (\neg q \supset \neg p)$ and $\neg q$ when we are working with a reflexive model, I take the sceptic to be committed to such models. Only in reflexive models do those conditions allow us to derive conclusions about what Jones means (or about what we can say he means) from Jones' actual answers.

Thus, given this commitment, if we opt for the alternative reading we are allowed to conclude from the statements:

a. If Jones means addition by 'plus', then he should answer '125' when asked about '68 + 57'.

b. Jones means addition by 'plus'.

that:

e. Jones answers '125' when asked about '68 + 57'

It may be clear that such an argument is intuitively invalid. Indeed, it is an essential element of our intuitive notion of meaning that people sometimes give answers which are not the answers they should give. It was this observation which functioned as Kripke's main crowbar when it came to demolishing dispositional theories. It should further be noted that the argument $O\ (p \supset q),\ p,\ q \models Oq$ is invalid, also in reflexive models. We might therefore also add $\neg Oq$ or 'It is not the case that Jones should answer '125' when asked about '68 + 57' to this collection without engendering any inconsistency. Thus from the premisses that if Jones means addition then he should give a certain answer and that he does in fact mean addition, we can conclude that he will actually give this answer and we can also without inconsistency assume that it is not the case that he *should* give this answer.

This of course is a mess, and shows that instead of expressing our ordinary intuitions about the normative consequences of meaning the alternative reading actually violates these intuitions. We may thus conclude that quite apart from the question whether the sceptic can give an account of these alternative readings in terms of communal justification conditions, they are simply not the kind of conditionals with which he can develop his paradox. For after all, if the conditionals, thus formalized, do not express an element of our ordinary notion of meaning, there is no

[1] Or, of course, that we cannot say that he does. When I am discussion those conditionals in the framework of the sceptical solution, 'Jones means addition' should be read without factual implications.

reason at all why a factual account would have to explain them in the first place. Since the sceptic must explain the conditionals that engendered the paradox, he must explain the conditionals of the form $p \supset Oq$, and not those of the form $O(p \supset q)$.

I finally want to summarize the point argued for in this section. In order to give a successful solution to the predicament in which the sceptical argument left us, Kripke is committed to explaining the meaning of the normative conditionals about meaning in terms of the non-normative circumstances which justify their use. This Kripke fails to do. In this respect, the fact that Kripke presents an account for a descriptive version of these conditionals is not of any help. Furthermore, since this latter account cannot be generalized to the normative conditionals, Kripke's 'sceptical solution', as it is being presented in *WRPL*, fails according to Kripke's own standards.

II. Reforming the Solution

I take it as established by now that Kripke, by his own reasoning, is obliged to give a straightforward account of the original normative conditionals and yet fails to do so. If this shortcoming cannot be remedied, then Kripke's solution fails and we could argue that his paradox should be regarded as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the premisses on which it depends. However, I do not think it wise to draw this conclusion before having seriously tried to improve upon the solution that Kripke presents. In this section I want to investigate whether this can be done. The following therefore does not claim literal adherence to Kripke's account, but it tries to make the most of his intentions, and will follow the letter of the text where possible.

What the sceptic is after

In order to get a sharper view on what the sceptic is doing when expounding his sceptical solution, we might state the problem that he addresses as follows. There is a certain linguistic community S, namely that community of which we ourselves are part. The members of this community say such things about each other as 'Jones means addition of course', or 'If Jones means addition, then he certainly messed up the budget', etc. We take it to be a central conceptual feature of such talk that someone who means something is for that reason normatively committed to a certain kind of linguistic behaviour. For the moment, we may leave it undetermined what, if anything, this normative commitment is based on, but it is this feature that is being expressed by such conditionals as 'If Jones means addition by 'plus', then he should answer '125' when asked about '68 plus 57'', and any account of the community's talk about meaning should also account for these conditionals.

Furthermore, we go along with the sceptical argument, and accept that there are no facts which make such statements true, and that therefore the very meaningfulness of these statements cannot be accounted for in terms of truth conditions. So unless the speech community is only indulging itself in so much gibberish, some

other account must be found which explains the meaning of their talk about 'meaning'. Such an alternative account, the sceptic claims, can be given by specifying the justification conditions of the speech community's talk about 'meaning', and by showing what role this language game of talking about 'meaning' plays in the life of the community.

Now, as Kripke acknowledges, the sceptic's shift from a truth-conditional to justification-conditional account is a strategy with which we are familiar from other anti-realist positions. The best known example is of course the intuitionistic account of mathematical statements. Denying the existence of a verification independent realm of mathematical facts, the intuitionist accounts for the meaningfulness of mathematical statements in terms of the proofs or proof methods which *justify* asserting such statements. We may assume that this is the kind of account which Kripke has in mind when he says that:

> ... Wittgenstein proposes a picture of language based ... on assertability conditions or justification conditions: under what circumstances are we *allowed* to make a given assertion? (*WRPL*, p. 74, my italics)

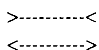
It should be noted that such conditions specify under which circumstances someone is *justified* in making a certain assertion, and not which circumstances *prompt* an assertion. The multifarious set of circumstances which might actually elicit an assertion from a speaker are at best interesting from a psychological point of view. The semanticist, on the other hand, is interested in what would justify an assertion, no matter what prompted it.

Of course, there would hardly be any reason to make this obvious point, were it not for certain other remarks which Kripke makes. When summarizing the sceptic's account of assertions about meaning, Kripke tells us that:

> ... we must look at the circumstances under which these assertions are *introduced into discourse*, and their role and utility in our lives. [or:]
> ... this solution explains how the assertions are *introduced into language*; it does not give conditions for these statements to be true. (*WRPL*, pp. 108 - 9, my italics)

Now the claim that we have to look at how such expressions are 'introduced into discourse', or at how they are 'introduced into language' suggests that we are concerned here with the circumstances that simply *prompt* one to make such assertions, and not with the circumstances that would justify them. If that is so, it might raise qualms about the cogency of the sceptic's endeavour. After all, 'specifying the justification condition of an expression' would then be something quite different from 'showing how an expression is introduced into language'. As a consideration of the Müller-Layer illusion shows, the circumstances under which the expression 'these lines are different in length' gets introduced into language are quite different from the circumstances under which it may justifiably be asserted.[1] The circum-

[1] The Müller-Layer illusion refers to the fact that people, when confronted with the following picture:



tend to judge that the upper horizontal line is longer than the lower line, which it is not. (If the

stance that 'that is just how they look to me (to us)' may be what prompts us to make that assertion, but it is not a part of its justification conditions. The salient difference between those circumstances under which an expression is 'introduced into language' (in this 'prompting' sense of the word), and those under which it is justified, is of course that the former set also contains circumstances under which we all tend *wrongly* to introduce the expression. In other words, the difference is basically one that concerns the normative role which such circumstances can or cannot play.

So although there seems to be a certain ambivalence between justification conditions and 'introduction conditions' in Kripke's description of the sceptic's account, I think we should best regard such expressions as 'introducing into language' as a slip of the pen. It was after all the sceptic's aim to present us with an account of the *meaning* of our semantic discourse, and this he can only accomplish by giving us the conditions which can be invoked in order to actually justify such statements about meaning. In that respect, an account of the conditions which may *prompt* such statements is quite irrelevant.

The claim that we are looking for 'full-blown' justification conditions, that can actually be used to justify an assertion when it is being questioned, will be worked hard in what follows. In discussing this point I have sometimes heard the objection that invoking a full-blown notion of justification is begging the question against Kripke. After all, the sceptic argued that there is not *really* any such fact as meaning something or being justified, and therefore we cannot assume that in giving his own solution he uses the notion of *justification* in its ordinary, normative sense.

I think that such charges are misguided. They result from a misunderstanding of the precise nature of Kripke's endeavour and the commitments following from it. Kripke claims that despite the non-existence of semantic *facts*, the meaning of semantic *discourse* can be accounted for in terms of its justification conditions. However, it is now suggested that by taking 'justification' to actually mean *justification*, we are unfairly committing Kripke to the existence of normative facts, and that therefore we are rendering his claim incoherent from the outset. Thus, presumably, we would have to interpret Kripke as talking about 'justification' in some other sense than the usual one.

If this were true, it would of course hardly be grist on Kripke's mill. For it would mean that the sceptical paradox does not only rule out a truth-conditional account of meaning, but that it also forbids the standard justification-conditional account. In fact, the semantic import of his solution would then completely hang in the air. If the sceptical solution is to do what it is supposed to do - to give a justification-conditional account of the meaning of our semantic discourse - then we have to take it that the sceptic presents us with justification conditions in the ordinary, normative sense of the word 'justification'. Otherwise, his account would not be an account of the meaning of such terms at all.

Furthermore, I do not think that by saddling the sceptic with this commitment we

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reader judges differently, he or she should realize that this is due to the limitations of MsWord, and not due to the illusion.)

are begging the question against him. For there is no reason to think that the non-existence of semantic facts forbids us to specify justification conditions in the ordinary sense. The general form of a justification condition, we may take it, is something like:

(*) Conditions C justify asserting statement A

Now the sceptic's ontological commitments are *fully* expressed by his specification of the conditions C, that is, by the facts which, if they actually obtain, justify the assertion of A. If the sceptic believes that no semantic facts exist, then he cannot adduce such facts as warranting an assertion, and he should specify the conditions C without presupposing the existence of such normative facts. But such a non-normative specification of conditions C, I take it, *exhausts* the ontological burden that he carries.

The objection stated above, on the other hand, assumes that the sceptic's ontological burden is much heavier. According to this view, the sceptic must not only give a non-normative specification of the facts C that justify an assertion. He also must give a non-normative specification of the facts in virtue of which it is true that the justification condition itself holds. In other words, it takes him to be committed to an explanation of the facts that make true the assertion 'Conditions C justify asserting statement A'. It is clear that if that were to be correct, the sceptic would effectively be forbidden *any* use of normative or semantic language, on pain of falling pray to his own paradox.

So, the objection was that in committing the sceptic to specifying real justification conditions, we are begging the question against him. The underlying reason for this charge is that one assumes that the sceptic must not only give an account of the facts that justify our ascriptions of meaning, but that he also has to account for the facts that make true the statement that we do use such justification conditions. Thus, the non-normative ontological commitments of the sceptic would not only concern the facts that justify *our* use of language, but they would also apply to the facts on which his own use of (meta-)language is based. In that case, we would indeed beg the question against the sceptic if we were to claim that he has to specify real justification conditions for our use of language, *and* that he has to specify the non-normative fact which makes it true that we have such real justification conditions.

However, I think that this view saddles the sceptic with more commitments than is fair. For one can only claim that the sceptic should specify the facts that make true his assertion that we use certain justification conditions, on the assumption that the meaning of the sceptic's meta-language only allows of a truth-conditional account. Then the sceptic would indeed be faced with the task of explaining the meaning of our discourse without himself using any semantic or normative notions. But of course it is *this* assumption which would beg the question against the sceptic. The sceptic claimed that the meaning of *any* semantic discourse - his own included - can only be explained in terms of justification conditions. He claims to give such an account for our language, and he would hold that a similar account can be given for his own use of (meta-)language. The meaning of his statement that *conditions C justify asserting A* could supposedly be explained by a meta-meta-

language which specifies how such a statement is justified by the sceptic's observations of our speech community.

So by taking the sceptic to give a justification-conditional account in the ordinary 'full-blown' sense (and what other sense *is* there?) we are not begging the question against him. It is the idea that the sceptic is in principle not able to use any semantic language that begs the question by presupposing that the sceptic's own discourse must allow of a truth-conditional account.

Therefore, we may conclude that it is the sceptic's task to give a justification-conditional account in the ordinary sense of the word. In presenting us with such conditions, the sceptic has of course to accept the ontological limits set by his sceptical conclusion. That is not to say that he has to worry about the facts that make his own talk about justification conditions true. But it does mean that he cannot presuppose the existence of any 'facts about meaning' or any other 'primitive normative facts' when it comes to specifying the conditions C by which *our* assertions are justified. Instead, he will have to describe the circumstances licensing a statement about meaning in terms of the 'blind' and non-normative inclinations which are present in the speech community.

Two different ways of proceeding

There are two ways in which the sceptic may proceed with his justification-conditional account, depending on how he treats the normative conditionals.[1] The first option is to treat the contraposition of these conditionals, e.g. $\neg N \supset \neg M$, as themselves expressing a justification condition. Such statements then tell us under which circumstances on is *not* justified to say that someone means a particular something. His list of justification conditions describing the linguistic behaviour of the speech community will then roughly look something like this:

J_1: p. If conditions C_1 apply, then this justifies assertion of:
'I mean addition by 'plus''

q. If conditions C_2 apply, then this justifies assertion of:
'Jones means addition by 'plus''

r. If conditions N do not apply, then this disjustifies assertion of:
'Jones means addition by 'plus''

s. ...

In this case such a conditional as $\neg N \supset \neg M$ would indeed express, as Kripke calls it, 'a restriction on the community's game of attributing to one of its members the grasping of a certain concept'. (*WRPL*, p. 95) In other words, such a condi-

[1] For the sake of briefness I will below abbreviate statements like '[we say that] Jones means a' as 'M', statements like 'Jones should answer such-and-such' as 'N', and the conditions which justify the assertion of a sentence as C.

tional specifies the conditions under which we are not justified to make certain ascriptions of meaning and they are in fact a kind of disguised meta-linguistic statements. For that very reason they could then be said to have the conceptual import which the sceptic claims for them.

Unfortunately for the sceptic, this approach is not open to him. The ontological commitments which he has taken upon him with the sceptical paradox imply, as I argued above, that the circumstances licensing an assertion cannot be specified in normative terms. But the circumstances specified by ¬N (e.g., that Jones *should* answer '125' when asked '57 + 68?') concern what a person should or should not say and are therefore of an intrinsically normative nature. So if the original normative conditionals are being treated in this way, then the sceptic would have to transcend the non-normative framework of communal inclinations and would, in blatant violation of his sceptical conclusion, have to resort to intrinsically normative circumstances. As was being shown in the previous section, it was this uncomfortable predicament from which Kripke tried to escape by tacitly replacing the normative conditionals by descriptive conditionals. Of course that will not do either; the sceptic *has* to account for the original normative conditionals, but on pain of violating the outcome of his sceptical argument, he cannot do so by treating these conditionals as disguised justification conditions.

However, the sceptic does in principle have a second option. He might also treat the conditionals as ordinary expressions of the language, instead of treating them as disguised justification conditions. In that case it seems that he would have to specify separate conditions for 'M' and for 'N', and that he would have to give a composite justification condition for the conditionals formed by such statements. His list of justification conditions will then look roughly as follows:

J_2: p. If conditions C_1 apply, then this justifies assertion of:
'I mean addition by 'plus''

q. If conditions C_2 apply, then this justifies assertion of:
'Jones means addition by 'plus''

r. If conditions C_3 apply, then this justifies assertion of:
'Jones should answer '125' to '57 plus 68?''

s. If, when conditions C_2 apply, then conditions C_3 apply, then this justifies assertion of:
'If Jones means addition by 'plus', then he should answer '125' to '57 plus 68?''

(or, if for some reason the contraposition is preferred:)

s'. If when C_3 does not apply, then C_2 does not apply, then this justifies assertion of:
'If it is not the case that Jones should answer '125' to '57 plus 68?', then it is not the case that Jones means addition by 'plus''

Such an account seems certainly more promising. The normative component of the original conditionals no longer forces the sceptic to accept certain unexplained normative circumstances and now he has room - or so it would seem - to specify in which way the communal agreement of blind inclinations justifies statements like 'M', 'N' and 'M ⊃ N' or the contraposition of the last. The latter scheme thus seems to be of the proper format, and might escape from the principled problems which the first scheme runs into.

The next question is how to flesh out this new scheme. What conditions can the sceptic actually give, and can these conditions indeed correctly account for our semantic discourse? With regard to the former question, I think we should try to stay as closely as possible to the conditions which Kripke himself actually specifies in *WRPL*, and that we should only divert from these when a diversion would arguably benefit the sceptic.

First person ascriptions of meaning - a first attempt

Yet, the difficulties involved in staying close to Kripke's account and the reasons for diverging from it become apparent as soon as we try to work out the conditions for such statements as 'I mean addition by 'plus''. Kripke starts his discussion of such assertions by asking us to 'consider what is true of one person considered in isolation' and he claims that if we consider an individual in that way, then

> It is part of our language game of speaking of rules that a speaker may, without ultimately giving any justification, follow his own confident inclination that this way (say, responding '125') is the *right* way to respond, rather than another way (e.g. responding '5') That is, the 'assertability conditions' that license an individual to say that, on a given occasion, he ought to follow his rule this way rather than that, are, ultimately, that he does what he is inclined to do. ... All we can say, if we consider a single person in isolation, is that our ordinary practice licenses him to apply the rule in the way it strikes him. But of course this is *not* our usual concept of following a rule. (*WRPL*, p. 87 - 88)

I fail to understand how these observations about what an individual speaker is inclined to do can give us any inkling of the *justification* conditions for a self-ascription of meaning. Of course it may be a brute matter of *fact* that individuals follow rules without looking for a justification, and that they usually just do what they are inclined to do without prior deliberation or reflection. I am also willing to accept that without such facts the language games which we do play could not be played. What I fail to see is that these circumstances form a part of the game itself, and in particular, in what sense it can be said that they *license* a move in the game.[1] Consider a similar case. Traffic would come to a standstill if motorists were only prepared to give or deny the right of way after elaborate consideration. Learning how to drive a motorized vehicle is to a large extent learning how to make such decisions instantaneously. But the traffic rules nowhere specify that particular decisions should thus be made, and if I were to find myself in a court of law because of

[1] Kripke claims (*WRPL*, p. 87) that cases like these are instances of what Wittgenstein calls 'speaking without 'justification'' ('*Rechtfertigung*'), but not 'wrongfully' ('*zu Unrecht*'). To me this rather seems a case of wanting to have your cake and eat it.

my reckless driving, I would be ill-advised to claim that it is part of our ordinary 'locomotive practices' that a motorist (considered in isolation?) is licensed to give or deny the right of way as he is inclined to do.

For the same reason I think that Kripke's claim that it is part of our language game that an individual is *licensed* to do as he is inclined to do, is of dubious intelligibility. Sometimes however, when pondering such passages, I cannot help feeling that what Kripke means is much simpler, and could be expressed by saying that in the light of the sceptical paradox, a single individual basically lacks a justification for his use of language and that thus, in the last instance, an individual speaker only has his own blind inclinations to go on. There is however an ambiguity in such a formulation which it is worthwhile to explicate. The first thing which could be meant, is that no circumstances concerning the speaker and the speaker alone can justify the applications which he makes. This in itself does not exclude that the applications *are* justified when a broader context is taken into consideration. The second thing which could be meant is that *no* circumstances, however broadly conceived, can justify the applications which a speaker makes.

The first thing meant could be illustrated with the following example. Suppose that I were to claim: 'my account of Kripke's sceptical solution is very clear'. The occasion prompting this claim will probably be a certain feeling of clarity which I experience after I have written down my account. This private mental episode, this 'fact about myself taken in isolation' does of course not justify my claim. No matter how enlightened and elated I happen to feel, I only take this claim to be *justified* if my account elicits a similar response in a knowledgeable audience. When the audience indeed responds in the way required, then I do take myself to be properly justified in claiming that the account is clear. So in this case we can distinguish between facts about myself alone, which may prompt my utterance but have nothing to do with its justification, and facts which justify my utterance but which involve a broader social context. If we want to claim that facts about an individual 'taken in isolation' cannot supply us with justification conditions, then I think that examples as the one above show how we can give a good sense to such claims.[1]

I did however also mention a second sense in which one could mean such a statement. It might be meant that any circumstance which we take into account basically has the same status as the feeling which prompted the claim. That amounts to saying that there is no real difference between the case in which a certain feeling inclines me to make my claim, and the case in which the reaction of other people incline me thus. In both cases, so one might argue, there is nothing but a blind inclination to make this claim. I must admit that I have sometimes been tempted to interpret passages like the one quoted above in this sense, but I think that the destructiveness of such a claim is clear as soon as it is explicated. If it were indeed the case that no single member of the speech community is ever justified in making any assertion, no matter whether the circumstances are 'individual', or involve the

[1] It should be noted of course that in the case discussed above it would be wrong to say that it is part of our language game that a feeling of clarity *licences* my claim. My feelings can be among the causal antecedents of my utterance, but they are irrelevant to our social justificatory practices.

rest of the community, then neither does it make sense to talk about justification at all. The attempt to account for the meaning of semantic discourse in terms of justification conditions would in that case be impossible from the outset. I take it therefore that the latter is not Kripke's claim. I *do* take it to be Kripke's claim that individual members of the speech community can and often are justified in making certain assertions, but that the circumstances which do justify them intrinsically involve the fact that they find themselves in a speech community.

So to summarize this point, I think that Kripke's remark that an individual speaker is *licensed* to follow a rule as it strikes him, depends on confusing the causal antecedents of an utterance with the conditions which could be invoked to justify it. Inclinations or dispositions are indeed the kind of non-normative facts to which the sceptic can help himself, but the problem is that they belong to an individual's causal realm, not to the public realm of justification. Since we have set out to provide justification conditions for our talk about meaning, we cannot limit our view to these causal phenomena. We are bound to specify the conditions which enable someone to actually, publicly justify an utterance when it is being questioned, and we take these conditions, in Kripkian vein, to involve the speech community in which this person finds himself.

First person ascriptions of meaning - second attempt

However, these worries need not detain us too long. Although Kripke claims that it is 'part of our language game of speaking of rules' and part of our 'ordinary practices' that an individual is licensed to do as he likes, he also says that 'of course this is *not* our usual concept of following a rule'. How these two claims can be accepted at the same time I do not know, but I wholeheartedly agree with the latter claim and will therefore ignore this previous account of self-ascriptions of meaning.

Kripke continues his account by considering what is true of an individual considered as a member of a linguistic community. On page 90 of *WRPL*, Kripke makes the following remark concerning self-ascriptions of meaning:

> ... we can discern rough assertability conditions for such a sentence as 'Jones means addition by 'plus'.'' *Jones* is entitled, subject to correction by others, provisionally to say, "I mean addition by 'plus'," whenever he has the feeling of confidence - "now I can go on!" - that he can give 'correct' responses in new cases; and he is entitled, again provisionally and subject to correction by others, to judge a new response to be 'correct' simply because it is the response he is inclined to give.

From this we may firstly gather the following justification condition for statements like ''125' is the correct answer to '68 + 57?'':

J_a If a speaker is not corrected by others and is inclined to respond with '125' to '68 + 57?', then he is justified in saying ''125' is the correct answer to '68 = 57?''[1]

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[1] Of course it might be questioned whether the sceptic can really avail himself of such notions as 'being corrected' which, on a usual reading, have to do with being told what you should or should not do. Let us, however, grant Kripke that 'being corrected' in this context merely means some such thing as 'being snarled at in a rather disagreeable way'.

The justification condition for 'I mean addition by 'plus'' would be:

J_b If a speaker is not corrected by others and feels confident that he can give 'correct' responses in new cases, then he is justified in saying 'I mean addition by 'plus''.

The fact that the term 'correct response' occurs in the specification of the circumstances justifying the assertion is not a problem, since that notion was already dealt with in J_a. Therefore we can rewrite J_b as:

J_b' If a speaker is not corrected by others and feels confident that in new cases he will be inclined towards particular responses which will not be corrected by the community, then he is justified in saying 'I mean addition by 'plus''.

I think that the idea behind such a condition is the following. We know by now that there is no fact about a single speaker which makes a statement like 'I mean addition by 'plus'' true. Still, under certain conditions a speaker can be justified in making such a claim, and making such claims under these circumstances plays a certain role in our linguistic community. Now someone who learns the use of 'plus' is instructed and given exercises, and after some time he usually gets the feeling that he has 'got it'. This in itself is of course not enough; it should also be the case that the person instructing him 'approves' of his performance. But when these two elements *are* present, this person is indeed justified in saying that he means addition by 'plus'. And that is in as far as we can go. In particular, it is no use at all to look for some superlative fact which not only justifies, but guarantees the truth of such a statement.

This might sound convincing. The only thing lacking in this account is a description of the role which such statements play in our lives, but we might try to work that out for ourselves. When do people venture such statements, and what do they want to accomplish by them? Now, that question is not at all easy to answer. A child which has learned how to add might say: 'I know what 'plus' means' ('it means doing such-and-such') or, 'I know how to add', but I do not think the child is prone to say that it means addition by 'plus'. Actually I can think of only one kind of occasion at which I would say such a thing myself. That is when for example a sceptic approaches me with strange suggestions about what I mean. In that case I might want to claim that I mean addition by 'plus', instead of quaddition.

I do not think that the fact that such statements only have this restricted range of application is in itself a problem. In fact, it provides us with a situation in which we might put those justification conditions to the test in order to see whether they can actually be used to justify something. For after all, it was this kind of sceptical question which triggered the whole debate, and if the justification conditions given above are really substantial, then we have now actually made an advancement. Of course, if the sceptic pesters me about what *fact* it is to mean addition by 'plus', I still cannot silence him with an appeal to the facts - that result of the paradox still stands. But I might now at least be able to convince him that I am not just talking gibberish by showing him that even if there are no semantic facts, I am nevertheless justified in saying that I mean addition by 'plus', and that I am justified in saying

that I do not mean quaddition by 'plus'. After all, Kripke has just given us the justification conditions for such statements. So presumably, in order to convince the sceptic that I am justified in claiming that I mean addition by 'plus', I will first of all make some additions. I will write down something like '1 + 1 = 2', '2 + 2 = 4', '4 + 4 = 8', and I will ask him whether he has any objections. Let us suppose that he hasn't. Next I will assure him that I feel perfectly confident that I can go on doing this, and thus I have, according to Kripke, justified my claim that I mean addition by 'plus'.

It should be obvious that the sceptic will not be led by the nose this easily. He will of course wholeheartedly agree with my computations, and with the claim that I can go on doing this. Since *this*, according to the sceptic, is quaddition and he takes me to be an expert 'quadder', he will tell me that my claims only prove his point. Actually, he will say that I have just shown him that the justification conditions for the statement 'I mean quaddition by 'plus' apply; I have made some perfectly acceptable quadditions, and voiced my conviction that I can go on making them. What more do I want?

It has already been stressed that in order for something to be properly called a justification condition for an assertion, it should at least be possible thus to justify the assertion when it is being questioned. The sceptic is one of the few people who are likely to question the assertion, and with him the condition proves worthless. The circumstances which Kripke specifies no more justify my claim to mean addition than they would justify a claim to mean quaddition. It is clear that if this cannot be remedied, we will find ourselves in an awkward situation. For it would turn out that not only is there no factual distinction between meaning addition and meaning quaddition, but it now also turns out that a claim to mean addition can no more be justified than a claim to mean quaddition and that thus the sceptical paradox would apply across the board.

I think that there are reasons for thinking that a non-circular way to remedy this problem can in principle not be found. The problem with the condition as it stands is that it is not specific enough, and since this condition specified two restrictions, my performance and my feeling of confidence, there are two ways in which the condition could be made more specific. However, a further specification of the tasks which I have to perform will not get us any further. If ten computations cannot justify my claim, then neither could a thousand, unless we were to stipulate that these are *additions*, instead of *quadditions*, but that of course is exactly the claim which the sceptic wants us to justify. Should we then further specify the feeling of confidence; should this be a feeling of 'plus-confidence' and not of 'quus-confidence'? That would mean that I need not only be confident that I have an inclination, but that it also is the *right* inclination. Here the 'right inclination' cannot be 'the inclination everyone has', for maybe we all mean quus by 'plus'. In that case we would need to appeal to some unexplicated normative element in our feelings of confidence. So unless some other non-normative condition can be found, which I fail to see, I think we can conclude that the above condition cannot justify the claim to mean plus anymore than it can justify a claim to mean quus.

In as far as I can see, the only way to deal with this problem is rather drastic. It would consist in shutting the sceptic up. The sceptic, one might argue, should not be considered as a member of our speech community at all, for the very fact that he does *not* accept the conditions mentioned above as a proper justification. *Our* speech community does actually accept such justifications, and if the sceptic does not, then he has placed himself outside our community. I do not want to pursue this line of reasoning because I think it is superficial and rather an *ad hoc* argument.

Third person ascriptions of meaning

Let us leave the matter of first person ascriptions in the present unresolved state and move on to the conditions Kripke himself deems of more interest. These conditions have to do with the circumstances under which *other* speakers are justified in ascribing linguistic intentions to a fellow speaker. It is from a description of these circumstances that the importance of community-wide agreement should become clear.

Kripke's account of the circumstances under which we are justified to ascribe linguistic intentions to a speaker is rather too long to quote in full.[1] I think it is accurately captured with the following justification condition:

J_c If in general (provided for exceptions to be further specified) a speaker S gives the answers to addition problems which I and the other members of the speech community are inclined to give, then and only then am I justified in saying 'S means addition by 'plus''.[2]

Kripke particularly stresses that if someone does *not* come up with the answers we are inclined to give, then we are *not* justified to say that he means addition by 'plus'.

The justification condition J_c at least appears to have the right format in as far as the circumstances justifying an ascription are formulated without any blatant use of normative notions. It should also be noted though, that the exceptions which are mentioned in the *ceterus paribus* clause of this condition also need to be specified in non-normative terms.[3] I will suppose for the moment that this can be done, and that J_c is also correct.

We now seem to have made a step in the right direction, and I would like to remind the reader of the reasoning which led up to this point. The sceptic's task is to explain the meaningfulness of our ascriptions of meaning - and in particular of such normative conditionals as $M \supset N$, in terms of their justification conditions. In

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[1] See for Kripke's account *WRPL*, p. 88 - 92.

[2] Jc is of course the descriptive conditional which Kripke actually gives on page 94, and which, because it is descriptive, has the right format for being a justification condition for a statement 'M'. It can of course neither be seen as an analysis of such statements as '$M \supset N$', nor as a justification condition for them.

[3] In this respect Kripke mentions that these exceptions should not be too frequent, that they should not involve additions with very small numbers and that it must be possible 'to interpret [the speaker s] as following the proper procedure' (*WRPL*, p. 91). I take it that the last phrase is a slip of the pen, and should be read as 'the procedure we are all blindly inclined to follow'.

doing so the sceptic stays true to the outcome of his paradox, which means that he does not invoke any unexplained or unreduced normative facts and circumstances. Now, firstly it was observed that there are two ways in which the sceptic can provide us with justification conditions, depending on how he treats these normative conditionals $M \supset N$, or their contraposition $\neg N \supset \neg M$. The first way of treating those conditionals consisted in regarding them as disguised justification conditions, in which $\neg N$ is a specification of the circumstances under which we are not justified to assert M. It was then shown that this way of proceeding is a dead end street. For if we execute this strategy with the original normative conditionals, we end up with justification conditions which are framed in terms of unexplained normative facts, and which are therefore in contradiction with the sceptic's adherence to the outcome of the paradox. Of course it is no way out of this problem to tacitly replace the original normative conditionals like *If Jones means addition, then he should answer '125'*, by non-normative conditionals such as *If Jones means addition, then he will answer '125'*, as Kripke did. In that case the sceptic simply failed to explain what he needed to explain, and has thus failed to meet his commitments.

However, there is a second way in which the normative conditionals can be treated (the one that we are trying to explicate at the moment). Instead of expressing justification conditions themselves, those conditionals can be seen as statements that have to be supplied with justification conditions themselves. The first approach analyses the contraposition of the conditionals as itself being a disguised 'disjustification condition', while the second approach regards the conditionals as ordinary statements of the language for which (composite) justification conditions have to be given.

In pursuing this second strategy, we first had a look at the justification conditions for first person ascriptions of meaning. It turned out that both Kripke's proposals run into difficulties when it is being asked whether such conditions can actually *justify* a self-ascription of meaning. I did not press this point, and moved on to the more important third person ascriptions of meaning. These have now been given, a have, for the time being, been accepted as descriptively adequate.

Thus the sceptic has taken the first step in accounting for the original normative conditionals; he has given the conditions for statements of the form M. The second step, one might suppose, would be to give justification conditions for statements of the form N, in order to arrive at a composite condition for $M \supset N$. Unfortunately Kripke does not tell us what the justification conditions for a statement like 'Jones should answer '125' when asked '68 + 57?'' would have to look like. Therefore we to try and figure out for ourselves what facts about the agreement between our blind inclinations and those of Jones could justify the claim that Jones should or should not answer '125'.

Now, on first sight it might appear that we are justified to assert the statement 'Jones should answer '125'', when '125' is the answer which *we* are all inclined to give. Well, we *are* all inclined to answer '125', instead of '5'. Are we therefore actually justified to say that Jones should answer '125'? That of course obviously depends on what we take Jones to mean. If he means plus, like we all do, then we

may indeed say that he should answer as *we* are all inclined to do. If he means quus however, then of course he should answer '5'. Thus it is not possible to work out some condition for 'Jones should answer 'x'' which is independent from what we take Jones to mean. Before we have worked that out, it is quite irrelevant what *we* mean and what *we* are all inclined to answer.

Furthermore, to hold that we are justified in claiming that *Jones* should answer something because *we* are inclined to answer like that, would have devastating consequences for the third step, that of specifying the justification conditions for the normative conditional. It is reasonable to assume that we are justified in asserting a conditional, if and only if it will never be the case that we are justified in asserting the antecedent, and not justified in asserting the consequent. Since by supposition *we* are indeed always inclined to answer '125' to '68 + 57?', then with the justification conditions for the antecedent as were suggested above, we would always be justified to say that Jones should answer '125', no matter what he means. Conditionals like 'If Jones means x by 'plus', then he should answer '125' to '68 + 57?'' would *always* be justified, whether we replace x by 'addition', 'quaddition', or what have you.

So it is impossible to frame justification conditions for statements like 'Jones should answer '125' to '68 + 57?'' directly in terms our own inclinations to give answers and without a prior appeal to what we take Jones to mean. Of course, this is hardly surprising. Yet, the important point about this observation is that it supplies us with yet another reason for being dissatisfied with Kripke's original explanation of the normative conditionals. In Kripke's account it was of paramount importance that 'when the community accepts a particular [normative] conditional ... it accepts its *contraposed* form' (*WRPL*, p. 108), because only in that form could such conditionals function as a restriction on our ascriptions of meaning. Now, as J_C testifies, what Jones *will* reply may indeed restrict our ascriptions of meaning, but it is quite misguided to assign a similar role to what Jones *should* reply. Because the conditions for saying that Jones should give a particular answer are dependent on what we take him to mean, we cannot base these latter statements on a prior investigation of what Jones should answer.

The fact that statements about what Jones should answer are intrinsically dependent on what we take Jones to mean, and can thus not be given justification conditions of their own, does not imply that it is impossible to giving justification conditions for the complex statements in which they might appear. After all, the sceptic might point out that he did already specify justification conditions for ascribing a certain meaning to Jones' words. Generally speaking, the sceptic put it that if, in enough cases, Jones actually gives the answers to addition problems which we are inclined to give to them, that then we are justified in saying that Jones means addition by 'plus'. These were the conditions for statements of the form M. The sceptic might concede that it is indeed impossible to continue by giving conditions for N which are independent of what we take Jones to mean. But he might suggest that we can directly proceed from the conditions for M to these for $M \supset N$. In other words, the sceptic might suggest that either we limit ourselves to the whole condi-

tional M ⊃ N, or, if we want to make sense of a statement like N, we have to assume that such a statement is being made relative to a prior ascription of meaning. If we thus refrain from prying the conditionals apart, then we might perhaps specify their justification conditions in terms of the answers Jones previously gave, and the answer which we, the speech community, are now inclined to give.

This would indeed give us some inkling of what justification we have for endorsing the normative conditionals and what we mean by them. According to this suggestion, if Jones were to answer '124' when asked about '57 + 68' and we were to say 'Wrong, you *should* have said '125'', then our justification for the latter statement is basically that we are justified in taking Jones to mean addition by 'plus', just as we all do, and that in this case we are inclined to answer '125'.

Following this line of reasoning, we can now derive the following composite justification condition for the normative conditionals:

J_{ci}: If it is the case that:

if in general a speaker S gives the answers to addition problems which I and the other members of the speech community are inclined to give, *then* that speaker S, when asked about 57+68?, will give the answer which I and the other members of the speech community are inclined to give; i.e. '125',

then we are justified to say: 'If S means addition by 'plus', then he should reply '125' when asked about 57 + 68'.

What this condition basically claims, is that the normative conditionals which we endorse are justified by the circumstance that if someone has in general given the answers which we are inclined to give, that then his answer in a particular case will be the answer which we are incline to give in this particular case.

Initial Worries Vindicated

This, I think, is the sceptic's best shot. It is of no avail. Indeed the circumstances mentioned in the justification condition do not involve any unexplained normative facts. Instead, they only rely on a particular speaker's inclinations and the relation between these inclinations and those of his fellow members of the speech community. However, such justification conditions do not even come near to explaining the meaning of such normative conditionals. To see this, it should be remembered that we were originally dealing with two kinds of conditionals; normative conditionals like:

(1) If Jones means addition by 'plus', then he *should* answer '125' when asked about 57 + 68

and descriptive conditionals like:

(2) If Jones means addition by 'plus', then he *will* answer '125' when asked about 57 + 68.

The difference in meaning between these two kinds of conditionals was all important to the sceptic's point, for even though a truth-conditional account could be given for conditionals like (2), conditionals like (1) proved resistant to such a treat-

ment. However, so the sceptic claimed, the meaning of conditionals like (1) *could* be explained if we abstained from a fruitless search for semantic facts and turned our attention to justification conditions instead. Yet it is clear that a difference in meaning between two sentences should express itself by a difference in the justification conditions for these sentences, and it is at that point that the justification condition J_d fails. The conditions which J_d specifies for the normative conditionals are exactly the same conditions as would have to be given for the descriptive conditionals. In other words, J_d still fails to do justice to the normative element of conditions like (1), and fails to differentiate their justification conditions from those of their descriptive counterparts. It therefore fails as an explication of their meaning.

Thus it turns out that this elaborate and drawn out attempt to save the sceptical solution just had us marching in a circle. We faulted Kripke because he only *seemingly* accounted for the normative conditionals which he had to account for, and we saw that his formulation of the solution would only work for descriptive conditionals. In trying to remedy this shortcoming of the solution we have now come full circle - the reformed justification conditions fail for the very same reason.

I think that this flaw in the solution is beyond repair. Either the sceptic fails to account for the conditionals which he deemed definitive for our concept of meaning, or he has to resort to the kind of normative facts which were ruled out by his paradox.

III. Blind Inclinations

We have come to the end of our crooked path. The problem that worried us in the previous sections was how to account for the meaningfulness of our talk about meaning. Kripke, in his attempt to supply such an account, could only avail himself of publicly assessable agreement and disagreement in blind inclinations, and therefore he had no option but to equate an ascription of meaning with a non-normative inductive judgement about the agreement of a person's inclinations with those of the speech community. Yet, it turned out that such an analysis fails to account for what it set out to capture. The normative aspects of our discourse on meaning and understanding cannot be accommodated in this way. I have shown that this vital shortcoming is beyond remedy and that Kripke has therefore failed to defuse the professedly absurd conclusion of his sceptical paradox. Thus, the impossibility of accounting for our talk about meaning within the confines of Kripke's approach finally lifted the sceptical framework off its hinges.

In order to argue for this outcome in the strictest possible way, I gave Kripke maximal benefit of the doubt, and adopted his reductionist presuppositions without further questioning. Although such a procedure makes for a tight argument, it does not necessarily result in an enlightening analysis. For that reason, I now want to supplement the previous discussion with a more external assessment of Kripke's

sceptical 'solution', and make some preliminary discriminations between 'Kripkenstein' and Wittgenstein. Instead of taking the 'blind inclinations' of language users as the accepted starting point for an account of semantic discourse, as Kripke urges us to do, the following takes a closer look at these 'blind inclinations' themselves by invoking our everyday understanding of semantic concepts. Where in the foregoing I have vainly tried to recast our standard use of semantic terms in the mould of communal inclinations, I will now presuppose our full-blown use of semantic notions in order to see why they fail to fit Kripke's mould.

Kripke's sceptical reconstruction of our linguistic practices has a *prima facie* similarity to the later Wittgenstein's view on meaning. Both Kripke's and Wittgenstein's outlook might roughly be expressed by saying that meaning something by a word is not a matter of being in some 'inner state' or of grasping some 'intensional object', but consists primarily in the use which is being made of the word. Both Kripke and Wittgenstein compare a speaker's competent use with the possession of an ability or skill, and both stress the importance of communal agreement in language use and the need for public criteria in order to assess whether such agreement obtains.

Now, anyone who holds that our grasp of meaning is completely reflected in the behaviour which is expressive of meaning, is instantly faced with the question which elements of the multifarious behavioural repertoire are being alluded to by this adage, and how this behaviour should be described and individuated. Concerning this question, Kripke commits himself to an answer which in my view is quite different from Wittgenstein's. Given the reductive nature of Kripke's program, it is essential that such questions be answered without invoking normative or semantic notions. If agreement in behaviour is to be the foundation of our use of normative terms, then the individuation of this behaviour may not itself presuppose the prior availability of such normative notions. For that reason Kripke conducts his discussion in terms of 'inclinations' rather than 'abilities'. The salient difference between an inclination-Kripke-style and an ability, is that an inclination can allegedly be individuated by means of the 'brute behaviour' which a person actually displays, while abilities such as 'being able to make additions' typically involve behaviour that is being informed by the attempt to meet a standard of success, that is, exercising an ability is displaying behaviour that aims at a norm. For that reason, we should not confuse exercising an ability blindly, that is, unthinkingly and without prior deliberation, with acting upon a blind inclination. It is only in the light of a normative assessment that the former action, the spontaneity of its performance notwithstanding, can count as the exercise of an ability.

I do not want to suggest that Kripke himself denies or obfuscates the difference between a blind inclination and a norm-informed ability. On the contrary, we saw that Kripke's account takes this distinction as its starting point and then tries to substantiate the claim that the normative level at which we can sensibly speak about an individual's abilities - in particular such abilities as 'computing the sum of two numbers' or in general 'the ability to follow a rule', is somehow supervenient on an

underlying level of communal, non-normative inclinations. Yet, those observations mark a fundamental difference between Kripke's approach and that of Wittgenstein. When Wittgenstein stresses the connection between meaning or rule-following (on the one hand), and the possession of certain abilities (on the other), there is no suggestion that thereby normative phenomena are being grounded in something non-normative. Wittgenstein's concern, as we shall see in chapter 5, is with the proper *location* of normativity, rather than with its *reduction*. His point is that the philosopher's attempt to isolate a speech act from the normative framework of abilities, practices, and social institutions in which it is embedded, in order to explain its meaningfulness by matching it with a mental or platonic item, is destructive of normativity. Thus, when Wittgenstein claims that meaning something does not consist in possessing some 'item', but should rather be seen as a kind of ability, then his concern is with a *relocation*, not a *reduction* of normativity.

In short, Wittgenstein takes the normative character of our everyday linguistic practices as his given starting-point. He then argues that theories which locate meaning in the personal possession or grasp of some 'item' cannot make room for normativity and are by that very shortcoming reduced to absurdity. Kripke turns this line of reasoning upside down. His avowed starting point is the totality of non-normative facts that are true of the individual speaker. Kripke then argues that if one cannot make sense of normativity in these terms, this must be regarded as a *reductio ad absurdum* of our notion of normativity. In order to escape the most destructive aspects of this conclusion, he then tries to show how, despite the absence of any normative facts, communal blind inclinations might sustain our ordinary 'language game' of ascribing a meaningful use of language to each other.

Thus, for Wittgenstein it is part of the solution to draw attention to the close connection between meaning something with a word like 'plus', and possessing practical abilities, such as *properly* adding your bills. Yet for Kripke, relating meaning to such blatantly normative abilities could at best be a reformulation of the problem, because in his view it only makes sense to talk about such abilities if they allow of an explanation in terms of non-normative inclinations.

This distinction between inclinations and abilities pinpoints what I take to be the most salient difference between Kripke's endeavour and that of Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein's concern is with the proper location of normative phenomena. Kripke's concern is with the factual status of such phenomena, a status that, due to his reductionist presuppositions, becomes deeply problematic. For that reason, Kripke firstly tries to safeguard the factuality of the normative by trying to find a reductive explication of normativity. When that project fails Kripke concludes that normative statements lack factual content, and consequently he tries to explain the semblance of normativity by accounting for 'our language-game of *talking* about meaning and rule-following'.

In probing Kripke's account from an internal point of view, I have taken his rather unspecified notion of a 'blind inclination for language use' more or less for granted. Yet, at this point it is appropriate to adopt a more critical stance, and to

press two questions in particular. Firstly, we must see whether we can produce any actual examples of a blind inclination for the use of language. Presuming that we can, then we must also determine what bearing such an inclination could have on our ordinary talk about meaning and rule-following.[1] Put differently, where in the previous account we took it for granted that some unspecified part of our behaviour could qualify as a conglomerate of blind inclinations, I now want to investigate whether we may actually ferret out a member of this elusive species and put it to the test.

In order to get the scent, some preliminary observations must be made about the nature and the role of these non-normative inclinations as they feature within the Kripkean framework. In the first place we should realize that our ordinary normative concepts have to be left out of account when it comes to isolating a blind inclination Kripke-style. Since our ordinary acknowledgement of normative judgements is the very thing which is to be explained, such judgements must in no way be presupposed in the individuation of the blind behavioural inclinations with which one has to start out according to Kripke. In particular, such judgements cannot be presupposed when it comes to assessing whether *your* blind inclination for certain verbal responses agrees with mine. Consequently, in individuating the blind inclinations of an individual speaker, and thus also in establishing whether the inclinations of different speakers agree or disagree, we are prevented from interpreting a person's behaviour by such means as asking what his reason for saying something is and assessing that reason, by considering whether he might have made a mistake, or by guessing what beliefs he might entertain, or by supposing that he knows more or less than I do. Such ordinary interpretive strategies presuppose judgements about the meaning of a person's words, and cannot be invoked in gathering the data meant to ground the very cogency of such judgements themselves.

Consequently, such blind inclinations must also be individuated purely in terms of the behaviour that is actually displayed. After all, since this is a reductive enterprise, we cannot help ourselves to the notion of a standard to which the behaviour has to measure up, and therefore we cannot judge that a certain action is indeed aiming at the right standard but is unfortunately failing to meet it. So when people

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[1] It might seem that Kripke's account already suggests a simple answer to this second question: if my blind inclination concerning the use of 'plus' - whatever it may turn out to be - matches that of Jones, then I exercise a second blind inclination, i.e. that of saying 'Jones means addition by "plus"'. This, I take it, is too extreme and would present Kripke with a rather unwelcome dilemma: either we take the idea of a blind inclination seriously, and somehow learn to conceive of ourselves as a community of parrots, or we hold fast to our ordinary self-understanding, at the price of robbing the notion of a *blind* inclination of all possible content.

I think that in order not make a mockery of Kripke's endeavour from the outset, we have to assume that it starts out by tying up blind inclinations with a very restricted range of ascriptive practices. Those basic practices may then themselves become part of more complex inclinations, that are somewhat less 'blind'. We must presume that in this way we slowly proceed from blind inclinations to the full light of day. I do not know whether such a procedure is possible. I am not even certain whether it is coherent. I am only claiming that Kripke is very much committed to such a stratified account.

behave differently, the Kripkian framework disallows the assumption that there is a shared behavioural regularity lying behind this behaviour that is in one case properly, in the other case improperly exercised. Within the Kripkian frame, displaying different behaviour implies having different inclinations.

Thus, Kripke's starting point must consist in inclinations for verbal or nonverbal reactions in certain situations. Those inclinations must be shared by all members of the speech community to the same extent and they should not involve any sophisticated, normativity dependent judgements about our own or other people's behaviour or about the situation in which this behaviour takes place. Furthermore, they should provide the foundation for at least some of our ascriptions of meaning.

In what follows, I first want to show that blind inclinations in the sense required by Kripke's sceptical solution are much harder to come by than Kripke suggests. Such inclinations do not really seem to be a part of the behavioural repertoire we take our fellow human beings to display. Secondly, I want to argue that in as far as we might succeed in pinning down behavioural patterns that could with some plausibility be regarded as blind inclinations, severe problems arise about the relation between those inclinations and the meaningful use of language as we ordinarily conceive of it and attribute it to people.

By making those points I hope to break the hold of the mesmerizing idea that it is *fundamental* to meaning and other normative notions that they do not appertain to what we see, but to how we see it; that they are a conceptual superstructure imposed on more basic data and that there *must* therefore be a stratum of non-normative inclinations and regularities on which the normative notions by which we make sense of each other can be imposed. We make sense *to* each other, rather than make sense *of* each other, since there is nothing non-sensical to be made sense of.

Let us start by considering Kripke's favourite example of an ascription of meaning: a statement such as 'Jones means addition by 'plus''.[1] What blind inclination involving the word 'plus' could be such that communal possession of that inclination could be the basis for this statement? A first, yet futile answer might be derived from the following observation. Ordinarily, when I ask someone what he means by 'π', and I am being told that 'π' denotes the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its radius, I take myself to be perfectly justified in saying that we mean the same thing by 'π'. By the same token, it might be thought that the inclination to answer 'addition' when asked about the meaning of 'plus' gives us enough foothold for saying that someone means addition by 'plus'. Yet, even though such an answer might do nicely in ordinary life, it is also clear that given the reductive

[1] Wright (1989) rightly observes that Kripke's preference for mathematical rules and language stems from the fact that the use of such terms makes minimal demands on the speaker when it comes to assessing the non-linguistic context of the utterance. For that reason, such mathematical terms provide the simplest case for Kripke's 'blind inclinations approach'. By the same token, they provide the ideal examples for a reductio of that approach.

nature of Kripke's endeavour, we would be begging the question with such an account. If you tell me you mean addition by 'plus', I will indeed take you to mean addition by 'plus', because I take you to mean addition by 'addition'. Your inclination to respond in this way to my question is of relevance, precisely because it is a meaningful answer, rather than a parrot-like vocalization of the word 'addition'.

Thus, the deficiency of this first attempt at an answer is obvious. In this case, I take you to make a meaningful use of the word 'plus' because I take you to make a meaningful use of the word 'addition'. If, on the other hand, I had reason to think that instead of answering my question you merely exercised a blind inclination to produce the sound *addition*, I would not take you to mean anything by 'plus' either. Surprisingly, the same point can be made regarding Kripke's favourite example of an allegedly blind inclination - the inclination which (partly) consists in saying 'four' when asked about two plus two. When you answer 'four' to this question, we only share a relevant mutual inclination in as far as it may be presupposed that we both mean four by 'four'. Given the purpose of Kripke's account, this presupposition cannot be made. It should be remembered that *giving meaningful answers* and in general, *meaning something with your words* were the problematic phenomena which Kripke's account set out to explain on the basis of blind, meaningless, non-normative inclinations. Thus, in as far as our propensity to answer 'four' testifies to a relevant communal 'inclination', it is because in saying 'four' we are giving a proper and meaningful answer, and an 'inclination' to give a proper and meaningful answer is obviously not blind.

If, on the other hand, we could somehow abstract from the meaningfulness of our responses, and regard them as the result of a blind inclination to produce certain sounds, then such inclinations would have no bearing on our meaningful use of the word 'plus'.[1] A communally shared blind inclination for producing sounds cannot sustain a meaningful practice for the use of words. On the contrary, it could be compatible with any or no meaningful practice whatsoever. Going by the lights of inclinations for verbal responses only, we can only ascribe meaning to the words of someone provided that we already regard him as being able to make a meaningful use of language.

Thus, the alleged blind inclinations that are supposed to be *basic* for ascribing a meaning to someone's words and for saying that someone means addition by 'plus', cannot *just* be inclinations to produce certain verbal responses. For either such responses have to be regarded as already being part of that person's meaning-

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[1] I very much doubt whether the idea of a 'blind inclination to produce language' can be applied to our actual use of language *at all*. What would it be like for a person blindly to produce sounds under particular circumstances? Can he not help himself but vocalize? And what upbringing could lead to such involuntary reactions... was he, as a child, beaten into a demented submission? It would seem that the nearest thing to an actual blind verbal inclination is Touret's syndrome. However, the point I am making above is stronger than this: *even* if the idea of a blind inclination to produce sound could somehow be applied to our actual use of language, then still such inclinations by themselves would have no bearing on the way in which we take ourselves and others to be users of meaningful language.

ful use of language, or, as a blind inclination to verbalize, they cannot have any bearing at all on our practices of meaningful language use. There is simply no way in which we can move from a matching inclination to vocalize to meaning the same thing, or from a communal glossolalia to a shared practice of purposeful use.

It should be noted that the point I am making does not depend on embracing an interpretive view on meaning. What is at issue, is not that we need reasons to interpret a person's vocalisations in a certain way, and that we cannot find such reasons. In fact, we may perfectly well grant Kripke that any account that depends on the need to interpret facts about an individual is hopeless. We may also agree with Kripke that our communal practices are crucial for the possibility to make a meaningful use of 'plus', and that a person's use of the word has to fit in with those practices if he is to be regarded as meaning addition by 'plus'. Yet, different from what Kripke thinks, those communal practices do not consist of matching inclinations to vocalize, and the criteria by which we determine to what extent an individual fits in with our practices, and can be regarded as a competent language user, do not and *cannot* consist in his alleged inclination for voicing as yet meaningless sounds.

So it seems that, in order to substantiate Kripke's account, we have to retreat beyond such merely verbal behaviour as giving answers to addition sums, and that we have to look for some behavioural inclination that is not wholly verbal. Since verbal inclinations alone could not do the Kripkian job, the remedy might be to tie those verbal responses in with non-verbal behavioural regularities. This behaviour must of course also be such that it does not itself need to be regarded in the light of a standard of correctness, but rather could, as a brute behavioural regularity, sustain our practice of judging each other to be rule followers and users of meaningful language.

Now obviously, there is a rich behavioural repertoire related to our use of 'plus'. Paying for my groceries, saving up for the holidays, warning someone not to overdraw his bank account or putting two extra plates on the dinner table are all actions that can be related to my use of the word 'plus' and in which my meaning addition with 'plus' is partly manifested. Yet, such actions are already part and parcel of the normative domain of reasons and meaning, and therefore they do not qualify as candidates for the blind communal inclinations we are looking for.

Perhaps, in order to find our way into the domain of blind inclinations, we should take our lead from the previous discussion on producing answers to addition sums. There is was argued that a reply, regarded purely as part of an inclination to produce sounds in response to probings, has no bearing on ascribing a meaning to someone's words, since it has no relation at all to the non-verbal behaviour which we take to be expressive of meaning addition by 'plus'. Yet, it might be thought that there is a way to escape from this problem. Consider the following case. I ask a person about two plus two, and he answers 'five'. However, when I express my utter puzzlement at this response, that person puts down some matchsticks: | | | |, and says 'five'. Here, his non-verbal inclination for 'plus' would still seem to match mine. Maybe such an urge to put down matchsticks or pebbles might come

closer to the blind inclination we are looking for. Or so it seems. In fact, nothing rules out the possibility that this person, by putting down matchsticks in order to illustrate his use of 'five', still follows a pattern deviant from ours which will come to the fore as soon as we leave the matchsticks alone. Or that someone else, who answers 'four', and puts down: | | | | matchsticks, will behave erratically in the supermarket or when it comes to adding up his bills. Even when we do accept, for the sake of argument, that I am blindly inclined to put down matchsticks after some arithmetical probing and that the other person shares my inclination concerning the matchsticks, then still I would not regard such a matchstick match a sufficient reason for taking that person to actually *mean* addition by 'plus', as I do myself. Rather, a mere match in inclinations concerning match sticks would immediately raise the question which one of the many possible readings this inclination actually testifies to. Matching inclinations for putting down matchsticks or pebbles leave us in basically the same predicament as matching inclinations for producing sounds.

Once again, we should take care to determine in which direction these considerations point. It might look as if they merely endorse an interpretive view on meaning. A person's words and actions, we seem to be saying, firstly need to be interpreted in order to be regarded as meaningful, and Kripke's blind inclinations do not determine such an interpretation. Such an argument would indeed testify to a gross misunderstanding of Kripke. Interpretations, as Kripke convincingly points out, cannot determine meaning, and Kripke's very point in invoking matching inclinations is to show us a way out of such an interpretive account. Interpretations, according to Kripke, become superfluous because meanings, or rather, our attributions of meaning, are founded on our direct, non-interpretational assessment of agreement and disagreement in inclinations. Thus, it is Kripke's contention, I do not need to interpret the behaviour to which a person is inclined, because as a matter of (blind) fact I do immediately establish that there is a match between our mutual blind inclinations.

Yet, even if we were to possess blind inclinations the agreement of which we established just as blindly, this would still leave us completely in the lurch where it concerns the crucial point of what we take someone to mean. Indeed, I do not interpret someone's linguistic behaviour in the sense that I consider what different readings this as yet meaningless datum allows. In ordinary circumstances, I take a shared meaning for granted. But how could that be explained by a given agreement in blind inclinations? If it is supposed that such an agreement inclines me blindly to voice the words 'Jones means addition by plus', then it might be remarked that firstly, this is simply *not* what I do, and secondly, that rather than accounting for our assessments about meaning and rules, such an account would condemn us to a perennial blindness. The problem is, that we cannot make the step from a mutual agreement in blind inclinations to our full-blown practice of language use. Between these two there yawns the very same gap as we already encountered in the sceptic's argument against an analysis of meaning in terms of mental 'items' and other 'blind' facts that bear no intrinsic relation to our normative practices. Blind inclinations leave us in basically the same predicament. When it comes to meaning some-

thing, or even to 'ascribing a meaning to someone's words' those inclinations still hang in the air, and fail to provide us with the foot-hold that we are looking for. As was the case with mental items, we might now be inclined to think that an additional act of interpretation would have to be performed, by which we may come to regard a match of blind inclinations as a common meaningful use. Yet, by the same token, we know that such attempts are doomed to failure.

Thus the fact that Jones, by answering as he did, told me that four was the proper answer to this particular addition is not somehow the result of blindly imposing a normative vocabulary on some primary data consisting in a matching of the vocalisations or the matchstick manipulations to which we are both inclined. For me, Jones telling me that four is the correct answer is the ultimate data itself. The considerations above, rather than presupposing that interpretation is a requirement for regarding someone's words as meaningful, show that if a match of inclinations is all I can go by, the need for interpretation would be reinstated. Therefore, in as far as blind inclinations can be isolated at all, a match in blind inclinations might accord with a wild divergence in the rules we are following and the norms we intend to comply with. Rather than blind inclinations cutting off the regress of interpretations, they to reintroduce the need for them.

Hence, possessing blind inclinations that mutually agree is not a *sufficient* ground for our ordinary ascriptions of meaning. In fact, to entertain the idea that such inclinations could provide us with an entering wedge to the shared domain of meaning is holding the wrong end of the stick. As long as blindness rules my inclination for the use of a word, my actual linguistic behaviour will be so communicatively deviant that few people will feel tempted to regard it as a meaningful use of language at all.

The point is that my actual use of words serves as a means of communication with my fellow speakers, and is not a blind reaction triggered by the extension of the word. To see this difference more clearly, one could think of some of the behavioural patterns children display when acquiring language. A child that has learned how to pronounce the word 'flower', and has acquired an idea of its extension, might, to its own delight, point at each and every flower it sees, and call it 'flower'. As a preparation for a communicatively salient use of language, this might be a necessary stage. But one can only say that the child means flowers by the word 'flower', to the extent that his use of language develops beyond this stage, and enables him to express his thoughts to others and to make sense of what others try to tell him. Yet, the least thing required for those latter abilities, is to outgrow the blind inclination to call every flower that one sees 'flower'. Rather than blind inclinations being sufficient for ascribing a meaning to someone's words, outgrowing blind inclinations is necessary in order to make room for meaning.[1]

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[1] Of course, Kripke might point out that this inclination is not what he has in mind when presenting his account. However, this is an example of a blind inclination that people actually do possess at a certain stage of their language development, and if Kripke would want to rule out this kind of inclinations, he owes us a criterion for selecting the relevant ones. Since this criterion might not

What holds for the word 'flower', holds for the word 'plus' too. Having blind inclinations to produce 'answers' and to fiddle with matchsticks in an ostensibly familiar way, does not make for a straightforwardly meaningful use of language. Imagine a person who does possess those inclinations, but who lacks the ordinary capacities that are related with the use of the word 'plus'. For example, he cannot tell you what he means by 'plus', nor explain to you what he is doing when he follows his inclination, and when presented with his bank account, he tends to add his house number to his zip-code and to ask you whether the number which he gets means that he is bankrupt now. I think it is clear that we inevitably reach a point at which it might be conceded that some weird computational mechanism is still present, but at which we would be rather hesitant to say that this person still means something by the word 'plus'.

Thus, when it comes to 'blind inclinations', possessing and acting upon such inclinations might be so weird from a communicative point of view, that it would indeed be very dubious whether a person means anything with his words at all. And on the other hand, when he does mean something with his words, it is because he does not just blindly follow his inclinations.

Kripke claims that communally shared, blind inclinations are a sufficient basis for the ascription of meaning to someone's words. We have just argued that they are not. Nonetheless, one might think that the Kripkian intuition is at least partly correct, since possessing some of those inclinations is still a necessary condition for being regarded as a user of meaningful language. Yet, I think that no particular, commonly shared inclination regarding the word 'plus' is necessary either for taking someone to mean addition by 'plus'. When it comes to meaning addition by 'plus', the fact of having or not having a particular inclination can be overruled by other, *normative* considerations.

In order to see in what respect this is so, we may imagine someone who is suffering from brain damage and who can be expected to put down *any* number of matchsticks in response to an addition problem. We may also assume that his verbal responses to such problems are wildly bizarre. On first sight it seems impossible to take this person to mean addition by 'plus'. As Kripke puts it: 'If [he] consistently fails to give responses in agreement ... with [mine], [I] will judge that he does not mean addition by 'plus'. Even if [he] did mean it in the past, the present deviation will justify [me] in judging that he has lapsed.' (*WRPL*, p. 91).

But is this true? I think the only plausible answer is that it depends. It depends on whether this person will accept my verdict about an addition sum, even though he cannot reproduce it himself. It depends on whether he knows that if one wants to pay several bills, one has to add them. It depends on whether he feels more comfortable with the news that a large amount of money has been added to his bank account than with the news that it has been subtracted from it. If this person indeed displays this kind of behaviour, and approaches me with the question whether I

itself involve semantic or intentional notions, the task of specifying such a criterion within the Kripkian framework is quite hopeless.

want to be so kind as to add his bills, since he himself is no longer able to do so, then I rightly and justifiably take him to mean that I should add his bills. It would be downright perverse if I were to frown, to tell him that in the light of his own recent additions I am not quite certain what he means, and to ask him to please tell me how much two plus two is.

It is interesting that we would indeed describe such a response as 'perverse', 'cruel' or 'unkind'. The reason for feeling this way, is that we regard that response as an unallowable attempt to banish this person from the human community. What this shows, I think, is that taking someone to mean something has an unmistakable *ethical* aspect; denying that a person's words have meaning is tantamount to denying him the status of an accountable, fully human being. For this reason, our ethical attitude towards someone and our propensity to regard his words as meaningful hang together, and a change in either aspect might be accompanied by a corresponding change in the other. Thus, I think that Kripke is right in pointing out that there is a close relation between regarding someone as making a meaningful use of language, and 'taking him into our community'. Nevertheless, I think that Kripke goes wrong on the following counts. Firstly, we do not so much take someone into our 'community of dependable language users', as into the community of human beings *tout court*. For that reason, secondly, we do not 'exclude someone from our community' with regard to a particular word such as 'plus', while accepting him as a member in other respects. Rather, we simply accept that a person might not be competent in certain respects, and try to take that into account while still regarding him as one of us. Thirdly, the ties holding our community together are not forged by matching blind inclinations, but rather are part of a web of mutual normative relations.[1]

Now, with regard to the case of the brain damaged adder, one may feel the urge to object that still his meaning addition is not the same thing as when *we* mean addition by 'plus'. And of course it is not. The obvious difference is that we can come up with certain answers, and he cannot. But 'meaning plus' is not the same as 'coming up with certain answers'. It is not even the same as 'being able to add'.

I think that this point is very similar to what Putnam has called the 'division of linguistic labour'. If we look at a speech community as a whole, we see that empirical knowledge and practical abilities to recognize and identify things enter into the meaning of terms and the determination of their reference. But this knowledge and these abilities cannot and need not be evenly distributed amongst all members of the

[1] In all of this, I think that it is wrong to say that regarding someone's words as being meaningful is tantamount to 'taking a certain stance' in the sense of 'projecting' meaning onto a person's intrinsically meaningless behaviour. (The expression 'ascribing a meaning to someone's words' might also read with this misleading connotation.) As I partly argue in this section, and will elaborate below, we cannot make sense of meaning within the framework of a dichotomy between the 'given' (non-normative behavioural data) and the 'construed' (meaningful, norm-involved language use). What inclines us to apply that model to the case of the impeded adder, is an atomistic and individualistic idea of meaning. What is difficult to realize, is that someone may really and truly mean addition by 'plus' without there having to be a particular, single fact about that person or a specific ability which makes it true that he means addition.

linguistic community. To use one of Putnam's examples, some people may be better than others at telling beeches from elms, but that does not imply that the botanically less knowledgeable do not *really* mean elm by 'elm', or are not *really* able to refer to elms with the word 'elm'. Of course I cannot take someone who asks me 'to imitate the mating call of the North American elm' to mean elm by 'elm'. A certain amount of knowledge is required in order to mean the proper thing with a word; e.g., one has to know that 'elm' refers to a kind of tree, and not to a kind of deer. But given this basis, the 'semantic competence' of speakers may very much be a matter of their reliance on better qualified fellow-speakers in the community.

In the present context, the salient point about the division of linguistic labour is that it cannot be accounted for in terms of blind, communally shared inclinations. For the 'inclinations' that *are* shared grossly underdetermine the meaning of the word, while the 'inclinations' of the expert that do determine the meaning are in many cases not commonly shared.[1] Furthermore, the only reason why, despite such differences, we can help ourselves to a unified notion of 'meaning something by a word', is because of the existence of such blatantly normative mechanisms as the layman asking and accepting the verdict of the expert speaker.

So, the ultimate reason why possession of some communally shared inclination is not a necessary condition for meaning something, is that our practice of taking people to mean something is actually more communal than Kripke can allow for. If we discard normativity and limit our view to blind inclinations, then the only question that can arise is whether the inclinations of a particular individual are identical with those that are present in the community at large. In that case, a speech community would merely be an aggregate of speakers who are carbon copies in as far as their individual inclinations are concerned, and whose 'dependable interaction' - as Kripke calls it - is possible just to the extent that those inclinations are identical. Beyond such a perfect agreement in blind inclinations there could within this framework only be a divergence that eludes all possible comprehension.

But as we saw, blind inclinations are just not a necessary condition for saying that someone means addition by 'plus'. In actual practice, divergent individual inclinations need not rule out a shared meaning, as long as the less knowledgeable treat the actions of the more knowledgeable as a norm that might carry more weight than their own inclinations. Indeed we do take people into our linguistic community, but we do so to the extent that they are willing to comply with the norms that are accepted within that community. And in this regard, a proven willingness to comply with those norms cannot be conflated with a blind inclination or capacity to actually apply them. On the basis of a person's intention to comply with the norm, we may properly regard him as a member of our community who uses the word 'plus' with a meaning and a reference, despite a divergence in actual computational inclinations.

[1] An interesting aspect of the example of the impaired adder is that it concerns a word, 'plus', in regard to which all people usually are competent to more or less the same degree. We have no institutionalized practice of acknowledging the verdicts of a special class of 'expert adders', as we do have concerning biological or chemical terms. Still, we take this person to mean 'addition'.

Someone might be a very unreliable adder, and yet mean addition by 'plus'. To assume that we first need to have identical inclinations in order to use normative notions is therefore putting the cart before the horse. It is rather because we have certain normative practices that we can to a substantial extent diverge in our inclinations and still use our words with the same meaning and reference.

So what is wrong with shared blind inclinations as a basis for ascriptions of meaning? Firstly, as I showed in the previous sections, such inclinations fail to offer us an explication of what we ordinarily take to be the normative commitments of meaning something by a word. Even if the conditionals that give expression to those commitments are not backed up by any facts, as Kripke argues, they still need to be accounted for in a 'non-factual' way. Blind inclinations prove to be useless for that purpose.

Apart from this internal defect of Kripke's account, it is now also apparent that the importance which Kripke attaches to those blind inclinations is misplaced anyway. If we are to rely on blind inclinations only, we could neither get an account of meaning, nor of our ascriptions of meaning off the ground in the first place. The first problem that arises when we try to specify any such 'blind inclinations for the use of words', is that it is rather difficult to find any suitable candidates. The existence of blind linguistic inclinations seems to be largely fictional. Secondly, in as far as we did succeed in isolating blind inclinations connected with the use of a word, it turned out that such behavioural regularities are not sufficient for taking someone to make a meaningful use of language. Blind inclinations on themselves cannot have the required bearing on our ascriptions of meaning, since those ascriptions are dependent on essentially normative considerations. In fact, if we had to steer by the light of blind inclinations only, then the need for an interpretational account of meaning would be reinstated. Furthermore, the case of the babbling child makes it clear that inclinations that are divorced from the ability to express one's thoughts and to make sense of the words of others are at best a preparatory stage in the meaningful use of language.

Thirdly, possession of particular blind inclinations is not a necessary condition for the meaningful use of language either. The case of the impaired adder shows that as long as we can regard someone's use of language as an attempt to comply with the publicly accepted norm, we may rightly take his words to have their commonly accepted meaning - deviant inclinations notwithstanding.

We must conclude that blind inclinations are just not a bridgehead in the domain of meaning. In as far as our explicit linguistic behaviour is criterial for the meaning of our words, this behaviour cannot be individuated apart from the norms with which it complies.

3

The Sceptical Charge

I. THE SCEPTICAL PARADOX AND BEYOND

The demise of Kripke's community solution sets the stage for a final assessment of his sceptical paradox. As was explained in the previous chapter, this paradox results from the combined pressures of two conditions that any straightforward account of meaning would have to meet.[1] Firstly, in order to be conceptually adequate, such an explication should account for the normative aspects of our notion of meaning as those come to the fore in our intuitive acceptance of such conditionals as:

* If Jones means addition by 'plus', then he *should* answer '125' when asked about '57 plus 68'.

Since meaning carries such normative commitments, any answer to the sceptic that does not make room for these conditionals thereby fails as an account of our ordinary notion of meaning. In effect, when we want to give a 'straight' or factual answer to the sceptical challenge, then this 'normativity condition' demands that the antecedent of such conditionals allows itself to be rewritten in terms of the fact that is claimed to be constitutive of meaning.

Secondly, Kripke restricts the acceptable accounts of meaning by a 'reduction condition'. This condition lays down that the facts constitutive of meaning should themselves be individuated in non-semantic, non-intentional and non-normative terms. After arguing for the plausibility of those two conditions, Kripke shows convincingly that none of the candidate facts, be they mental, dispositional, or Platonic, can bear the burden of these two restrictions simultaneously, and from this he derives his paradoxical conclusion that 'no one means anything by any word'.

Nevertheless, Kripke regards this conclusion and the concomitant contention that our ordinary semantic concepts are just so much bogwash, as 'obviously insane'. We do have an everyday practice of operating with semantic concepts and even though this practice does not reflect the objective facts, we still need to show how such a practice is possible in the first place. In order to do so, Kripke presents us

[1] In the sections dealing with Kripke's paradox, I have interpreted that paradox as presenting us with an ontological problem. Kripke's own exposition in *WRPL* might also suggest an epistemological reading of the paradox, but, as I argued in chapter 1 section III, on such a reading the paradox is only dubiously coherent, and definitely much easier to deal with. The price one has to pay for diffusing the epistemological version, is a rejection of the idea that knowledge of meaning can be accommodated by a foundational epistemology. The price for successfully dealing with the ontological version is much higher. As I will argue below, it comes down to giving up physicalism.

with his sceptical solution. This solution abides by the ontological outcome of the paradox, and accepts that there are no *facts* making our statements about meaning true, but still it tries to account for our practice of *ascribing* a meaningful use of language of each other. Since this solution is meant to give an account of our ordinary, everyday talk about meaning, it is bound by the same conceptual constraints as any straight solution, and accordingly one of the criteria for its success is its ability to accommodate the normative conditionals. After all, those conditionals were deemed to express a vital and ineliminable normative aspect of our ordinary concept of meaning.

Scrutinizing the text of *WRPL*, we found that Kripke does not actually live up to this self-set challenge, his explicit claims to the contrary notwithstanding. The sceptical solution may well account for some descriptive conditional - as might any straight solution - but when it comes to the original normative conditionals Kripke's non-factual account fails as badly as any factual solution. Furthermore, as the investigation in the previous chapter makes clear, there is no means of remedying this defect within the confines of the Kripkian framework.

This shortcoming is the demise of the sceptical solution. The sceptical rescue mission fails because it is not able to deal with the conditionals that express a crucial feature of our ordinary discourse on meaning. Our usual way of talking about the normative consequences of meaning presumably cannot be accounted for along factual lines - as the sceptic argued - but neither can it be explained in terms of the 'ascriptive' approach that Kripke envisions. Apart from those problems about the consequences of an ascription of meaning, we argued that it is also rather dubious whether these ascriptions of meaning can themselves be accounted for in terms of the communally shared 'blind inclinations' that Kripke favours.

The failure of the sceptical solution forces us to face the paradox anew. Since this paradox resulted from the combination of a normative and a reductionist restriction the following approaches to it are open:

1. Both the normative and the reductionist restriction are accepted as valid,
in which case either:

    i. one looks for new facts which could give a straight solution to the paradox while staying within the confines of both conditions,
    ii. the paradox is accepted.

2. One of the restrictions generating the paradox is rejected as invalid,
in which case either:

    i. the normativity condition is rejected, or
    ii. the reductionist condition is rejected.[1]

Let us now take a short look at these respective positions, thereby paying particular attention to the role and status of the normativity condition.

[1] Logically, there is also the possibility of rejecting both conditions. I will disregard that option for now, and shortly address it at the end of the chapter.

If we do not want to give up either one of the sceptic's conditions, then a first option would be to renew our search for a dispositional or physiological fact that could meet the sceptic's challenge head on. Our acceptance of the normativity condition then impels us not to stop the search before we have come up with a fact from which the requisite normative consequences can somehow be derived. Thus, at one and the same time we are supposed to come up with a fact that can be specified without invoking any normative notions, and to show how this fact can have, or can seem to have, normative consequences that cannot be explicated in terms of the purely causal determination of someone's behaviour. I think that Kripke convincingly argued that this is a hopeless search. After all, even a non-normative fact that causally accounts for all extensionally correct linguistic behaviour will not fit the bill, since it will merely stand in a causal - and therefore wrong - relation to the linguistic behaviour it is meant to account for normatively.

Since the problem is of this principled nature, I see little prospect in digging for new facts that might meet the sceptic's challenge head on. How, for example, could any refinement of the causal or the physiological account even in principle supply us with an answer that meets both Kripke's conditions? Neither, as Boghossian argues extensively, is there much chance of refining the dispositional account while still remaining within the reductionist confines.[1] Nor is it much use to appeal at this point to a fact that transcends the limits of Kripke's individual model and is somehow intrinsically social. This option will be dealt with elaborately in the chapters to come, and I think that ultimately it is indeed of paramount importance to reject the individual model of meaning. But at this stage of the discussion we may disregard this option, since to reject the individual model as such will not further the prospects of a straight solution. After all, whether the non-normative facts are individual or social, the overwhelming difficulty of deriving normative consequences from those facts is still towering over this straight approach.

I take it, therefore, that we may rule out the possibility of giving what Kripke calls a 'straight' answer to the sceptical problem, and that we may safely draw the following, conditional conclusion: *if* our notions of rule-following and meaning have intrinsically normative aspects, *then* the fact that someone means something or follows a certain rule cannot be accounted for in terms of non-normative facts about that person.

The second option we have when accepting both Kripke's conditions, theoretically at least, is to try to live with the sceptical paradox. It would then be conceded that our ordinary semantic concepts are intrinsically normative in nature. But they

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[1] See Boghossian's assessment of such attempts in Boghossian (1989). One of Kripke's arguments against dispositional accounts was that the fact that speakers tend to make mistakes makes it impossible to identify what a speaker means in terms of the actual disposition that he possesses. Boghossion convincingly argues that a dispositional account, in order to escape this problem, will have to take the beliefs of a speaker into consideration. In that case, however, the dispositional account becomes blatantly intentional and fails to meet Kripke's reduction condition. (See also Chapter 1, section 3.)

are also held to be quite empty, because, as Kripke showed, there is nothing in the world to which they apply. It was this conclusion that Kripke tried to escape by means of his sceptical solution.

I do not know of any author who actually tries to build his home in this particular niche. Still, we can get an idea of what this option amounts to when we notice that it would need to introduce and embrace a notion of 'folk semantics' that is very similar to the notion of 'folk psychology' in the Philosophy of Mind. Just as one might hold that our mentalistic idiom constitutes a folk psychology because it commits us to the existence of mental items which science has shown to be non-existent, so now one would have to hold that our semantic idiom constitutes a folk semantics because the normative phenomena to which it commits us likewise turn out not to exist.

However, it should be pointed out that such a view concerning normative linguistic notions seems more drastic than its counterpart in the Philosophy of Mind. Kripke conducts his discussion in terms of rule-following and meaning, and therefore formulates the outcome of the sceptical paradox as 'there can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word'. Now of course there are philosophers of an extensionalist bent who would be quite happy to embrace such a conclusion about *meaning*. But Kripke's choice of words should not make us think that the paradox only has bearing on intensional notions. The central problem presented by the paradox is to give a factual, reductionist account of normative semantic concepts in general, and therefore the paradox has as much bearing on extensional notions such as 'reference', 'truth' and 'validity' as it has on intensional ones such as 'meaning'. After all, to use a word with a certain reference has normative consequences for future linguistic behaviour, just as well as using the word with a certain meaning has. If Jones' utterance of 'Bill Clinton' refers to the current male occupant of the White House, then he *should* bring that man's political denomination to bear on the truth of his statement that Bill Clinton is a Democrat. As was the case with Jones' meaning addition by 'plus', we might of course imagine a case where Jones makes a mistake and misidentifies the referent of his words. But the fact that Jones does not *actually* behave in accordance with the normative commitments of his particular refering use of the word, does not belie the fact that he has those commitments, as we, in our turn, may point out to him.

This puts our imaginary 'folk semanticist' who tries to live with the outcome of the paradox, in a rather awkward position. If he really wants to put his money where his mouth is, he should also take an eliminativist approach to such notions as reference, truth and logical validity.[1] I think that such a position is of doubtful intel-

[1] It should be noted that our 'folk semanticist' accepts *both* Kripke's conditions, and therefore acknowledges that our notion of meaning is intrinsically normative and that a factual account that cannot explain those normative consequences is *ipso facto* not an account of meaning. This is a salient difference with the Chomskian approach discussed below, that holds that a factual account of meaning or of some very similar notion does not *need* to address the question of normativity. Such an approach would amount to a rejection of Kripke's normativity condition, and is not inherently eliminativist. It is from accepting both Kripke's conditions *and* his paradox that elimina-

ligibility and is certainly profoundly unattractive. One need only think of the devastating consequences this position would have for the scientific endeavour itself. If, for example, the notion of logical validity is really obsolete, it seems hardly appropriate to apply it to scientific theories.

Because the ramifications of accepting the idea of a folk semantics cannot be confined to the domain of meanings, but proliferate and overgrow the whole semantic area, this option also makes one effectively lose all grip on such notions as truth and logical validity. I think that therefore this option should be rejected as a response to Kripke's paradox.[1]

So, given the failure of the sceptical solution, it turns out that if one accepts both Kripke's reduction condition and his normativity condition, that then one either has to come up with a new straight solution to the paradox, or one has to live with its consequences. Neither option is viable. Thus, we cannot diffuse the paradox in either a sceptical or a straight way, and we cannot live with it either. Kripke's sceptical paradox, we must conclude, is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the conditions that generate it and we are left with no other option but to reject one of those conditions. Either our notion of rule-following is not intrinsically normative, or a non-normative reduction of that notion is not possible.

Let us therefore now take a short look at the different ways in which one might reject one of Kripke's conditions.

A first reaction to the present situation is to focus one's criticism on the normativity condition. Basically, there are two ways of attack. Firstly, one could try to show that normativity is not so central to our ordinary concept of meaning as Kripke takes it to be.[2] Obviously, one cannot argue this by flatly denying the intuitive acceptability of the normative conditionals that gave expression to these normative features. For *ordinarily* speaking, we certainly accept that Jones' meaning addition by 'plus' has consequences for what he should answer to addition sums. So instead of claiming that our ordinary concept of meaning has no normative features at all, one should rather claim that those features are not *essential* to our concept of meaning. For in that case, we no longer need to account for them in our factual explication of meaning.

Following this line of argument, one could grant Kripke that an explanation of our *ordinary* notion of meaning must also involve an account of the normative

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tivism follows.

[1] Whether this means that the idea of a misleading 'folk-semantics' is in worse shape than the parallel idea concerning a 'folk-psychology' is not directly clear. See Putnam (1988) Chapter 4 for an argument to the effect that eliminativism towards 'folk-psychology', consistently applied, must lead to a corresponding doctrine of 'folk-semantics' and is thereby reduced to absurdity.

[2] Kripke's motivation for demanding an explication of the normative conditionals is that normative features are 'essential to our concept of a rule' (*WRPL* 94). I will often rephrase that claim by saying that such concepts as 'rule', 'meaning' or 'language' are *intrinsically* normative. What I mean by this, can with convenient vagueness be rephrased by saying that no concept lacking such normative features can be the concept of a rule, of meaning or of language as we use it in our everyday intercourse.

conditionals. One might also hold that a properly scientific account of our ordinary notion is therefore impossible. But since those normative features are now regarded as inessential, one can argue against Kripke that our ordinary notion of meaning may be replaced with a cognate notion of meaning that lacks those normative features and that *can* be explained in terms of scientifically acceptable, non-normative facts. In this way, one can try to shrug the burden of the normativity condition. I take it that Chomsky endorses this line of argument.

The second way of dealing with the normativity condition is to claim that only the philosopher has to account for it, and not the scientist. Let me explain. In his exposition of the sceptical paradox Kripke relies on the implicit assumption that if a concept C is normative in the sense that we draw normative consequences from a statement C (Jones), then any explication of the fact *that C (Jones)* should be able to account for such normative consequences. This assumption stands out clearly in Kripke's discussion of the dispositional view. There it is argued that even if we can specify a disposition that is extensionally correct, then still such an account fails because no normative consequences can be derived from a non-normative specification of someone's disposition.

Now, the first line of attack that I sketched above grants Kripke the assumption that we must be able to derive normative consequences from the factual account of a normative statement. On the first line of attack it is merely argued that the normative concept C can be replaced by a sufficiently similar concept C' that is not normative and that does allow of a scientific explanation. However, the second line of attack addresses the underlying assumption itself by arguing that in making this demand, Kripke fails to distinguish between conceptual issues and scientific questions. It is a conceptual feature of our notion of meaning, so the objection goes, that we take meaning to have certain normative consequences. Yet, it is a *scientific* question to ask what meaning actually *is*, or what underlying facts are characteristic for someone who means addition by 'plus'. Analysing our concept of meaning, it is then held, is the proper job of the philosopher, while the scientist is in the business of investigating the facts that are constitutive of the phenomenon of meaning itself. In conducting this investigation, the scientist is not bound by any a priori conceptual constraints imposed upon him by the philosopher, nor do his actual findings stand in need of the philosopher's sign of approval. For that reason, although the scientist's factual explication of the phenomenon of meaning must to some extent be explanatory of the linguistic behaviour of speakers, it need not explain our normative assessment of that behaviour.[1] Thus, where the first approach tries to escape the

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[1] The reader does well to realize that this position is still very much open, and in particular, is not ruled out by the observations made in the previous section. In that section I argued that the way in which we actually ascribe meaning to another person's words cannot be accounted for in terms of blind, non-normative inclinations, but rather depends on intrinsically normative assessments. The correctness of that observation goes against Kripke's account of how we ascribe a meaning to someone's words, but it is no refutation of the position presently mentioned, which holds that in order to explain what meaning actually *is*, no such normative features have to be taken into account.

strictures of Kripke's normativity condition by arguing for the possibility of a conceptual revision, the second approach does claim to account for the facts that are captured by our ordinary notion of meaning, but denies that such an account needs to explain certain conceptual features of that notion in the first place. This latter line of reasoning can be found in the work of Fodor and Goldfarb.

So, these are the two principal ways by which one might try to escape from Kripke's paradox if one were to reject the burden of his normativity condition.

Once we have concluded that Kripke's paradox should be regarded as a *reductio* of its premisses, the second general option is to reject the reduction condition. In that case we accept that meaning and rule-following cannot be explained in non-normative, reductionist terms and instead we take normativity to be a *primitive* phenomenon.

To some, declaring a phenomenon to be 'primitive' is tantamount to an admission of defeat. This is incorrect. If the reason for this assessment is that one takes the possibility of a reduction as a necessary condition for the success of a particular account, then one is merely begging the question in favour of the reductionist point of view. If, on the other hand, one thinks that a primitive concept must always be a useless and an unworkable concept, then one is simply wrong. For example, notions such as 'mimicry' or 'territorial behaviour' are impeccable, though primitive concepts of ethology. Nevertheless, we must realize that, apart from the irreducibility of such ethological concepts, there is much more that we can point out about them. We can, for instance, explicate such notions on the unreduced level (e.g., by relating them to other ethological notions), we can explain why a reduction is not feasible (e.g., ineliminable environmental factors), and we can partly relate them to underlying physiological factors (e.g., adrenaline excretion). Our grasp on those notions depends on the possibility to anchor them within such a broader explanatory framework. If declaring a concept to be primitive were to be both the first *and* the last thing one could say about it, then one would indeed merely have declared one's ignorance.

So, in order to arrive at a substantial non-reductionist concept of meaning, it is imperative to integrate this concept within a broader frame. This means that one must give an actual non-reductionist explication of meaning and linguistic normativity, that one should explain why those notions have to be primitive, and that one can relate those notions to other, non-semantic or non-normative facts about language users. Such an account can be underpinned in different ways. The most notable alternatives explicate normativity either in terms of the 'intrinsic intentionality' of the mind, or in praxiological terms. The former approach, thought anti-reductionist when it comes to normative or intentional phenomena *tout court*, still regards *linguistic* normativity as derived from an underlying mental stratum and therefore sees it as a reducible phenomenon. On the latter approach, such a reduction of linguistic normativity seems considerably less feasible.

I take it that these are the two principal ways in which one might reject Kripke's reduction condition.

Now that we have an overview of the terrain to be covered, I want to devote the remainder of this chapter to a discussion of the reductionist response to Kripke's paradox, deferring a discussion of the non-reductionist position to later chapters. I will start with an extensive investigation of Chomsky's plea for a scientifically cleaned-up, non-normative notion of language. Once we have gained clarity about Chomsky's proposal, we can be relatively brief about the second version of the reductionist approach - the one that consists in separating 'conceptual' from 'scientific' questions. My discussion of both these proposals will be rather critical.

Since the issues involved are subtle and our path will be winding, it may be helpful to give a summary of the main points to be argued in the remainder of this chapter. In the next section, I will start by discussing a major argumentative difficulty that faces us when we want to assess Chomsky's proposal for a scientifically cleaned up notion of language. In order not to beg the question against Chomsky - I will argue - we must refrain from asking ourselves whether Chomsky's notion of language can account for the phenomenon of normativity. Rather, we must opt for a purely internal line of criticism and focus our attention on Chomsky's own claims about knowledge of language. Once this methodological point has been made, I will discuss Chomsky's reasons for being dissatisfied with our ordinary concept of language and I will look at Chomsky's successor notion of an 'I-language'. The next section contains my internal criticism of Chomsky's view. It will be argued that a consistent employment of the notion of I-language would effectively preempt Chomsky from talking about 'knowledge of language' in any salient sense. In other words, Chomsky's claims on behalf of the notion of an I-language and his remarks concerning our knowledge of language are irreconcilable. Subsequently, we will see our argument vindicated by Chomsky's actual remarks on our knowledge of language: when discussing knowledge of language, Chomsky invokes the ordinary, normative notion of language which he claimed he had discarded in favour of that of an I-language. Our claim that knowledge of language cannot be knowledge of I-language is thus born out by Chomsky's own words.

Finally, in the two concluding sections of this chapter we will discuss the problems facing a reductionist account of language at a higher level of generality.

II. ELIMINATING 'OBSCURE NORMATIVE FACTORS'

It is beyond question that we do, in ordinary life, accept Kripke's normative conditionals as valid, and therefore one cannot flatly deny that our ordinary concepts of language and meaning have normative aspects. Kripke's sceptical paradox, however, depends on a stronger thesis. It not only presumes that our ordinary linguistic concepts are normative, but also that they are *intrinsically* normative. For only when normativity is held to be an essential aspect of meaning can it be argued that any explication that fails to account for the normative conditionals cannot be an explication of meaning.

Accordingly, one might attack Kripke's paradox by denying that our linguistic and semantic notions are *intrinsically* normative. A proponent of this position could concede that our ordinary notions of meaning and language have 'obscure normative factors'[1] and he might also accept that such notions are not reducible to non-normative physical notions. Still, it might be claimed that those normative 'connotations' are dispensable, and that we would do better, for scientific purposes, to adopt a notion of meaning that has been 'cleaned up' in this respect, since such a notion will be explainable in terms of non-normative facts about language users.

So, on this line of arguing, it is firstly conceded that our ordinary notions of language and meaning have normative features that cannot be accounted for reductively. But secondly, it is claimed that those normative features are not intrinsic to our notions of language and meaning and that therefore, thirdly, we might adopt a properly scientific notion of language or meaning which lacks those normative features and which will allow of a more reductive approach. What distinguishes this position from the eliminativist position treated of in the last section, is that the new, scientifically cleaned up notions are held to be sufficiently similar to our ordinary notions still to count as notions of language or meaning. Thus, as is quite important to notice, the proponent of this view advocates a *revision* of our concept of meaning, rather than an *elimination.*

Although there are different ways in which one might try to articulate such alternative, non-normative linguistic notions, I will start by discussing one particular proposal, that of Noam Chomsky.[2] Chomsky is the most influential proponent of the view that our ordinary notion of language stands in need of scientific revision, and his reliance on underlying 'mind/brain mechanisms' is prototypic for much current approaches towards language. Yet, there is another reason for starting out by scrutinizing one proponent of this view, rather than the whole approach in general. This is a particular argumentative difficulty that faces us when we want to assess such an allegedly improved concept of language. For the situation is as follows. We have our ordinary concept of language, and someone who has doubts about this concept now proposes a partial modification that is meant to result in a closely similar notion of language. This person does not want to eliminate any notion of language *tout court*, but wants to present us with a new notion which is

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[1] Chomsky (1988) p. 37.

[2] See, e.g., Chomsky (1988), Chomsky (1990), and in particular Chomsky (1986) Chapter 2. Chomsky's advocacy of a 'non-normative concept of language' is inspired by his own linguistic program and is not intended as a response to the challenge of Kripke's paradox. In fact, in the fourth chapter of *Knowledge of Language*, Chomsky argues extensively that Kripke's paradox does not make sense in the first place. However, I think that Chomsky missed out on some of the more intricate aspects of Kripke's argument. From Chomsky's own point of view it is in fact more logical to claim Kripke as an ally. For whether Chomsky's non-normative notion of language is feasible or not, it is certainly immune to Kripke's paradox, and Chomsky might therefore well appeal to Kripke's argument as yet another reason for trading in our ordinary notion of language for the 'scientific' notion of language that he himself proposes.

sufficiently similar to our ordinary notion still to qualify as a notion of language. Thus, since the issue turns on the viability of this proposed conceptual revision, we have to ask ourselves in how far the opponent is right in claiming that his reformed, non-normative notion of a language is indeed the notion of a *language*. What we need to determine is whether both notions, the ordinary one and the reformed one, may be seen as two variants of the same concept, or whether the revision has 'improved' our ordinary concept beyond all recognition. Obviously, this raises the question what it is for the revised concept to be 'sufficiently similar' to the ordinary notion and what criteria we should bring to bear here.

I think that it is very difficult to argue out this point without begging the question. The obvious way to start the investigation, is by looking which judgements both concepts allow us to make, and in this respect, both parties might indeed reach agreement. It will then turn out that there are intuitively acceptable judgements about language ordinarily conceived that we can no longer make when using the revised notion of a language. Prominent amongst those will be judgements concerning the normative implications of language. But does this show that the new notion is not sufficiently similar to the ordinary one? In order to settle that question, we would first have to decide how essential such normative judgements are, and this will simply bring us back to the initial disagreement on how central normativity is to any notion of language.

Thus, it is only possible for two parties to decide - without mutually begging the question - whether an ordinary notion and a proposed revision are sufficiently similar, when both parties are already in agreement about the judgements that the concepts should allow them to make. In this case, however, a disagreement about the importance of normative judgements is what we start out with. So, when two persons think differently about the centrality of the normative aspects of our notion of meaning, they will probably also differ about what counts as a criterion for 'sufficient similarity'.

This does not imply that it is *impossible* to give a general argument for or against the importance of the normative features of our concept of language. It is just that such an argument can easily give the idea that one has merely pressed one's own point against the opponent, and that a real common ground on which to decide the issue has not been found. In order to avoid that impression, I shall employ a different strategy. I will not start my discussion with a general argument, but with an examination of the particular account offered by Chomsky. Furthermore, I will divert attention from the disputed feature - normativity - to other features of language on which both Chomsky and I are agreed. In this particular case, I will focus on the fact that language is something of which we have knowledge. I will then try to assess Chomsky's revised notion of language by looking whether the things that Chomsky himself says about knowledge of language actually make sense when using his non-normative concept of language. If they do not, then Chomsky's notion can be ruled out of court; not because it cannot account for our ordinary normative judgements, but because it would make it impossible for Chomsky him-

self to say the things that he actually says about language.[1]

After having scrutinized Chomsky's account, I will use the findings of that discussion as a step-up for a more general assessment of the position Chomsky endorses.

In the second chapter of *Knowledge of Language*, entitled 'Concepts of Language', Chomsky attempts to explicate a scientifically fruitful notion of language.[2] According to Chomsky, the need for such a 'technical concept of language' stems from the fact that our 'intuitive, pretheoretic commonsense notion of language' has two features that stand in the way of a properly scientific approach. Firstly, 'the commonsense notion of language has a crucial sociopolitical dimension' (Chomsky (1986), p. 15). For instance, Cantonese and Mandarin are treated as two dialects of 'Chinese', while Dutch and German, which are comparably similar, are treated as separate languages. It is doubtful, Chomsky claims, 'that any coherent account can be given of 'language' in this sense'. The second feature which scientifically disqualifies our ordinary concept of language is a 'normative-teleological element' (Ibid., p. 16). Chomsky gives us a few examples of what this term is meant to cover. Firstly, it refers to the kind of teleological considerations that make us say that a child 'does not yet know English' or that it 'partly knows English', instead of saying that it already knows a language of its own which is partly similar to ours. Apart from this, the term 'normative-teleological' is meant to refer to 'what are called 'errors'' (a word which Chomsky consistently uses in

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[1] Such a line of argument has its pros and cons. A definite pro is that such an argument will be more illuminating since it tries to go along with the opponent and attempts to meet him on his own ground, rather than pressing a point which which the opponent disagrees from the outset. A conspicuous con is that such an argument tends to lack generality, and that, in the last instance, it will be inconclusive. If it turns out that the second feature can not be accounted for either, the opponent is in principle free to conclude that therefore this feature needs to be dropped too. Ultimately, it can then only be claimed that in that case, the revised concept is intuitively no longer sufficiently similar to the original one.

[2] I will in what follows sometimes describe Chomsky's position as 'physicalistic' or 'reductionistic' (primarily in the sense of accepting Kripke's reduction condition while rejecting his normativity condition). Nevertheless, two glosses are in order here. Firstly, Chomsky is sceptical about a straightforward reduction of linguistics to physics. Secondly, Chomsky stresses that given our *present* knowledge of the human brain, linguistics (as part of a more global science of the mind) can not (yet) be incorporated into the natural sciences. Chomsky does however hold that such an incorporation is both desirable and in all probability possible. As he puts it: 'When we speak of the mind, we are speaking at some level of abstraction of yet-unknown physical mechanisms of the brain, much as those who spoke of the valence of oxygen or the benzene ring were speaking at some level of abstraction about physical mechanisms then unknown. Just as the discoveries of the chemist set the stage for further inquiry into underlying mechanisms, so today the discoveries of the linguist-psychologist set the stage for further inquiry into brain mechanisms [...] contemporary mentalism, so conceived, is a step toward assimilating psychology and linguistics within the physical sciences.' (Chomsky (1988), p. 7, 8) As will become clear below, Chomsky regards the 'normative connotations' of our ordinary concept of language as a feature that threatens such an assimilation of the study of language to the natural sciences, and for that reason he attempts to work out a scientifically revised notion of language.

inverted commas). An example of such an 'error' offered by Chomsky is the idiosyncratic digression from a common standard of usage. I am in error, when I mistakenly think that the word 'livid', as in 'livid with rage', means 'red' or 'flushed', instead of 'pale'. In this case I am following a particular rule for the word, and this rule proves to be different from the one that is commonly used by my co-speakers.

However, when talking about errors (or 'errors'), we must realize that there is also a second kind of error that could be made and which is not mentioned by Chomsky. I might, for example, use the word 'livid' as meaning 'flushed' or 'red' and yet misapply this word according to my own rule. In that case, the problem is not that my rule fails to accord with the common rule, but that my particular use fails to accord with my own rule. To put it differently, the first kind of error - the one mentioned by Chomsky - consists in the violation of a social norm, and raises no questions about my command of rules in general. If it were asked, in this case, what the proper rule is, the question might perhaps be decided statistically. The second kind of error consists in violating my own norm, and might raise the Kripkian question what my command of a rule actually consists in.[1] If it were asked, in this latter case, which of two answers would be correct, the matter could not be decided statistically, but would require an explanation of what it is about me to follow a particular rule, and how this could have normative consequences for the applications I make.

It is hard to find any explicit statement by Chomsky saying that normativity as concerning the relation between the rule someone is following, and the applications he is making, is also one of those aspects of our ordinary concept of language that should be ruled out of court. I think that the reason for this omission is not that Chomsky thinks that such normative features are worth preserving. It is rather that he does not seem to discern them in the first place.[2] However, as a closer scrutiny

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[1] Kripke's quus example is misleading in as far as it might suggest that the question turns on how to decide which of two candidate-rules a person is following (whether he is making an error of the first kind). This is how Chomsky interprets Kripke (Chomsky (1986), Chapter 4). But of course this problem, which already takes the notion of a rule for granted, is not the one that worries the sceptic. For Kripke, the question whether Jones means addition or quaddition is merely a rhetorical device meant to raise the more fundamental question about the relation between a particular answer Jones gives, and the fact that Jones means such-and-such. The question Kripke is concerned about, is what fact about Jones could determine that he is or is not making an error of the second kind. When the sceptic asks us to explicate a conditional such as 'If Jones means quaddition by 'plus', then he should answer '5' when asked about 57 plus 68', he is not asking us to decide whether Jones means the same thing as we do. He is asking us to explain the normative relation that we take to obtain between Jones meaning such-and-such, and Jones answering in a certain way.

[2] In Chomsky (1995) it is acknowledged that one kind of error a speaker might make, is that 'he may misinterpret an expression...', but this is in the same breath explained as '...in that his performance system yields an interpretation different from the one his internal language imposes' (pp. 36 - 37). It is interesting to notice that the explanation in terms of 'internal language' and interfering 'performance system' is not offered as an reductive analysis of what we would ordinarily describe in normative terms. Rather, Chomsky almost seems to presuppose that, ordinarily speaking, misinterpreting an expression and having different, interfering causal mechanisms is just one

of Chomsky's own 'technical notion' of language will show, we may take it that in as far as Chomsky acknowledges that our ordinary concept of language has normative features of this second kind, he would definitely not regard them as worth preserving in a scientifically fruitful conception of language.

Thus, the reason why Chomsky finds fault with our ordinary concept of language, is because is has sociopolitical, teleological, and normative aspects. It is doubtful, Chomsky claims, whether any coherent account can be given of "language" in this everyday sense and there certainly is no role for such a messy concept in an eventual science of language. As he puts it quite plainly, 'in pursuing a serious inquiry into language, we require some conceptual precision and therefore must refine, modify, or simply replace the concepts of ordinary usage, just as physics assigns a precise technical meaning to such terms as 'energy', 'force', and 'work'.' (Chomsky (1988), p. 37)

Once the need for a 'technical' revision of our ordinary concept of language is established, Chomsky distinguishes two ways in which we may proceed, depending on whether we regard language as an intrinsically individual, mental phenomenon or not. If we do not, we might try to explicate some notion of what Chomsky calls an "External-" or "E-language". Broadly speaking, one commits oneself to the notion of an E-language, when one regards language as a 'construct [that] is understood independently of the properties of the mind/brain' (Chomsky (1986), p. 20) or, more specifically, when one regards language as something that 'is external to the mind/brain' (Chomsky (1990), p. 510). According to Chomsky, anyone who defines language as a pairing of sentences and meanings, as a set of some kind, or as a system of actions and behaviours, rejects the idea that a language is something internal to the 'mind/brain' of an individual speaker and thereby commits himself to the notion of an E-language.

In Chomsky's view, the notion of an E-language raises insuperable difficulties. E-languages cannot be sharply defined, the notion of an E-language tends to lead to an instrumentalist notion of grammar, and E-languages, as formal objects, have properties which cannot sensibly be ascribed to human languages at all. At this point, it is not necessary to go deeper into Chomsky's assessment of E-languages. Suffice it to say that Chomsky regards the notion of an E-language as a 'useless, perhaps quite senseless concept', that 'is of no interest and has no status'. It is therefore erroneous to assume 'that [the notion of an E-language] is the relevant scientific notion that corresponds to, or should replace, some concept of ordinary language' (Chomsky (1990), p. 513).

In contrast to the notion of an E-language Chomsky develops his own concept of

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and the same thing. This particular 'blind spot' might be the reason for Chomsky's often strangely inappropriate response to people who are pressing the point that the relation between the rule which a particular person is following and the applications he makes of it should be normative, not causal. (See, e.g., Chomsky's reaction to Kripke in Chomsky (1986) Ch. 4, and his reply to Smith, in Chomsky (1995) pp. 36 - 7.)

an 'Internal-' or 'I-language'.[1] In trying to isolate Chomsky's alternative notion of an I-language we are faced with the difficulty that Chomsky gives us several, mutually exclusive definitions. Basically we find three kinds of definition. Firstly, it is sometimes suggested that 'I-language' is a kind-term for concrete particulars that might be part of the physical constitution of the brain. Thus it is said:

> ... I-languages are real entities, as real as chemical compounds. They are in the mind, ultimately the brain, in the same sense as chemical elements, organic molecules, neural nets, and other entities that we construct and discuss at some appropriate abstract level of discussion are in the brain. (Chomsky (1990), p. 513)

Chemical elements and organic molecules are in the brain in the sense that the brain as a physical entity is constructed out of such elements and molecules. So Chomsky presumably means that I-languages are amongst the physical building blocks of the brain.

Secondly, we are told that an I-language is not so much an actual physical part of the brain, but a particular state in which a part of the brain can be:

> An I-language ... is the state attained by the language faculty [i.e., a part of the brain (H.S.)] under certain external conditions. (Ibid., p. 514)

Thus, an I-language would not be a particular part of the brain, but a functional state of such a part.

Thirdly, we are being told that an I-language is neither a part of the brain, nor a functional state of a part of the brain, but rather something which is *represented* in the brain:

> The I-language is what the grammar purports to describe: a system represented in the mind/brain, ultimately in physical mechanisms that are now largely unknown, and is in this sense *internalized*. (Ibid., p. 513)

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[1] In fact, Chomsky tells us that 'I' stands for internal*ized* and 'E' for external*ized* (e.g., Chomsky (1986), pp. 19, 21). I can only explain this as a slip of the pen. For something to be externalized, it must be internal to start with and allow of an external expression - I can e.g., externalize my personal feelings by expressing them. For something to be internalized it must be external to start with, and it must be possible to learn or absorb it - I can e.g., internalize the ABC. If I-language is to be an internalized, rather than an internal language, then the external language which presumably has been internalized has logical and ontological priority over the internalization in the sense that it is the non-individual prior standard by which to judge whether this internalization is succesful or correct. That is not to say that one cannot study internalizations for their own sake. One could for example study the different ways in which people internalize the ABC. Yet, in order to determine what we are to count and not to count as an internalization of the ABC in the first place, we must appeal to the ABC. So, since the notion 'the ABC' has priority over the notion 'internalization of the ABC' in the sense that the latter is defined by means of the former, we cannot abolish the former notion while retaining the latter. However, since it is Chomsky's intention to trade in any notion of language that takes language to be a non-individual, non-mental phenomenon, in favour of the notion of I-language, the 'I' in 'I-language cannot stand for *internalized* but must be understood to stand for *internal*. To be precise, it is only such an Internal-language that can be *externalized* (e.g., by giving a grammatical description of it) while it is only an External-language can be *internalized* (e.g., by forming oneself a representation of it). (Compare also note 1 on p 115 below)

Thus, an I-language is presumably something outside the brain which is represented by it; something which is not *internal* to the brain, but which is *internalized* by it.

I think that in order to give the most favourable interpretation of Chomsky, we would do best to disregard the first and the third definition as slips of the pen. I do not think that it is really Chomsky's intention to plead for a notion of language that would make language into one of the physical constituents of the brain, comparable with e.g., organic molecules. After all, while organic molecules (e.g., milk) are the kind of things with which one might fill a glass in order to quench one's thirst, it makes no sense to talk about a glass filled with language. The third definition claims that an I-language is something *represented* by the brain and that it is therefore presumably something that is neither itself a part, nor a state of the brain. But in in this way, one would actually define an I-language (the thing being represented) as something which is external to the representational medium of the brain itself. On this definition, it would seem that an I-language is itself something external to the 'mind-brain', so that it would actually be a kind of E-language. This can definitely not be squared with Chomsky's rejection of this latter notion.[1]

This leaves us with the second alternative: an I-language is an acquired functional state of (a part of) the brain. Or, to be more precise, an (I-)language is an acquired brain state S_L of a module of the brain - the 'language device', which state is described by grammar. This state S_L is developed by setting parameters of an initial state S_0, which is innate and which is described by Universal Grammar.

Thus, Chomsky's proposed successor concept of our ordinary notion of language takes language to be a causally effective state of the individual speaker's brain. This revised notion of language indeed lacks those features of our ordinary concept that Chomsky deemed objectionable. An I-language, for instance, has no social features, for it is essentially the property of an individual speaker. People cannot literally have the same I-language, just as they cannot literally have the same nose. Yet, people may of course have languages that are closely similar, or that

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[1] It is important to realize that at this point we are concerned with Chomsky's conception of what a language actually is, or with how to define a proper notion of language. Therefore the point I am making here should not be seen as criticism of the thesis that the brain, as a neuro-physical mechanism, can be said to represent something in a substantial sense of the word. My point is, that if we grant that the brain may represent something (language, history, the MIT buildings), and if we define language as something that is represented by the brain, then we have given a definition which is at best unenlightening about the nature of that which is represented (might it be a brain state that is represented by another brain state?) but that does strongly suggest that that which is represented (language) is something external to that which does the representing (the brain). Regarding the relation between language and the brain as one of *representing* would seem to be grist on the mill of someone embracing the notion of an E-language. For an E-language, as a non-internal, non-individual object, is typically the kind of thing that an individual might represent to himself or might internalize. I take it that Chomsky's intentions are better expressed by the claim that the brain state which a language user attains 'incorporates an I-language (it is the state of having [...] a particular I-language' (Chomsky (1986), p. 25)

belong to the same kind. If we take the concept of an I-language as fundamental, then presumably we would have to define the notion of a common language such as Spanish as a particular kind or type of I-language. Just as a 'Spanish nose' is the type of nose most common amongst Spanish people, so the Spanish language is presumably the state of the language device most common amongst Spaniards. But, Chomsky could point out, the fact that the notions 'Spanish nose' or 'Spanish language' are relative to a community of people, does not imply that noses or languages are intrinsically social items.[1]

On the other hand, this is not to deny the obvious fact that social factors such as education are amongst the causal antecedents of a fully developed I-language. It is merely to deny that those social factors have to be taken into account when it concerns the identification of the brain state they helped to produce. So, Chomsky might grant that I-languages are partly social products, since he is only committed to the claim that the 'production process' does not enter into the identification conditions of the finished product itself.

By the same token, the notion of an I-language is supposed to have no normative aspects of any kind. Only from a social perspective could one perhaps call a particular I-language 'the correct one', but such a judgement would have no basis in the I-language itself. Also, the relation between an I-language, and the speech behaviour of its possessor can only be a causal one. For a certain brain state may be causally involved in the production of a particular range of speech behaviour, but it makes no sense to ask whether, apart from this causal nexus, the speech behaviour is correct or incorrect relative to the brain state. As Chomsky puts it, someone 'follows the rules of *T* [his I-language] because that is the way he is constructed' (Chomsky (1995) p. 36).[2]

III. Knowledge of Language

In order to assess Chomsky's proposal we should be clear about what is at stake and what is not. It is beyond question that people have brains, and that certain parts of their brain are crucial to their command of language. Those parts might well be prestructured, and they will at the age of ten usually be in a different state than at

[1] Although we obviously need some social notion of language in order to be able to talk about a grammar or a dictionary of the English language, Chomsky does not attempt to define such a notion in terms of the concept of an I-language. Given the primacy of I-languages, there seems no other option but to define such a social notion of language in terms of the statistically most frequent kind of I-language. I have my doubts about the feasibility of such an attempt, but since questions about the possibility of deriving the concept of a common language from that of an I-language are clearly secondary to questions concerning the cogency of the notion of an I-language itself, I will disregard those problems.

[2] It should be noted that according to Chomsky, the I-language constitutes only one module of those parts of the mind/brain that are responsible for my linguistic performance. The I-language therefore causally underdetermines linguistic behaviour. Nevertheless, to the extent that the I-language contributes to linguistic performance, this contribution can not be anything but causal.

birth. What is rather at issue, as was explained in section I, is whether one might coherently replace the ordinary notion of language by a non- normative notion of language which roughly defines a person's language as such a particular state of a part of his brain.

As I explained above, the answer to this question will crucially depend on which features we deem essential to any notion of language. Pace Chomsky, it seems that the possibility of making a distinction between correct and incorrect uses of language is such a feature. However, taking this conviction as the starting point of our investigation would hardly make for an enlightening assessment of Chomsky's proposal. Therefore I want to address this question by looking at one of the aspects of language that Chomsky himself deems of utmost importance: *language is that which a speaker can have knowledge of*. Language is the object of our 'knowledge of language', and something, whatever it may be, of which it makes no sense to say that anyone ever knows it, certainly cannot be a *language*.[1] To Chomsky, it has always been a question of paramount importance what it actually is to know a language or to have such knowledge of language. So, when it comes to assessing Chomsky's claims about our ordinary notion of language and its proposed 'successor concept', instead of focussing on the disputed normative judgements that we ordinarily make about language, I will focus on the fact that language is something that can be known. For this, both Chomsky and we agree upon: any concept of language must allow one to say that a language is something that can be known, and a concept that does not allow one to say so, cannot be a concept of language. So, in order for Chomsky's notion of I-language to be an acceptable successor to our ordinary notion of language, one might at least demand that the concept of an I-language can in some sense account for this knowledge of language, without any implicit reliance on our ordinary normative conception of language.

Chomsky has his own particular conception of the nature of our knowledge of language.[2] We may summarize his view by means of the following four theses.

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[1] I will use the term "object of knowledge" in an ordinary, non-technical sense: the object of one's knowledge is simply what one knows when one knows something. Obviously, both when it comes to "knowing that (John is bald)" and to "knowing how (to build sand castles)" we can distinguish such an object of knowledge: in the first case this object is an event or proposition, in the second case it is the activity of building sand castles. In the context of the discussion below, it will not really be relevant whether we should regard "knowledge of language" as a knowing that or a know how. When, e.g., you know Polish, then I will say that *Polish* is the object of your knowledge, no matter whether this language is regarded as a system of skills, an abstract object, or some internal state. What will be very relevant, though, is that in all cases of knowledge it is the object of knowledge, that which one knows something about or that which one knows how to do, that provides us with a criterion that is independent from the alleged state of knowledge itself and that allows us to determine the substance of a claim to knowledge or to know how and to assess its validity.

[2] Though Chomsky usually talks straightforwardly about 'knowledge of language', he sometimes also invokes a neologism of his own making: that of 'cognizing'. (See for this notion e.g.,

* To know a language is not primarily a question of possessing certain skills, but rather of knowing a certain set of linguistic rules and construction principles.

* A person's knowledge of language is largely implicit.

* To have knowledge of language is to be in a particular brain state.

* A person's knowledge of language is the main causal determinant of his linguistic production.

All of these claims are controversial, but in what follows we will not dispute any of them. Despite epistemological conundrums arising from the idea that to know something is to be in a particular brain state, we will grant Chomsky such a notion of knowledge. Neither will we criticize the idea that a person can implicitly have knowledge of rules that he cannot possibly make explicit. Since our criticism will be purely internal, we will take these claims about knowledge of language as a given point of departure and will try to determine whether they can be squared with Chomsky's employment of the notion of I-language.

Granting Chomsky these claims about the nature of our knowledge of language, we must next ask ourselves what the object of such knowledge is. We have already seen that both language in the ordinary sense and language in the sense of E-language are dismissed by Chomsky as being unfit for a scientific treatment. So obviously, our knowledge of language in a scientifically salient sense can only be knowledge of I-language.

And indeed, as we might expect, when it comes to knowing a language L, Chomsky claims that:

> It is natural to take L [the language we have knowledge of] to be I-language ... Then, for [a person] H to know L is for H to have a certain I-language. The statements of a grammar are statements of the theory of mind about the I-language. (*KoL* 23)

Chomsky (1986) Chapter 4.) 'Cognizing' is Chomsky's successor concept for our ordinary notion of knowledge. It lends itself well to solving connundrums about implicit knowledge of language since it is so defined that, firstly, we cognize everything that ordinarily speaking we *do* know, and, secondly, it is meant to apply to such things as the rules of our language, which we *do not* ordinarily say that we know. The question whether to adopt the concept of knowledge or the concept of cognizing is in Chomsky's view merely a 'semantical question', and he points out that at least the new concept has the advantage of allowing us to say that we cognize language in the very same way as we cognize the ABC. I have my doubts about the cogency of this notion, and introducing it inevitably makes me think of someone who is in the dock on charges of counterfeiting money, and who suggests that we addopt a new concept 'munny', which covers both real and counterfeit money. It is 'merely a semantical question' - our culprit might continue - which of the two concepts we adopt, and the latter concept has the advantage of saving us legal trouble since the munny he has printed is every bit as genuine as the munny printed by the Bank of England.

However, the notion of cognizing is irrelevant to the question that occupies us. In order to see why, one has to remember the line of our argument. We are concerned with Chomsky's idea that the normative features of our ordinary concept of language are dispensible, and that we might therefore replace this ordinary notion with a sufficiently similar but 'cleaned up' notion of I-language, and it is this claim of 'sufficient similarity' that we are about to assess. If we were to assume from the outset that I-languages can only be 'cognized', and cannot possibly be said to be known, then we would already have decided the question of sufficient similarity against Chomsky. His position would then turn out to be a form of eliminativism, rather than a plea for a conceptual revision.

Since the only scientifically acceptable notion of language is that of I-language, knowledge of language as it concerns the linguist must have I-language as its object. And in contrast to statements about abstract entities such as E-languages, or pronouncements about 'language' in the muddled ordinary sense of the word, 'statements about I-language ... are true or false statements about something real and definite, about actual states of the mind/brain and their components' (Chomsky (1986), pp. 26-7). Thus, a particular person's knowledge of language is knowledge of the particular functional state of the part of his brain that constitutes his language device, and 'the statements of grammar are statements of the theory of mind about the I-language' (Ibid., p. 23) Given our problem-setting it is also important to notice that the notion 'knowledge of I-language' is supposed to be a reasonably close approximation of our ordinary notion of knowledge of language, just as the notion of an I-language is meant to improve on our ordinary concept of language without distorting it beyond all recognition. As Chomsky puts it:

> We may think of a person's knowledge of a particular language as a state of the mind, realized in some arrangement of physical mechanisms. We abstract the I-language as "what is known" by a person in this state of knowledge. ... The technical concept "knowledge of I-language" is a reasonably close approximation to what is informally called "knowledge of language". (Ibid., p. 40)[1]

We have now expounded Chomsky's notion of I-language and we have gone over some of his claims concerning our knowledge of language. As we saw, such knowledge of language must be conceived of as knowledge of I-language, and we have noted that, according to Chomsky, both the notion of I-language and the notion of knowledge of I-language can be regarded as conceptually acceptable

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[1] When looking for a precise definition of the notion of I-language it became apparent that Chomsky tends to give different, mutually exclusive explications of this term. This somewhat shifty use of words also leads to difficulties when it comes to what knowledge of language is. The quotation above provides an example, in as far as it might be read as saying that a person's knowledge of language-ordinarily-conceived is a brain state from which the I-language is abstracted. Such a reading, though natural, cannot be squared with the general drift of Chomsky's account. Firstly, it would give logical priority to the ordinary notion of language over that of an I-language. Secondly, it would be unnecessary to talk about 'knowledge of I-language' - rather, it would have to be said that one has knowledge of language-ordinarily-conceived by having an I-language of which, in its turn, one does not need to have knowledge in order to have knowledge of language. Thirdly, regarding I-language as something 'which is abstracted from' a brain state would make I-languages theoretical entities rather than functional properties of the actual mind/brain. ('The typical form of a tree' is something abstracted from actual trees by some observer, and might therefore be something which most trees do not actually instantiate. 'The steering installation of a car', on the other hand, is not something abstracted from actual cars, but a part of each and every working car which is described at a more or less abstract, functional level.) Even worse confusions can be found at Chomsky (1986), p.23, where it is claimed that we should analyze 'H knows language L' as a relation R holding 'between H and an *abstract entity L*', and that, since having knowledge is being in a certain brain state, 'statements about R and L belong to the theory of mind'. This view would make any statement about any object of knowledge a part of the theory of mind, and thus collapses into a weird kind of idealism. When it comes to language, I think that the most coherent account of Chomsky's position requires us to regard an I-language not as an abstracted, nor as an abstract entity, but as a functional entity, logically on a par with the car's steering installation.

improvements on our messy ordinary notions.

Thus the stage is set for a critical assessment of Chomsky's account. According to Chomsky, to have an I-language is to possess a particular brain state, and having knowledge of I-language also consists in being in a particular brain state. Departing from this observation, I will now proceed to construct a dilemma by pressing one single question only: is the state of *having an I-language* identical with the state of *knowing an I-language*, or are these two different states? Chomsky does not go deeply into this question, but we might take a first clue from the passage on knowledge of language quoted above. There it was said that: 'It is natural to take L [the language we have knowledge of] to be I-language ... Then, for [a person] H to know L is for H to have a certain I-language.' (Chomsky (1986), p. 23)

This strongly suggests that Chomsky regards both states - the state of having knowledge of I-language and the state that is known (the I-language itself) - as being in fact one and the same state. Now, such an equivocation might strike us as rather odd, since we normally distinguish sharply between knowledge and its object. So, perhaps we should regard Chomsky's identification of both states as a slip of the pen and opt for a more usual model for how both states are related. Let me first give you some examples in order to make this ordinary distinction between knowledge and its object unequivocally clear. Then we will see whether, given Chomsky's views on knowledge of language, we can indeed tailor knowledge of I-language on this ordinary mold.

We have granted Chomsky that to have knowledge of something is to be in a brain state. We therefore assume that brain states can have representational properties and we take it that to have knowledge of some particular thing *a*, is to have a certain brain state that represents *a*. On this view, having knowledge of, e.g., American history, is to have a certain brain state that can be seen as a representation of certain past events. In such a case, there is an obvious distinction between the brain state embodying the knowledge and the historical events represented by it. Because of this distinction, these events can function as an independent criterion by which it can be judged whether, and to what extent, the person in possession of the brain state actually has knowledge of American history or merely thinks that he has. Similar things would apply if, *pace* Chomsky, we were to adopt a notion of E-language and would see language as, for example, a social phenomenon. In that case, we might still regard a person's knowledge of E-language as a brain state possessed by that person, but the object of such knowledge, the E-language itself, would be a public phenomenon that is independent from this state of knowledge and that could provide the objective criteria for assessing whether the brain state can actually be qualified as a state of knowledge.

Now, one might of course also have knowledge of brain states themselves. I will elaborate somewhat on a suitable example of such a case, because it may shed light on Chomsky's account of knowledge of I-language. Suppose I am a functionalist psycholinguist studying the effects of brain haemorrhage on the cluster of mechanisms that are called the "centre of Broca" and that are involved in one's grammati-

cal competence. In that case, I may know the functional state of the centre of Broca when it is unimpaired and working properly, and I may try to find out in what respects that state is changed in patients suffering from particular forms of aphasia. We may conceive of this knowledge along Chomskian lines as being itself a brain state. Having knowledge of the centre of Broca then amounts to having a brain state which is a representation of the ordinary functional state of a person's centre of Broca. Granted that I have such knowledge, I have a brain state which represents a brain state. In fact, since I myself am an ordinary, unimpaired user of language, and I therefore have a centre of Broca which is in the ordinary functional state of which I have expert knowledge, I have a brain state representing one of my own brain states.

Let us call the common functional state of the centre of Broca 'Bf'. This state is what I, as a psycholinguist, have knowledge of. Let us call the state of having this knowledge 'Kf'. The brain state Kf represents Bf, which is also a brain state. Now, it is important to notice that Kf and Bf, though both brain states, are different brain states. Firstly, the role of those two brain states in my total cognitive make-up is very different. Bf is the state which I share with all my normal fellow speakers and which is causally effective when it comes to my production of grammatical sentences. Kf is the state which most of my fellow speakers will lack, but which I share with most of my fellow psycholinguists, and which is causally effective when it comes to treating patients suffering from aphasia or when giving lectures in psycholinguistics. This distinction in role, secondly, is reflected by the way in which I have acquired these two states. Bf, the state of my centre of Broca, I have acquired when as a child I learnt language. Kf, my knowledge about the ordinary functional state of the centre of Broca, was acquired by following university courses and perhaps by conducting empirical investigations. Thirdly, the fact that there is a distinction between the state of knowledge and the state known is a precondition for claiming that Kf instantiates knowledge in the first place. After all, we described Kf as representing Bf, and we would certainly want to allow for the possibility that Kf only partly represents Bf, or that it might even misrepresent Bf in certain respects. Even if, as an expert on the centre of Broca, I were conceited enough to believe my knowledge of Bf is complete and perfect, I would still want this to be a substantial feature of my representation, and not something which was gratuitously due to the coinciding of the representation and the thing represented. This, however, requires that Bf is distinct from Kf so that it may function as an independent criterion for judging whether, and to what extent Kf in fact embodies *knowledge*.

So, in this example of a case where one has knowledge of one of one's own brain states we are dealing here with two different states. The first one, the functional state of the centre of Broca, is causally relevant to one's linguistic performance and was acquired by learning language. The second state, instantiating knowledge of the first one, is relevant to, e.g., the medical treatment of aphasics and was acquired by painful study. Furthermore, the saliency of the claim that this second state faithfully represents the first one presupposes that there is a distinction between the state that represents and the state represented.

Let us now turn our attention to knowledge of language, conceived along Chomskyan lines, and see whether it fits this ordinary mold. The first state we are dealing with is that of the 'I-language'; the acquired functional state of a speaker's language device which we might call 'I'. (In fact, the state of the centre of Broca discussed above is a constituent of this more complex state of the whole language device.) The second state would be the one embodying knowledge of this I-language. We will call it 'Ki'. Now it might be thought that this present case parallels the one discussed above in as far as the knowledge possessed and the object of this knowledge are two different states. On that assumption, it is clear what we mean when we call Ki a state of knowledge: it is a state of knowledge to the extent that it truthfully represent the separate state I.

Nevertheless, this idea runs into difficulties as soon as we try to be specific about the causal relevance of both these states and the way in which they are acquired. As far as the I-language is concerned, there are no serious problems. This state is acquired under the influence of the external stimuli we received when learning language as a child, and presently it is the causal basis of our ordinary linguistic performance. Yet, when we regard the state of knowing such an I-language as a second, distinct state, it is quite unfathomable how it was ever acquired and what causal role it might play. In order to see why, one might bring the previous example to mind. Where the state of the centre of Broca was acquired during childhood, the knowledge of that state was acquired by attending university classes and conducting empirical investigations. Yet, the knowledge of I-language that every speaker is supposed to possess, is certainly not acquired by such academic means. In fact, it is rather mysterious how it could be acquired at all. Secondly, and more importantly, it is rather difficult to see what bearing this knowledge of I-language could have on one's linguistic performance. In the case mentioned above, it was the state of the centre of Broca that was relevant to one's grammatical performance. Here, the I-language plays a similar role. But knowledge of the centre of Broca, though necessary for treating aphasics, is irrelevant to whatever role the centre of Broca itself might play in linguistic performance, and the lack of such expert knowledge in no way impairs one's actual grammatical performance. By the same token, if knowledge of language were to be a state different from the I-language, it would be perfectly possible for a person to have an I-language and to manifest this in his linguistic performance, while still utterly lacking any knowledge of this I-language, just as he might exercise his centre of Broca without having any knowledge of its construction.[1] So, it is hard to see what causal role our knowledge of I-language is

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[1] To put things formally, when we look at the previous example where $\lambda x\ Bx$ is the state of Broca, we would certainly want to hold that $\lambda x\ Bx$ is not identical with $\lambda x\ K[x, \lambda x\ Bx]$. If they were, then anyone lacking my psycholinguistic knowledge would would also lack the property λx Bx, and would therefore probably qualify as aphatic. But one is not aphatic because one does not *know* the ordinary state of Broca, one is aphatic because one does not *have* that state. Equating those two properties would make the knowledge itself the causally relevant factor of linguistic performance. Yet, in the case of knowledge of language as Chomsky conceives of it, that is *exactly*

to play if it is a state different from the I-language.

This allows us to formulate the first horn of our dilemma.

(1) When the state of *having an I-language* and the state of *knowing an I-language* are two different states, then:

a. there is in principle an independent criterion to give substance to the knowledge claim, but,

b. it is quite mysterious how one has acquired one's knowledge of language,

c. knowledge of language is of no (causal) relevance to one's production of language.

Now, this outcome is obviously not in accord with Chomsky's claims on behalf of our knowledge of language. As was pointed out above, knowledge of language is regarded by Chomsky as the most important causal determinant of our linguistic performance. For that reason, the attempt to construe I-language and knowledge of I-language as two separate states cannot be squared with Chomsky's claims.

Thus, we must look into the second possibility and take Chomsky at his word when he speaks indiscriminately about the state of *having* or *knowing* an I-language. In that case, a mature human being has a language device that is in a particular state, this state is his I-language or his knowledge of (I-)language. One knows an I-language exactly to the extent that one has one, and by the same token, your knowledge of your I-language becomes manifest in your exercising your I-language, and any exercise of your I-language is a manifestation of your knowledge of it.[1]

Obviously, when we take the state of knowing an I-language to be identical with the state of having an I-language the problems about the acquisition and causal relevance of such 'knowledge' are solved immediately. After all, we have already seen how to answer these questions in regard to the I-language and on the assumption that both states are identical these answers now simply carry over to our knowledge of language.

Yet, in this case a different problem arises. To identify the state of knowledge with the thing known effectively pre-empts the possibility of there being a standard which this knowledge has to meet in order qualify as knowledge in the first place.[2]

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the role which this knowledge has to play. It is my knowledge of language that is one of the most important causal determinants of my linguistic behaviour, and without this knowledge, the behaviour would not be possible. For that reason, pace the case of Broca, the state of knowing an I-language and that of having an I-language have to be one and the same state, or knowledge of language cannot have the required causal role.

[1] This should not be understood as claiming that each and every linguistic performance testifies to one's knowledge of I-language. After all, there are other modules of the mind/brain that enter into actual performance and which might interfere with our I-language. Yet, where there is no such interference, and performance is purely the result of exercising the I-language, in that case performance is also automatically a manifestation of knowledge.

[2] One might think that the problem to which I am drawing attention has to do with the fact that the statement 'John has an I-language' predicates a property of John, while the statement 'John has knowledge of an I-language' ascribes a relation to him. Since there is a relational property corre-

Since the object one knows - the I-language, and the state of knowing it are in this case seen as identical, a change in one's 'knowledge' is by definition also a change in one's I-language and if one's I-language were to change, one's 'knowledge of I-language' would by definition automatically change accordingly. One knows an I-language exactly to the extent that one has one: what you know is what you have got - no more, no less - and what you have got, you *ipso facto* know. Thus one's 'knowledge of language' is by definition - and therefore gratuitously - complete and perfect.

This explication of knowledge of language is peculiar, to say the least. In order to see why, one might compare Chomsky's account of I-language to an account of knowledge of an E-language that also takes this knowledge to be a brain state, as does Chomsky. Such a comparison also will make clear that the problems with Chomsky's account do not result from his notion of knowledge-as-a-brain-state.

In the case of knowledge of E-language, the object of a person's knowledge would be a public language, and not one of that person's own brain states. In that case, one might of course still conceive of the speaker as having a language device, which has developed into a certain state, and one could hold that this state might structurally be characterized by a grammar. Furthermore, it could be claimed that this state of the language device constitutes knowledge of (E-) language, *if* indeed the grammar characterizing the speaker's internal state matches the grammar of the E-language. In as far as the structure of the individual's language device does not reflect the grammatical structure of the public E-language, the internal state does not constitute knowledge. Sticking to Chomsky's terminology of I- and E-language, one might now say that by having an I-language, a person can have knowledge of an E-language. Thus, in this case 'having an I-language' and 'having knowledge of language' might also be one and the same state. Yet, the crucial difference with Chomsky is that 'knowledge of language' is here 'knowledge of E-language', and the structure of the public E-language, which is prior and independent of single person's I-language, determines whether his I-language indeed constitutes knowl-

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sponding to every relation, and Chomsky's conception of knowledge as a brain state should best be construed in terms of relational properties anyway, such an objection would be beside the mark. However, the feature of Chomsky's account that I take to be problematic does not depend on the distinction between predicates and relations, and could just as well be formulated in terms of (relational) properties of people or brains. Let us follow Chomsky in taking knowledge and I-language to be states of the brain. We may then regard an I-language as a particular functional property of a person's brain, and that John (or rather his brain) has this property might be formulated as: $\lambda x\ Ix$ (John's brain). John having knowledge of an I-language (or rather, his brain being in the state of having such knowledge) could then be formulated as: $\lambda x\ K[x, \lambda x\ Ix]$ (John's brain). Thus, an I-language is a complex functional state, and John's brain is characterized by the state of having knowledge of this former state. The peculiar feature to which I want to draw attention, is that those two states - of having an I-language and having knowledge of an I-language, are identical, and that thus $\lambda x\ K[x, \lambda x\ Ix] = \lambda x\ Ix$ and that $\lambda x\ K[x, \lambda x\ Ix]$ (John's brain) is equivalent with $\lambda x\ Ix$ (John's brain). Formally, there is nothing wrong with this equivocation. Yet, as I will argue, the predicate 'K' cannot stand for 'knows' in any acceptable sense.

edge of E-language or not.[1]

In this case, knowledge of E-language is also a brain state, but there is still a difference between the thing known and the state of knowing it. For that reason there can be a criterion - the actual grammar of the E-language - that is external to the state of having knowledge and that determines whether the state actually *does* constitute knowledge or not. The existence of such a genuine criterion is crucial to our notion of knowledge as a true or correct reflection of the object known and presupposes that we can make a logical distinction between the state of having knowledge, and the thing known. A mentalist account of knowledge of E-language can maintain this distinction. If the grammar embodied by the state of knowledge (the grammar of someone's I-language) matches the grammar of the public language (the E-language), then we can say that this person indeed knows the E-language. If those two do not match, then we might say that the person does not know the E-language, or that he knows it imperfectly. So in this case, we also regard the possession of knowledge as the possession of a particular brain state. But because the object of this knowledge is independent from this state of knowledge, we have a criterion for saying that this state of knowledge represents, misrepresents or partially represents something, and we can saliently talk about an eventual increase or decrease of such knowledge.

However, when we identify the state of knowledge with that which is being known - as we would do when we identify having an I-language with knowing an I-language - then we are banned from saying such things about one's knowledge of language. For identifying the state of knowledge with the thing known effectively pre-empts the possibility of there being a standard which this knowledge has to meet in order qualify as knowledge in the first place. Since the object one knows - the I-language, and the state of knowing it are in this case identical, a change in one's 'knowledge' is by definition also a change in one's I-language and vise versa. One's 'knowledge of language' is by definition - and therefore gratuitously - complete and perfect. Take, for example, a child who - normally speaking - overgeneralizes the construction of past tense at some time t_1, and who stops doing so at some time t_2. This child can now no longer be said to have increased or perfected his knowledge of language. For regarded from the present perspective where we identify the state of knowledge with the thing known, the child had a language I_1 at t_1, and a different language I_2 at t_2, and of both languages he had perfect and complete knowledge. After all, he had those I-languages at those times, and having an I-language is knowing one. The child's knowledge of language cannot increase or be perfected, nor can he lack knowledge - he can only change from a state of perfect knowledge of one (I-)language, to a state of equally perfect knowledge of a different one.

Now, one might try to raise an objection here. It might be pointed out that the second I-language is an extension of the first one, and that in that sense the knowl-

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[1] I do actually think that such an internalist account of our knowledge of a public language will also run into unsurmountable difficulties. Yet, those difficulties are unrelated to the present problem about 'knowledge of an I-language'.

edge of the child has also extended. Well, one might indeed *say* this, as long as it is not construed as the claim that the child has a better or more complete knowledge of language. That would require the existence of some external standard by which the child's knowledge could be measured, which is exactly what we lack in this case. In order to see how little substance it has to say that the child's knowledge 'increases', one might think of the following case. Suppose that we were willing to say that a tree, by the very fact of *having* roots, branches and leaves, also has *knowledge* of its roots, branches and leaves . Growing new branches in spring and shedding its leaves in autumn, the tree thereby changes its knowledge of its branches and leaves. By increasing and decreasing its form and structure, it 'increases' and 'decreases' its knowledge. Yet, since having a structure is knowing it, the tree's knowledge at each point in time is selfcontained and complete. Our knowledge of our I-language must be as 'perfect' as the tree's self-knowledge.

So, the identification of having an I-language with knowing an I-language leads to a situation where a speaker always, gratuitously has "knowledge of language". But where one cannot possibly be said to lack knowledge of language, one cannot really possess it in any salient sense either. Actually, such a use of the word "knowledge" bears no conceivable relation to our ordinary employment of that term and Chomsky's previous claim that "the technical concept 'knowledge of I-language' is a reasonably close approximation to what is informally called 'knowledge of language'" would in this case be clearly violated.[1]

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[1] The reader might detect a somewhat 'Wittgensteinian' ring to the objection that is raised here. And indeed, Chomsky's problems concerning knowledge of I-language have an obvious similarity with the difficulties that Wittgenstein raises with regard to the notion of a private language. In the so-called 'private language argument' Wittgenstein holds that there cannot be 'a language which only I can understand'. One of the main reasons for this impossibility is that with regard to such a 'language' there is no standard for the correct application of expressions that is independent from my own impression about the correctness of such applications. In other words, if I have the impression that I am applying my private language expression correctly, then there is no independent standard beyond this very impression that might confirm or belie it. Thus, there is no room for the distinction between thinking that you use an expression correctly, and actually using it correctly. If you think you are doing it right, then *ipso facto* you are. But this merely shows that for such 'expressions' there is no standard for using them with a particular meaning and that therefore they do not really mean anything to start with. A similar problem confronts the idea that we can have knowledge of I-language. Given that the state of having knowledge of I-language is identical to the state of having an I-language, there is no longer room for a standard by which one might differentiate between actually having such knowledge, and not (yet) having it. In absence of such a criterion, the notion of knowledge seems to lose all content.

This similarity with Wittgenstein's argument, though, is neither intentional, nor perfect. One dissimilarity is of course that Wittgenstein takes as his target a language 'which I alone can understand', while Chomsky's I-languages are not meant to be private in this strong sense. People who are in possession of I-languages that are of the same type, Chomsky supposes, will have no difficulty understanding each other. Rather than being a private language, an I-language conforms to what Kripke calls 'the private model of language' - it is a language constituted of facts about an individual speaker in isolation. Secondly, my argument does not directly concern the possibility of such I-languages, but rather what it is to have knowledge of such a language if this knowledge is supposed to do what Chomsky says that it does. Yet, when it comes to such knowledge, the prob-

Thus we arrive at the second horn of our dilemma:

(2) When the state of *having an I-language* and the state of *knowing an I-language* is one and the same state, then:

a. there are no problems regarding the acquisition and causal role of this state, but,

b. there are no longer any criteria which this "state of knowledge" would have to meet in order to qualify as knowledge in the first place, and thus,

c. our ordinary concept of knowledge is inapplicable here or gets distorted beyond all recognition.[1]

So, if knowledge of language is regarded as knowledge of I-language we are faced with an awkward dilemma. Either we regard the state of knowledge of I-language and the state of having an I-language as two different brain states. In that case, we employ a substantial notion of knowledge since we have a criterion for determining what it is to have such knowledge, and the question whether a particular person knows his I-language is not empty. The notion of I-language, on this construal, is defensibly an acceptable revision of our ordinary notion of language. Still, this option is of no use to Chomsky. As I argued above by means of the Broca-example, knowledge of I-language conceived in this way is quite irrelevant to the actual production of language. Just as a person might be grammatically competent without having knowledge of the functional state of his centre of Broca, so one might in general be a competent language user (due to one's possession of an I-language) without having any knowledge of I-language. As far as the causal determinants of linguistic competence are concerned, knowledge of language, construed this way, drops out of the account. That is obviously not in line with Chomsky's intentions. To Chomsky, the notion 'knowledge of language' is of crucial importance precisely because he sees our knowledge of language as underlying our linguistic competence.

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lems facing us are very similar to those facing the speaker of a private language.
However, this similarity might give rise to some concern about my argument. After all, when embarking on this discussion of Chomsky's concept of an I-language I assured the reader that I would do my utmost not to beg the question against Chomsky by assuming that *any* feasible notion of language would have to be normative. However, Wittgenstein's objections against a private language make a crucial use of normative considerations. If a parallel argument is raised in regard to knowledge of language, then it might be thought that this testifies to a violation of the intentions I previously expressed. I do not think that it does. I have, for the sake of argument, followed Chomsky in taking I-languages as being free of normative features. What the possibility of raising Wittgensteinian arguments against the concept of knowledge of I-language shows, is that Chomsky himself, by invoking the notion of knowledge, inadvertently introduces a notion which is just as normative as our ordinary notion of language is. Even though Chomsky has rid himself of normativity by devising the notion of an I-language, normative features and considerations get reintroduced when one starts discussing *knowledge* of I-language.

[1] It is clear that nothing would be gained at this point by giving up the notion of knowledge and introducing a notion of "cognizing" which is such that an I-language or a brain state is "cognized" simply by possessing it. Conclusion c. would then still stand, and would still refute Chomsky's claim that the notion of an I-language is an acceptable revision of our ordinary notion of language.

This leaves us with the other horn of the dilemma, the position that Chomsky embraced and that identifies the state of knowing an I-language with the state of having an I-language. But such an identification implies that we can no longer talk about knowledge in any acceptable sense. The possibility of having knowledge requires the possibility of a genuine standard to be met. Such a standard, which must to some extent be logically independent from the state of having knowledge itself, is in principle ruled out on this second construal of knowledge of I-language. On this second horn, the idea that we have knowledge of I-language gets robbed of any content whatsoever.

This signals the demise of Chomsky's attempt to meet the Kripke's challenge by presenting us with a non-normative, scientific revision of our ordinary normative notion of language. For either our knowledge of such a 'language' cannot possibly fulfil the role that Chomsky assigns to it, or an I-language is something which cannot possibly be known in any acceptable sense of the word and therefore cannot with any plausibility qualify as a notion of language at all.

Now, since it turned out that the notion of 'knowledge of language' is hardly cogent when construed as knowledge of I-language, it might well be asked whether it is indeed Chomsky's intention consistently to propagate such a conception of knowledge of language. I do not think that it is. Surely, Chomsky explicitly assures us that any notion of language is scientifically obsolete unless it takes language to be I-language, and he assures us that our knowledge of language is knowledge of I-language and consists in our possession of an I-language. Yet, it is easy to find examples where Chomsky talks about instances of 'knowledge of language' that cannot plausibly be regarded as knowledge of I-language.

A telling example can be found in *Knowledge of Language* pages 263-4, where Chomsky draws a comparison between propositional knowledge of language and propositional perceptual knowledge:

> Suppose we are presented with a plane figure perpendicular to the line of vision, rotating until it disappears. Suppose that under a certain range of conditions, we take it to be a rotating plane figure, not a plane figure shrinking to a line. Given a series of visual presentations, we perceive a rigid object moving through space, not an object changing its shape. The judgments we dismiss are consistent with the evidence presented, but they are rejected by our system of interpretation of objects in visual space. If the judgments we make are correct, then we have true knowledge, propositional knowledge that the plane figure is rotating, that a cube is moving through space, and so forth. Similarly, we have propositional knowledge that sentences mean so-and-so.

But of course we do not, at least not if this propositional knowledge concerns the meaning which sentences have in one's I-language. The crucial difference between the perceptual case and the case of knowing one's I-language resides in the proviso 'if the judgments we make are correct, then we have true knowledge'. In the perceptual case, this works out as follows. We perceive a certain object in the world and we have a certain perceptual apparatus which leads us to form a particular judgement, e.g. 'that is a cube'. Depending on whether the object *indeed* is a cube, we may then claim to know that it is a cube. This latter step is obsolete when it concerns knowledge of an I-language. When Humpty Dumpty hears Alice say the

word 'glory', he may put this verbal input through the apparatus of his I-language, which will lead him to the judgement 'glory means 'a nice knock-down argument''.[1] And indeed, in his I-language it does, and he well knows that it does. No further check of this judgement is either necessary or possible. Being a deliverance of Humpty Dumpty's I-language, the judgement is automatically an instance of Humpty Dumpty's knowledge of language. Any foolhardy insistence that 'glory does not mean that', Humpty Dumpty could counter by observing that this denial depends on adopting a 'useless, perhaps quite senseless concept of language', that 'is of no interest and has no status'[2] - indeed, 'it all depends on who is to be master'.

I do not want to suggest that Chomsky is intent on playing Humpty Dumpty in the passage above. Yet, the only way in which he can avoid doing so, is to allow for the possibility of checking whether the judgement derived is indeed correct, and thus by withdrawing the claim that the object of this possible 'item of knowledge' is one's I-language. In as far as the quoted passage suggests that Chomsky indeed accepts the possibility of such a check, it shows that Chomsky implicitly regards knowledge of language as knowledge of a public language, his explicit claims to the contrary notwithstanding.

This suspicion might be strengthened by looking at a second passage in which Chomsky discusses particular instances of knowledge of language. When discussing the possibility and cogency of ascribing implicit knowledge of language to someone, Chomsky gives the following example in *Knowledge of Language* page 266:

> Suppose that R is a rule of English grammar that states that verbs cannot be separated from their objects by adverbs, so that in accordance with R, the sentence "I read often the newspaper of Sunday" is unacceptable ... Suppose that John, a speaker of English, follows the rule, but Pierre, who is learning English, does not and regularly produces and accepts the sentences R marks unacceptable, as in his native French. What we would say, in this case, is that John knows that verbs cannot be separated from their objects by adverbs, but Pierre has not yet learned this and does not know it. Thus John knows that R, but Pierre does not know that R.

It is such ascriptions of (implicit) knowledge of language that Chomsky wants to account for in terms of the 'state of knowledge' (the I-languages) which John and Pierre possess. And indeed, I agree with Chomsky that we would ordinarily say everything that Chomsky claims we would say about Pierre and John; John knows, and Pierre does not yet know, that in English verbs cannot be separated from their objects by adverbs.

But is this knowledge a knowledge of I-language? Could the attributions of knowledge to John and Pierre that Chomsky wants to explain even make sense if we only have the notion of I-language to go by? Here one would do well to remember, as was explained in section II of this chapter, that one of Chomsky's reasons for holding our ordinary concept of language to be unacceptable for scientific pur-

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[1] Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*, Chapter 6.

[2] As Chomsky remarks (Chomsky (1990), p. 513) about the very notion of a public (E-language), which might provide us with a criterion to put Humpty Dumpty in the wrong.

poses, was that it had certain 'normative-teleological features'. The desire to discard such features was one of the reasons for introducing the notion of an I-language in the first place. This is what Chomsky claims:

> The commonsense notion also has a normative-teleological element that is eliminated from scientific approaches. ... Consider the way we describe a child or a foreigner learning English. We have no way of referring directly to what that person knows: It is not English, nor is it some other language that resembles English. We do not, for example, say that the person has a perfect knowledge of some language L, similar to English but still different from it. What we say is that the child or foreigner has a "partial knowledge of English," or is "on his or her way" toward acquiring knowledge of English, and if they reach the goal, they will then know English. Whether or not a coherent account can be given of this aspect of the commonsense terminology, it does not seem to be one that has any role in an eventual science of language" (Ibid., p. 16)

I have quoted the passage almost in its entirety because of its blatant inconsistency with the previous passage. The very 'normative-teleological' features which in the latter passage are claimed to be of no interest to a science of language, (John knowing, and Pierre not yet knowing the rule R), are in the former passage presented as the very things which a science of language would have to account for. 'If these are not instances of knowledge' Chomsky remarks, 'it is hard to see what is' (Ibid., p. 266). Yet, those are not instances of John's or Pierre's knowledge of I-language, nor could they be explained purely in terms of I-language. If we trade in our ordinary notion of language for that of an I-language, and regard such an I-language as the object of John's and Pierre's knowledge, as Chomsky had previously urged us to do, then we would have to describe the knowledge which John and Pierre possess quite differently. Taking it that the knowledge of John and Pierre has as its object their respective I-languages, one might still say that John knows that verbs *cannot* be separated from their objects by adverbs, and that the sentence 'I read often the newspaper of Sunday' is unacceptable, but Pierre's knowledge could better be described by saying that he knows that verbs *can* be separated from their objects by adverbs, and that the sentence 'I read often the newspaper of Sunday' is perfectly acceptable. If knowledge of language is knowledge of I-language, there is no contradiction here since John and Pierre both have their own I-language. And if we want to say something about what John and Pierre do *not* know, we can with equal reason claim that John does not know that verbs *can* be separated from their objects by adverbs, and that Pierre does not know that verbs *cannot* be separated from their objects by adverbs.

Of course such claims would be bizarre and pointless. Yet, they follow directly from the proposition that knowledge of language is knowledge of I-language and that such knowledge consists in the very possession of an I-language. In that case what one knows is what one has got, and what one has not got is what one does not know. I do not take such a notion of 'knowledge of I-language' to be feasible, and neither, I suspect, does Chomsky. Despite explicit assurances that only the notion of an I-language is scientifically acceptable and that knowledge of language should be regarded as knowledge of I-language, we see that Chomsky shuns the absurdities implied by such a notion of knowledge of language and discusses what is in fact knowledge of ordinary, public language.

This, I think, supports our findings above. While constructing our dilemma, we saw that Chomsky endorses the view that having an I-language (a language device which has attained a certain state) and having knowledge of I-language come down to the same thing. The very fact that one has in some way attuned one's language device, guarantees that one has 'knowledge' of the I-language 'incorporated' by that device. In other words, it is logically impossible that the I-language or language device contains any rule, principle or 'parameter setting' which does not constitute knowledge (of I-language). As it was argued, this effectively short-circuits our notion of knowledge of language, since there is no longer any possibility of a speaker not knowing, or not yet knowing a particular grammatical rule of his language. This objection has nothing to do with the question whether a speaker's knowledge of language can be irrevocably implicit. The point is that when it is logically impossible to *lack* such knowledge of language - be it implicit or explicit - that then we cannot sensibly claim to *possess* it either.

The remarks quoted above show that Chomsky as a working linguist, rather than as a philosopher, implicitly acknowledges this point. Where Chomsky stops theorizing about the object of our knowledge of language and actually discusses instances of it, this knowledge turns out to be the good, old knowledge of a public language, rather than 'knowledge of I-language'.

Therefore, when it comes to our knowledge of language, it is nothing less but disastrous to replace our notion of a shared, public language by that of an I-language. An 'I-language' is simply not what we can have knowledge of when we have knowledge of language.

V. An Interim Assessment

We must now ask ourselves whether those problems about knowledge of language allow us to draw general conclusions about Chomsky's attempt to improve upon our ordinary notion of language by means of his notion of an I-language. Before generalizing the previous discussion, it might be helpful to recapitulate our argument as it developed from chapter one onwards.

In the first two chapters we expounded Kripke's paradox, and argued that it could neither be met by a straight solution, nor by the sceptical solution that Kripke himself endorses. Yet, we cannot live with this paradox either and therefore we have no other option but to regard it as a *reductio* of one of the premisses generating it. Now, Kripke arrived at his paradox by taking language to be intrinsically normative, while at the same time demanding a reductive explication of our linguistic competence. Accordingly, one way of trying to escape from the paradox is by denying that language is *intrinsically* normative, or, in other words, by arguing that there is a viable notion of language in which those normative features are discarded. This, we saw, was Chomsky's claim. Chomsky argued that our ordinary notion of language, because of its normative features, should be abolished in favour of the non-normative notion of an I-language - the state of a speaker's language device,

described at a certain level of abstraction. If this notion of language is indeed acceptable, it would offer a way out of Kripke's sceptical predicament. A person's language, conceived in this way, does not involve any social or normative dimensions and, for that reason, Kripke would no longer have reason to press his claim that an account of the 'facts about language' must also account for the normative conditionals. 'Language', in this revised, non-normative sense, would be the proper object for any neuro-physiologist to study.[1] The facts about language that Kripke demands from us, would then be facts about the brain, described at some level of abstraction.

In order to put Chomsky's proposal to the test, I have tried not to beg the question whether language is intrinsically normative. That is, I have refrained from arguing that an I-language fails to have the normative features that any notion of language, in order to be a notion of *language*, should have.[2] Instead, I have provisionally granted Chomsky his notion of an I-language, and I have pressed the question whether this concept of an I-language can indeed play the role that it has been assigned within Chomsky's account.

One of the most important things that the notion of an I-language should enable us to do, according to Chomsky, is to account for the 'knowledge of language' that underlies a speaker's use of language. Yet, all Chomsky's assurances notwithstanding, I-language can simply not be the object of the knowledge we have of language in the way Chomsky envisions. For if the state of knowing an I-language is distinct from the state of having an I-language, then such knowledge is not the relevant causal factor in our production and understanding of language. While, on the other hand, if we equate 'knowledge of language' with 'possession of an I-language', then there is no longer an object of knowledge that is logically independent from our 'state of knowing', and therefore there is no criterion which our knowledge should meet in order to qualify as *knowledge* in the first place. Furthermore, it became clear from Chomsky's own words that in practice he agrees with this assessment of I-language. When discussing instances of knowledge of language - as in the case of Pierre and John, Chomsky implicitly assumes the existence of a public norm by which it can be assessed whether a person has such knowledge, or whether he, as yet, lacks it. In other words, it is the fallible and possibly imperfect knowledge of a public language that Chomsky is discussing in such cases, not the trivially perfect and complete 'knowledge' of one's alleged I-language. When it comes to fitting Chomsky's own bill, the 'improved' notion of language therefore proves to be quite a stumbling-block, since the thesis that knowledge of language underlies (competent) use of language is incompatible with the claim that knowledge of language is knowledge of I-language. We may thus conclude that the notion of an I-language fails to meet Chomsky's own restrictions on an acceptable notion of language.

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[1] Or so it is claimed by Chomsky. In the remainder of this chapter I will in fact argue that this conception of language effectively preempts any substantial neuro-linguistic research program.

[2] See for an example of this a line of arguing Baker and Hacker (1984) Chs. 8 and 9.

This result is in itself noteworthy. It both reveals a difficulty internal to Chomsky's influential approach towards language, and it rules out *one* attempt to deal with Kripke's paradox by discarding the normativity condition in favour of the reduction condition. However, by focussing only on Chomsky's actual account, the discussion has not yet reached the level of generality required to rule out the 'conceptual innovation-response' to Kripke's paradox all together. In order to reach such a general assessment, we have to ask ourselves whether the problems concerning knowledge of language are typical for Chomsky's notion of an I-language, or whether they will also arise for other non-normative concepts of language. In other words, we must ask whether one could answer Kripke's paradox by devising a 'scientifically improved' notion of language that is similar to Chomsky's concept of an I-language in that it lacks any normative features, and that nevertheless allows us to account for our knowledge of language.

The answer, I think, must be a straightforward 'no', but in order to see why, we have to be very specific about what exactly it is that we are after. Let me explain. The problem facing us is Kripke's suggestion that there are no facts about an individual speaker that constitute his having a language or his meaning something by his words. The position under investigation holds that this problem is merely due to our pre-scientific, normative notions of meaning and language, and it claims that by introducing scientific concepts that lack those normative 'connotations' we may be able to give a reductive solution to Kripke's problem.

Now when it *just* comes to devising a non-normative notion of language, there are, logically speaking, two ways in which one might proceed. Bearing Chomsky's distinction between I-language and E-language in mind, we might either regard language as something that is basically and exhaustively the property of a single individual, or we might regard it as a non-individual or 'external' phenomenon. Accordingly, when one wants to improve on Chomsky's non-normative notion of language, one might proceed in two ways. Firstly, one might think that Chomsky's internalist approach is right in principle, but that it needs to be adapted in detail in order to escape the problems about knowledge of language. Secondly, one might hold that Chomsky's account runs into trouble precisely because it is internalistic and individualistic, and that one must rather appeal to a notion of language as a (non-normative) abstract or public phenomenon. So where the first approach would try to adapt Chomsky's notion of an I(nternal) language, the second approach would rather try to devise a non-normative notion of an E(xternal) language.

Let us first look at this latter option. In our previous discussion of knowledge of I-language, I have several times compared Chomsky's account with what an account of knowledge of ordinary, public language might look like, and I have suggested that for such an account, the troubles facing Chomsky would not arise. Still, at this point we may leave attempts to define a non-normative notion of E-language out of consideration. For presently, we are looking for a way to meet the sceptic's reductive challenge by sacrificing the normative aspects of our ordinary concept, and thus, ultimately, we want to be able to explain what fact about an individual 'in isolation' constitutes the fact that this person means something by his

words or speaks a particular language. Shifting attention to language as a public, social phenomenon - whether it be normative or non-normative - is of no help in this respect. Since such a language not solely constituted by the facts about an individual speaker, the introduction of a non-normative notion of E-language would actually amount to admitting defeat in as far as our reductive aims are concerned. For that reason, Kripke's reductive challenge cannot be met by turning to a non-normative notion of E-language.[1]

So, in order to generalize our findings, the question we need to ask is whether one might devise a non-normative notion of language that takes language to be a feature of an individual speaker (along the lines of Chomsky's I-language), and which can nevertheless account for the speaker having knowledge of such a language. Frankly, I fail to see how changing the particular details of Chomsky's internalist account could make any difference to the general objection we raised. Even when, once again, we give the opponent the maximal benefit of the doubt by not pressing the fact that our ordinary discourse about language has normative features and by accepting that knowing something is to be in a certain brain state, then still the problems facing Chomsky will appear again. For when one defines a person's language L in terms of whatever causally efficacious mechanism, and one goes on to claim both that knowledge of language has L as its object, and that this knowledge is the antecedent of one's linguistic performance, then one will conflate the state of knowing with its object and one will rob the knowledge claim of all substance. If, on the other hand, one avoids this conflation, then knowledge of language loses its relevance to such a degree that someone might be a perfect speaker of L without having any knowledge of it whatsoever. To change the details of Chomsky's account while staying faithful to its substance, is simply of no avail.

This, I think, is the undoing of this particular response to Kripke's paradox. We started by asking ourselves whether one might adopt a non-normative notion of language that was sufficiently similar to our ordinary notion still to be called a notion of *language*. We also decided not to beg the question by making the normative features of our ordinary notion of language the criterion for what counts as

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[1] It might be noted that the idea of devising a non-normative notion of language is much less plausible when one regards language as a phenomenon that is external to the individual language user (e.g., as a social practice or a network of conventions), than when one conceives of language as a feature of the neural or mental make-up of an individual speaker.
That is not to say that one cannot define a language as an abstract object, e.g., as a set of sentences. Of course one could give such a definition, but one should not think that one thereby introduces a more basic non-normative notion of language. Here one should bear in mind the difference between *abstracting* from the normative features of language, and *reducing* those features. If, in order to facilitate formal treatment, one defines an actual language as some set of sentences, then the set in question will be some such thing as the set of well-formed or grammatically correct sentences. Once one works with this set, no notion of correctness has to be invoked, yet, in order to define the set in the first place, we need to know what, in this language, counts as a correct sentence. Chomsky's account, on the other hand, does not try to abstract from the normative features of our ordinary notion of language, but rather tries to eliminate them or to reduce them in favour of an allegedly more basic, non-normative notion.

'sufficient similarity'. We have indeed followed this exemplary strategy, and it now turns out that our adversary not only has to refrain from talking about correctness and incorrectness and everything that goes with it, but that he is also robbed of our ordinary ways of talking about knowledge of language. Not only is the new notion of 'language' free from 'obscure normative connotations', it is also a 'language' that one cannot know in any usual sense. This situation, in my view, is fatal to the present position. For when a particularly stubborn proponent of this view were to urge us that we should not only drop the normative, but also the cognitive aspects of our ordinary notion of language, then we might convincingly argue that in that case there is certainly no longer a sufficient similarity between the ordinary and the 'improved' notion of language.

So, since it cannot plausibly be upheld that a 'scientifically improved' concept of language is sufficiently similar to our ordinary concept still to be seen as the concept of a language at all, we may close our discussion of the 'conceptual innovation position'. This response to Kripke's paradox is a failure.

V. KNOWLEDGE AND NORMATIVITY

In arguing this point, we have conducted a purely internal line of criticism, and have left normativity out of the discussion in order to meet the opponent on his own terrain. For that reason, it is as yet not clear what bearing the point about knowledge of language has on the questions about linguistic norms that are the focus of our overall discussion. This is not to say that our findings about knowledge of language are completely unrelated to normative issues. For the upshot of our discussion is, basically, that our ordinary concept of knowledge should also be regarded as a normative notion. After all, in order for a person to have knowledge of some object x, there must in principle be some standard that can be met. One can only have 'knowledge of x', when x sets a norm by which it can in principle be decided whether that person has knowledge of x, has it only partially, or lacks it. The impossibility of there being such a norm when it comes to knowledge of I-language was the rock that shipwrecked Chomsky's account.

Still, this point concerns the nature of *knowledge*, not the nature of the *object* of knowledge, and it applies as well to our knowledge of physics, as it does to our knowledge of language. So, the fact that knowledge of language requires the possibility of a standard in order to be *knowledge*, does not imply that the object of this knowledge (that is, language), is itself intrinsically normative. If there is a relation between the normative features of our concept of knowledge, and the normativity of language, then it still has to be spelled out. In what follows, I want to bring linguistic normativity back in the picture, and I will attempt to relate it to the role that knowledge of language plays in an approach such as Chomsky's.

We may start this investigation by asking ourselves why Chomsky puts such great stress on the notion 'knowledge of language' in the first place. Chomsky, as

we saw, urges us to give up our ordinary notion of a public language, and he attempts to redefine the notion of language, for scientific purposes, as an acquired functional state of a particular part of the brain. This proposal on itself is doubtlessly motivated by a strongly naturalistic point of view. It is not immediately clear, however, why someone who embarks on such a reductionist project would also insist that the causal mechanisms that underlie a speaker's linguistic capacities must be qualified as a 'system of knowledge'. One reason for stressing the importance of such cognitive features might be found in Chomsky's self-professed rationalism. But I think there is a more crucial reason why on an internalist approach it may seem necessary to stress that the mechanism constituting the internal language is at the same time a system of knowledge. This reason, I want to suggest, is that in such an account, the notion 'knowledge of language' is meant to function as an *Ersatz* for the public norms that we ordinarily bring to bear on a person's linguistic performance. If language is a public normative phenomenon, as we ordinarily take it to be, then it can provide us with a normative framework for assessing the sometimes flawed linguistic performance of individual speakers. To banish this notion of language, as Chomsky does, and to insist that language should rather be seen as a non-normative individual phenomenon, is to rob us of this public framework and therefore seems to preempt the possibility of normatively assessing a person's multifarious linguistic performance. If that were indeed so, then each and every of a speaker's utterances would *ipso facto* be definitive for the individual language that he is supposed to speak. This situation, as we will see below, would make any serious linguistic or neuro-linguistic investigation impossible.

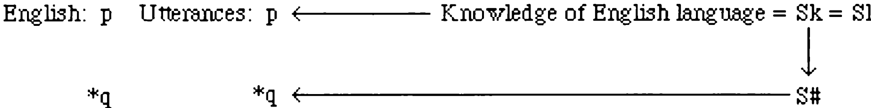
Here, however, the importance of talking about internal mechanisms as 'systems of knowledge' comes in. If such systems of knowledge are prior to actual linguistic performance, then they might, so one could think, give us a purely internal and individual criterion for discriminating between utterances that do belong to a person's I-language, and those that do not. For some of a person's utterances can now be seen as the result of an unimpaired exercise of his knowledge of language, while others are partly the result of mechanisms that interfere with such a pure exercise of knowledge. One could then claim that only the first kind of utterances are indicative for a person's I-language and that the second kind might be ignored. Thus, it might seem, 'knowledge of language' sets an internal, individual standard that in principle performs the role of our old and now obsolete public notions of correctness.

This, I take it, is the underlying reason why Chomsky still gives pride of place to such a notion as 'knowledge of language': a 'system of knowledge' is meant to sustain the indispensable distinctions in a person's verbal output that were previously vouched for by public norms. But if the observations that I made above are correct, it is highly implausible that knowledge of (I-)language can actually play this role. For we saw that the classification of any internal system as a system of *knowledge* ran into grave difficulties. Now, if Chomsky's employment of the notion of knowledge is indeed at bottom an illicit attempt to let non-normative

elements of his account play a normative role, then we must subsequently ask ourselves what relation there might be between, on the one hand, our knowledge of language and the norms to which it is tailored, and, on the other hand, the neural mechanisms that speakers do undoubtedly employ when using language. Below I want take a closer look at several answers to this question. Plotting out these different options will not only enable us to shed light on Chomsky's confusions from a different angle, but it will also give us opportunity to address and refute the second kind of reductionism that was mentioned in section I of this chapter. In general it will be argued against those two kinds of reductionism that the existence of public norms is an indispensable presupposition of any salient neuro-physiological investigation.

Let us start by considering figure 1, which models a theory that does not run into the problems facing Chomsky. This theory, just as Chomsky's, takes someone's knowledge of language to consist in a certain brain state, but, *pace* Chomsky, it takes a public notion of language to be basic and indispensable.

Figure 1.



Here, the basic notion of language is a public language such as English.[1] Let p represent the correct English sentences and *q the incorrect ones. Given the standards that obtain in the English language, we can distinguish within a speaker's performance between those utterances that are correct, and those that are incorrect. Now suppose that we are interested in investigating the neural mechanisms that underlie a person's command of language, i.e., that enable certain speakers to talk and understand proper English. Undoubtedly an actual human being has that capacity only in as far as he has a brain that is structured in a certain way. Investigating those relevant brain structures is therefore a highly interesting and completely legitimate endeavour. But how do we proceed? Well, what we are basically interested in, are those brain structures that are relevant to someone's competence in the English language, that is, the structures that are causally relevant to the production of the correct sentences of English that we called p. Of course the incorrect utterances and linguistic mistakes of the speaker are just as much caused by certain brain

[1] I need hardly say that, conceived as models of actual neuro-linguistic theories of language production, this figure and the one's to come would be far too simple. However, I have no pretention of modeling such theories in the first place. Rather, I want to use these figures for clarifying the relations between public language, individual performance, and internal mechanisms, whatever those latter might be. Therefore, we may abstract from the actual complexity of such mechanisms, their relation to perceptual input etc.

processes as his correct utterances are (in fact, we may assume that any sound that the speaker makes has *some* cause). Yet, we make the hypothesis that the ordinary competent use of language will have causal antecedents that can be distinguished from those of the occasional lapses - one might suppose that a lapse is due to the influence of some interfering mechanism. Let us call the latter mechanisms 'S#'.[1] The mechanisms that causally underlie the production of proper English sentences we take to 'instantiate' that person's knowledge of English, and we might call that totality of states, mechanisms and processes his 'state of knowledge of English' or Sk. Thus, Sk (the person's knowledge of English) is that mechanism which is causally involved in the production of English sentences, and we might identify Sk with a particular acquired state 'Sl' of a particular part of the brain that we call the language device. The arrows in the scheme might be read as signaling some causal relation; the arrow from Sk to p means that Sk and only Sk is causally responsible for the utterance of p, while the arrows going from Sk to S# to *q mean that both Sk (the 'knowledge of language') and S# (the 'interfering mechanism') play a causal role in the production of *q.

So, there are two important features of this scheme. Firstly, we presuppose certain public standards of correctness that obtain in the English language and that allow us to make differentiations in the actual behaviour of individual speakers. Secondly, starting from such differentiations in linguistic behaviour, we venture the hypothesis that underlying them there are distinct mechanisms or states that are somehow causally responsible for this behaviour. The complex state that underlies a person's competent use of English we denominate his state of knowing English, which we may identify with a particular acquired state of that person's language device.

I think that a model such as this one is very much what someone has in mind who is interested in the causal basis of people's knowledge of language. It is in many respects similar to Chomsky approach, except for the crucial difference that it does not identify language with the state Sk (or Sl), but rather regards such a state as secondary to a public language such as English. I think that Chomsky's claims about I-language are the result of slightly - but fatally - modifying this initial picture.

Now what, in the picture sketched above, is the substance of talking about 'knowledge of language'? There are several things that can be remarked. Firstly, our interest is not primarily focussed on all the things that, in ordinary parlance, are

[1] The viability of the project rests to a large extent on the truth of this hypothesis. Yet, it is not inconceivable that every utterance or even every sound that a person produces has some cause without there being any discernable order in these causes. In that case, the distinctions that apply to the behaviour of a speaker would not be reduplicated at the underlying level, and overt order would terminate in underlying chaos. This possibility, of course, is employed in the familiar multiple instantiation argument against strong reductionism or type-type identity. In the context of the present discussion we may suppose that there is at least *some* level of describing a person's 'internal mechanisms' (functional or otherwise) at which such distinctions as, e.g., grammatical versus ungrammatical can be reduplicated.

involved in 'knowledge of language'. For normally speaking, knowledge of language to a certain extent involves 'meta-capacities' such as explaining words and phrases or answering questions about grammar. Such capacities are not primarily of interest here. The state of knowledge of language in this case is the state that is primarily causally responsible for someone's actual use of English. Secondly, to say that there is a particular mechanism that can be regarded as instantiating someone's knowledge of English, is to define the mechanism one looks for in terms of the public language. To say that Sk is someone's knowledge of the English language, is to say that Sk is that mechanism, yet to be discovered, that by definition produces the sentences of English. Thus, the point of saying that Sk is someone's knowledge of English, is that thereby we specify the identity conditions of a postulated neural mechanism in terms of a prior standard, i.e., the English language. By the same token, when there is any question of whether a certain neural structure or process should be regarded as belonging to Sk or rather to S#, the question is decided by asking whether the exercise of that structure is or is not instrumental in the production of proper English sentences.

Consequently, what matters about talking of knowledge here, is not primarily our desire to present a very cognitive or 'intellectual' view on linguistic competence. Rather, the reason why we want to talk about knowledge here, lies in the fact that one possesses knowledge only relevant to a certain standard, and it is this standard that provides our bridgehead into the domain of the neural. By talking about the state of '*knowledge* of language' we set this standard in an overtly rationalist way, but nevertheless it is still the standard, and not the rationalist way in which we set it that is crucial.[1] So the bite of saying that Sk is someone's knowledge of English is that we thereby use English and our knowledge of what utterances belong to English as the defining criterion for the supposed state Sk. The relation is emphatically not the other way around. Of course it is true that on this account an utterance is correct English, if and only if it is produced by Sk, but this is not so because we have succeeded in giving neural criteria for what counts as a correct English sentence. It is rather because Sk is by definition the hypothetical mechanism that produces what we already know to be correct English sentences.

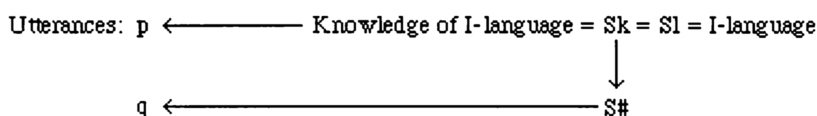
Finally, it is quite important to notice that this model, as it stands, is not reductionistic. Far from employing a non-normative, 'scientific' notion of language, this investigation starts from our ordinary normative judgements about a person's linguistic performance. For that reason, such an investigation will not give us any answer to Kripke's constitutive questions. For suppose that, in a Chomskyan vein, we want to investigate the mechanisms underlying a person's syntactic capacities. Kripke's sceptic would then ask us, roughly, what fact about an individual speaker is constitutive for the grammaticality of a sentence, or what fact it is that 'makes' a sentence syntactically correct, rather than incorrect. For the reasons explained in the last paragraph, this question cannot be answered by referring us to some mecha-

[1] Neuro-linguist lacking rationalist inclinations might drop notion of knowledge all together, and might rather talk about mechanisms causally involved in the production of correct English sentences.

nism Sk. Even if our neuro-linguistic program has been successful, and we have found a state Sk that produces only what are in fact correct English sentences, then still a sentence is not a syntactically correct English sentence *because* it is produced by Sk, and being produced by Sk is not the deciding criterion for grammaticality. It is precisely the other way around: we regard a particular mechanism as belonging to the global state Sk, because it is causally relevant to what we *already* know to be the grammatical sentences of English. The norms of the English language give us a criterion for identifying Sk, rather than that Sk gives us a criterion for identifying the norms of the English language.

Let us now look at the attempt to define the notion of language itself in terms of neural mechanisms, in the way Chomsky tries to do. It seems that this can be done by slightly changing the picture that we sketched above; we do away with the normative notion of English, and we identify language, or rather I-language with the state of the language device itself. This would lead to a scheme as in figure 2.

Figure 2.



The salient difference between this scheme and the previous one, is that we now no longer have the prior standards of our ordinary language by which to differentiate the linguistic behaviour of the speaker. The very concept of a public language such as English no longer features in this scheme, since it is held to be scientifically more fruitful to define the notion of language in terms of the particular state or structure of a person's language device. So, in this case, a language is an individual person's private property, and knowledge of language should now be conceived of as knowledge of I-language. Of course, we now also lack the means to distinguish within the totality of someone's utterances between those that are correct English, and those that are not. Yet, we still need some such distinguishing criterion, for even if we regard the speaker as a speaker of some I-language, rather than English, we cannot assume that each and every vocalization is ipso facto an utterance that belongs to the I-language. So we are still in need of some criterion by which to distinguish utterances that belong to the I-language from those that do not belong to it.

Now it might be thought that this is not really a problem, since we still have two distinct mechanisms that are causally responsible for someone's behaviour, the mechanisms Sk and S#. Perhaps these mechanisms might be used to distinguish the utterances belonging to the I-language from those that do not: a particular utterance belongs to someone's I-language when it is the causal result of Sk, which is after all that person's knowledge of I-language, and it does not belong to the I-language when the interfering mechanism S# has also been involved in its production.

But this is too hasty. With what right, we must ask, are we still talking about two

separate mechanisms Sk and S#, and what is in this case the content of saying that Sk is 'knowledge of I-language' and S# an 'interfering mechanism'? In the previous case, these questions had a clear answer. There English functioned as a prior standard that provided us with the identity conditions for the state Sk, that could be conceived as knowledge of English in as far as it was defined as the state causally responsible for the production of proper English sentences. In the present case, where an appeal to such a prior standard is impossible, we cannot identify the state Sk (now conceived as knowledge of I-language) by means of the utterances that we know to belong to the I-language. For what utterances belong to the I-language is precisely the question, which we attempted to solve by saying that an utterance belongs to the I-language iff it is produced by Sk. Given that an utterance belongs to the I-language iff it is produced by Sk, then saying that Sk is by definition the state that only produces the sentences that belong to the I-language, is merely to say that Sk is a state that produces what it produces. But so, of course, is S#, and it is now completely unclear by what criterion Sk and S# might be distinguished. We might identify Sk and distinguish it from S#, provided we knew what utterances to count as belonging to the I-language, but in order to know that, we need to have to be able to identify Sk and distinguish it from S#. In fact, we are moving in a vicious circle with no means of escape.[1]

As became clear with regard to figure 1, the bite of claiming that there is a certain neural state which is a state of *knowledge* of language, is that the notion of knowledge refers us to the independently given object of this state of knowledge (English), which can give us a foothold for the future physical determination of the postulated state. Yet, in the case of the model represented by figure 2, the claim that Sk is a state of knowledge is void. For that reason, the adoption of this second scheme has devastating consequences for any serious scientific investigation into the neuro-physical basis of language use. For by giving up the notion of a public language, we rob ourselves both of our subject of enquiry and of a necessary tool for conducting it. Our subject - finding the causal antecedents of someone's command of language - is lost because we have no idea how even in principle to decide which of a person's utterances belong to his I-language and which do not. In other words, the notion 'command of I-language' is empty. In that case, we are also robbed of the criteria by which it can be decided whether to count a particular mechanism as belonging to the complex state we are looking for.

This turns the tables on Chomsky's claim that it is on *scientific* grounds that we should adopt a non-normative, notion of I-language. Rather than being conductive to the scientific enterprise, the notion of I-language - when it is meant to replace the notion of a public language - preempts a such a scientific investigation. As our comparison of these two ways of approaching the physical basis of linguistic

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[1] Neither does the claim that this state qualifies as knowledge refer us to some other (internal?) standard (the I-language itself?) that circumscribes the state. After all, Sk and Sl are identical, so that it hardly helps to say that Sk is the state that somehow correctly represents Sl. We have no standard external to the mechanism by which to define it, neither in someone's behaviour, nor in some other mechanism.

competence makes clear, it is vital to any such investigation that we can make use of the normative framework provided by our ordinary public language such as English. Without it, we do not arrive at a 'more scientific' notion of language, but rather, we get bogged down in a undifferentiated verbal mash.

The hard boiled reductionist might try to defend his position by adopting a last ditch stand. An approach like Chomsky's, it might be said, is just too hasty because it kicks the ladder away even *before* it has been climbed. The public language English, it might be granted, is an indispensable heuristic device, but by using it the scientist can eventually arrive at those underlying features that define what language actually *is*. So, our ordinary normative assessments of someone's linguistic behaviour are indeed indispensable at a certain stage of scientific development, but they can be abolished or ignored once the neuro-linguistic program has indeed successfully been executed.

Such a view could well be tied in with the second reductionist strategy that was mentioned in section I. A reductionist, it was there observed, could grant Kripke that our linguistic concepts are intrinsically normative, and he might - *pace* Chomsky - accept that a revision of those ordinary concepts is impossible. Nevertheless he might argue against Kripke that the normative features of our ordinary notions are only of concern when we attempt to give a conceptual analysis of those notions. That is, when we are doing philosophy. The scientist, on the other hand, is not concerned with the conceptual analysis of our notions of meaning or language, but rather tries to discover what meaning or language actually *is*. The only burden that the scientist carries is to find the underlying facts that constitute meaning, and he can therefore delegate the task of accounting for such conceptual features as normativity to the philosopher.

This latter view, combined with the idea that normativity merely serves a heuristic purpose, can be found in Goldfarb's *Kripke on Wittgenstein on Rules*. Let us see how Goldfarb introduces his point:

> A reductionist could claim, for example, that future physiological psychology might reveal two mechanisms, separable on scientific grounds. States of the first amount to a person's linguistic competence and would, if untrammeled, always cause correct responses; states of the second are identifiable with interfering features, which explain why on particular occasions the first mechanism does not issue in an appropriate response (and the person errs). (Ibid., p. 477)

... here I want to interrupt Goldfarb in order to make an important gloss. Goldfarb puts those words in the mouth of the reductionist, but we should notice that there is nothing exclusively reductionistic about the suggestion made thus far. In fact, what Goldfarb suggests is quite compatible with the non-reductionist program captured by figure 1. In that case, it is also supposed that we can find particular neurological features or 'mechanisms' that distinguish what we already, and independently from those mechanisms, know to be the correct and the incorrect responses. In this respect we should be careful not to grant reductionism too easy a victory. The claim that we can distinguish such mechanisms as Goldfarb mentions above is tantamount to the claim that there is a particular neuro-causal story to be told in the first place. If

we mistake this claim with the reductionist claim, we condemn the non-reductionist to a wholesale rejection of any form of neuro-linguistic investigation whatsoever. But that would be a grave mistake. The distinction between reductionism and non-reductionism is not that the former assumes and the latter denies that someone's correct use of language has a causal etiology that is different from his occasional lapses and mistakes. Both parties may assent to this claim. The real bone of contention is this, that the reductionist claims and the non-reductionist denies that the very fact that an utterance is correct or incorrect can in the last instance be fully accounted for in terms of this difference in causal etiology itself. This is indeed what Goldfarb seems to claim when he goes on to say:

Of course, in the empirical work that leads to these identifications we must use our ordinary meaning ascriptions and practices of ascribing error. In the end, though, we can identify the physical states of the first mechanism as constituting meaning words in certain ways. ... If we do find physical states that can, on internal grounds, be distinguished as competency states, as well as other states that are interfering mechanisms, then clearly that will be enough to ground the notion of how the person would ideally respond, as different from how the person actually responds. In the difference, the normative force of an ascription of meaning can be lodged. (Ibid., pp. 477 - 8)

The bite of Goldfarb's remark lies in the suggestion that our ordinary normative criteria are merely important for heuristic reasons, and that their indispensability is therefore epistemological and irrelevant to the question what language actually is. Yet, the situation that Goldfarb asks us to imagine is somewhat muddled, and its description mixes physical and normative notions in a way that is not easy to sort out. For instance, it is quite obscure what it means 'to find physical states that can, on internal (i.e., physical) grounds, be distinguished as competency states (i.e., being competent in the English language)'. After all, the feature 'resulting in the utterance of correct English sentences' may perhaps be predicated of some physical mechanism, but it is not itself a physical feature. Are we then supposed to leave this characteristic out of account, in order to find a mechanism that 'on physical grounds qualifies as a competence state', quite disregarding the fact whether it leads to the production of correct English or not? It is rather unfathomable what possession of such a state would make one competent in.

Let us try to get some clarity here. I take it that what Goldfarb wants us to imagine is something like the following situation. Suppose we start to conduct a neuro-linguistic investigation into the brain mechanisms underlying, e.g., the syntactic competence of an ordinary English speaker.[1] When doing so, we have to use our ordinary understanding of what is and what is not a grammatically proper sentence of English. But now we make a great discovery: a certain part of our speaker's brain consists of nerve cells with dendrites that are shorter than 2μ, and when our

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[1] Although Goldfarb talks about a reduction of meaning, I will discuss his proposal in terms of a reduction of grammar. I think that the case of meaning is much more complex than that of grammar, because semantic competence is more social in nature than grammatical competence. Therefore a reduction of syntactic competence has more initial plausibility than a reduction of semantic competence. So, shifting our attention to grammar will not only lead to a clearer discussion, it will also make for a stronger reductionist case.

speaker utters a grammatical English sentence, then this, and only this center of his brain is involved in producing this sentence. This discovery certainly merits full coverage in *Nature*, but what conclusion can we draw from it concerning the nature of language? Goldfarb seems to suggest that with this discovery we have given a reductive analysis of what such linguistic correctness actually *is*. We have, presumably, acquired an insight into the 'real' nature of grammaticality that is more or less on a par with the discovery that water is really the substance H2O. At least, this is the comparison that Goldfarb explicitly draws on page 478, where he remarks:

> To be sure, on this account, the true justifications of our judgements of correctness of responses are hidden; they are matters of facts deep in the brain ... of course these physical states are not what we consciously reflect upon in our ordinary ascriptions of meaning, and it does not *feel* as if we are making physiological hypothesis, that is, talking about hidden physical states; but that is exactly what we are doing, just as we are talking about molecular constitution when we say the glass is filled with water.

But the real import of our hypothetical discovery is not so easy to assess. Firstly, there are many intricacies involved in the 'reduction' of a natural kind such as water in terms of its chemical constitution. Secondly, it is not immediately clear in what respects the comparison of water with language is meant to hold. With regard to the first point, we may circumvent some of the difficulties by focussing on one particular feature of such reductions. This is the fact that when we have discovered the real, underlying nature of a substance that we already know how to identify by means of its phenomenal properties, that then we will use this 'underlying nature' as an identification criterion that overrides the initial criteria that have to do with the phenomenal or 'surface' properties of the substance.[1] Let us take this as a feature of a successful theoretical reduction. Goldfarb's comparison between the discovery what water really is, and what language (meaning, grammaticality) really is, might now be sharpened in three different ways that can be captured by three different thesis. All three of them are false. I will be somewhat brief.

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[1] I think that in actual fact the situation is much more complex and ambiguous than is often suggested by philosophers theorizing about 'natural kinds'. One difficulty that is often ignored in thought experiments about 'natural kinds' is that, in ordinary science, the motivation for singling out certain features as the 'underlying nature' of a kind is their capacity to account for the surface properties of this kind. Mendelyev's periodic table, for example, was accepted by the scientific community when it turned out that from the 'underlying nature' as specified by this table (e.g., the number of electrons) it could be predicted what the surface properties would be of as yet undiscovered chemical elements. Nevertheless, it is often assumed by philosophers that if we were to find two samples of some stuff that had the same phenomenal properties but turned out to be different in underlying nature, that then we would simply let the criterion of underlying nature prevail and regard the two sample's as belonging to two different substances. What is ignored, is that the theoretical framework itself might be thrown into doubt if the explanatory relation between underlying features and surface features was breached too drastically. To actually find two elements with the same chemical qualities and a different number of electrons would lead to serious problems for the very framework of chemical theory.
This is not to say that there are no cases where we will let the underlying properties be the prevailing criterion for determining to what kind something belongs. Yet, in such cases the phenomenal properties that are being shared will be of a rather superficial nature.

Firstly, we may read Goldfarb as making the following claim: the feature 'being produced by a neural structure with dendrites smaller than 2μ' can now be taken as the overriding criterion for applying our *actual* ordinary notion of a properly grammatical sentence of English, just as the feature 'having the chemical structure H2O' is the overriding criterion for applying our ordinary notion of water. Yet, a first problem we encounter is that the notion of grammaticality primarily concerns *sentences*, while the neural mechanism primarily causes a person's *utterances*. A situation in which of two utterances of the same sentence one would be grammatical and the other would not be (since it would not be produced by the mechanism in question) would be rather incoherent. But even if we stipulate that *all* utterances of a sentence by *all* people are caused by the same mechanism, either the <2μ-mechanism or another one, then still we get nowhere with this suggestion.[1] The point is simply that the scientist reporting on his discovery cannot sensibly tell us that he has now also discovered that the sentence 'Some roses are red' is after all not a grammatical sentence of English, since his neural investigations have shown that it is not produced by the <2μ-mechanism. If the discovery of the <2μ-mechanism is to be the discovery of the *real nature* of what we ordinarily regard as being a grammatical English sentence, then the idea that knowledge of the mechanism enables one to make such discoveries would have to be cogent.[2] But it is not. The underlying mechanism simply does not constitute a criterion that can override our ordinary intuition that the sentence 'Some roses are red' is a properly grammatical English sentence.

Secondly, Goldfarb might be read as propounding the following thesis: the feature 'being produced by a neural structure with dendrites smaller than 2μ' can be the criterion that supplies us with a notion of what it is to be a properly grammatical sentence of English that is *new*, and superior to our ordinary notion. Here one would attempt to use the feature for a revision of our ordinary notion. Once again, of course, one would be faced with the problem of defining a notion as grammaticality in terms of individual brain mechanisms. Apart from that point, on this view it would first of all have to be explained in which way and for what reason our ordinary notion of grammaticality *is* actually deficient, and it would have to be explained in what respect it would be an improvement to define grammaticality in terms of the newly discovered brain mechanism. I do not see any way in which this could be done, and I cannot see the purpose or the advantages of a notion of gram-

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[1] I doubt whether even this situation can be spelled out in a coherent way. What are we to say about a foreigner who does not know the English language and utters the sentence 'tresspasers will be prosecuted' that he sees on a sign. This utterance will presumably not be produced by his <2μ-mechanism, which, for example, produces french utterances. The problem is, basically, that 'grammaticality' is a social notion that cannot easily be spelled out in terms of individual mechanisms.

[2] Compare the often mentioned case of gold and foolsgold (or ironpyrite). Both are very similar in appearance, and have thereby misled many a golddigger, but they are nevertheless counted as different substances since they differ in underlying chemical nature. (Gold is the element Au, foolsgold is the compound FeSO4.)

maticality that can only be applied on the basis of extensive neuro-surgery.

Thirdly, it might be thought that: the feature 'being produced by a neural structure with dendrites smaller than 2μ' can be used to define a scientific notion of 'I-language' that can supersede our ordinary public notion of language. This suggestion can be written off because it runs into all the problems facing the previous one.

I have discussed Goldfarb's suggestion because his idea that our ordinary normative notions are practically or heuristically indispensable without touching on the 'real' nature of language is an option that is logically open to the reductionist. However, when we probe this idea somewhat more than Goldfarb does, it turns out to hold little promise. 'Language', 'meaning', 'grammaticality' are not natural kind terms, and they do not refer us to substances or mechanisms whose real underlying nature is to be found in our brains. As I pointed out previously, this is not to deny the possibility of neuro-linguistics. It is to claim that the ordinary framework of public norms is indispensable and cannot be regarded as a ladder that is to be kicked away once the neuro-linguistic project proves successful. Rather, this public normative framework is and remains a presupposition of any such scientific investigation.

VI. Language, I-Language and Tomatoes

Reductive naturalism has a strong appeal, and my excuse for giving it as much attention as I have done in this chapter, is that I am well aware of the spell it can cast. But the strong appeal of this position is perhaps not fully due to convincing physicalistic arguments or to the pressing demand for a uniform scientific method. Ontological or methodological naturalism are after all positions that are notoriously difficult to explicate in a philosophically satisfactory way. Most of all, I think, the appeal of reductive naturalism derives from what one might call a *picture*. This is the picture of the world as an uniform natural whole, whose parts may manifest a different complexity while remaining interconnected and sustained by one underlying reality. Such a picture is not a philosophical theory. Yet, it may be what we try to express in our philosophical theories, and its pull need hardly diminish even after a particular expression of it has proven insufficient. In the next chapter I will have much more to say about the nature and the role of such pictures. To conclude this chapter, I will attempt to break the hold of this particular reductionistic picture by offering and scrutinizing an alternative one: that of the tomato sorting machine which my grandfather used before putting his tomatoes up for auction. I think that everything about language, I-language, brain states and what we may cogently say about them can be clarified by means of this model.

The (former) fruit and vegetable auction in Zwijndrecht used a certain system for classifying tomatoes according to size. The reason for having such a system - and for fining farmers who do not abide by it, is that small tomatoes sell for more money than big tomatoes. The classifying system distinguishes about ten cate-

gories, which are called, starting with that of the smallest tomatoes, A+, A, A-, B+, etcetera. This classification system was specified in the *Zwijndrecht Auction Manual*, which gives the exact minimum and maximum sizes for the different categories of tomatoes.

Furthermore, since the price of tomatoes would become unrealistically high if people had to measure with a ruler each and every tomato they wanted to put up for auction, farmers that grow tomatoes are in possession of a tomato sorting machine. This machine consists of a declining slope with horizontal rows of holes in it. All the holes in the horizontal row have the same size, which is the maximum size of a particular category of tomatoes. At the highest point of the slope is the row with holes that are A+ sized (the smallest holes), at the lowest point of the slope is the row with the holes that are D sized (the biggest holes). The holes corresponding to the other categories are in orderly fashion in between. Furthermore, the machine has a mechanism, hand-operated by a lever, that makes little blocks of wood underneath the holes move upwards if the lever is pulled, so that the block can push up a tomato that is stuck in the hole. One starts to operate the machine by throwing in a crate of unsorted tomatoes. The machine then drops one tomato in each and every hole of the first horizontal row (the highest one, with the smallest holes). Obviously, only those tomatoes that are smaller than the first hole, that is, smaller than the maximum size of A+ tomatoes, will drop through. Those are collected in a crate marked 'A+'. The tomatoes that are bigger just get stuck in the holes. After the tomatoes have fallen through or have gotten stuck, the farmer pulls the lever, all the little blocks of wood go up, and push up the tomatoes that got stuck. Since the slope declines, those tomatoes are deposited in the holes of the next row, the A row. Once again, some tomatoes drop through and get collected in a box marked 'A', the others get stuck, get topped over to the next row, etcetera. Operated by one lever only, this wonder of mechanical simplicity can assign tomatoes to ten, very precisely defined categories.

So, to start with, we have three different things: the classification system, the manual and the sorting machine. The classification system can go proxy for a language, ordinarily conceived. Just as a language, it is a conventional and rule-governed system, that is upheld by a certain community of people, who make a purposeful use of it and who know what counts as abiding by it or going against it. The manual can be a model for a grammar, devised by a linguist, in as far as it gives a systematic description of the classification system just as the linguist attempts to give a systematic description of the language. The tomato sorting machine, finally, I will regard as a model of the language device of a speaker of the language or of some functional state of the language device. As can be done with regard to the language device, one might distinguish with regard to the sorting machine between its underlying mechanism, e.g., the actual pieces of wood and iron, and the functional state of the whole contraption, which is defined by such things as the input, the relevant machine parts, their intended interconnections and proper functioning, and finally the neatly categorized output in which this results. In order to make the model even more fitting, we might want to distinguish between

the machine from a purely functional point of view - as I just described it above, and the actual machine as it is standing in the shed. The point of making this distinction is that the actual machine will not invariably function in the way I described above. After all, it is subject to rust, to bending of the lever, to wear of the holes and it might even have to deal with the interference of mice and spiders that have made their home in it. Therefore we will assume that the actual machine sometimes dumps a tomato in the wrong crate, just as a language user sometimes makes mistakes. In that way, the machine's functional state can model the functional state of the language device, while the complete machine - including mice, spiders and the lot, can go proxy for the total neural make up of the speaker, that also partly consists of mechanisms that 'interfere' with the functioning of the language device.

What we have got now, is the classification system that goes proxy for the language, the manual going proxy for a grammar, the sorting machine in its purely functional capacity modelling the language device, and the actual machine - mice and all, modelling the actual neural make up - interference mechanisms and all. The only thing still lacking, is an agrarian counterpart of the speaker of the language. In our model, this role can only be fulfilled by the farmer-with-his-sorting-machine. We might treat the machine as virtually an extension of the farmer, and the 'biotic' combination of farmer and machine might then go proxy for the speaker of the language. In order to accommodate Chomsky's notion of implicit knowledge of language, one might even imagine that the farmer has forgotten all his explicit knowledge of the classification system, and relies solely on the performance of his sorting machine.

Now that our model has been set up, we have to start probing it. The first question to address, is what knowledge is possessed by the machine or the farmer-with-his-machine.[1] To me, it seems alright to say that the farmer with his machine (or the machine) has knowledge of the *Zwijndrecht Classification System for Tomatoes*. The system prescribes certain sizes for particular categories of tomatoes, and the farmer manifests his knowledge of the system by generally bringing in crates that are filled with tomatoes of the proper size. To have this knowledge is of course compatible with an occasional mistake. The farmer knows the system, even if he or the auctioneer sometimes has to pick out a tomato which obviously has been misplaced, and which has to be run through the machine again. On the other hand,

[1] Ordinarily we ascribe knowledge of language to a speaker of the language, that is, to a person or to the farmer-machine. Given Chomsky's contention that knowledge is a brain state, it would make sense to ascribe knowledge not only to the person having a brain with such a state, but also to the brain itself, that is in that state - that is, in our model, to the machine. For the moment, nothing depends on this distinction, and I will talk about knowledge as something that can both be ascribed to the machine, and to the farmer-machine. (The reader should remember that my discontent with Chomsky's account did not depend on his invocation of implicit knowledge, or on his view on knowledge as a brain state. Therefore, I will go along with Chomsky in assuming that a person who knows something must have a particular brain state that somehow 'instantiates' this knowledge. Those who see no difficulty in ascribing knowledge to the brain, yet feel uneasy when it comes to ascribing knowledge to a tomato sorting machine, I can only ask to bear with me.)

we might also imagine a person who returns to farming after being out of the business for a while, and who unwittingly uses an old sorting machine corresponding to a now obsolete classification. In that case we might say that this man does know the old classification, but that as yet he lacks knowledge of the new system. Comparing those two cases also brings out the point of talking about knowledge in the first place. It will be quite common that there is, to a greater or lesser extent, a mismatch between the prescriptive classification system, and the boxes of tomatoes that are for sale. This discrepancy may range from one misplaced tomato on a single occasion, to crates full of mis-categorized tomatoes. Now, all those cases are similar in as far as they diverge from the norm. But rather than having to treat all those divergences on a par, we may invoke the notion of knowledge to differentiate between them and to decide how the situation is to be remedied. We can then distinguish between a farmer who knows the system quite well, one who knows it alright, but who should do something about those darned mice, one who does not quite know it yet, and who should make such-and-such adjustments to his sorting machine, and the farmer who knows a different, obsolete system and should get himself a new machine. The point in talking about knowledge of the system in the first place, is that it allows us to differentiate the mismatches between norm and actuality, and to derive practical consequences from those distinctions.

So, we can cogently claim that our farmer or the machine somehow knows the classification system, and any such claim can be substantiated by the fact that the farmer, or the machine, generally acts in accordance with the standard that is prescribed by the classification system. We might even say, if that is how we want to talk, that the sorting machine possesses or instantiates knowledge of the classification system by - amongst other things, representing the salient features of the system.[1] So I think that we can properly say that the farmer has knowledge of this

[1] Interesting complications occur in this respect. One might on first sight be tempted to say that in this case the representational relationship holds between the holes in the slope of the machine, and the sizes of the different categories of tomatoes. Yet, the obtaining of such a purely static relation is on itself not a sufficient condition for ascribing knowledge of the classification system to the machine. For we might imagine that the machine has by wear, tear and rust deteriorated to such an extent that only the slope with the holes is left. In as far as the farmer or the machine could once be said to possess knowledge, it seems very implausible that they still possess it when the machine has fallen to pieces in this way. What seems crucial for the possibility of ascribing knowledge to the machine, is that it can actually *do* something, i.e. that it can actually sort tomatoes. A similar problem occurs when it comes to saying that the machine *represents* the system. Above, we invoked a static notion of representation, as a structural similarity holding between the perforated slope and the categories that make up the classification system. But just as the existence of the mere slope can not substantiate a claim to knowledge, it can neither give backing to the claim that there still obtains a representational relationship. For after all, the slope on itself might be re-fitted into a machine with the big holes, rather than the small holes on top. In that case, the machine will certainly not represent the system that it originally represented. In abstaction from the function that it actually performs, the slope can be used to represent different things, and what it represents will be ultimately dependent on its employment. I will not go further into those problems here. They will extensively be treated in chapter 5, when we will deal with Wittgenstein's cube-argument.

classification system, and the criterion we use in this respect is whether the sorted tomatoes that the farmer puts up for auction are indeed covered by the classification. The situation parallels the case of a speaker who has knowledge of a language such as English.

Let us now consider the case corresponding to Chomsky's notion of 'I-language', and his claims about 'knowledge of I-language'. We then have to discard the *Zwijndrecht Classification System*, which is after all blatantly prescriptive and normative, and we would have to devise some kind of successor concept in terms of the make up of individual sorting machines. Thus, we want to replace the public, normative notion of a classification system by an internal, individual, non-normative notion. In order to minimize semantic confusion, I will not call this new notion an 'I-classification system', but rather a 'sorting system' - or, for short, a 'sorting'. The claim then under consideration, is, firstly, that one can work out a viable notion of a 'sorting', where a sorting is a kind of classification system that is non-normative and scientifically better behaved than a classification.[1] Secondly, it is claimed that a sorting machine primarily has knowledge of a sorting, rather than knowledge of a classification.

Now, what is a 'sorting'? Well, we might think that we can simply take our lead from the previous situation. There we had the classification system, the farmer-machine who had knowledge of it, and the functional state of the sorting machine, which is a higher level description of the causal functioning of the machine. Now that we want to abolish the normative classification system, we might think that we should do so by focussing on the functional state that we previously described as the knowledge of the classification system. Thus, instead of talking about the classification system, we now want to talk about a sorting, which we take to be the state of knowledge itself; the functional state of a sorting machine.

It should be noted that this way of proceeding, though it is the only option open to us, is somewhat odd. For what we actually do is the following: we are throwing out the notion of a classification, while at the same time we seem to appeal to such a notion as 'the functional state of the machine' that was previously defined by means of this very classification system. As I will argue later, this is an illicit way of proceeding, and any attempt to remedy it will preempt the possibility of any serious investigation. However, let us, for the moment at least, presuppose that we can help ourselves to the notion of a sorting as a functional state of the machine that is logically independent from the classification system, and let us rather focus our attention on questions about knowledge of a sorting.

Employing the new notion of a sorting, we might now of course redescribe the former situation by saying that a machine, by having the *proper* sorting, has knowledge of the classification system, and that it is this knowledge - this sorting, that is ultimately the causally relevant factor for his abidance by the system. However, when following Chomsky's line of thought, such knowledge of the *classification*

[1] Presuming, that is, that the notion of a classification *is* 'scientifically unbehaved'. Why would that be?

system does not interest us any more (after all, we have just abolished the very notion of a classification as being unscientific). Rather, we would now want to claim that the sorting machine has knowledge of a *sorting*.

Yet, where questions about knowledge of the classification can be substantiated and decided by seeing to what extent the output of a machine matches the classification system that is fixed independently from that particular output, we do not have that possibility when it comes to 'knowledge of a sorting'. After all, where the classification is a general standard for all machines, sortings are features of single individual machines, and the sorting of a particular machine is by definition the particular functional state of that machine as it is determined (amongst other things) by its output. Thus, the machine's output cannot possibly disagree with the sorting it is supposed to have knowledge of, since it is this very output which is one of the defining criteria for that sorting itself. Since the only criterion that might settle the question about knowledge of the sorting - the output, is at the very same time a defining criterion for the identity of the object of this supposed knowledge, invoking the notion of knowledge at all becomes quite empty. Instead of asking whether a machine can have knowledge of a (his own) sorting, we might rather ask whether it can lack such knowledge, or not yet have such knowledge, or possess such knowledge only partially. And the answer should certainly be that given what a sorting is, those situations are simply not provided for.

So even if, without appeal to a classification, we could work out a proper notion of a sorting, then still the idea that a machine might have knowledge of his sorting is, I think, quite empty. A sorting is simply the particular functional state in which a machine happens to be, and the claim that beyond *having* that state, a machine also has *knowledge* of that state lacks any substance. For the only criterion by which a claim to knowledge might be substantiated (i.e., the output), is at the same time a defining criterion for that which the knowledge is supposed to be knowledge of (i.e., the sorting). A machine might indeed be said to embody knowledge of an external standard such as a classification system, but once we drop that external object of knowledge, the notion of knowledge itself loses all applicability.

The mistake that we made with regard to 'knowledge of a sorting' was this: we could cogently talk about knowledge as long as we could appeal to a classification as the object of such knowledge, and we wrongly and too hastily supposed that discarding classifications would have no consequences for the possibility of the machine possessing knowledge. Our mistake was to saw off the branch on which we were sitting. This should alert us to the possibility that a similar mistake was being made when we freely helped ourselves to the notion of a sorting, conceived as the relevant functional state of the machine. Therefore the next question to ask ourselves is what exactly such a 'sorting' is supposed to be. Our initial idea was, that a sorting is the functional state of a particular machine, and we thought of that state as a feature 'really' pertaining to that machine itself, quite independently from the classification system. And, of course, sorting machines *can* be in particular functional states. After all, it was by specifying the functional state of tomato sort-

ing machines that I introduced those contraptions to you in the first place; I specified the input, I described the relevant machine parts and their interrelations and I pointed out that such pests as mice and spiders were irrelevant to the way in which the machine was meant to function, and finally I described the output of the machine. But in doing so, I gave a general, fairly abstract description of a particular kind of machines in terms of the function they were intended to perform; that of sorting tomatoes according to a classification system. The question we should now ask, is to what extent such a state is something that may qualify a particular machine independently of the classification system? In how far can we still cogently speak of such functional states when the classification system has been discarded?

I think that at this point our notion of a sorting runs into serious problems. The point is, that the existence of the classification system is a precondition for helping ourselves to derived normative notions such as 'proper output', 'relevant machine parts' or 'functioning properly' by which the functional state of a sorting machine is identified. Therefore the abolishment of the notion of a classification system will have the consequence that the notions which are defined by an appeal to it can no longer be applied to the machine. This in its turn will have repercussions for the functional states that can be ascribed to the machine.

This point is perhaps not so easy to see. We have to make an effort in order to really shed the normative notions that we so readily apply. Let me try to paint the picture in more detail. When specifying the functional state of a machine two important parameters will be its input and output. In my initial description, I specified that input as 'a crate of unsorted tomatoes', and the output could be specified as 'ten crates marked A^+ to D, containing tomatoes of those respective categories with the corresponding sizes as specified in the *Auction Manual*'. Obviously, this cannot be a proper description of the output once we discard the classification system. For in that case, we must disregard the marking on the crates, we cannot speak of the tomatoes as belonging to certain categories, and we cannot describe their sizes with reference to the manual. In fact, we lack any reason whatsoever of thinking about the tomatoes that roll out of the machine as being 'classified' at all, and by the same token, we cannot describe the input as being a crate of 'unsorted' tomatoes if by that we mean 'unclassified' tomatoes. When rain falls on a blade of grass, the small raindrops may stick to it, while the larger ones roll off and drop to the ground. Can we therefore say that the blade of grass classifies unsorted raindrops into smaller and bigger ones? And can it start misclassifying raindrops when the wind rises and bends it over? I do not think that we can say it does, and the same thing goes for the machine as we presently conceive of it.

So what have we got? Well, to start with, we have a crate full of tomatoes, and to end with we have ten crates containing tomatoes. Those tomatoes will of course have many qualities, to different degrees. They differ in size, but also in colour, in smell, in taste, in age, in nutritional value, in vitamin content, in pesticide-volume ratio, in the amount of insect damage etcetera. Some of these qualities will have little to do with each other, others are strongly correlated. Our input and output must now be specified in terms of those qualities and the degree in which particular

tomatoes in particular crates possess them. If we take that task seriously, the result - I suspect - will be quite uninformative. It is not that we will not find any regularities. Rather, we will find an enormous number of regularities and correlations, none of which are perfect. We will, for example, find regularities in the size of the tomatoes that are contained in the ten boxes, but, due to what we previously called the 'occasional malfunctioning of the machine' we will also find exceptions. Exceptions ... with what right are we actually using *that* term? When a large tomato is dropped in the first crate, then we have a discrepancy in size, but perhaps there is another quality, e.g., colour, that is equally shared by all tomatoes in the crate, the large one included.

One might, in the light of such problems, think that knowledge of the actual internal construction of the machine might be of help here. But in fact, we will in this respect merely run into similar problems. For what are we to count as the relevant machine parts and what are they relevant to? How much strength is to be exercised on the lever, and in particular, what criterion do we have for deciding that question? Or note the changes that occur in a machine: when it comes straight from the factory, the machine will have clean cut holes, but its movement will be rigid; at a later time it moves smoothly, but the holes will have worn ever so slightly; later still, it will be rigid again due to rust and the holes have worn even more. But is one of these states somehow intrinsically more typical than the others, or should they rather be treated as some kind of natural development, so that our account has to cover all these stages alike? The point is that such questions only allow of an answer when we can appeal to the proper or the intended function of the machine as that is lain down by the Auction's classification. In the present case, however, we lack a criterion for favouring one state of the machine over the other and we would have to treat them all alike.[1]

Where does this leave the notion of the 'sorting' of a particular machine? I think it is clear that we have no option but to define such a sorting in terms of the overwhelming multiplicity of brute facts applying to the machine and the tomatoes. This will give us a large amount of rough regularities and imperfect correlations that will vary over time and that will be different from machine to machine. Frankly, I have no idea what conceivable purpose the notion of a sorting could serve if it had to be defined in this way, and I do not know what new insights could be gained by groping around in this primordial darkness. If scientific knowledge of tomato sorting machines is our aim, then discarding the normative notion of a classification in favour of that of a sorting is not the way to gain such knowledge. By the same token, if it is our purpose to gain scientific knowledge of the physical features that underlie a language user's competence, then we are ill advised to discard the norms that constitute language itself. We have seen that Chomsky advised us to discard

[1] Remember how similar problems occured for Chomsky's account of I-language. We saw in the case of John and Pierre that a fact such as 'Pierre not yet knowing the rule' could not be accounted for because from the perspective of Pierre's I-language each and every successive stage was on a par with the others. In other words, in the absence of a standard, we rob ourselves of such notions as 'development' and 'deterioration' and we have to settle with brute and pointless change.

normativity in the name of science. I think it is now clear that if we were to follow this advise, we would actually preempt the kind of scientific investigation that Chomsky intends to conduct. The scientific endeavour to gain insight into the 'mechanisms' that enable people to use language does not rob us of our normative notions, but rather, the very possibility of this endeavour depends on the availability of such notions.

4

Wittgenstein's Philosophical Method

I. INTRODUCTION

To interpret is to construe the most lucid and coherent reading that some given data allows. In order to assess a novel interpretation of a philosophical work, we must therefore ask ourselves whether this interpretation is exegetically plausible and whether the philosopher's account, thus explicated, is systematically cogent. In the previous assessment of Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein, I have nevertheless focussed exclusively on the systematical issues that Kripke's account raises, and I have postponed any direct confrontation of Kripke's exposition with Wittgenstein's text. One of my reasons for doing so, is the intrinsic interest of the reductionist problems about meaning that are the kernel of Kripke's interpretation. As I will argue in the chapters to come, those sceptical, physicalist worries are far removed from Wittgenstein's actual concerns in the *Philosophical Investigations*. Yet, if we had started our investigation by arguing for the exegetical inaccuracy of Kripke's interpretation, then this would inevitably have had the effect of reducing our interest in the intricate systematical issues that motivate Kripke's account.

My second reason for developing the internal dialectic of Kripke's problem first, is that thereby our discussion could reach a point where the non-reductionist position that I take to be Wittgenstein's becomes systematically relevant. Thus, by delaying the appearance of our main character until the stage is properly set, we will be able to make exegetical issues serve a systematical purpose.

In order for the reader to appreciate this last point, it might be helpful to recapitulate the main line of our argument thus far. In the first chapter, I have given a critical exposition of Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein. In my view, the 'sceptical paradox' that Kripke expounds is primarily an ontological problem concerning the factual status of meaning. This problem is raised by the demand that any acceptable explication of what it is for a person to mean something should satisfy both a reduction condition and a normativity condition. The reduction condition - I argued - has a broadly physicalist motivation, and requires that the facts that are constitutive for meaning something must themselves be statable without using any intentional, semantical or normative concepts. The normativity condition is meant to safeguard the conceptual adequacy of the explication, and requires that the proposed facts about meaning must be able to account for the normative consequences that follow from the fact that a person means something.

In the second chapter, I subjected Kripke's account to closer scrutiny and I argued that it fails on internal grounds. The sceptical paradox, as Kripke points out, leads to the 'obviously absurd' consequence that people only possess blind, non-

normative inclinations for the use of words, and, therefore, that no one really means anything by any word. The sceptical solution that Kripke offers is meant to take the sting out of this conclusion by showing how a practice of ascribing a meaning to each others words can be conducted on the basis of mere blind inclinations, provided that these inclinations are shared by all speakers involved. Yet, Kripke's claims to the contrary notwithstanding, we saw that this solution actually fails to meet the standards of conceptual adequacy that Kripke himself endorses. An elaborate attempt to remedy this vital shortcoming proved to be fruitless. For that reason, the sceptical 'solution' is of no avail, and simply leaves the paradox standing with its full destructive force. Apart from the fact that Kripke's solution cannot fulfil its intended role, I argued furthermore that the building stones of this positive account - our alleged 'blind inclinations' - are predominantly fictional entities, and that our practices of taking each others words to be meaningful are already infused with normative features.

Chapter Three investigated some of the possible reactions to Kripke's paradox. We saw that there is little hope of giving a straight solution to it, and a forthright acceptance of the paradox, I argued, would lead to a self-defeating form of eliminativism. Therefore, since we cannot escape the sceptic's problem by means of a sceptical solution and can neither solve it straightforwardly, nor live with its eliminative consequences, the only reasonable response is to regard the paradox as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the premisses that generated it. When it comes to explicating our semantical concepts, either Kripke's reduction condition, or the normativity condition has to be given up.

Next, we have gone into several versions of the latter option, the most prominent of which was Chomsky's account of language. Ultimately, we have found those positions to be wanting. No plausible account of the meaning of language is possible when one principally leaves the normative features of language and language use out of account, and, for that reason, to give up the normativity condition is not the appropriate way to escape from Kripke's paradox.

Systematically, the next step is to take a closer look at positions that involve a rejection of Kripke's reduction condition. As the next chapters will make clear, I take Wittgenstein to be amongst those who endorse such a non-reductionistic view on meaning. Our 'deconstruction' of Kripke's Wittgenstein has thus lead to the point where the views that I actually take to be Wittgenstein's become relevant to our current discussion because they might offer us a means of escaping the predicament in which Kripke's sceptical argument left us. Apart from this systematical import, my sketch of Wittgenstein's position in the *Philosophical Investigations* is at the same time intended to present the reader with an exegesis that can stand as an alternative to Kripke's interpretation.

Yet, Wittgenstein is not unique in thinking that the normative features of language use cannot and need not be reduced to non-normative facts. A similar position has often been endorsed by philosophers of a mentalist bent. In that case, the normative features of linguistic meaning are not themselves regarded as irreducible, but are taken to derive from some underlying mental state or mental 'item' pos-

sessed by the language user. Those mental states, however, are themselves regarded as having intrinsically normative features that do not allow a reduction to some more basic non-normative domain of facts.[1] Bearing such views in mind, it might be thought that - apart from addressing Wittgenstein's position, we must also feature an extensive treatment of other non-reductionistic answers to Kripke's problem, such as the mentalistic one. This task, however, is in my view largely preempted by Wittgenstein's own considerations in the *Philosophical Investigations*. Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following presents us with an argument that, as I will argue, convincingly shows that meaning cannot be located in some such thing as a mental state or a mental 'item' and that, in general, any attempt to disconnect meaning from a normative practice of use is misguided.

Accordingly, my reasons for presenting Wittgenstein's views at this point are threefold. Firstly, an anti-reductionist position such as Wittgenstein's is the only kind of position that might offer an answer to Kripke's problem about the factuality of meaning. Secondly, Wittgenstein's account rules out other non-reductionist, mentalist alternatives to those problems. Finally, in expounding my reading of Wittgenstein I hope to present a plausible alternative to Kripke's exegesis of Wittgenstein's remarks on meaning and rule-following in the *Philosophical Investigations*.

However, before turning to Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following in chapter 5, I want to devote the present chapter to a discussion of the philosophical method that Wittgenstein applies in the *Philosophical Investigations*. I think that such a discussion can hardly be missed if we really want to get a firm grasp on the rule-following discussion. For the *Philosophical Investigations* is a *difficult* book. Yet, its difficulty is of a peculiar nature. Certainly, where a philosophical text is usually fairly abstract, the *Investigations* subjects us to a bombardment of examples and illustrations. Still, it is hardly ever clear what conclusions we are expected to draw from those often bizarre cases. Indeed, Wittgenstein's remarks are couched in a vocabulary that is more colloquial than the average newspaper report, but his smoothly running sentences often run as sand through our fingers. To be sure, the *Investigations* presents us with an ongoing discussion between Wittgenstein and an

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[1] Such a thoroughgoing, non-reductive mentalism might be read in, e.g., Searle's *Intentionality* and Fodor's *The Language of Thought*. Still, some caution is appropriate when calling these positions 'mentalistic'. Indeed, both Searle and Fodor regard mental states as being intrinsically representative or intentional, and both reject a straightforward reduction of such states to non-mental, non-representational states. Searle, for example, explicitly rejects the possibility of specifying intentional states in an non-intentional idiom and in that respect, flatly denies Kripke's reduction condition. Yet, at the same time, both Searle and Fodor are self-confessed physicalists and regard human mental states as 'nothing over and above' the human brain that 'realizes' them. In what follows, we need not and will not address the question whether such non-reductionistic physicalism is viable. In as far as the positions of Fodor and Searle are relevant to the present stage of the discussion, we may suppose this question to allow of a satisfactory answer, and we will focus our attention on the claims that are being made about the intrinsically representational or intentional features of the mental.

imaginary interlocutor, even so, it often escapes us exactly what position or theory is under attack. The *Philosophical Investigations*, in short, is a rather elusive book.

Those difficulties concerning the *Philosophical Investigations* are real enough, and there is no master-key for dissolving them, no vantage point from which this Gordian knot of interwoven remarks will reveal a hidden system. Still, our understanding of the book is facilitated by noticing how its form is related to certain specific aspects of the later Wittgenstein's thinking. In this respect, there are three traits that are particularly worth singling out: firstly, Wittgenstein's depreciatory view of philosophical theorizing, secondly, the important place that he assigns to 'pictures' ('Bilder') as a source of philosophical problems and the resulting 'pictorality' of his own way of doing philosophy, and, thirdly, the anti-foundational and pragmatic tenet of his later work. A full appreciation of these three points will present us, if not with a key, then still with a good vantage point from which to study the *Philosophical Investigations*.

Concerning the first point, Wittgenstein is renowned, if not notorious, for his claim that there is no room for philosophical theorizing, and that there can be no such thing as a specifically 'philosophical thesis'. It may be debated to what extent Wittgenstein succeeds in always following this precept himself, yet, it is clear that the *Investigations* is stamped by the persistent attempt to abide by this adage. Therefore, in order to understand Wittgenstein's project in the *Investigations*, we must get clear about his reasons for holding this view, and we should determine to what extent it precludes the possibility of the more traditional forms of philosophy and the use of standard philosophical language. Such an explication and assessment of Wittgenstein's views on philosophy does not only serve an exegetical purpose. Since the current work on Wittgenstein makes a free use of traditional philosophical distinctions and terminology, I feel that I owe the reader some explanation of my own obvious disregard of Wittgenstein's denunciation.

In the discussion of Wittgenstein's negative remarks on philosophy that is to follow, I will in particular argue against the view that Wittgenstein regards all philosophical problems as deriving from a misuse of ordinary language on the part of the philosopher. This view, I take it, fails to do full justice to Wittgenstein's discontent with traditional philosophy, and it wrongly denies Wittgenstein any positive conception of philosophy whatsoever. Yet, in order to see in what respect Wittgenstein saw room for a legitimate philosophical endeavour, we have to turn to his remarks on pictures ('Bilder'). As will be explained below, the pictures that are forced upon us by our use of language are regarded by Wittgenstein both as an important source of philosophical confusion and as an instrument for philosophical remedy. The role of pictures in Wittgenstein's later thinking is a relatively unexplored topic, and we will therefore treat of it quite extensively.

Finally, even though appreciating Wittgenstein's pragmatic anti-foundationalism is an important key to the intricacies of the *Investigations*, this theme will not be taken up in the present chapter. I will defer a discussion of it the the chapters to come.

II. THE LANGUAGE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS

Wittgenstein's attitude towards philosophy was highly ambivalent. Relentlessly striving to meet the most severe intellectual standards himself, he nevertheless did his utmost to make his students give up the study of philosophy in favour of the manual jobs or practical crafts that he regarded as more worthwhile activities. In fact, one might say that Wittgenstein regarded a dedication to philosophy as something vaguely *indecent*. To what extent this attitude is rooted in Wittgenstein's own character is a question I will not speculate upon.[1] Yet, some theoretical underpinning of this attitude can be found in the famous remarks on the nature and the proper method of philosophy in the *Philosophical Investigations*. Philosophical problems, it is stressed, are conceptual problems that can only be solved by attaining a firmer grasp on how we use the language that is expressive of those concepts. When it is asked how such problems arise, Wittgenstein often seems to suggest that they are exclusively due to a misuse of language to which the philosopher is almost irresistibly drawn and that such problems are therefore not so much encountered, as fabricated. Philosophers tend wrongfully to assimilate the use of expressions that function differently and they are prone to suffer from 'philosophical diseases' because they 'feed their thought with only one kind of examples' (PI # 593). Most importantly, though, philosophers, since they do not realize that the foundation of language is use, uproot ordinary expressions such as 'knowledge', 'object', or 'name' by taking them out of the context of use in which they are properly meaningful and by subsequently applying them in a deviant manner. 'Philosophical problems', it is remarked in PI # 38, 'arise when language goes on holiday' and, in a similar vain in PI # 132, 'the confusions which occupy us arise when language is like an engine idling, not when it is doing work'. So, where words are truly and unproblematically at work in their everyday context of use, philosophers move in a linguistic vacuum, where the ordinary functioning of words no longer counts and their very meaningfulness becomes questionable.

It is important to realize that, according to Wittgenstein, it is an underlying misunderstanding about the nature of meaning itself that lies at the root of the philosopher's blindness to the deviancy of his use of language. Rather than acknowledging that the meaning of a word is intrinsically bound up with the actual

[1] The fact that this feeling of indecency applied as well to his own philosophical activity is well attested to by Malcolm's description of the mood Wittgenstein was in just after giving a lecture. 'Wittgenstein was always exhausted by his lectures. He was also revolted by them. He felt disgusted with what he had said and with himself. Often he would rush off to a cinema immediately after the class ended. ... He insisted on sitting in the very first row of seats, so that the screen would occupy his entire field of vision, and his mind would be turned away from the thoughts of the lecture and his feelings of revulsion. Once he whispered to me "This is like a shower bath!"' (Malcolm (1958), pp. 27 - 8) This attitude is sometimes echoed by those who are influenced by Wittgenstein, compare for example Baker and Hacker's remark that: 'The human intellect, it seems, tends to philosophical error as the human will inclines to sin.' (Baker and Hacker (1980a), p. 279).

contexts of its application and that it can therefore no longer be taken for granted when deviant applications of it are being made, the philosopher regards meaning as something that is prior to use and that can remain constant irrespective of the applications made. As it is remarked in PI # 117:

> You say to me: "You understand this expression, don't you? Well then - I am using it in the sense you are familiar with" - As if the sense were an atmosphere accompanying the word, which it carried with it into every kind of application.

In making this manoeuvre, the philosopher relies on a blanket-notion of meaning that lacks any content. Certainly, he may grant us that a word that is being used in two different ways does not have the same meaning, but he denies that he *is* making a different use of it in his philosophical discourse, since - he claims - he is using it with the same meaning as we are familiar with. Yet, since the meaning of a word is its use, *using a word with the same meaning* can only mean *making the same use of it*, and to say you are making the same use of a word *because* you are using it with the same meaning, merely boils down to the tautology that you are making the same use of it because you are using it in the same way. When we do not take the intimate relation between meaning and use sufficiently serious, Wittgenstein urges us, we may be tempted to take the meaning of words in their philosophical employment for granted.

I think that those remarks represent a valuable element of Wittgenstein's thinking that is still to be taken seriously by contemporary philosophers. In many cases, Wittgenstein convincingly shows that philosophers are prone to use certain expressions in deviant and only marginally meaningful ways, and that such an idiosyncratic, 'philosophical' employment of terms throws serious doubt on the cogency of much traditional philosophical theorizing. His remarks on his own previous use of the notion of 'something being absolutely simple' (PI # 47 ff.) provide a fair example of this. And even today it is not hard to find philosophers who start by assuring us that they will use words such as 'language', 'rule' or 'knowledge' with their ordinary meaning, and who then go on to apply them in the most exotic ways.[1] Indeed, when doing philosophy, it is extremely easy to get trapped by the most ordinary expressions, and it is exceedingly tempting to tailor one's use of language to one's philosophical preconceptions. For that reason, Wittgenstein's warnings are still not obsolete.

So, let us assume that Wittgenstein is right to point out that philosophers can inadvertently be misled by ordinary expressions, to show that often they subtly misuse such expressions, and to trace standard philosophical problems back to these roots by careful analysis. Still, this does not rule out the possibility that there can also be an innovative philosophical practice of language use and such criticism is therefore not sufficient for a wholesale condemnation of philosophy. Yet, as other remarks strongly suggest, Wittgenstein also seems to rule out the very possibility of such a specifically philosophical 'language game' that is not part and

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[1] Our discussion of Chomsky's remarks about 'knowledge of language' may to large extent be seen as such a Wittgensteinian criticism on the deviant use of this term.

parcel of our ordinary use of words. As it is stressed in PI #116:

> When philosophers use a word - "knowledge", "being", "object", "I", "proposition", "name" - and try to grasp the *essence* of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language which is its original home? *We* are leading words back from their metaphysical, to their everyday use.

Here the point is no longer that the philosopher wrongly thinks that he is using the word in the ordinary way. Rather, it is the *metaphysical* or the specifically philosophical use of a word that Wittgenstein deems to be illegitimate. Outside the 'original home' of language, we seem to be told, there is no place for a philosophical use of words. If one were to object that leading words back from their philosophical to their everyday use is to destroy everything that is 'great and important' about philosophy, then Wittgenstein's answer is uncompromising: 'What we are destroying is nothing but houses of cards and we are clearing up the ground of language on which they stood' (PI # 118). This ground of language is completely given by the ways in which words actually function within a practical context of ordinary human activities. It is the web of 'language games' that constitutes the sense of words and that both defines the limits, as well as the object of philosophy. 'Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it' (PI # 124).

Such remarks do not merely caution us against the pitfalls of a philosophical use of language, but seem to rule such a use of language completely out of court. Still, it is not immediately clear on what reasons this censure is based, nor how absolute it actually is. On the face of it, Wittgenstein may appear from those remarks as a hard boiled ordinary language philosopher who holds that all philosophical problems are exclusively due to a misuse of everyday language and that the construction of philosophical theories and concepts can never be anything but a futile attempt to remedy things by abusing language even more. As two prominent Wittgenstein scholars who hold this view put it, philosophers live by 'violating the rules of language in subtle ways' and the proper treatment for the 'monstrous chimeras and phantasmagoria' that result, is to lead us back to 'the safe grounds of language'.[1] Such a view is of a tempting simplicity. It starts from the supposition that there is a definite set of linguistic rules and practices that circumscribe the possibility of meaningful language; it regards philosophical discourse as a deplorable case of not abiding by those rules, and it holds that the only positive task of philosophy is to provide the philosopher with a clearer insight into these rules and to urge him not to transgress them again.

I disagree with this view on the nature of philosophical activity, both considered on its own merits, and as an interpretation of Wittgenstein's views. For as a representation of Wittgenstein's position, this view is in the first place rather one sided. Wittgenstein's conception of the nature and genesis of philosophical problems is certainly not exhausted by the observation that such problems can be due to breaking a set of established linguistic rules. In my mind - as will be explained below -

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[1] See, e.g., Baker and Hacker (1980a), p. 282 and p. 279.

we can neither understand Wittgenstein's assessment of philosophical problems, nor his own way of doing philosophy, when we ignore his frequent remarks on pictures and the pictorial element of philosophical thinking. Secondly, this ordinary language interpretation of Wittgenstein is in my view superficial, since it simply takes it for *granted* that the scope of meaningful language use is exhausted by our everyday practices and it fails to ask why Wittgenstein ruled out the possibility of a specifically philosophical use of words. If this latter question is not addressed, than any such general condemnation of philosophy remains merely an unwarranted dogmatism.

Let me elaborate somewhat on this last point, in order to raise some systematical problems concerning this view on philosophy. We saw that Wittgenstein, in PI # 116, criticized the philosopher's use of such ordinary words as 'knowledge', 'being', 'object' or 'I'. Now, one might be tempted to see in such criticism the basis for a wholesale charge against philosophy: all philosophy - it would then be claimed - is in fact nothing but a inadvertent misuse of such ordinary expressions. From an argumentative point of view, this would nevertheless be too hasty, since no amount of examples, however convincing they are, is sufficient to sustain such a general and exhaustive claim about philosophy. The problem is that such examples, and the indictment following from them, can at best only cover a minute part of what we ordinarily regard as philosophy. After all, it is indisputable that philosophers do not always take themselves to be using words in their usual sense, and that they also frequently rely on technical jargon. The typical answer when asked what you mean by 'transcendental' is not to say that you are using it with its ordinary meaning, but rather, that you are using it in Kant's sense or Husserl's. And it is not immediately clear how a typical philosophical question such as 'Are there any synthetic a priori propositions?' is due to an subtle misuse of the grammar of ordinary language. Indeed, after having been trained as a philosopher, it is easy to become oblivious of the enormous amount of philosophical terms one has painstakingly acquired. The following list of words that are either straightforwardly philosophical or are used in a specifically philosophical sense might refresh one's memory: *abandonment*, *abduction*, *(the) Absolute*, *abstracta*, *abstraction*, *absurd*, *access*, *accident*, *acquaintance*, *act*, *actuality*, *actualization...* To continue this list and to consider what philosophical questions and theories are crystalized in those terms, may prove a useful prophylactic against the temptations of the idea that philosophical issues are solely due to a misuse of 'ordinary language'. (Not to mention the fact that there are many terms that once had an exclusively philosophical use, but that have now become a part of the general public's vocabulary - a phenomenon that leads to serious demarcation problems and ultimately throws doubt on the notion of 'ordinary language' itself.)

So, to present isolated examples of a philosophical misuse of ordinary language cannot substantiate a whole-sale indictment of philosophy, since it does not present us with an argument against the possibility of employing expressions that are typically philosophical, nor does it rule out the use of ordinary words in a different, philosophical sense.

However, there might be a second way of defending this deprecatory view of philosophy. When one accepts that there is a specifically philosophical vocabulary, one does not thereby deny that there are any relations at all between a philosophical and a more ordinary use of language. In fact, it seems rather doubtful that philosophical language can have such a strongly autonomous character, and if it can not, and philosophical expressions have to be rooted in our everyday use of language, then the ordinary language philosopher might have a way of rephrasing his charge against philosophy. An adept of the 'misuse of ordinary language view' of philosophy might now claim that our elaborate philosophical vocabulary and the questions and observations that gave rise to it is merely a superstructure erected upon two and a half millennia of implicitly misunderstanding and misusing ordinary language. Where a philosopher is not overtly misusing ordinary language, he is still covertly doing so, as would become clear if he were to trace his philosophical vocabulary to its roots in everyday language. His 'typically philosophical use of language' can thus by careful analysis be revealed as a hidden misuse of ordinary terms.

On the face of it, though, that claim is neither *obvious*, nor even *plausible*, so that the burden of proof is certainly with the ordinary language philosopher. But if he is to shoulder this burden, he would actually have to show how each and every philosophical problem *de facto* springs from some misunderstanding of the grammar of ordinary language - a rather Gargantuan task that is tantamount to solving all philosophical questions or, in fact, all *possible* philosophical questions. Such a labour, I suspect, is impossible to execute. Given that the ordinary language philosopher has to carry such a burden, his general and all inclusive statement about the nature of philosophy now turns out to be merely a badly supported empirical hypothesis about the genesis of philosophical problems and will in all probability always retain that status. Thus, the view that philosophy can in general be condemned because all philosophical use of language is either directly or indirectly a misuse of ordinary language it is quite difficult to substantiate and I think we should be cautious in ascribing it to Wittgenstein.

Still, those who have serious doubts about the cogency of traditional philosophy might try to find a more principled reason to support their suspicion. In particular, they might try to argue that there is somehow no 'semantical space' for the kind of language in which philosophical problems are phrased and articulated. This, I think, is an implicit presupposition of many a defendant of the 'misuse of ordinary language view', and it is, as I will argue below, also Wittgenstein's view. Nevertheless, whatever the merits of such a claim are, it is important to realize that with this thesis we have shifted ground so thoroughly that the initial idea that philosophy depends solely on a misunderstanding and misuse of ordinary language now simply becomes irrelevant. If it can be argued that there is something semantically wrong with the way in which philosophers use language, it is no longer a salient question what has brought them to this use of language in the first place. If, e.g., a philosopher lacks the means to render his use of 'the Absolute' meaningful, then it is hardly interesting what possible misunderstanding of ordinary language tempted him to coin this expression in the first place. Thus, to hold that philosophi-

cal problems exclusively stem from a misunderstanding of ordinary language is either to endorse a badly supported hypothesis, or it is a rather uninteresting view that derives its real bite from the implicit supposition that there can be no semantic space outside ordinary language.

It is this latter thesis that I take Wittgenstein to be endorsing when he rules the philosophical use of language out of court as 'an engine idling' and a case of 'language being on holiday'. In doing so, Wittgenstein explicitly denies the philosopher the possibility of a creative use of language, and his real charge against philosophy is that where words are meaningful due to a practice of language use, a *philosophical* use of language cannot constitute such a meaning-conveying practice. Wittgenstein does not explicitly state his reasons for this view. Yet, if we want to unearth them, we may derive an important clue from the observation that a proper practice of language use or a specific language game is for Wittgenstein never a purely *verbal* matter. A practice for the use of language does not simply relate words to words, but connects words with practical everyday activities and is therefore to a large extent a 'technique' for relating words to the non-verbal context in which they are used. A good example of this is provided by the language game of the builders in # 2 of the *Philosophical Investigations*. On the face of it, their 'language' is exceedingly simple, consisting merely of the four words 'block', 'pillar', 'slab' and 'beam'. Yet, this simplicity of vocabulary is paired with a rich functional setting. Apart from the vocabulary of this language game, Wittgenstein also specifies a linguistic community (the two builders), a practical context (the activity of building), a use (giving orders and acting upon them), criteria for understanding (bringing the right stones), and methods for teaching the language (see PI ## 6 - 7). As is stressed in PI # 7, it is only relative to this rich practical context that the four words of the builders carry a specific meaning.

The same point also stands out very clearly in Wittgenstein's treatment of mathematics. Within mathematics, we may of course have techniques for relating mathematical signs to each other. Yet, it is Wittgenstein's view that in order for mathematical expressions to be properly meaningful, this purely mathematical use of signs has to be connected with an extra-mathematical context of use:

> I want to say: it is essential to mathematics that its sign are also employed in *mufti*. It is the use outside mathematics, thus the *meaning* of the signs, that makes the sign-game into mathematics. (RFM V, 2)

Our ordinary ways of counting and making calculations are indeed employed in this way:

> What we call "counting" is an important part of our life's activities. Counting and calculating are not - e.g. - simply a pastime. Counting ... is a technique that is employed daily in the most various operations of our lives. And that is why we learn to count as we do: with endless practice, with merciless exactitude; that is why it is inexorably insisted that we shall all say "two" after "one", "three" after "two" and so on. (RFM I, 4)

Of course, not all parts of mathematics are so straightforwardly related to practical activities as operating with natural numbers is, and we must assume that for Wittgenstein this relation may to a certain extent be indirect. Yet, however indi-

rectly, it must be possible to anchor our mathematics in some extra-mathematical practice. Where this is not the case, the very meaningfulness of the mathematical practice seems to become questionable. In this regard, arithmetic with transfinite cardinals is one of Wittgenstein's black sheep, and the way in which he voices his doubts about the cogency of that part of mathematics is surprisingly reminiscent of his criticism of philosophy. In *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* II 35, for example, it is conceded that there may be mathematical considerations for making a particular claim about transfinites, but it is then remarked:

> "These considerations may lead us to say that $2^{\aleph_0} > \aleph_0$." ... But if we do say it - what are we to do next? In what practice is this proposition anchored? It is for the time being a piece of mathematical architecture which hangs in the air, and looks as if it were, let us say, an architrave, but not supported by anything and supporting nothing. (*RFM* II, 35)

Wittgenstein's criticism of philosophy - I want to suggest - is very much on a par with those critical notes on mathematics. The typical philosophical use of language, in Wittgenstein's view, fails to have the required connection with everyday practical activities; philosophical terms fail to have the *civil* use that is required for rendering them properly meaningful. Indeed, there may be purely philosophical considerations for holding a particular philosophical thesis, yet, it is a mirage to think that for that reason alone philosophy is a salient practice, rather than a self-contained intellectual pastime. The problem with traditional philosophy, according to Wittgenstein, is therefore not so much its misuse of ordinary language, as its alienation from ordinary life.

However well the last paragraph may express the sentiments that underlie Wittgenstein's rejection of traditional philosophy, one might ask oneself whether this charge against philosophy can be spelled out in such a principled way that it can indeed support a *global* rejection of philosophy.[1] I very much doubt this. If we bear

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[1] My interest, throughout this discussion, is in determining whether Wittgenstein's remarks offer us a good reason for such a whole-sale rejection of a specifically philosophical employment of language. Though it is often assumed that it was Wittgenstein's intention to press such an all-embracing thesis, I am not really certain about that. On the one hand, his remarks seem to aim at a categorical rejection of philosophical language. On the other hand his own practice of language use often seems to belie it, as is testified to by his use of such terms as 'grammar', 'language-game', 'form of life', and his consistent distinction between 'Bedeutung' as the meaning of a word and 'Sinn' as the meaning of a sentence. By arguing that if Wittgenstein intended a general rejection, then still his reasons are not conclusive, I hope to be excused from pronouncing on the exegetical question.
It must be born in mind that presently the *general* thesis about philosophy is under investigation, and that I do not want to deny that there are particular instances of philosophical claims that stand condemned because they do not stand in the proper relation to a practical context. In my view, the endorsement of theoretical or Cartesian doubt provides a good example of such a philosophical claim as will elaborately be argued in Chapter 6. Yet, Cartesian doubt does not have the proper relation to practical contexts because this theoretical position *does* have straightforward practical consequence that the philosopher will not - and *cannot* - live by. The question presently under discussion is whether a philosophical thesis that does *not* have such direct practical consequences is for that reason not properly meaningful.

in mind what was remarked about the paradigmatic language game in PI # 2, it should be noticed that for philosophical language too, there is a linguistic community, a use, criteria for understanding, and methods for teaching. So, the lack of a *practical* context, in some sense of the word practical, must be why philosophy stands condemned. Yet, to explicate what, in this respect, we can and cannot count as 'practical' runs into formidable difficulties. Firstly, this explication would have to rule out such activities as reading, writing, attending lectures and conferences, teaching and correcting, discussing, taking part in television panels, as not being practical in the required sense, but at the same time it should not narrow down the notion of a practical context to such an extent that only the most elementary forms of language use are acceptable. Where the 'misuse of ordinary language view' of philosophy runs into demarcation problems about what to count and not to count as 'ordinary language', the present view would seem to run into very similar problems with regard to the notion of a 'practical context'. But, secondly, even if one could solve such conundrums and one could show that philosophical activities are not practical in the required sense, then it would still have to be shown that the typical activities of a philosopher have no bearing on 'practical' everyday life, even in an indirect way. That, I think, simply cannot be argued with any plausibility.[1]

However, one might raise the objection that such rather technical problems concerning the demarcation of a 'practical' context fail to capture the spirit of Wittgenstein's criticism. I think that is correct. At the beginning of this section I noticed that Wittgenstein felt an almost moral unease about philosophy. I did not want to speculate about any personal reasons he might have had for this, and instead I have scrutinized the possible intellectual motivation for this view. I argued that philosophy's alleged misuse of ordinary language is not an acceptable reason for such a general indictment, and have traced Wittgenstein's objection to the view that any use of language needs to be anchored in a practical context in order to be properly meaningful. But to explicate the notion of a practical activity in such a way that it can serve as a demarcation criterion by which philosophical language is revealed as semantically lacking, raises formidable and, in my view, unsurmountable difficulties. At this point, however, we may try to do more justice to the spirit of Wittgenstein's deprecatory remarks on philosophy by focussing on the moral intent of his unease. Perhaps we do best not to understand Wittgenstein as claiming that philosophy has no bearing on any practical context whatsoever, but rather, as maintaining that it lacks a connection with a practice that has an *ethical* import or that testifies to a certain ethical "directedness". Philosophy, the objection would then read, is completely unrelated to those practical aspects of life that matter in the sense of having a moral import. A certain episode reported by Malcolm can give this point more bite than any of my elaborations could. Malcolm tells us how, in the autumn of 1939, Wittgenstein and he saw a newspaper report about an alleged British assassination attempt on Hitler. At this, Malcolm voiced the opinion 'that the British were too civilized and decent to attempt anything so underhand' and added

[1] Those who are tired of apologists flagging the contribution of philosophers to the information revolution may easily find different examples from any history of philosophy.

'that such an act was incompatible with the British 'national character'' (Malcolm (1958), p. 32). Wittgenstein's reaction to this remark about 'national character' was one of extreme anger, and the incident cast a cloud over their relationship for several years. The reason for Wittgenstein's anger becomes clear from a letter he wrote to Malcolm in November 1944 in which he explained the reason for their enstrangement over the last five years:

> Whenever I thought of you I couldn't help thinking of a particular incident which seemed to me very important. You & I were walking along the river towards the railway bridge & we had a heated discussion in which you made a remark about "national character" that shocked me by its primitiveness. I then thought: what is the use of studying philosophy if all that it does for you is to enable you to talk with some plausibility about some abstruse questions of logic, etc., & if it does not improve your thinking about the important questions of everyday life, if it does not make you more conscientious than any ... journalist in the use of the *dangerous* phrases such people use for their own ends. You see, I know that it's difficult to think *well* about "certainty", "probability", "perception", etc. But it is, if possible, still more difficult to think, or *try* to think, really honestly about your life & other peoples lives. And the trouble is that thinking about these things is *not thrilling*, but often downright nasty. And when it's nasty then it's *most* important. (cited in Malcolm (1958), p. 39)

Wittgenstein's most important reason for being dissatisfied with much of traditional philosophy, I would want to suggest, is exactly that it 'does not improve your thinking about the important questions of everyday life' and does not make you more 'conscientious'. This charge, however, does not merit a principled rejection of philosophical language on semantical grounds, and the determination of its validity is something that I will leave up to the conscience of the reader himself.

Now that we have reached the end of our discussion of Wittgenstein's negative remarks on philosophy, we may summarize our findings. Firstly, we have seen that there is little reason to suppose that Wittgenstein rejected philosophy *tout court* because of its alleged misuse of ordinary language. Secondly, there are reasons to think that Wittgenstein doubted the meaningfulness of a philosophical use of language because of its isolation from a practical context. This objection, I argued, cannot be spelled out in such a principled way that it can be made to stick. Thirdly, I have tried to make it plausible that the accusation that philosophy does not bear the proper relation to practical life is for Wittgenstein rather an ethical, than a semantical objection. In Wittgenstein's work we find many good reasons for being cautious about our standard philosophical problems, distinctions and ways of theorizing. We do not find sufficient ground for a wholesale rejection of philosophy.

III. Pictures

There is yet another reason for being dissatisfied with the superficial, traditional exegesis of Wittgenstein's criticism of philosophy. The idea that Wittgenstein regarded philosophical problems as merely due to a misuse of ordinary language or that he thought that philosophy is just going through linguistic motions in a semantic void, renders Wittgenstein's own life-long commitment to philosophy deeply

puzzling. If philosophy is merely intellectual sin, then the best one can do is to point out the sin, and to tell the sinner to 'go hence from here, and sin no more'. And, of course, some people do dedicate their lives to correcting the sins of their fellow human beings. Those are either saints or criticasters, Wittgenstein - I think - was neither. Where philosophy uses language in a deviant and problematic way, it may count on Wittgenstein's straightforward condemnation but not on his time or his philosophical efforts. In fact, when we actually *look* at what is being done in the *Philosophical Investigations,* it becomes clear that, far from correcting and sorting out the problems of traditional philosophy, Wittgenstein is hardly interested in those problems at all. What did passionately interest him, however, was a set of very real philosophical problems that are forced upon us by the pictures ('Bilder') that accompany our use of language. To understand the role of those pictures, both as a source of philosophical puzzlement and as a means of escaping from it, is essential for getting a proper grasp on the way in which Wittgenstein proceeds throughout the *Investigations.*

The role of pictures in the later Wittgenstein's thinking has received surprisingly little attention.[1] This may to some extent be due to the fact that Wittgenstein does not present us with any detailed or systematical account of the role or nature of pictures. Yet, it is unmistakable that the notion of a picture or 'Bild' features very prominently in the *Philosophical Investigations*, occurring a total number of 263 times, of which 194 occurrences are to be found in 91 different sections of the first part of the work.[2]

The notion of a picture, as the later Wittgenstein uses it, covers a broad array of things. A picture may be a painting hanging on the wall, a drawing made for instruction, a scheme, a simile expressed in language ('wondering what is going on inside someone's head') or it may even be the human body itself, which is called 'the best picture of the human soul' (PI p. 178). But a thought experiment might also present us with a certain 'picture' of a phenomenon, and a turn of speech might evoke a 'picture' in us that we take to be a proxy for the use of a whole category of expressions and that we treat as 'a full-blown pictorial representation of our grammar' (PI # 295).

Two features of pictures stand out in all those disparate cases: firstly, pictures are visual, and secondly, they function as general representations. Pictures, to start with the first feature, are things that we perceive, either literally, or 'with the mind's eye'. Still, a picture, Wittgenstein stresses, is not to be equated with other 'visual

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[1] A notable exception is Judith Genova (see Genova (1993) and (1995)). Genova stresses that one of Wittgenstein's main concerns in the *Investigations* is to change our way of *looking at things*, and she rightly points out that Wittgenstein frequently invokes visual means to bring about such a change. Baker and Hacker also point out that the pictures that go with our use of language may lead to philosophical problems (see, e.g., Baker and Hacker (1980a) Ch. XIII and Hacker (1986) Ch. VI.5.) Yet, in my view their remarks on pictures are too much coloured by their general negative view of philosophy. Pictures, on that perspective, are merely one of the many temptations that lure a philosopher away from the safe grounds of language, and that may only be exorcised by an overview of the grammar of ordinary language.

[2] See Kaal and McKinnon, *Concordance to Wittgenstein's Philosophische Untersuchungen.*

items' such as an image ('Vorstellung') or a visual impression ('Gesichtseindruck') (Z # 638). The distinction between visual impressions on the one hand and images and pictures on the other is unproblematic - a visual impression is something one receives rather than makes, to have such an impression presupposes that there is something that gives one the impression, etcetera. But the distinction between an image and a picture - though of great importance - takes more circumspection to explain.[1] The difference between images and pictures is not, Wittgenstein stresses in *Zettel* 638, that images are a kind of inner pictures that are *produced* in a certain way, so that images, as a particular kind of subjective psychological entities, might by their causal or psychological aetiology be distinguished from other such psychological entities as, e.g. pictures. Pictures are not psychological entities in such a subjective sense at all. A picture, first and foremost, is a general form of representation, a paradigm, and it is subject to objective constraints whether one may form such a pictorial representation of something, and in what way one may do so.

This difference becomes clearer from ## 300 and 301 of the *Investigations*, where Wittgenstein discusses our concept of pain and emphatically distinguishes images from pictures.

> It is - one would like to say - not merely the picture of the behaviour that plays a part in the language-game with the words "he is in pain", but also the picture of the pain. Or, not merely the paradigm of the behaviour, but also that of the pain. - It is a misunderstanding to say "The picture of pain enters into the language-game with the word 'pain'." The image of pain is not a picture and *this* image is not replaceable in the language-game by anything that we would call a picture. - The image of pain certainly enters into the language game in a sense; only not as a picture. (PI # 300)

Wittgenstein is arguing, in this part of the *Investigations*, against a view of sensation terms as designations for 'inner objects', and it has already been established that a word like 'pain' does not function in such a designating way (see in particular PI # 293). Yet, this model of sensations keeps tempting us. One way in which one could try to refute Wittgenstein's general analysis, is by pointing out that when you talk about someone's pain, you do at least have a definite idea of *what* you are talking about, since you can imagine or have a picture of this very thing (the pain) that is going on inside the person who is feeling the pain. Therefore, as this counter argument that opens PI # 300 runs, even if Wittgenstein is right when he says that the *word* 'pain' does not designate an inner object, still when using such words as 'he is in pain' one employs a *picture*, a pictorial representation, of the pain that is being felt. In that case, Wittgenstein's rejection of the view that sensations are 'inner items' would be inconclusive, since there *is* an object that is represented when we talk about someone's pain. It is just that the representation of this object is done by pictorial, rather than verbal means.

It is precisely because this argument depends on the *representational* character of a picture, that Wittgenstein takes such care to distinguish image and picture in those

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[1] As will become clear below, it is absolutely crucial for understanding the *Philosophical Investigations* to realize that Wittgenstein's own thought experiments are intended to present us with *pictures*, rather than *images*. Much of the *prima facie* elusiveness of the *Investigations* is in my view the result of not sufficiently appreciating this point.

sections. Indeed, one can imagine or have an image of the pain that Jones feels after hitting his thumb with a hammer. And one's ability to imagine his pain may, as Wittgenstein says, 'enter into the language-game with the word 'pain''. For example, if I am scolding Jones for staying home after hitting his thumb with a sledge-hammer, then someone else might answer: 'But imagine the pain he must be feeling'. To the extent that I am able to form an image of Jones' pain, my anger is abided and I will accept that Jones is excused after all.

So indeed, to imagine someone's pain may be relevant for the use of the word 'pain', but what exactly is it to form such an image of Jones' pain? Well, I do not know about the reader, but what *I* do in such a case is to think of Jones, and to go through certain bodily motions: I cramp my stomach muscles together, lock my jaws, screw up my eyes and slightly twitch my arm. This is how I form an image of Jones' pain. Yet, to imagine Jones' pain in this way is not to make a picture or representation of Jones' pain as some 'inner item' possessed by Jones. In fact, I have no idea of what a *picture* of Jones' pain, in that sense, is supposed to look like at all, or what function such an alleged picture might have when it comes to using the word 'pain'. Certainly, I can imagine the pain, or form a picture of the pain *behaviour*, but, as Wittgenstein puts it in PI # 301,

> An image is not a picture, but a picture can correspond to it.

I imagine Jones' pain by mimicking pain behaviour, but this is not to make a picture of his pain, even though a picture might correspond to my image of Jones' pain, e.g., a picture of Jones' behaviour; his screaming, his jumping up and down, etc.

The remarks on pain in PI # 300 - 1 are interesting, because the strong distinction between image and picture that Wittgenstein draws in those sections can only be understood in the light of the particular representational character of pictures. To imagine someone's pain is something that you can or cannot do, depending on your powers of imagination, and when you can form such an image, you do so by mimicking a person's supposed behaviour. To form a picture of someone's pain, on the other hand, would be to frame a general representation of a particular item - a pain - and the reason why such a picture cannot be made, is because our concept of pain does not stand for such items in the first place.

However, this is not to say that images and pictures must always somehow be different 'mental items'. This need not be the case, and in general, we do better to distinguish image from picture by the way in which they function, than in terms of what kind of 'item' it is that functions thus. In this respect, it should also be pointed out that an image is of course 'representational' in the sense of being the image *of* a particular something. But a picture, rather than being a representation in this broadly intentional sense, might best be seen as a *form of representation*. Where an image is a visualization of a particular case, a picture is a general mold, a norm for representing many cases in a particular way. So, when something is logically possible, then, provided our imaginative powers are not too dull, we may imagine it and form a kind of visual illustration of the case. But in order for something to be a picture, another step is needed. Something can only be a norm of representation or

a 'paradigm' (# 300) in as far as we are prepared to acknowledge and to use it as such. A picture does not so much enliven the ongoing 'inner show', as does an image, but it rather presents us with an instrument for representing and regarding a particular kind of phenomena in a specific way.

A good illustration of the view that pictures are paradigms that demand our acknowledgement is provided by PI # 144. This section is rather important because it is one of the few occasions where Wittgenstein explains the point of his own way of doing philosophy and where he tells us how the examples that he so frequently offers should be understood. In the previous section (PI # 143), Wittgenstein has discussed the case of a pupil who is learning to write down and continue elementary series of numbers. Several times it is pointed out that the possibility of further training is dependent on the pupil's response to our coaching, and that the pupil's capacity to learn may at each step of the training come to an end. Now, one's first reaction to that observation is likely to be a shrug - indeed, the pupil might turn out to be unteachable, so what about it? In PI # 144 Wittgenstein tells us how we should treat that observation:

> What do I mean when I say "the pupil's capacity to learn *may* come to an end here"? Do I say this from my own experience? Of course not. (Even if I have had such experience.) Then what am I doing with that proposition? Well, I would like you to say: "Yes, it's true, you can imagine that too, that might happen too!" - But was I trying to draw someone's attention to the fact that he is capable of imagining that? - I wanted to put that picture before him, and his *acknowledgement* of this picture consists in his now being inclined to regard a given case differently: that is, to compare it with *this* sequence of pictures. I have changed his *way of looking at things*.

In PI # 143 Wittgenstein asked us to envision the case of a pupil whose capacity to be taught breaks off because he reacts improperly to some basic step of the standard training. Yet, Wittgenstein's point in bringing that case up, is not just to have us imagine it and to make us realize that such a thing, though somewhat far-fetched, is also possible. Rather, he wants us to acknowledge this case as a picture (or rather, one of a sequence of pictures) of the activity of teaching and following rules. To do so, we are told, will change our way of looking at rule-following. Summarily put, rather than seeing the process of acquiring and following rules as a process moving along predetermined logical tracks, the picture of the failing pupil might give us a view on rule-following as a typical human activity that presupposes our natural, yet contingent reactions.

This is not to say that merely imagining a case as in PI # 143 cannot serve any purpose at all. In fact, such 'imaginings' are part and parcel of our standard philosophical practice and the distinction between taking # 143 as an image, and taking it as a picture, therefore also points at a distinction between two ways of doing philosophy or two philosophical 'techniques'. Let me explain. It is quite common that a philosopher makes a general statement about the nature of a particular phenomenon. Our critical assessment of his thesis will involve the attempt to think of a possible counter-example, some case that, though perhaps far-fetched, is certainly imaginable and that will undercut the validity of the general statement. To regard Wittgenstein's examples in this way is guaranteed to make us lose our

footing completely. For instance, if we treat his observation about the pupil in PI # 143 as a counter-example that we are asked to imagine, then we will naturally start looking for some implicit general thesis about rule-following and its acquisition that is supposed to be refuted by this counter-example. But what thesis could that be? Is it the claim that there could not possibly exist any incorrigible students? If that statement was the target of PI # 143, then Wittgenstein would be attacking a position that no one in his right mind would hold. Read as a counter-example, the case of the pupil seems to be of a puzzling irrelevancy.

However, PI # 143 is not an attack on a general thesis about rule-following, but on a particular *picture* of rule-following, and the means of attack is not by presenting a counter-example, but by proposing a different picture. This different picture is meant to function as a new paradigm and is intended to change the way in which we regard the nature of the activity of following rules. In this respect it is important to notice that a picture and a general statement do not bear the same relation to a possible exception. Where a general statement is refuted by a counter-example, a paradigm is not invalidated by the fact that it allows of exceptions. But, by the same token, where a counter-example by its very existence logically refutes a general statement, the same case conceived as a candidate picture has no such logical force. Even though we may acknowledge the possibility of the case mentioned in PI # 143, nothing can logically compel us to treat it as part of a new and better picture of rule-following. We have to be persuaded to treat it in that way and to *acknowledge* the case as a (better) picture that is to be used in future as a focus for representing other instances of rule-following. In other words, to do philosophy by means of pictures is not to exert logical force in order to compel someone to go into a certain direction. Rather, it is to tempt someone with new vistas, to indicate the possibility for changing one's view, and to give one convincing reasons for doing so.

Where Wittgenstein's explicit use of pictures as a means for changing one's philosophical point of view is highly innovative and uncommon, the very activity of framing pictures is something that he regards as part and parcel of our human representational tendencies. Framing and invoking visual pictures that are to serve as a general representation is an ordinary and almost irresistible human inclination. Consequently, the cases of picturing that Wittgenstein discusses cover a broad domain, ranging from explicit pictures that are used in a practical context (e.g., a picture that makes clear how something fits into something else, as in PI # 425), to rather sketchy pictures of what the world basically is like (e.g., the picture of reality as build up out of absolutely simple elements, as in PI # 59). In all those cases, it comes natural to our human way of thinking to frame some visual representation of the object that concerns us.[1] Yet, our pictorial propensities are of most interest to

[1] Interestingly, Wittgenstein's emphasis on role that pictures play in our thinking has recently received unexpected support from the paleontologist Stephen Gould. In his book *Wonderful Life*, Gould presents us with an extensive discussion of the strange invertebrates of the Early Cambrian, whose fossile remains have been found in the Burgess Shale of the Canadian Rocky Mountains. Yet, rather than with describing those ante-deluvian antinomies, Gould is concerned with their

Wittgenstein where the pictures in question are correlated with our use of language. The *Investigations* make it clear that Wittgenstein sees a close and intricate relationship between pictures and our verbal means of expression. In this relationship between language and pictures, sometimes it is language that takes the lead. A picture, as Wittgenstein puts it, can 'lay in our language', and it might come to exert a mesmerizing force on our thoughts since language 'seem[s] to repeat it to us inexorably' (PI # 115). Sometimes such pictures are directly evoked by a metaphorical turn of phrase, as when we 'wonder what goes on inside someone's head' (PI # 427), or they are readily derivable from an expression, as when the phrase 'finding the right expression for your thoughts' suggests a picture of the thoughts already being present and the matching expression still to be selected (PI # 335). On the philosophical dangers of this picture generating capacity of language we will shortly say more. For now, it must be noted that if we limit ourselves to such remarks exclusively, we might easily get the impression that Wittgenstein regards pictures as merely a misleading and therefore deplorable side-effect of our use of language. To think so would be quite wrong. It is true that Wittgenstein is primarily concerned with cases where pictures cause problems, and those cases are often the ones where language forces a picture upon us. Yet, pictures are not merely a misleading visual side-effect of our words. Pictures also have a positive role to play. Admittedly, Wittgenstein's positive remarks on the role of pictures are somewhat scanty, and they are usually made when discussing a problematic case of picturing. As when, for instance, it is remarked in PI # 425:

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taxonomical classification, and even more than with their proper taxonomy, he is concerned with the consequences that this taxonomy will have for certain *pictures* of the evolution of life. There is one such picture of evolution that is almost universally known: a line of about ten creatures, starting with something rather amorphous and moving from something crawling on all fours, through several intermediate forms to the human shape. For the general public, this popular icon epithomises the idea of evolution. Of course, no one slightly acquainted with the biological ins and outs will entertain this antropomorphic view on evolution as being a linear progression from anaerobic bacteria to *Homo Sapiens Sapiens*. Yet, according to Gould, even the thinking of such specialists as the evolutionary biologist and the paleontologist is guided by certain abstract pictures of evolutionary development and the diversification of life. For example, biologists tend to picture evolutionary diversification as a steadily branching tree or as a regular cone that is standing upside down. It is interesting that what Gould is discussing here are indeed *pictures* that force themselves upon the biologist, rather than scientific models that have been carefully construed. Also, Gould stresses the visual nature of such pictures, and sees their root in the fact that 'man is primarily a visual animal'. According to Gould, pictures like these do not only guide, but may also *misguide* a biologist, e.g., by interpreting an early fauna as that of the Burgess shale as displaying less diversity than it actually does. Gould's own minute scrutiny of the Burgess Shale fauna is meant to detract from the appeal of such implicit pictures and to clear the ground for his own alternative picture of evolutionary development. In this respect, his way of arguing could well be compared to the way in Wittgenstein often maps out the actual use of an expression in order to defuse the wrong picture that we associate with it. In fact, Gould's *Wonderful Life* could well be seen as the application of Wittgenstein's philosophical methods to the field of evolutionary biology. To my knowledge, this is not due to Gould's acquintance with Wittgenstein's work. Rather, we are dealing with a remarkable case of 'parallel evolution'.

In numberless cases we exert ourselves to find a picture and once it is found the application as it were comes about of itself. In this case we already have a picture which forces itself on us at every turn, - but does not help us out of the difficulty, which only begins here.

As the continuation of the remark makes clear, we may exert ourselves to find a picture in order to elucidate the sense of a sentence. For example, a picture might show what is meant by an order to fit something into something else. This way of transposing the spoken into the visual representational medium is 'in numberless cases' a part of our ordinary activity of understanding sentences; it is one aspect of our practices of making sense of each others words.

However, we must tread carefully here. A picture may indeed elucidate or even show us the meaning of a sentence that someone utters, but it does so in the same way as could a verbal explanation. From a semantical perspective, the pictorial and the verbal medium are on the same level, and the picture is emphatically not some meaning bestowing foundation that is required for the sentence to have a sense in the first place. In PI # 449 we are explicitly warned against the supposition that words can only be meaningful due to some such visual accompaniment:

We fail to get away from the idea that the employment of a sentence consists in imagining something for every word. We do not realize that we *calculate*, operate, with words, and in the course of time convert them sometimes into one picture, sometimes into another. - It is as if one were to believe that a written order for a cow which someone is to hand over to me always had to be accompanied by an image of a cow, if the order was not to lose its meaning.

Here, Wittgenstein once again draws a contrast between pictures and images. This time it involves the distinction between visual items that passively accompany our words while allegedly rendering them meaningful (images), and visual items that are actively employed in combination with our words without being foundational for their meaning (pictures). An important consequence of Wittgenstein's view of pictures as a medium that is semantically on the same footing as ordinary, verbal language is that - as is the case with language - the very meaning of a picture is dependent on the actual use that is being made of it. To invoke pictures should therefore not be seen as an appeal to a use-external determination of meaning. Indeed, to convert a sentence that strikes us as puzzling into a picture may be a means of elucidating the meaning of that sentence, but only if the use of the picture under those circumstances is clear. Even if a sentence is usually meaningful and a picture accompanying it normally has a clear use, still, when the ordinary context of application falls away, both sentence and picture are in the same predicament. As PI # 349 puts it:

"But this supposition surely makes good sense!" - Yes; in ordinary circumstances these words and this picture have an application with which we are familiar. - But if we suppose a case in which this application falls away we become as it were conscious for the first time of the nakedness of the words and the picture.

So, it is of paramount importance that we know what application to make of a picture, and this proper way of using it is not something that is logically forced upon us by the picture itself. Rather, as Wittgenstein repeatedly points out, we have

definite conventional practices for the use of pictures. A picture of a boxer (PI p. 11), for instance, can be used to tell someone how he should stand, or how he should not stand, or how a particular man stood. A picture can be the picture of the general shape of a leaf (PI # 73), provided that we decide to use it in a certain way. Even where the use of a picture is so familiar to us that we are (wrongly) inclined to regard this use as intrinsic to the picture itself - as is the case with the picture of a cube in PI # 139 - then a careful scrutiny will nevertheless make clear that not the picture itself, but our conventional practices determine its application. As Wittgenstein points out in PI # 141, after establishing that a picture does not determine an application all by itself:

> Can there be a collision between picture and application? There can, inasmuch as the picture makes us expect a different use, because people in general apply *this* picture like *this*.

However, to say that the use of pictures is conventional, and not intrinsic to the picture itself, is not to say that the way in which we use pictures is somehow due to an absolutely unrestricted choice on our part. Wittgenstein's example of the picture of an old man (PI p. 54) provides a good illustration:

> I see a picture; it represents an old man walking up a steep path leaning on a stick. - How? Might it not have looked just the same if he had been sliding downhill in that position? Perhaps a Martian would describe the picture so. I do not need to explain why *we* do not describe it so.

But why *do* we see the picture the way we do, and why does Wittgenstein think that he does not have to explain this? The answer, I take it, comes from noticing that it comes natural to us to see a picture in the light of our global knowledge of reality, and to explain why we see the picture of the old man as we do, is to refer us back to the nature of mountains here on earth, which does not facilitate an easy slide downwards, or to point out that the practice of having old people roller-skate backwards down mountain tracks, would soon deplete us of our senior citizens. In short, global facts about ourselves and the way in which the world around us allows us to behave account for the fact that we directly see the picture as that of a man climbing up, rather than down. Seeing the picture the way that we do, we may then put it to a particular use. The general facts about mountains and such things, however, provide the contingent background against which such representation takes place. Pointing out the existence of such a background is part of Wittgenstein's task, mapping it out is not.

So, the way in which we see a picture and the use that we subsequently tend to make of it can be rooted deeply in our way of life, rather than in a convention that we have laid down explicitly. Pictures are a deeper, a more implicit and elusive, a more 'primitive' or 'primordial' realm of representation than our ordinary language. This observation, however, draws our attention to a darker, somewhat pernicious side of pictures. As PI # 349 had put it, a picture is 'naked' outside the ordinary context of its application, but at the same time, pictures come natural to us and assert a strong appeal. A picture may 'force itself upon us' and can seem to convince us of its correctness - even when its very application is not yet clear and its alleged 'correctness' therefore simply lacks any substance. As Wittgenstein

remarks with regard to such expressions as 'the dawn of consciousness with the evolution of man':

> Our language primarily describes a picture. What is to be done with the picture, how it is to be used, is still obscure. Quite clearly, however, it must be explored if we want to understand the sense of what we are saying. But the picture seems to spare us this work: it already points to a particular use. This is how it takes us in. (PI p. 184)

It is situations like these, where we do not sufficiently realize that it is as yet not clear how the picture should be applied, that may give rise to a particular kind of deadlock, which, according to Wittgenstein, lies at the root of many typically philosophical problems. When thinking about thought, sensations or rule-following, we may hit on a picture of what those things really seem to be like. In the picture, we almost literally see the very quintessence of the phenomenon with which we are dealing. Still, the picture jams or remains stubbornly inert when we attempt to cash in on its promise. We see the radiant lands of Canaan clearly, but are not able to enter them. Such a picture may come to exert an obsessive power over our thought. For we seem to perceive the solution to our problem clearly, but, as if a glass wall stands in the way, we are prevented from actually reaching it. So, we probe deeper, we hit the glass even harder... Just as the fly bangs against the fly-bottle because it sees where it wants to go, so, when doing philosophy, we may obsessively bang our heads against language because beneath it we clearly see the picture that we want to put into words.

Now, of course such a description is itself only a picture of the mesmerizing force that pictures may exert. Wittgenstein applies this picture by giving specific examples and particular reasons why we should be heedful of pictures when doing philosophy. I will briefly go over a few different cases that are mentioned in the *Investigations*.

A first type of case that Wittgenstein discusses, is where we misapprehend the status of a picture. A picture is a form of representation, a paradigm for looking at things in a particular way, yet we may mistake such a form of representation for the description of a very general fact. In regard to the mind, or to the relation between mind and meaning, we possess many ordinary pictures that might easily be mistaken for descriptions of general facts. As it is pointed out at PI p. 184:

> "The mind seems able to give a word meaning" - isn't this as if I were to say "The carbon atoms in benzene seem to lie at the corners of a hexagon"? But this is not something that seems to be so; it is a picture.

The mind giving meaning to a word, the rule intimating the way one is to go (PI # 222), knowing only from your *own* case what pain is (PI # 295) - all of these, Wittgenstein points out, are pictures and the only salient question with regard to such pictures is how they are applied and what purpose they serve. Indeed, we are never *completely* taken in in this regard: we know that it is not 'really' or 'literally' a fact that the rule tells us how to go, but still, it so strongly *seems* to be a fact, that we shy away from flatly denying it to be the case. The difficulty here is in realizing that the problem is not one of establishing or denying any facts in the first place, but

rather one of understanding the application of the picture. In order to reach such an understanding, however, we must carefully scrutinize the picture that presses itself upon us, rather than rejecting it out of hand. Just as our ordinary ways of talking are regarded by Wittgenstein as something that is to be understood but never to be changed, so in his observations on pictures there is hardly ever any question of eliminating a picture. On the contrary, as is stressed in PI ## 423-4 with regard to the picture of the mental as something residing inside us:

> *Certainly* all these things happen in you. - And now all I ask is to understand the expression we use. - The picture is there. And I am not disputing its validity (Gültigkeit) in any particular case. - Only I also want to understand the application of the picture.
>
> The picture is *there*; and I do not dispute its *correctness* (Richtigkeit). But *what* is its application? ...

On the face of it, such remarks lead to an obvious difficulty. I have stressed above that something is a picture, in its full representational sense, in virtue of the conventional use that we make of it. But in remarks such as this one, as in several remarks that we will discuss below, it is the very existence of such an established application of the picture that seems to be in question. How then can it be said that the 'correctness' or the 'validity' of a picture is not in dispute, when its application is not yet settled? With what justification could we even speak of a 'picture' in such a case?

In order to see how this objection could be answered, we firstly have to distinguish the cases where a picture has a definite use within a limited domain, from those where it does not seem to have any use at all. The first case will be discussed more elaborately below, and is relatively unproblematic: we know how to apply the picture in specific instances, but get stuck when we want to use it outside this restricted domain. The second case, however, is more interesting. In order to see our way, we might take our lead from PI # 59, where Wittgenstein discusses the picture of reality as built up out of simple *elements*. This is a picture that we do not know how to apply. What we do possess is a clear and readily applicable notion of the *component parts* (Bestandteile) of something composite, and, Wittgenstein points out, the picture of reality as consisting of elements is built up or derived from the picture of an ordinary thing having component parts. To derive the elements-picture from the component parts picture is not an overgeneralization. Rather, the notion of a component part, which is relative and applies to ordinary things, is now transformed into a picture of absolutely simple elements that is meant to apply to the world *in toto*. Because this latter picture is parasitic on the mundane notion of things being composite, it may seem to be cogent to us and it seems to be applicable even though we cannot think of a particular application. Since we readily know how to apply the first picture, we think that the picture that we have derived from it must have an application too.

I do not know whether we should say that in the case of reality consisting of elements we really have a picture, or that we have something that only *seems* to be a picture without really being one. I do not think that it matters much either way. What is important, is that such pictures *are* challenged by Wittgenstein. In the

sections following PI # 59, Wittgenstein is not concerned with attaining a better understanding of the elements-picture, but rather, he attempts to show that this picture is nothing but an illicit distortion of the component parts picture, so that we do best simply to discard it. This then, is a second way in which we might be mislead by pictures. From a well understood, applicable picture we might derive a ghostly counterpart, whose semblance of applicability is merely a shadow cast by its model.

When a picture has a unequivocal application, it was pointed out above, it might elucidate the meaning of an utterance. A third type of problem occurs when the application of the picture is unclear or not yet fixed. In that case, the fact that we can associate such a picture with a sentence that we do not really understand might merely trick us into believing that the sentence has after all a definite sense. So here we are not mistaken about the status of the picture, but rather, we too easily suppose that possessing a picture will render the sentence meaningful. One example of such a case is mentioned in Zettel 251:

> "The supposition that this person - who behaves quite normally - is nevertheless blind, surely makes sense!" ... And that means: I picture the thing I am supposing. Very well: but does it go any further than that? ... This picture only becomes important here, where it is so to speak the only thing that gives a handle for thinking that I really have supposed something. That is all that is left of there being an assumption here.

A similar case is discussed at some length in PI # 352 of the *Investigations*. Here Wittgenstein criticizes the thesis that 'in the decimal expansion of π either the group '7777' occurs, or it does not - there is no third possibility'. What is at stake, is not so much the validity of the law of excluded middle. Rather, Wittgenstein takes it that the statement about π, in the absence of any idea of how to prove it, is not properly meaningful to start with. Nevertheless, he points out, we do tend to invoke a picture of this infinite expansion of π - perhaps the picture of some visible series of numbers which *we* fail to oversee but which still is completely fixed (perhaps God can oversee it?). Where we go wrong, is that we use this picture to create the illusion that the meaning of the sentence is fixed after all, and then - as it were within this picture world - we apply the law of excluded middle, thereby reinforcing the mistaken impression that we are already dealing with a definite question about the expansion of π.

> ... this picture *seems* to determine what we have to do, what to look for, and how - but it does not do so, just because we do not know how it is to be applied. Here saying "There is no third possibility" or "But there can't be a third possibility!" - expresses our inability to turn our eyes away from this picture: a picture which looks as if it must already contain both the problem and its solution, while all the time we *feel* that it is not so. ... What primarily occurs to us is a picture which by itself seems to make the sense of the expressions *unmistakable*: "Now you know what is in question" - we would like to say. And that is precisely what it does not tell him. (PI # 352)

A fourth type of confusion about pictures may occur when elements of two different pictures that are perfectly useful and cogent by themselves are combined to form a new, problematic picture. The *locus classicus* of such a case is

Wittgenstein's lengthy discussion of the machine-metaphor in PI ## 193-4. With regard to our idea that the whole application of a word is in a sense already present and lends itself to be grasped in a single instant, Wittgenstein remarks that this notion is merely the result of 'crossing pictures' (PI # 191). He elaborates by showing how we might derive a similar notion of the 'ideal movement of a machine' by crossing the picture of a machine as an actual physical mechanism with that of the machine as an ideal model for a particular kind of movement. Fogelin clearly explains the mistake we are prone to make here:

> It is through crossing two pictures that I arrive at the idea of an ideal movement or the movement of an ideal mechanism. I derive the ideal from the machine-as-symbol and the motion from the machine as physical object, but of course, that which moves is not ideal and that which is ideal (the calculation) is not something that moves (even if the calculation concerns movement, and for example, has relevance to the prediction of movements). (Fogelin (1976), Chapter XII.2)

Apart from these four types of cases, there is yet a fifth and very persistent way in which pictures may lead to philosophical anomalies. This occurs when we take a picture that may have a proper but restricted use, and start to regard it as a general model for the grammar of a whole category of words. 'When we look into ourselves as we do philosophy' it is pointed out in PI # 295, 'we often get to see just such a picture. A full-blown pictorial representation of our grammar. Not facts; but as it were illustrated turns of speech.' When philosophers feel compelled to make pronouncements about, e.g. pain, that are at odds with how one normally talks about pain, then it is not infrequently the case that the philosopher is lead by a global picture of the 'nature of pain' that seems to dictate in advance what one must hold about such a sensation. Of all the pictures that might play such a role, the one discussed most elaborately by Wittgenstein is that of the mental as belonging to an 'inner' world that stands opposed to the 'outer' world to which our bodies belong. Indeed, we do sometimes evoke the picture of sensations or mental states as something that goes on 'inside us'. This, on itself, is dangerous enough. But, in Wittgenstein's view, we all too easily generalize this picture of the mental by treating it as a model that determines what does and what does not make sense to say about sensations. The picture then seems to give us a guideline for all our discourse about the mental and blinds us to the actual grammar of the expressions involved. When, for example, we come to regard pain as something residing 'within' us - a kind of 'mental object' that is referred to by our word 'pain' - then it is tempting also to apply this picture to our knowledge of such sensations. Since, presumably, only *I* have access to such inner items as pains, it must also follow that only *I* can really know that I am in pain - the others can only surmise it. But with this manoeuvre, as Wittgenstein points out in PI # 246, we have allowed our 'inner item picture' of pain to get the better of our ordinary grasp on sensation language, and we have become blind to what normally makes sense to say about pain. Normally speaking, it may perfectly well be said of other people that they know that I am in pain, and to say about myself that I *know* that I am in pain, far from being a cogent epistemic claim, is at best a strong assertion that I *am* in pain. The picture of sensations as inner items that only I can survey tempts us in such a case to miscon-

strue the grammar of our sensation language.

I have somewhat elaborated on those different types of problems caused by our employment of pictures, in order to show Wittgenstein's sensitivity to the subtly different roles that pictures may play in generating philosophical problems. Thereby I hope to even further undermine the idea that - in Wittgenstein's mind - philosophical problems are nothing but the result of a perverse and somewhat puzzling misuse of ordinary language on the part of the philosopher. We cannot understand Wittgenstein's negative remarks on philosophy unless we take account of his view on pictures. This is not to deny that philosophical problems can be deeply rooted in our use, or even in our *misuse* of language. That much was already pointed out in the first part of this section, where I also mentioned the problems discussed in the previous chapter as an example of such conundrums. Furthermore, we have seen that in those cases where a picture *is* the driving force behind a philosophical problem, the picture usually bears an intricate but close relation to our ordinary forms of expression. Language can be the motor of many a philosophical problem, but by focussing exclusively on problems that are due to a misuse of language we arrive at a view of Wittgenstein's concern with philosophy that is both superficial and one-sided. It is superficial, because the dangers inherent in language are not exhausted by the possibility of its misuse. It is one-sided, because it fails to notice the pictorial roots of philosophical problems. What results, is a purely negative, a somewhat puzzling, and basically an *uninteresting* view on philosophy.[1] More importantly perhaps, as will be pointed out below, it results in a view of philosophy which easily leads to a serious distortion of Wittgenstein's most basic points concerning rule-following.

But as we have seen, the philosophical problems that seriously occupied Wittgenstein himself are not just due to a particular insensitivity to the demands of language or to a freewheeling carelessness regarding the 'bounds of sense'. In many cases, they are the offspring of pictures coming to acquire an - often implicit -

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[1] Nevertheless, it looks as if this view is becoming more popular by the day. Glock epithomises this view nicely in his recent *A Wittgenstein Dictionary*: 'Philosophical problems evince conceptual confusions which arise out of the distortion or misapprehension of words with which we are perfectly familiar outside philosophy. These problems should not be answered by constructing theories, but dissolved by describing the rules for the use of the words concerned." (Glock (1996), p. 27) Those and similar pronouncements one may encounter many times without realizing the utter weirdness of the view expressed. For look at the first sentence of Glock's statement and ask yourself what could possibly make someone distort and misapprehend words with which he is otherwise perfectly familiar. The answer cannot be: 'a philosophical problem', for it is claimed that these problems are merely the result of the misuse, not its inspiration. Is it a particular madness perhaps? Look at the second sentence, and ask yourself why one should 'describe the rules for the use of the words concerned', rather than simply forbidding a person to do philosophy. After all, the description is not meant to give the rules for a philosophical use of language (there is no such thing), but to give the rules for the ordinary use. For that ordinary use of language, however, the person does not need any rules in the first place, since he is already 'perfectly familiar' with it. In my mind, neither this view on philosophy, nor its 'therapy' make any sense.

hold over our thinking. The often strange pronouncements we feel inclined to make when doing philosophy can to a large extent be traced to this pictorial root. Given the important role that pictures play as a source of philosophical problems, it is necessary to keep bearing in mind that Wittgenstein regards the framing of pictures as a natural human propensity. Making pictures is not something from which we can voluntarily abstain once we have become convinced of the dangers involved, nor can we simply put an appealing but misleading picture aside. This almost instinctive character of our picturing proclivity accounts both for the phenomenology of philosophical problems, and for Wittgenstein's method of dissolving them. As Wittgenstein depicts it, a philosophical problem is typically of a haunting, *obsessive* character. A picture confines us by binding us to one exclusive view of things and by forcing us to keep retracing one and the same outline that we know to be defective. This vexing nature of philosophical problems is well expressed by such remarks as:

> A simile that has been absorbed into the forms of our language produces a false appearance, and this disquiets us. "But *this* isn't how it is!" - we say. "Yet *this* is how it has to *be*!".
>
> "But *this* is how it is -" I say to myself over and over again. I feel as though, if only I could fix my gaze absolutely sharply on this fact, get it in focus, I must grasp the essence of the matter.
>
> A *picture* held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably. (PI ## 112-3, 114)

A philosophical problem imprisons our thinking by producing a 'mental cramp' (BB, p. 1). The attempt to solve such problems is therefore in the first place a pursuit for quietude and release.

> The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to. - The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* in question. - Instead, we now demonstrate a method, by examples; and the series of examples can be broken off. - Problems are solved (difficulties eliminated), not a *single* problem. There is not *a* philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies. (133)

The questions that bring philosophy itself into question, are those all-encompassing, foundational questions, in regard to which any attempted answer throws doubt on the very cogency of the attempt to answer them. The philosopher, e.g., tries to give us a foundational account of knowledge, inescapably entangling himself in questions about the foundation and the epistemic status of the account itself. Or one might think of the *Tractatus* itself as one of the most excellent examples of this problematic way of doing philosophy: in trying to account for the general nature of meaning and representation, the very meaning of the account itself becomes questionable.

The discovery that enables one to stop doing philosophy is the same discovery that enables one to actually get some philosophical work done: it is the realization that what one needs in philosophy is not to arrive at a uniquely correct view of some ultimate foundation or essence, but to find a method by which one can work one's way towards a complex, many-faceted perspective of what is actually there at the surface. The discovery that puts philosophy at rest, is the realization that one

must not, for example, strive for an instantaneous insight into 'the general form of the proposition', but for a method that allows a piece-meal investigation into the different uses to which actual sentences are put. The distinction that matters here is that between the involuntary inertia that comes with staring mesmerized at a picture in order to take up some all-inclusive solution in one glance, and the piece-meal activity of tackling difficulties one by one, applying the particular method most suitable for these particular difficulties.

Now, one of the methods or 'therapies' that Wittgenstein very frequently employs in the *Investigations* is that of presenting us with new pictures. A *single* picture can bind our thought by inducing the idea that this picture presents an unique and correct model in which we can see the true, underlying nature of a particular phenomenon. Accordingly, the method for releasing us from such bondage is to show that one can devise other, different pictures, that present a new but partial perspective on a domain of phenomena. By presenting the conceptual landscape from different angles, a series of such pictures comes to present us with an overview of the phenomenon in all its complexity.[1]

Of course there are several other ways in which Wittgenstein attempts to break the hold that a single picture may exert over our thinking. For instance, it is sometimes pointed out that a picture allows of applications that are different from the ones that we initially focussed on. The way in which we employ, e.g., the picture of a cube comes so natural to us, that from the obviousness of such applications we tend to derive the idea that this picture by itself 'logically' forces a particular use upon us. To show that the picture of the cube nevertheless allows of a systematic application to other things than cubes can break the hold of this idea of 'logical determination'.[2] Yet another way Wittgenstein employs is to explicate a picture by means of another one. A good example of this is the 'beetle in the box' example in PI # 293. We already seem to know that our sensations such as pain are 'inner items' that are only accessible to ourselves, and this picture of the inner and the outer also seems to dictate how a term like 'pain' must function. Wittgenstein's explication of this picture of sensations as residing 'inside' us, in terms of a picture of a beetle inside a box, establishes the semantic irrelevancy of such inner items and shows us something about the use of a word such as 'pain'.

It is important to notice that in all these cases different *pictorial* methods are put to work in order to resolve the philosophical deadlock that resulted from an obsessive adherence to a picture.

Wittgenstein's view on the role of pictures in philosophy is tightly interwoven with his general view on meaning in the *Investigations*. As we saw, pictures can only function as representations or paradigms provided that they are used in a

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[1] Above, we discussed PI # 143 as an instance of this philosophical method. The long discussion on the phenomenology of rule-governed activities such as reading that starts at PI # 156 also provides a fair example of Wittgenstein presenting picture after picture.

[2] The philosophical point of this case, which here only serves as an illustration of Wittgenstein's method, will be discussed at length in the next section.

certain way. This use itself allows of no 'deeper' foundation but is dependent on a conventional practice that is subject to natural constraints and rooted in contingent human and non-human reality. Those features of pictures are mirrored in Wittgenstein's view on linguistic meaning and rules. Our discussion on pictures might therefore be regarded as a preview of the discussion on rule-following later on in this chapter.

However, my reason for presenting this elaborate discussion on philosophy and pictures is not merely to anticipate on the goodies still to come. An additional reason already mentioned is the need to be more explicit about my own free use of philosophical vocabulary *vis-a-vis* Wittgenstein's seemingly prohibitive remarks on philosophical language. Someone who agrees with the main philosophical points that Wittgenstein makes in the *Investigations* - as I will do in the present work - cannot simply reject Wittgenstein's view on philosophy as being too 'quietistic', but must account for his own disagreement with this view in a more principled way.

This is what I hope to have done. I have argued that Wittgenstein's critical remarks on philosophy do not justify a global ban on the use of philosophical language and should not be read as claiming that all philosophy is merely a misuse of ordinary language. Still, I do think that Wittgenstein is to be taken very seriously when he warns us about the dangers that are implicit in both our ordinary parlance, as well as in our philosophical employment of language. But those remarks, I must stress, can only be properly understood in the light of Wittgenstein's observations on pictures. Philosophers are particularly vulnerable to the perils of language, but this is not because they are linguistically impaired or because they are incorrigible mystery mongers. Not our philosophical pride, but our common sense itself cautions us against such facile assessments. When philosophers are driven towards the pitfalls of language, it is usually because a picture spurs them on. Such pictures may be forced upon us by language, but they may also be pictorial paradigms that come almost natural to us. Such pictures, under which we try to subsume a field of phenomena or even the whole of reality, are real enough and their appeal can be overwhelming. I think that in Wittgenstein's view it is a legitimate philosophical activity to articulate those pictures, to sort out the tensions due to clashing, irreconcilable pictures, and - ultimately - to free ourselves from their obsessive hold. So, understanding Wittgenstein's view on pictures is not only necessary for understanding his remarks on the lures of language. It also provides us with a positive conception of what philosophical activity can be about.

A different reason for elaborating on Wittgenstein's view of pictures is that it gives us a firmer grasp on the way in which he argues. In this respect, I already pointed out how crucial it is not to take the alternative pictures that Wittgenstein offers in, e.g. the rule-following discussion, as counter-examples to some general claim. But taking notice of the role and nature of pictures not only enables us to understand the form of the rule-following discussion, it also provides us with a pointer on how to see its content. After all, the philosophical point that we take Wittgenstein to be making in those sections will partly depend on what we take to

be his view of proper philosophical activity. This is not yet the moment to go deeply into this issue, but it may be helpful to elaborate somewhat. As an example, one might think of Kripke's reading of the sections on rule-following. According to Kripke, Wittgenstein presents us here with a sceptical argument concerning the factual status of meaning that leads to the conclusion that, other than we think, it is not a fact that anyone means anything by any word. Now, given the interpretation of Wittgenstein's view on philosophy presented above - in particular, concerning his critical stance towards traditional philosophy - it is hard to imagine that Wittgenstein would endorse such a traditional sceptical argument with that kind of a conclusion. So, in order to defend this interpretation, either Kripke would have to hold that Wittgenstein's actual philosophical practice is grossly at odds with his idea of what proper philosophical activity is all about, or he must take it that Wittgenstein's view on philosophy is after all much closer to the traditional way of conducting philosophical arguments than his negative remarks suggest.[1]

Baker and Hacker, on the other hand, have argued against Kripke that the sceptical reading of the rule-following remarks is in flagrant contradiction with Wittgenstein's views on philosophy, and should - if only for that reason - be rejected. In this, I think, they are right. Yet, they, in their turn, ascribe the 'misuse of ordinary language' view of philosophy to Wittgenstein, and this is reflected in their interpretation of the sections on rule-following. Where Kripke reads a sceptical argument in those remarks, Baker and Hacker apply their view on Wittgenstein as an ordinary language philosopher, and see him battling against philosophical transgressions of sense that can only be remedied by pointing out grammatical truisms. In line with this interpretation, they claim that the puzzling accord between a rule and an act of following it is to be found in the grammar of language. It is in the intra-grammatical relations between *formulations* of rules and *descriptions* of acts that a rule and an act 'make contact'. As they put it in *Rules, Grammar and Necessity*:

> "... the relation between a rule and what is in accord with it is rendered unmysterious and perspicuous by grammatical remarks ... it is a grammatical truth that an F's ϕing in circumstances C is an act in accord with the rule that F's should ϕ in C; and equally 'The rule that F's should ϕ in C' = 'The rule that is followed by an F's ϕing in C'. ... It is *in language* that a rule and the act in accord with it ... make contact." (Baker and Hacker (1985), p. 91)

We will have ample occasion to elaborate on this view and to discuss it critically. For now, I will merely note that if my explication of Wittgenstein's view on philosophy is correct, then neither of those versions of the rule-following discussion would seem very plausible. Wittgenstein's critical stance towards traditional philosophy is in my view to be taken more seriously than can be squared with Kripke's interpretation. On the other hand, Wittgenstein's remarks on our propensity to be misled by language do not make him a proponent of ordinary language philosophy

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[1] Of course, the sceptical solution that Kripke ascribes to Wittgenstein bears a closer connection to the standard interpretation of Wittgenstein's view of philosophy. It should be remembered, though, that this solution presupposes the sceptical paradox and the validity of the argument from which it follows.

and are not enough to justify the idea that he exclusively relied on grammatical truisms. Given that pictures play the role we sketched above, we should in fact be cautious about distilling a single master view from those remarks on rule-following, be it in the form of a sceptical argument, or in that of a grammatical truism. After all, as a method for doing philosophy Wittgenstein's use of pictures is meant to break the hold of such single, definitive paradigms by constructing in a piecemeal way a manifold of local perspectives. Rather than looking for a master view concerning rule-following, we should attune our expectations to Wittgenstein's own description of the *Investigations* in the preface to that work, where it is remarked:

> The same or almost the same points were always being approached afresh from different directions, and new pictures made. Very many of these were badly drawn or uncharacteristic, marked by all the defects of a weak draughtsman. and when they were rejected a number of tolerable ones were left, which now had to be arranged and sometimes cut down, so that if you looked at them you could get a picture of the landscape. Thus this book is really only an album.

In making this observation, Wittgenstein refers to his method of construction the *Investigations* by arranging and rearranging short remarks. I think that it also gives a good characterization of his way of doing philosophy.

5

Wittgenstein on Meaning and Rule-following

I. WITTGENSTEIN'S PICTURE

One of the main reasons why we have discussed Wittgenstein's negative stance towards traditional philosophy and explained the role that pictures play in his own approach is that we are barred from a full understanding of the *Philosophical Investigations* as long as we are unaware of the extent to which these views shape Wittgenstein's arguments and presentation. Nevertheless, the most important stumbling block for understanding the *Investigations* is the unfamiliar overall perspective that is embodied in Wittgenstein's remarks. Provisionally, we may point out three prominent features of the global position from which Wittgenstein conducts his investigations. Firstly, it is radically anti-foundational. Secondly, it has a distinct 'naturalist' bent while being at the same time strongly non-reductionist. Thirdly, it is both driven by and aiming at a 'philosophical anthropology' that is dramatically at odds with the standard modern self-understanding in that it gives action priority over thought and insight, and the social over the individual. Gaining a full appreciation of these points is of paramount importance for coming to terms with the *Investigations*. For the issues that are involved here are so basic that we often treat our view on them as a presupposition that sets the very standard for what we regard as a proper philosophical account itself. We may then easily miss Wittgenstein's point when he urges us to give up these presuppositions and argues in favour of a different set of assumptions. For instance, when we approach the *Investigations* with the (implicit) desire for a foundational account of rule-following, then time and again our expectations will be frustrated and our understanding thwarted because Wittgenstein seems to have the annoying habit of always stopping short before the foundational issues that we regard as most important. We should then realize that it is precisely Wittgenstein's point that there are no depths hidden beneath the surface that he has covered, and that the foundational guarantees which we crave for are both illusory and superfluous.

Now, to earmark Wittgenstein's general philosophical outlook in terms of these three features requires in depth explanation and a sustained exegetical backing. These tasks will be deferred until a later moment. At this point, I will merely try to give the reader an inkling of Wittgenstein's general position by signaling its seminal presentation in the first section of the *Investigations*. The hermeneutic truth that the deepening of understanding is a spiral movement, rather than a straight drop could be brought to mind as a justification for first offering the reader this mere preview.

The way in which I will proceed needs some elucidation. In what follows I will draw attention to several features of the opening section of the *Investigations*.

However, the weight that I will give to these features does not depend on their mere occurrence in that very first section. It rather derives from my general reading of the book. Guided by this global reading, to be presented in the later sections of this chapter, I will highlight certain aspects of the first section of the *Investigations* that can serve as illustrations of the three features of Wittgenstein's position that I mentioned above. Now, this procedure might easily give the reader the impression that I am making too much out of minor details. If by this objection one means that Wittgenstein did not want us to derive such intricate views from this first section as standing on its own, then I agree. Yet, I think that the features of PI # 1 that I pinpoint can be regarded as themes that reoccur and reverberate throughout the rest of the work, just as a certain tune that occurs only once in the overture of a piece of music may still be a theme of that work because of its employment in the other movements. So, ultimately, the question whether it is proper to stress details of PI # 1 in the way I will do, can only be assessed in the light of my overall reading of Wittgenstein's views on meaning and rules.

When it be asked whether Wittgenstein indeed meant this fist section as an overture sounding the major themes of the whole work, then I cannot but confess my ignorance of Wittgenstein's intentions. I will leave it to the reader to judge by the following pages whether he finds this perspective enlightening.

The *Philosophical Investigations* open with Augustine's description of how, allegedly, he acquired language as a child by finding out what his parents meant when they spoke to him. 'These words', Wittgenstein remarks after quoting Augustine, 'give us a particular picture of the essence of human language'. This picture is the root of the idea that every word has a meaning that is correlated with that word and is the object for which the word stands.[1] Wittgenstein regards this picture as oversimplified and one-sided, and he urges us:

> Now think of the following use of language: I send someone shopping. I give him a slip marked "five red apples". He takes the slip to the shopkeeper, who opens the drawer marked "apples"; then he looks up the word "red" in a table and finds a colour sample opposite it; then he says the series of cardinal numbers - I assume that he knows them by heart - up to the word "five" and for each number he takes an apple of the same colour as the sample out of the drawer. - It is in this and similar ways that one operates with words. - "But how does he know where and how he is to look up the word 'red' and what he is to do with the word 'five'? - Well, I assume that he *acts* as I have described. Explanations come to an end somewhere. - But what is the meaning of the word "five"? - No such thing was in question here, only how the word "five" is used.

What are we being presented with here? Wittgenstein tells us that 'it is in this and similar ways that one operates with words', but that can hardly be taken literally.

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[1] See for an elaborate account of Augustine's picture of language Baker and Hacker (1980a). According to Baker and Hacker, the 'Augustinian Picture' and the object theories of meaning to which it gives rise are the central targets of Wittgenstein's criticism. See for criticism of this view as a *Gesamtinterpretation* von Savigny (1980) pp. 31 - 35. Von Savigny points out that we find an important clue to Wittgenstein's discontent with Augustine in *PI* # 32b, and relates PI # 1, in my mind correctly, to questions about the social versus the individual conception of linguistic competence.

English or German grocers do not keep books with colour samples under the counter, and they do not, upon the order 'five apples', simply present you with five of the things, whatever they may be, that are in the drawer marked 'apples'. Certainly, in the *Investigations* Wittgenstein often presents us with an intricate analysis of our ordinary use of language that is descriptively superior to what we are philosophically lead to expect.[1] But this presentation in PI # 1 is not such a case. Nor should we think that Wittgenstein is so keen on presenting his own view that he looses sight on how grocers and shoppers actually use their words. What Wittgenstein intends to offer us, I think, is not a faithful description of our ordinary use of language, but rather an alternative *picture* of the nature of language.[2] Or, to give both differences and similarities their due, it is perhaps better to say that where Augustine presents us with a picture of the essence of language, Wittgenstein presents us with a picture of a language without essence. Let us try to unpack this picture somewhat.

To start with, we must notice some apparent oddities that come to the fore when we compare the Augustinian and Wittgensteinian pictures of language. Firstly, Augustine's account and that of Wittgenstein seem to be so dramatically at odds, that one might almost want to accuse Wittgenstein of changing the subject. Augustine's child is learning how to speak; from the gestures and sounds made by the adults the child figures out what objects are denoted by the words that are spoken and in this way he is laying the groundwork for his own future competence in language. Wittgenstein's grocer, on the other hand, already knows perfectly well how to employ language. In this respect, Wittgenstein's alternative seems to be wildly inappropriate. Where Augustine presents us with a situation where language is learned, Wittgenstein presents a situation where language is used. Where Augustine attempts to explain what it *takes* to become a competent language user,

[1] Recall, for instance, the remarks on "knowing that you are in pain" in PI ## 246 ff.

[2] Many commentators do not really seem to realize how *odd* Wittgenstein's presentation is as a description of English or German speakers. Baker and Hacker, for example, make much of Augustine's *picture* of language, but Wittgenstein's alternative is merely called an 'example' which is meant, amongst other things, to bring out differences in the (English?) use of the words 'five, 'red' and 'apple'. (Baker and Hacker (1980a) p. 24) Von Savigny (1988) remarks that the grocer 'reacts as he has been taught to' and speaks of the grocer 'reacting in the usual way', but follows this up with the somewhat enigmatic remark that 'the employment of the colour table is, of course, not standard; it characterizes what matters to language use when applying what one has learned' (Ibid, p. 34). Hallett ((1977), pp. 74 -5) regards Wittgenstein's presentation in PI # 1 as a language game. This, I think, is misleading. It has no argumentative bite to counter Augustine's picture of the essence of language by inventing a language game that goes against this picture. This, of course, might raise the question what exactly differentiates a picture from a language game. Roughly put, we might say that the difference between these two is primarily functional: a picture functions as a general representation of a particular field of phenomena, while a language game usually functions as an example that can make a particular feature of our employment of language more perspicuous. In this respect, it might be remembered that we often find language games, e.g., that of the builders, chained together in a growing complexity, incorporating more and more specific features of our ordinary employment of words. The invented example in # 1 does not function in this way, but rather has the generality of a picture.

Wittgenstein merely seems to tell us what one *does* with language, once one has got what it takes to do it. Von Savigny also notes this discrepancy, and justifies it with a reference to PI # 32, where Wittgenstein points out that Augustine's child is in fact like someone who already knows a language and is now trying to understand a foreign tongue. (Von Savigny (1988), pp. 33 - 4) In other words, the situation of the child and that of the grocer are not really different after all, von Savigny claims, since *both* are already in command of language. Now, of course von Savigny is right in pointing out that PI # 32 makes a salient observation about some of Augustine's presuppositions. Still I think that appealing to PI # 32 in order to straighten out the discrepancy between Augustine's and Wittgenstein's account in PI # 1 tends to obscure an important difference. Augustine's account, other than Wittgenstein's, is deeply and thoroughly foundational and is intended to point out the grounds of the child's future linguistic competence. When seen from this foundational perspective, Wittgenstein's picture is very much at odds with that of Augustine. This feeling is shared by the 'Gegner' (as I will call Wittgenstein's imaginary interlocutor), who has the impression that Wittgenstein is merely ducking the important questions and who objects: 'But how does he know where and how he is to look up the word 'red' and what he is to do with the word 'five'?'. This is the kind of question that Augustine attempts to answer and that Wittgenstein seems to leave hanging in the air. On first sight, Wittgenstein's response to the Gegner's question is utterly stunning:

> Well, I assume that he *acts* as I have described. Explanations come to an end somewhere.

Indeed explanations ultimately come to an end, but in this case they presumably come to an end in the very first section of the book, even before a single explanation has been offered in the first place. Of course such an answer does not urge us to exercise a sensible modesty in our demand for explanations. Rather, it is a radical rejection of the explanatory project itself. The kind of explanations that the Gegner seeks and Augustine attempts to supply are here simply rejected by Wittgenstein as not being to the point.

This response might strike us as being unmotivated and unfair, were it not that - in a nutshell - we are also told the reason for rejecting such questions: 'I assume that he *acts* as I have described'. I take this as foreshadowing PI # 43, where it is said that, in most cases, the word 'meaning' can be explained by saying that the meaning of a word is its use in the language. The meaning of the words 'five, 'red' or 'apple' in PI # 1 is fully exhausted by the patterns of action of the people involved, and those are precisely what has been described in PI # 1. Any further question that one might pose, is not a question that is relevant to the *meaning* of those words. Even though we perhaps tend to follow in Augustine's footsteps by looking for meaning in the inner recesses of our minds, meaning is in fact to be found at the surface of our public space, beneath which no hidden depths lurk. Indeed, this is no easy insight, as is elsewhere testified by Wittgenstein himself when he remarks about his own attempt to explain the nature of rules:

> The difficult thing here is not, to dig down to the ground; no, it is to recognize the ground that

lies before us as the ground. For the ground keeps on giving us the illusory image of a greater depth, and when we seek to reach this, we keep on finding ourselves on the old level. (RFM, VI 31)

So, the meaning of a word is its use in the language, the public mode of operating with this word. It is by acting as we do that our words acquire meaning, and the kind of explanatory project undertaken by Augustine is misdirected. Wittgenstein's depiction of language use where Augustine talked about language acquisition and his flat refusal to answer the Gegner's question by brusquely telling him that 'explanations come to an end somewhere' both testify to this new view on meaning and the radical anti-foundationalism that is tied up with it.

Yet, PI # 1 also gives us some important indications of what, according to Wittgenstein, this 'operating with words' consists in. One obvious feature, which is in line with the point made above, is the total absence in Wittgenstein's picture of intentions or mental states sustaining the use of words. In fact, letting the child carry a slip of paper is an artful means for divesting the interaction between grocer and child from as many intentions and mental states as possible. In this respect, Wittgenstein's picture contrasts dramatically with that of Augustine, who mentions such things as 'naming objects', 'grasping' and 'learning to understand' what they are called, 'meaning to point at objects', 'intending', 'expressing a state of mind' and 'expressing desires'.

Other salient aspects come to the fore when we take account of the total setting of both situations. In Augustine's case there must certainly be a minimum of social contact between parent and child, but basically this child is embarked on a solitary intellectual quest for a linguistic competence that, once acquired, might be seen as his own, private possession. Social interaction may be a precondition for acquiring this competence, but there is no reason to assume that the competence thus acquired is itself in any way intrinsically social in nature. In Wittgenstein's case it is the *actions*, the actual operating with words that matters. But moreover, those linguistic actions are intrinsically interwoven with other actions such as, e.g., buying and selling, that take place in a rather complex social setting made up of grocery shops, different social roles and established practices of commerce. The grocer - *this* man, all by himself - indeed knows how to operate with a word such as 'apple', but his actions only have a point as long as there are *other* people who come to buy apples at his shop and thereby provide a context for the exercise of his linguistic skills. This social context, furthermore, requires a permanency that is only to be found in institutionalized patterns of action that are extended over time. Paraphrasing the opening sentence of PI # 199, we could express this point by saying that what we call 'selling an apple' is not something that would be possible for only *one* man to do, and to do only *once* in his life. The same thing goes for counting out the apples that are to be sold.

So, in Wittgenstein's picture, operating with words takes place in an institutionalized social context in which different people can fulfill different roles. In the light of the important role of such social features, Von Savigny draws the conclusion that in Wittgenstein's view linguistic competence is a social, rather than an

individual matter.[1] As the next chapters will make clear, I fundamentally agree with this thesis. Still, two glosses are in order. Firstly, we should notice that intrinsically social practices are not the only extra-individual features that matter to our language use. In order to see what I mean, we may turn to another important element of the description in PI # 1. The grocer, when confronted with the word 'red', takes out a colour chart, looks up the word 'red', and finds a colour sample opposite the word. The chart, therefore, is vital to the grocer's ability to operate with colour terms. Now, what is Wittgenstein's reason for introducing a colour chart here? One motive, I think, is that he wants to draw our attention away from any mental items that might be involved in the employment of this language, such as coloured images appearing before the grocer's mind.[2] But I think there is also a second, and much more important theme being sounded here. The way in which the grocer operates with the word 'red', makes his command of language dependent on the contingent existence of such objects as colour charts. Thereby, it also comes to depend on a whole network of global contingencies about the world that have to obtain if the existence of such charts and the grocer's mode of operating with them is to be possible. If, for instance, the grocery were to become infested by moths that ate the charts, then the grocer would no longer be able to operate with colour words in the way he did, until he had laid hands on a new chart. If such pests were to occur very frequently, and for a long time, then this whole way of operating with colour terms would become pointless. So, the way of operating with language that Wittgenstein describes in PI # 1, and therefore the very meaningfulness of the words employed there, demands that a myriad of contingent facts about the non-human world holds. The crucial importance of such a given factual background is here, in PI # 1, merely hinted at by the introduction of the colour chart, but is more elaborately worked out later on in the *Investigations*. To put Wittgenstein's global point in a nutshell: our ways of using language, following rules, drawing logical conclusions and attaining knowledge can only exist against a given, stable background of facts and conditions the obtaining of which is nevertheless completely contingent. This 'contingency theme' reverberates throughout the *Investigations*, and it is one of the roots of the anti-foundationalism that we noted above.[3]

Secondly, when von Savigny remarks that according to Wittgenstein linguistic competence is not a purely individual matter, he does not seem to notice that this point raises some rather difficult questions regarding the nature of an individual's linguistic competence and, ultimately, regarding our metaphysical explication of what it is to be an individual person in the first place. For Wittgenstein seems to hold that an individual speaker may only be said to make a meaningful employment of language in as far as there exist social practices and contingent non-human

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[1] Von Savigny (1988), p. 32. See also von Savigny's discussion of the paragraphs on rule-following, where this thesis features prominently.

[2] Compare BB p. 4, where Wittgenstein tells us that 'there is one way of avoiding at least partly the occult appearance of the processes of thinking, and it is, to replace in these processes any working of the imagination by acts of looking at real objects' [such as charts or samples].

[3] See for this theme also the discussion of PI # 142 in section 3 of this chapter.

conditions that fundamentally go beyond any individual determination. In that case it would seem that an individual as a language user - as a being that speaks and thinks - can also no longer be conceived of as a self-sustained, autarkic substance, but would rather seem to be constitutively dependent on the multifarious relationships that he entertains with his surroundings. This is not the place to go deeply into this matter, which certainly goes far beyond what we find in PI # 1. We will try to get a better grasp on this issue in the chapters to come, after we have more fully expounded Wittgenstein's views on meaning and rule-following.

In our attempt to read PI # 1 as an overture to the *Investigations*, we must finally notice another outstanding detail: Wittgenstein's way of dealing with the word 'five'. I think that his treatment of this word can be seen as an illustration of what, at the beginning of this section, I have called 'Wittgenstein's non-reductive naturalism'. In order to give the reader a better idea of what I mean by that phrase, I will start off by looking at the remark on the word 'five' in PI # 1, and I will then extrapolate this treatment of numbers to the topic of rules.

Now, when reading Wittgenstein's description of what goes on in the grocery shop, the grocer's mode of operating with the word 'five' is clear enough. Yet, the Gegner feels dissatisfied with this description, and demands to know: 'But what is the meaning of the word 'five'?'. The question, as I read it, should be seen in the light of the referential notion of meaning that the Gegner embraces. What he really wants to know, is what object is denoted by the word 'five', or, in other words, what kind of things numbers are. Again, Wittgenstein's answer seems to be a rejection of the question itself:

> No such thing was in question here, only how the word 'five' is used.

The reason for Wittgenstein's rejection is well explained by Baker and Hacker in their exegesis of this section:

> Wittgenstein's point is that there is nothing left to say about the meaning of 'five' (properly understood) after its use has been described. ... There is no need to answer what, on the Augustinian picture of language, is the fundamental question.[1]

Yet, this explanation leaves several very important questions hanging in the air. A referential theory of meaning may be seen, very simply put, as an attempt to wed the use of language to an ontology that specifies which categories of things are to be found in the world. In this case, such a theory would attempt to relate the use of numerals to some domain of mathematical entities. In respect to such a theory, there are two kinds of questions to be asked: semantical questions concerning the nature of the relation, and ontological questions concerning the nature of the relata, in this case, concerning the nature of mathematical objects. The latter questions are about what is 'really out there', the former are about how to link up that which is out there with our use of language. This bipartition does not imply that we must regard our ontology as being prior to language in the sense of allowing us some language

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[1] Baker and Hacker (1980a) p. 24.

independent access to the things that we talk about. In fact, we may well accept this bipartition while abiding by the central tenet of analytical philosophy that the only road into the ontological domain is by means of the analysis of language.

This picture of referential theories of meaning, I admit, is very sketchy. But thereby it all the better allows us to get a grasp on the question what ontological consequences follow from a non-referential theory of meaning such as is propounded by Wittgenstein. What if we succeed in explaining the meaningful use of numerals without appealing to a domain of mathematical entities? There is of course one obvious answer, which will press itself upon us with a force that is proportional to our belief in the priority of language over ontology: it now turns out that there is nothing 'out there'; that there is not *really* any such thing as a domain of mathematical entities. Or, more cautiously: now there is no longer any reason to believe in the existence of such entities, since we can account for the meaning of numerals without appealing to them. We initially presumed that the meaning of our language had to be accounted for by setting it over to reality, and we thought that there had to be a specific mathematical part of reality in order to account for the meaning of numerals. Now that we can account for the meaning of numerals without appealing to such entities, reality, in a sense, becomes 'emptier' than we thought it was. Thus, we seem to arrive at a kind of nominalism, which holds that there are not really any such objects as numbers, but only our ways of operating with numerals.

Now, is this what Wittgenstein means to imply by his remark on 'five'? Frankly, I think that if nominalism is the intended outcome of this remark, then Wittgenstein's way of describing the situation in the grocery shop is not very fortunate. For what we should expect, in that case, is something like: the grocer says the series of countwords, and for each numeral he takes an apple ...etc. What we do find is: 'he says the series of *cardinal numbers* ... and for each *number* he takes an apple ...' [my italics]. From PI # 1, it appears that Wittgenstein has no nominalistic qualms whatsoever in respect to speaking about cardinal numbers. But does this then mean that Wittgenstein accepts the realist idea of some independent realm of mathematical entities? Neither nominalism, nor realism are, I think, implied by Wittgenstein's remark, and his own position is more subtle than either one of those two views.

However, I do not want to sketch Wittgenstein's view by reference to a mathematical example. The remark on the use of the word 'five' in PI # 1 is useful for posing the general problem and for raising doubts about any alleged nominalist leanings. But Wittgenstein's view on mathematics is both very intricate and hardly of concern to the coming discussion. Let us therefore shift our attention to rule-following. Here we encounter similar problems. Sections 138 to 242 of the *Investigations* are concerned with rules and rule-following. In those sections, we find a drawn out discussion on how rules are being taught, we find important remarks on the presuppositions of rule-following and reflections on the question under which circumstances we would and would not say that someone is following a particular rule. But we might agree with these observations and still, as the

Gegner in PI # 1, have the feeling that we are being left in the lurch. For when wondering what a thing is, we wonder what kind of thing a thing is. And what kind of thing a rule is, we are not being told. Even at the culmination point of the discussion, towards PI # 200, we are merely told that

> ... there is a way of understanding a rule which, ... from application to application, ... expresses itself in what we *call* 'following the rule' and 'acting against it' (PI # 201*, my italics)

or,

> And hence also, 'to follow the rule' is a practice. (PI # 202*)

But so is following a manual, yet, the manual itself is not a practice; it is a little booklet that you can put in your drawer. To follow a rule may be a practice, but what kind of thing is a rule itself? However, rather than being told what a rule is, we are being reminded of how we apply the word 'rule' in a multitude of different cases. As with the word 'five' in section 1, this is Wittgenstein's way of enlightening us about the meaning of the word 'rule' and, presumably, about their nature.

As was the case with numbers, there is a strong but insidious temptation to read a form of nominalism in such an approach, which will only become stronger when we bear in mind that Wittgenstein indeed severely criticizes the idea that rules are use-transcendent items. Baker and Hacker, for instance, readily fall prey to this temptation, as when they remark:

> In speaking of rules at all, we are, in a sense, speaking of fictions, as in speaking of propositions. ... inasmuch as we feel free to speak of rules *existing*, we naturally feel inclined to wonder what kinds of things they are. It is, of course, tempting to say that rules are abstract entities, like propositions, yet unlike propositions in typically being temporal objects. This is true, but gravely misleading. When certain complex patterns of behaviour obtain then we are justified in talking of a rule as existing. It is a convenient *façon de parler*, an ontological fiction. What it conceals is that the sole reality of which we speak consists of interlocking patterns of actual and potential justification and explanation, actions and reactions, uses of rule-formulations in guiding conduct or in evaluating it. (Baker and Hacker (1984b) p. 262 - 3)

I have quoted Baker and Hacker liberally, because their 'nominalism' is inspired by strong anti-Platonist and anti-mentalist sentiments, rather than by a desire for a reductive, non-normative analysis of rules. In fact, they claim that 'the social world we inhabit is made up of normative phenomena' (Ibid., p. 256). In rejecting reductionism, Platonism and mentalism, Baker and Hacker agree with what I take to be Wittgenstein's view. For that reason it is important to understand the flaw in their position. The basic problem with it, I think, is that it is inherently unstable, and always totters on the brink of collapsing into a reductive view on normativity. For on the one hand, rules are seen as a 'convenient *façon de parler*' or an 'ontological fiction', and it is pointed out that the only reality underlying those 'fictions' consists of normative patterns of behaviour. But on the other hand, this normative behaviour is in its turn dependent on the existence of rules, as Baker and Hacker themselves point out:

> Normative behaviour is *informed* by rules, shaped by or given meaning by the rules that it falls under. It is the rules that make the behaviour what it is. We may term this feature the *definitory* aspect of rules. (Ibid., p. 259)

It is not the circularity or mutual dependency by itself that is problematic here. The problem is that this mutual dependency of rule and normative behaviour precludes us from assigning a different ontological status to the rule and the behaviour. Either rules are ontological fictions, and so is the existence of the specifically normative behaviour that is 'shaped' by them, or such normative behaviour is real enough, just as the rules that inform it. Misled by their distaste for a use-independent reifications of rules, Baker and Hacker fall into a kind of nominalism regarding rules that might ultimately be the undoing of their whole account.

Wittgenstein's treatment of the word 'five' in PI # 1 shows in my opinion that he has an open eye for those pitfalls, and that he refuses to let himself be trapped in a dichotomy between the acknowledgement of use-transcendent items and irrealism. This attitude towards such 'problematic' entities as rules or numbers, is what I meant when speaking about Wittgenstein's 'non-reductive naturalism'. I think we can call this position a form of 'naturalism', in as far as Wittgenstein, when elucidating the nature of rules and rule-following, carefully shuns the reification of rules as mental or Platonistic entities and only appeals to 'interlocking patterns of actual and potential justification and explanation, actions and reactions, uses of rule-formulations in guiding conduct or in evaluating it' - as Baker and Hacker aptly put it. But it is at the same time of the utmost importance to notice that this kind of naturalism is also non-reductive in that it flatly takes the reality of rules for granted. Wittgenstein does not hold that rules are ontological fictions and he does not regard our talk about rules as a convenient shorthand for some other, underlying phenomenon. To ignore this feature of Wittgenstein's position and to read his naturalism as an attempt to deny the reality of rules, will lead to a serious misconstruction of his remarks. In this regard, one may bring back to mind the remark from *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* that was quoted above and which we may now re-quote more extensively:

> To what extent can the function of a rule be described? Someone who is master of none, I can only train. But how can I explain the nature of a rule to myself? The difficult thing here is not, to dig down to the ground; no, it is to recognize the ground that lies before us as the ground. For the ground keeps on giving us the illusory image of a greater depth, and when we seek to reach this, we keep on finding ourselves on the old level. (RFM, VI 31)

What are these grounds beyond which we cannot dig? Wittgenstein leaves us in no doubt when, in RFM, VI 28, he remarks:

> Following according to the rule is at the ground of our language game. (*)

In the sections to come, I will go much deeper into this issue. For now, I will with these remarks close the attempt to read the first section of the *Investigations* as an overture sounding some of the work's major themes. It is now time to turn our attention to the whole work itself.

II. WITTGENSTEIN'S RULE-FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS IN CONTEXT

Any particular reading of Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following and meaning in the second part of the *Investigations* will greatly depend on what, if anything, we take to be the overarching question addressed in those sections. I think, as does Kripke, that there is indeed one single problem fueling this lengthy discussion on rules. But, other than Kripke, I do not think that this problem is sceptical in nature, nor that it concerns the factual status of meaning. Rather, in those sections Wittgenstein is addressing an objection that is specifically directed at his own previously established view that meaning is dependent on a practice of usage, and his aim here is to argue out and settle the priority relation between, on the one hand, an individual person's instantaneous (mental) act of meaning or understanding something and, on the other hand, the social practice for the use of a word that is extended through time. Accordingly, this discussion does not result in the endorsement of some sceptical solution, but in a straightforward vindication of the initial view that meaning is dependent on a practice of use and in a radical reconceptualisation of the individual, momentary phenomena that take place within the confines of such practices.

My aim, in this section, is to give more substance to this alternative interpretation of Wittgenstein's discussion and to show how the sections on rule-following, on this reading, fit in with the remarks that precede and follow it. Since both my systematic reading of Wittgenstein's arguments and the general line of argument I see presented in the *Investigations* are drastically at odds with Kripke's interpretation as it was presented in chapter one, I will start, in order to refresh the reader's memory, by reiterating the essential points of Kripke's reading.

As we saw, Kripke reads PI ## 138 - 242 of the *Investigations* as endorsing a global sceptical argument about the factuality of meaning. Kripke's Wittgenstein does not aim his arrows at a particular conception of meaning, but argues in general that there are no facts about meaning in the first place, and that it cannot be literally true that a person means something by his use of language. This sceptical argument derives its bite from establishing the impossibility of a reductive account of linguistic normativity, while at the same time presupposing the need for such a reduction. According to Kripke, it is thereby shown that an individual speaker may at best have 'blind', non-normative inclinations for operating with words, but since his use of language cannot be answerable to any normative constraints, he cannot really, factually, mean anything by it.

As it stands, this conclusion is rather self-defeating. Accordingly, Kripke tells us, Wittgenstein tries to escape from the nihilist implications of this paradox by presenting us with a 'sceptical solution'. Indeed, there are no facts about meaning and an individual speaker only possesses blind inclinations, but within a community of language users those inclinations may clash or converge and may thereby sustain a regular practice for the use of words in general and for the use of such words as 'meaning' or 'correctness' in particular. In this way, the solution pairs a

global scepticism about the factuality of such normative notions as *meaning* with an account of how a word such as 'meaning' can be used on the basis of communal blind inclinations.

Kripke supports this systematical reading of the rule-following discussion by offering us a structural analysis of the *Investigations* that is based on this *Gesamtinterpretation*. The most important point of PI ## 1 - 138, according to Kripke, is that here Wittgenstein trades in his *Tractarian* truth-conditional account of meaning for a account in terms of justification conditions. A first, obvious reason for doing so is that the latter simply presents a better view on meaning. But Kripke also adduces a second motivation for this change in semantic viewpoint which directly follows from his systematic reading of the *Investigations*. By adopting a justification-conditional view on meaning in the first part of the work, Wittgenstein paves the way for a possible solution to the paradox that he is to argue in the second part. Subsequently, in PI ## 138 - 242 this global sceptical paradox is expounded and its semantic nihilism is softened by a sceptical solution that draws on Wittgenstein's new conception of meaning. Finally, the private language argument that commences in PI # 243, should in Kripke's view be seen as an application of the conclusions previously reached to the particularly difficult case of 'mental language'. Since it was already established that any meaningful use of language is impossible, this section does not give us any new arguments against the possibility of a private language. It rather shows that the sceptical solution which was given for a public language fails to apply to such an alleged private language.

In the second chapter of this work, we have subjected Kripke's interpretation to a thorough systematical criticism. As was shown, Kripke's sceptical solution in principle fails to meet Kripke's own criteria for a successful solution of the paradoxical and self-defeating outcome of the sceptic's paradox. Furthermore, it was argued that there are considerable difficulties concerning the blind inclinations that were meant to function as the building blocks for Kripke's community view on meaning. Kripke's paradox, I concluded, must for these systematical reasons be seen as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the premisses that generated it.

However, now that we also allow ourselves a critical stance towards the exegetical merits of Kripke's work, we should notice that, seen in the light of Kripke's interpretation, the *Investigations* is rather oddly structured. According to Kripke, the sceptical paradox is the real knock-out argument against a truth-conditional account of meaning, and the strongest support in favour of a justification-conditional account is that it can supply us with a sceptical solution to this paradox. Therefore, if Kripke's systematical interpretation is correct, one would naturally expect Wittgenstein's argument to proceed as follows. Firstly, we would be presented with the sceptical paradox, which argues that there are no facts about meaning. Secondly, it would be pointed out that a truth-conditional account is only viable provided that there are such facts about meaning and that, in the light of the first point, such an account must now be rejected. Thirdly, it would be argued that the adoption of a justification-conditional account is the only way to escape from the devastating conclusion that no one means anything by any word.

Yet, what we do find, is that in the first part of the *Investigations* Wittgenstein argues elaborately against a truth-conditional account of meaning and in favour of the thesis that meaning is use, without making any mention of the sceptical paradox and its solution. The arguments in this part of the work are purely internal; the latter account simply presents us with a better story about meaning than the former does. Now, in the second part of the *Investigations*, if we are to believe Kripke, Wittgenstein shifts to an external point of view, and argues that there are not really any facts about meaning in the first place and that the best we can do is to explain how we are all blindly inclined to use a *word* such as 'meaning'. There are two reasons why such a line of arguing must strike us as unsatisfying if not misleading. Firstly, the internal criticism on truth-conditional theories of meaning in the first part of the *Investigations* would be highly superfluous in the light of the master argument presented in the next part. Secondly, the point made in the first part, i.e. that a use orientated view offers an account of meaning that is superior to a truth-conditional view, seems to be undercut by the point made in the second part, i.e., that there are no facts about meaning in the first place. In the light of such a conclusion, the previous claim that meaning is use would certainly need a serious re-qualification. In fact, this curious juxtaposition of an internal and an external point of view is like arguing that a particular theory of phlogiston 'A' is superior to another one 'B', because A gets the sortal weight of phlogiston right and, furthermore, that B is wrong anyway because there is no such thing as phlogiston to start with and the phenomena related with combustion can be accounted for by theory A. Both arguments against theory B are by themselves sufficient, but their combination is a somewhat puzzling case of argumentative overkill.

The same thing goes for the *Investigations* on Kripke's reading. Both the first and the second part of that work would by themselves provide arguments for adopting a use oriented view on meaning over a truth oriented view, and yet these arguments dialectically exclude each other, virtually breaking up the work in two unrelated - and unrelatable - parts.

This inability to properly relate the first and second parts of the *Investigations* does not give the lie to Kripke's interpretation, systematically speaking. But from an exegetical point of view it is certainly a flaw. Therefore, together with my presentation of an alternative systematical view of Wittgenstein's arguments below, I will also try to show that there is an intricate, but natural argumentative relation between these two parts of the *Investigations*.

In order to get a proper footing for the arguments concerning meaning and rule-following in *Philosophical Investigations* ## 138 - 242, I will first have to say several things on the first part of the work. In particular, Wittgenstein's pronouncement on meaning as use in PI # 43 merits some attention. Subsequently, I will try to determine what relation the second part of the book bears to the foregoing remarks and how this relation ties in with our systematic view of Wittgenstein's arguments. A comparison between selected remarks from both parts of the work will allow us a better grip on both the exegetical and systematic points.

In the part leading up to PI #138 we can roughly discern three major themes: a

sustained criticism of Wittgenstein's previous *Tractatus* view on meaning and its presuppositions, the introduction and application of Wittgenstein's new, use-oriented view on meaning, and an exposition of Wittgenstein's later view of philosophy itself. This latter topic has been treated extensively in the previous chapter and will not occupy us here. The content of the *Tractatus* criticism is well covered by the exegetical literature on the *Investigations*, and we may here confine ourselves to reiterating its main points. Prominent in Wittgenstein's attack on the *Tractatus* is his rejection of the view that language can be founded on the relation of reference holding between names and objects. Learning a meaningful language, we are told in PI # 26, does not consist in giving names to objects, for naming is an act that can only be preparatory to the subsequent use that really renders those words meaningful. Such a practice of use is already presupposed when we ostensively give names to objects, and for that reason ostensive definitions, though they may well relate a name to an object, cannot play a meaning bestowing role in any *foundational* sense. After his discussion on ostensive definitions some more specifically *Tractarian* points are discussed. Respectively, Wittgenstein dismantles the notion of a 'real name' that, in contrast to an ordinary proper name, supposedly cannot fail to refer and he scrutinizes the idea of these supposed referents, things that are simple in an absolute or metaphysical sense. Next he turns his attention to the notion of linguistic analysis as an activity that reveals the true, underlying meaning of terms and he criticizes the notion of determinacy of sense that is presupposed by such a view.

The main tool employed throughout this critical discussion of the *Tractatus* is Wittgenstein's new insight into the relation between the meaning of expressions and their use. The *locus classicus* of this view is PI # 43, where we find what has often been mislabeled as 'Wittgenstein's definition of meaning'. In the context of discussing the idea that the meaning of a name is its referent, Wittgenstein remarks:

> For a *large* class of cases - though not for all - in which we employ the word "meaning" it can be explained (*erklären*) thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language. And the *meaning* of a name is sometimes explained (*erklären*) by pointing to its *bearer*. (*)

This remark, of course, is well known, and the seminal view on meaning it expresses has received ample attention. Here I will limit myself to making several points that have to do with our general interpretation of this remark. A first thing that should be noticed, is that in translating this remark I have departed from the standard Anscombe edition by rendering the German 'erklären' as 'to explain', rather than translating it as 'to define'. Anscombe's reasons for choosing the latter option are not altogether clear to me. The common German verb 'erklären' simply means *to explain*, and it never means *to define*, for which the German 'definieren' would be the proper term. The German word 'erklären', just as the English 'to explain', has both an 'explicatory' and a more or less theoretical sense. One might, e.g., explain to someone what the K-T line is by telling him that it is a tiny layer of iridium separating Cretaceous from Tertiary sediments. One might also explain the K-T line by forwarding the hypothesis that this layer of iridium is made up of extraterrestrial dust that settled after a huge meteor hit the earth and disintegrated. The Dutch language would in the first case use the term 'uitleggen', in the second

'verklaren'. Since the term 'erklären' recurs in the last sentence of PI # 43 in this first sense, it seems obvious to me that in this section Wittgenstein intends to use the term in this first sense of the word, that is, in the sense of 'to explicate'.

The difference between those two translational options carries more bite than might appear at first sight. To explain a word is basically a descriptive activity, in which one has to abide by a prior standard. To define a word is to a large extent a prescriptive activity, in which one departs from or sharpens the original meaning of the word in order to give a better formulation of one's thesis or theory. The Anscombe version of PI # 43, in which 'erklären' is translated as 'to define', wrongly suggests that Wittgenstein's observation about meaning is intended to carry such prescriptive force and is offered as a philosophical innovation. But this is not the case. Wittgenstein offers us an observation about how we actually, in our ordinary use of language, employ the word 'meaning', and he means to point out that where in actual, everyday cases questions about meaning arise, such questions will in fact be settled by scrutinizing the use that is made of a word. Given the central role of this view on meaning when it comes to criticizing both the *Tractatus* views and the mentalist views on meaning in the second part of the *Investigations*, our choice between a prescriptive or a descriptive reading of PI # 43 is pivotal for how we see the general nature of Wittgenstein's argument. On a prescriptive reading, one sees a new philosophical view on meaning expressed in PI # 43. The *Tractatus* criticism in the first part of the *Investigations* would then be regarded as a 'battle between philosophies' in which Wittgenstein's new philosophical insights gain the upper hand over the old ones. The second part of the *Investigations* could then be given a similar reading. Here one would see Wittgenstein employing his new philosophy of language to unhinge an - admittedly somewhat primitive or naive - mentalist philosophy of language. This, I think, is to see Wittgenstein's arguments from the wrong perspective. Rather than opting for a prescriptive interpretation, we should adopt a descriptive reading of PI # 43. Wittgenstein's observation that there is a strong relation between meaning and use is not a philosophical point, but is derived from our actual everyday involvement with such semantic notions. When questions about meaning arise in a practical context, the paramount and overriding criterion for settling those questions is how language is actually employed. In the first part of the *Investigations* this finding about our ordinary employment of the notion of meaning is set over against Wittgenstein's previous philosophical conception. Yet, most importantly, in the second part of the *Investigations* something very different is being done. There Wittgenstein does not address a crude form of philosophical mentalism, but rather, he has the Gegner bring in a second feature of how we ordinarily talk about meaning; a feature that might seriously undermine the previous observation about the priority of usage. For we also talk about meaning as a phenomenon that is subject to the momentary, instantaneous grasp of an individual language user, rather than something that is locked into an extended, communal practice of use. The central problem of the second part of the *Investigations*, as I read it, is to settle the priority relation that holds between these competing aspects of our notion of meaning. Below, I will

elaborate upon this reading of Wittgenstein's argument. At this point, we may confine ourselves to noticing the repercussions that our reading of PI # 43 has for our subsequent reading of the *Investigations.*

Concerning our interpretation of PI # 43 there is a second point to be noticed. I just presented Wittgenstein's remark on meaning in PI # 43 as descriptive, rather than prescriptive. Yet, if we simply were to take into account all the cases in which English speakers use the word 'meaning', we would probably find that a large number of applications were made by philosophers or semanticists, and that *those* applications of the word 'meaning' could not be described or explained in the way Wittgenstein does in PI # 43. Those cases already have to be excluded when we read Wittgenstein as presenting a descriptive account of our employment of the word. The question of how, and where Wittgenstein excludes these cases hangs together with the reasons that we ascribe to him for excluding them in the first place. In my view, those cases are excluded by the opening phrase of PI # 43: 'for a *large* class of cases - though not for all - in which we employ the word 'meaning'...'. The cases not covered by the explanation Wittgenstein is about to give are the philosophical ways of employing the word 'meaning'. This reading, I think, is supported by the sections that form the context of PI # 43, where the *philosophical* conception of meaning that was propounded in the *Tractatus* is discussed. The last sentence of PI # 43 then contrasts this philosophical use of the term 'meaning' with how we ordinarily operate with a notion as 'the meaning of a name'. In the previous chapter I have explained what I take to be the reason for Wittgenstein's discontent with a philosophical use of language. In short, such a use of language is 'an engine idling' because there is no context of practical activities to which it matters. In the previous chapter, we also discussed Baker and Hacker's 'ordinary language view' on Wittgenstein. Summarily put, they claim that Wittgenstein regards a philosophical use of language as quite meaningless in the first place because it transgresses the 'bounds of sense' that are laid down by our ordinary use of language. Baker and Hacker's interpretation of PI # 43 is in accordance with this view. The cases that they see excluded by the opening phrase are such uses of the word 'meaning' as we make when, e.g., we talk about 'the meaning of life'. Philosophical uses of the word 'meaning', it might be noted, need not be excluded on their view since they are strictly meaningless to start with. In the previous chapter I have expressed my reasons for disagreeing with this view. Here it can be remarked that this reading would make the opening phrase of PI # 43 somewhat redundant.

There is a last feature of PI # 43 that I want to notice. Not only does Wittgenstein refrain from giving us a *definition* of meaning, but the kind of explanation to which he points in PI # 43 cannot be seen as a straightforward explanation of the meaning of the word 'meaning' either. Rather than addressing the question how we explain the word 'meaning', or saying what the word 'meaning' means, Wittgenstein tells us how we explain *the meaning of a word.* We may regard this preference for a contextual explanation of our use of the term 'meaning' as a consequence of Wittgenstein's anti-theoretical approach, as it is also expressed in the opening

paragraph of *The Blue Book* :

> What is the meaning of a word? Let us attack this question by asking, first, what is an explanation of the meaning of a word; what does the explanation of a word look like? The way this question helps us is analogous to the way the question "how do we measure a length?" helps us to understand the problem "what is length?" The questions "What is length?", "What is meaning?", "What is the number one?" etc. produce in us a mental cramp. We feel that we can't point to anything in reply to them and yet ought to point to something. ... Studying the grammar of the expression "explanation of meaning" will teach you something about the grammar of the word "meaning" and will cure you of the temptation to look about you for some object which you might call "the meaning".

To focus our attention on the substantive 'meaning' and on such questions as 'what is meaning' tends to produce an urge to grope for a particular something that can fit the bill, and results in such sweeping identifications as 'meaning is reference' (or: 'meaning is use'). The prophylactic that Wittgenstein offers us is to focus on the term 'meaning' as we actually employ it in contexts such as explaining the meaning of a particular word. Yet, we might also point out already, it is precisely because Wittgenstein himself favours and endorses this contextual method of tackling problems about meaning that he takes the objections that are raised against his view in the second part of the *Investigations* so seriously. There it is observed, for instance, that we say such things as that a person 'grasps the meaning of a word in a flash', and that what is grasped in this way cannot be an actual practice of use. Such an objection is raised from the very same perspective as Wittgenstein himself adopts when he is attacking the *Tractatus* views: our employment of the notion of meaning in an ordinary, everyday context. So, when addressing such objections, Wittgenstein is not primarily arguing against a philosophical mentalism. Rather, he responds to a problem that is raised from the very same methodological point of view that he himself endorses in such sections as PI # 43, or in the opening lines of the *Blue Book.*

Let me reiterate the main points made in the previous pages before illustrating the argumentative line that I read in the *Investigations* with specific examples. One of the main focal points of the first part of the *Investigations* is the view on meaning that was propounded in the *Tractatus*, and Wittgenstein's master tool for criticizing his own previous philosophical conception of meaning is the insight that words are meaningful due to a practice of usage. In PI # 43, where this insight is most pungently expressed, Wittgenstein does not offer us a prescriptive, theoretical *definition* of meaning, nor does he directly explain what the word 'meaning' means. Rather, he points out to us, in a descriptive vein, that in the contexts in which we employ the word 'meaning' - that is, when we explain the meaning of a particular word, but also when we try to determine whether a person understands the meaning of a word, whether two words have the same meaning, etcetera - that in such cases we actually will take the use or the employment of the word as the criterion by which to decide the question.

Accordingly, we find Wittgenstein dismantling the foundational account of meaning that is offered in the *Tractatus* by showing that those alleged foundations

already presuppose an established practice of usage - as in the remarks on ostensive definition. We find him criticizing the very cogency of the terms employed in the *Tractatus* by showing that their theoretical use is wildly at odds with their everyday employment - as, for example, in the remarks on 'simples'. Also, we find him questioning certain theoretical demands of the *Tractatus* - such as the demand for the determinacy of sense - by showing that in our ordinary practice for using words those demands are not and, even more importantly, need not be met. Here Wittgenstein criticizes a *philosophical* conception of meaning on the basis of observations about how words *actually* are employed and become meaningful within our established practices of language use. The view that meaning is dependent on a context of usage is *itself* not problematized in this part of the *Investigations*, but is rather taken at face value and is employed as a critical tool. In the next part of the *Investigations*, as I will show more extensively below, it is precisely this particular view on meaning as use that becomes the focus of Wittgenstein's critical attention. From an everyday, rather than from a philosophical point of view, the suggestion is raised there that the use of language cannot have the priority that Wittgenstein gives it, but should rather be seen as a phenomenon deriving from something more basic (e.g., something that can instantaneously be grasped by an individual speaker). The discussion that follows tries to establish which of these two - a practice of use or something that can instantaneously be grasped - has priority over the other. The conclusion of this discussion is not that the idea that meaning resides in use must be retracted, and it is most certainly not the global thesis that there are no facts about meaning at all. Wittgenstein argues that such individual, instantaneous phenomena as 'grasping the meaning in a flash' are not the ground underlying a communal practice of usage, since they are themselves constitutively dependent on the prior existence of such practices. Thus, the discussion conducted in the second part leads to a further strengthening and elaboration of the initial view put forward in PI # 43. In order to illustrate this general line of argument, I will in the next few pages look at the way in which both parts of the *Investigations* are related, and I will give a preview of the discussion to be found in the second part. My way of proceeding will be to contrast certain remarks on rule-following from the first and the second part of the *Investigations* and to show how the differences in Wittgenstein's treatment of this subject can be explained by differences in the argumentative context in which they appear.

To understand what I mean by the claim that in the first part, other than in the second, Wittgenstein takes our ordinary practice of language use 'at face value', one might start by observing that many of the points that feature extensively in the second part of the *Investigations* already make their appearance in the first part of the work. Take for example the remarks on rules and rule-following that are made in PI ## 81 - 87. The points that are argued in these sections are very similar to those made in the discussion on rules later on in the second part, and we even find Wittgenstein employing the same images and similes. Yet, in PI ## 81 - 87 those points are offered as simple observations on matters of fact that unequivocally settle

the issue that was raised.

For instance, after Wittgenstein has remarked in PI # 80 that the application of a word is not everywhere bounded by rules, he goes on to consider the objection that there might then arise doubts about the application of the word which need to be excluded by giving further rules. After all, 'can't we imagine a rule determining the application of a rule, and a doubt which *it* removes - and so on' (PI # 84). This suggestion, however, is rejected when, in PI # 85, it is observed that:

> A rule stands there like a sign-post. - Does the sign-post leave no doubt open about the way I have to go? Does it shew which direction I am to take when I have passed it ...? But where is it said which way I am to follow it ...? - And if there were, not a single sign-post, but a chain of adjacent ones or of chalk marks on the ground - is there only *one* way of interpreting them? - So I can say, the sign-post does after all leave no room for doubt. Or rather: it sometimes leaves room for doubt and sometimes not. And now this is no longer a philosophical proposition, but an empirical one.

Here, a rule is compared with a sign-post giving us directions, (a simile that returns in the second part of the *Investigations*), and when it is asked, in a philosophical vein, whether the sign-post itself excludes all possible doubt about how it is to be followed, such qualms are quickly dismissed. The sign-post does indeed not direct us in the way hinted at in such a question. But that is not a shortcoming that is to be remedied by further directions. To direct us, in the sense of excluding all possible doubt, is something not even a continuous line could accomplish. Yet, this shows us that the demand for such absolute determinacy is incogent in the first place and above all, superfluous. Within our ordinary practice of designing, manufacturing, putting up, and following sign-posts, the single sign-post by the side of the road leaves no room for real doubt. Or rather, within the context of such practices, sign-posts usually work fine, even though they might occasionally get overgrown by moss or break down and thereby make room for doubt. As it is remarked two paragraphs later, 'the sign-post is in order - if, under normal circumstances, it fulfils its purpose'. The same thing goes for a rule. Even though a rule does not settle the application of a word under each and every condition that one could possibly think of, it is in order if, under normal circumstances, it fulfils its purpose. To settle all doubts that are imaginable by giving additional rules is both impossible and superfluous.

A similar point is made in PI # 86, where it is envisioned that the builders introduced in PI # 2 have a practice for employing and teaching the use of a table relating signs and pictures of building blocks. Of course, there are different ways in which one might read such a table, and one could imagine that the builders might start using different arrow schema's as additional rules for how the table, on a particular occasion, is to be used. Each of these arrow schema's would be a rule for reading the table, but on itself, as a schema drawn on paper, it would belong to the same category of things as the initial table. Such an arrow schema is a rule for interpreting a rule, but, Wittgenstein asks,

> Can we not now imagine further rules to explain *this* one? And, on the other hand, was that first table incomplete without the schema of arrows? And are other tables incomplete without their

schemata? (PI # 86)

Yes, we could imagine further schema's, but no, neither the initial table, nor the additional schema's are for that reason incomplete. As long as the table and the arrow schema's that are employed by the builders are safely rooted within such practices as are described in PI # 86, there is simply no question of incompleteness, no need to demand further rules or schema's. The sign-post in PI # 85, the table and the schema's in PI # 86 are all locked within a particular practice of usage, they fulfil their proper function, and are unproblematic instances of rules.

Let us now compare these paragraphs to the opening of the discussion on rule-following in PI # 139, where, superficially seen, exactly the opposite point is being argued.[1] In PI # 86 it is stressed that an arrow schema may unproblematically determine the application of the table. There is in this case no reason why the application of the arrow scheme would first have to be fixed itself, and there is no threat of a regress of rules interpreting rules. In PI # 139, on the other hand, it is argued that a picture of a cube that comes before one's mind can *not* determine the application of the word 'cube' because this would involve one in exactly such an infinite and vicious regress of pictures allegedly fixing the application of the previous pictures. Certainly:

> The picture of the cube did indeed *suggest* a certain use to us, but it was possible for me to use it differently. (PI #139)

Trying to remedy this situation by imagining an additional schema, similar to the one the builders were using, is of no avail in this case:

> Perhaps I see before me a schema shewing the method of projection: say a picture of two cubes connected by lines of projection. - But does this really get me any further? Can't I now imagine different applications of this schema too? (PI # 141)

We can indeed imagine such different applications, and the additional scheme is therefore merely the first step in a vicious regress. Where the table and arrow scheme in PI # 86 are in order as they stand, the cube and its scheme of projection are not getting us anywhere.

It important to ask ourselves what distinguishes the situation with the arrow scheme in the first part of the *Investigations* from the situation with the cube at the beginning of the second part. The difference, I think, is not primarily that the arrow schema is drawn on paper, while the cube is a mental picture. In fact, in PI # 140 it is stressed that such differences are not principled. Nor should one take it, in a Kripkian vein, that in the first part Wittgenstein provisionally went along with our preconception that such things as arrow schemes can be meaningful, but that he is now on the brink of arguing that *in fact* neither the cube picture nor the arrow schema has any meaning.[2]

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[1] I will presuppose that the reader is roughly familiar with the cube-argument in PI # 139 and will not extensively quote from it here. We will amply discuss its content below.

[2] There is a second way in which one might try to reconcile those sections in the first part with a Kripkian reading of the second part. One might venture that in remarks such as PI # 86 Wittgenstein already tacitly presupposes his sceptical solution. I think no exegetical support can

The key to understanding the difference between those sections is to realize that in the first part of the *Investigations* our ordinary practices of use are presupposed, while in the second part these practices are problematized. The sign-post, the table and the arrow schema in the first part of the *Investigations* function properly because the usual setting of an embedding context of use is already taken for granted. It is then shown that where there is such a fabric of pre-established usage, doubts of a hyperbolic, Cartesian kind simply prove to be superfluous.[1] A rule-formulation such as the sign-post functions properly when people have certain practices of employing it repeatedly for a particular purpose. In fact, it is only within the context of such practices that we are dealing with a sign-post, rather than with a painted piece of wood. So, in the first part of the *Investigations* there is no attempt to separate the sign or the rule-formulation from the practices that are constitutively related to them, and the philosophical doubts that raise their head are put to rest by pointing out that the expressions in question are safely locked within an established practice.

On the other hand, it is precisely the attempt to separate the expression of a rule from the context in which it is employed that leads to the problem setting of the second part of the work. Let me elaborate somewhat. The problems raised by the Gegner in this second part are not primarily fuelled by philosophical worries about the foundations of meaningful language use, as they are in the first part. Rather, they arise from certain aspects of our everyday intuitions about meaning and understanding. For on the one hand, our practices of language use are typically phenomena that are extended in space and time. A practice is an established pattern of use in which, standardly, many people are engaged over a longer period of time. Yet, if we follow Wittgenstein's own policy of approaching meaning by scrutinizing the context in which we employ this notion - as we were for example urged to do in the opening paragraph of the *Blue Book* that was quoted above - then we also see that we often talk about meaning in relation to such presumably momentary phenomena as grasping and understanding. We do frequently talk about 'suddenly understanding the meaning of an expression' and we say that we may 'grasp the

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be found for such a claim. Remember, this sceptical solution is sceptical in denying that there are any facts about meaning, and it is a solution in as far as it specifies the conditions under which we can *predicate* meaningful language use of a person. Now indeed, in the second part of the *PI*, the meaningfulness of such items as cube-pictures is frequently discussed, and Wittgenstein often asks under which circumstances we might say that someone means something by a word or that he has understood its meaning. But in such sections as PI # 86, no questions are being raised about whether the arrow schema is *in fact* meaningful, and no attention is paid to such issues as the conditions under which we might *say* of the builders that they use such schema's in a meaningful way. In other word, the remarks in PI # 86 cannot plausibly be seen as an application of the sceptical solution.

[1] The Cartesian nature of these doubts stands out clear from Wittgenstein's remark in PI # 87: 'It may easily look as if every doubt merely *revealed* an existing gap in the foundations; so that secure understanding is only possible if we first doubt everything that *can* be doubted, and then remove all these doubts.' The misguided quest for such Cartesian certainty is what motivates the demand for 'determinacy of sense' that is one of the main targets in PI ## 81 - 87.

rule in a flash', and with these 'events' a whole host of mental phenomena is correlated. Now if the meaning of a word really *is* a pattern of use that is stretched out over time, then such momentary acts of understanding or grasping the meaning or the rule would become deeply problematic, if not impossible. For the use of a word consists in *actions*, in actual doings that are performed in many concrete circumstances at different times. Therefore the real usage of a word transcends any momentary grasping: one simply cannot have the actual use before one's mind. Yet one may have the meaning before one's mind - or so we say. Quite naturally, this observation might lead to the idea that the 'real' meaning of our words - the object of our sudden understanding - must be something more quintessential than the use that we make of them, something that can instantly be grasped and from which the use can be derived from case to case.[1]

This objection to Wittgenstein's view on meaning as use makes a point that merits serious consideration, and the fact that it seems to follow naturally from certain aspects of our everyday talk about meaning, rather than from a metaphysical conception of language and the world, is an additional reason why Wittgenstein should take it seriously indeed. Accordingly, in the second part of the *Investigations*, as I read it, Wittgenstein conducts a sustained examination of this objection. He scrutinizes the 'phenomenology' and the 'grammar' of such momentary events of grasping and he investigates our ways of talking about them. And time and again, we find him probing and refuting the idea that such momentary happenings or the mental episodes related to them have priority over the use that we make of our language. In fact, towards the end of this part of the *Investigations* Wittgenstein drastically turns the table in favour of our practices of use. The suggestion put forward in PI # 139 is that the use of our words follows from some momentary event of grasping their meaning. Wittgenstein's discussion leads to quite the opposite conclusion: only in as far as such momentary events of grasping are embedded within extended practices of usage can they qualify as an event of 'suddenly understanding the rule' or 'instantly understanding the meaning of the word'.

This reading is a far cry from the idea that the second part of the *Investigations* introduces a novel form of global scepticism about meaning. Rather, by addressing the dichotomy between use and some use-transcendent item or state, Wittgenstein presents us with a profound defense and refinement of the view that meaning is use. It is in this context of sorting out the priority relation between such a momentary, individual event of grasping and the use that is extended both over time and over a speech community that we must understand Wittgenstein's negative arguments concerning pictures of cubes. The Gegner, in his attempt to argue the priority of the momentary over the extended, tries to come up with examples of something

[1] In this respect it is of course relevant that the picture of the cube which the Gegner invokes is a *mental* item. For the Gegner is looking for something use-transcendent that might sustain our practice of language use and a mental picture might be thought, on first sight, to fit the bill. Nevertheless, the primary distinction on which these paragraphs turn is that between use and use-transcendent item, and not that between the mental and the non-mental.

use-transcendent that determines the application of a word. To this aim he invokes the mental picture of a cube or the rule-formulation for the development of a numerical series. Provided that such 'items' are related to an established context of usage, they may perhaps have a role to play in directing our applications. Yet in the rule-following discussion the Gegner is attempting to isolate such pictures or rule-formulations from their context of use in order to treat them as the ultimate foundation of use itself. By doing so, Wittgenstein argues, he is trying to ground use on what is itself use-dependent and this attempt is bound to turn a 'living sign' into a 'dead item'. This is the point of Wittgenstein's observation that a picture or a rule-formulation regarded as a 'Deutung' (that is, regarded as something supposedly dictating use without having to be used itself) either hangs in the air or involves us in a vicious regress.[1] So, the point that is being argued in the second part of the *Investigations* is not that there is no such thing as the meaning of a sign, but rather, that the attempt to ground this meaning in something that is intrinsically independent from the use of signs is destructive of meaning itself. Rather than denying that there are any facts about meaning, Wittgenstein defends his own previously expressed view that meaning is use.

Thus, the different treatment of the arrow scheme and the cube picture can be accounted for by noticing that due to the different argumentative setting in which they occur they have a different status. It is presupposed that there is a practice of use for the arrow scheme in PI # 86, and therefore it can be treated as a meaningful sign. The cube picture, on the other hand, is forwarded by the Gegner as a *Deutung*; as something use-transcendent from which the use allegedly follows. Yet, as a *Deutung*, the cube picture hangs in the air and in no way can direct our application of the word 'cube'.

The distinction between the first and the second part of the *Investigations* as I have sketched it above can be pungently illustrated by juxtaposing two paragraphs from PI sections 87 and 198. In order to bring out both the difference in *what* Wittgenstein says in these sections, and the striking similarity in *how* he says it, I will first give the two quotes.

In PI # 87, as was explained earlier, we find Wittgenstein addressing the Gegner's question how an ordinary explanation could ever lead to understanding:

> "But then how does an explanation help me to understand, if after all it is not the final one? In that case the explanation is never completed; so I still don't understand what he means, and never shall!" - As though an explanation as it were hung in the air unless supported by another one. Whereas an explanation may indeed rest on another one that has been given, but none stands in

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[1] The only acceptable English translation of the German word 'Deutung' is 'interpretation'. However, it must be born in mind that the word 'interpretation' is broader in meaning than the word 'Deutung'. A standard context for the latter could be 'die Deutung eines Gedichts' - 'the interpretation of a poem' - and, roughly speaking, one might say that 'deuten' is to interpret by verbal or symbolic means, as one interprets a poem by explaining its metaphors, paraphrasing a line etc. We will have more to say on this subject when discussing # 201 of the *Investigations*, where such lexical matters are important to our systematic reading of Wittgenstein's text.

need of another - unless *we* require it to prevent a misunderstanding. (PI # 87)

Towards the end of the second part, in PI # 198, we find Wittgenstein in remarkably similar wordings making precisely the opposite point about interpretations:

> "But how can a rule shew me what I have to do at *this* point? Whatever I do is, on some interpretation, in accord with the rule." - That is not what we ought to say, but rather: any interpretation still hangs in the air along with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support. Interpretations by themselves do not determine meaning. (PI # 198)

In the light of our discussion above, where we addressed the difference between the arrow scheme and the cube picture, the distinction that is here made between explanations and interpretations ('Deutungen') can be readily understood. If I explain the name 'Moses' to someone by saying 'he is the man who led the people of Israel out of Egypt', then I explain the word by offering other words. But if the understanding of a word like 'Moses' - so the Gegner asks - requires other words, then do not these words in their turn require an explanation? And if there would be no last explanation, how then could anything ever be explained in the first place? In this first part of the *Investigations* such worries are quickly dismissed as being misdirected and superfluous. Indeed there cannot be such a thing as an ultimate explanation that all by itself forces an understanding upon you. But there need not be any such thing either. An explanation as the one just offered - it is observed - simply does not require the backup of further explanations in order to help someone to understand the meaning of the word, nor is the understanding of the word flawed by the fact that not everything one might possibly want to know about Moses is settled by my explanation. An explanation - a verbal formula that is safely locked within a prior context of established verbal and non-verbal practices - may perfectly well perform its intended function in the context where the need for an explanation arose. The call for foundations in the form of further explanations is superfluous. Implicit in the worries expressed here by the Gegner is the idea that there must be some use-transcending foundation underlying our understanding, and that therefore a mere verbal explanation with a particular use is intrinsically incomplete. In this first part, Wittgenstein rejects the Cartesian doubts that might lead to such a view, but he does not further address this line of thought.

Seen from the angle of how we sometimes talk about meaning as something that is the object of instantaneous understanding, the hunt for use-independent foundations of meaning becomes one of the main subjects of the second part of the *Investigations*. In that context the quote from PI # 198 should be seen. When it is asked how a rule can show me what to do, one might think of the situation where someone is to continue the series 1, 3, 7, 13, ... and the rule $n^2 - (n - 1)$ either comes before his mind or is offered as the solution. On first sight, the case seems similar to that of explaining the meaning of the word 'Moses'. Yet, within the context of the discussion conducted in this part of the *Investigations*, we are now no longer looking at the formula $n^2 - (n - 1)$ when it is voiced in an ordinary teaching situation or when it comes before one's mind as an expression that is locked within a practice of use. For at the outset of the discussion the Gegner, in an attempt to locate meaning in some instantaneous event, had disconnected signs or

rule-formulations from their ordinary context of use and went hunting for an ultimate, use-transcendent interpretation. This is the role which the formula $x^2 - (x - 1)$ or its 'mental counterpart' now has to fulfil. Yet, by leaving the context of use out of consideration, Wittgenstein argues, both the thing to be interpreted, e.g., the series that I have to continue, and the 'interpretation' remain hanging in the air. As a sign that is functioning in a context of using mathematical expressions, (whether it is written down or comes 'before my minds eye'), the formula may play a salient role in directing my development of the series. As an 'interpretation' that is divorced from any practice of use, it remains completely inert. This observation is not meant to establish some sceptical point. Rather, it is one of the considerations by which Wittgenstein establishes the priority of an extended practice of use over our momentary acts of grasping and understanding.

In order to summarize the above and to reiterate my alternative to the thesis that the second part of the *Investigations* expounds a sceptical paradox, I would like to offer the following as an exegetical thread of Ariadne that might safely lead us through Wittgenstein's argument. In the first part of the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein establishes that the meaning of language resides in its use, and he employs this observation for criticizing the global philosophical viewpoint of the *Tractatus*. Rule-formulations, explanations, road-signs, arrow scheme's are in this part treated within the ordinary context of use that is constitutive of their very nature as a meaningful sign. Yet, the use of language is a communal, normative practice, that is stretched out over time, and for that reason the identification of meaning with use seems in principle to preclude any account of such phenomena as the sudden understanding of a rule or instantly grasping the meaning of a word. Such instantaneous 'happenings' rather suggest that meaning is really constituted by some momentary mental event or by some graspable item from which the use somehow follows.

This juxtaposition of a momentary event versus an extended practice of use leads to the problem setting of the second part of the *Investigations*. In the sections 138 - 242 those two views on meaning are made to clash by asking which of the two phenomena that we are dealing with - an individual person meaning and understanding things, and a shared practice of language use - has priority over the other, and which of the two is a 'possibility condition' for the other. In this argument the individual, intellectual and foundational view of the Gegner gets demolished, and Wittgenstein's own view is articulated and deepened. The outcome of this discussion we find towards the 200's. The last 40 paragraphs or so of the second part make some important glosses on Wittgenstein's view; although the Gegner still speaks up in those sections, the priority question is not really open anymore.

On this general interpretation, the private language argument may be seen as directed against a last ditch stand of the Gegner. The previous part of the *Investigations* started with the suggestion that a person's individual mental 'episodes' are foundational for the use that he makes of our public language. It ended with an inversion of this priority relation: a person can be said to suddenly

grasp the meaning of a word in a flash in as far as there already exists an established practice of use for that word and he relates to this practice in the appropriate way. Now the Gegner tries to argue against the priority of the public by coming up with a case where I do privately mean something by a word - or so he claims - and yet, where a public practice can in principle not exist. Wittgenstein's rebuttal of that suggestion indeed draws on some of the conclusions established previously. Yet, this is not the presumed conclusion that there are no facts about meaning in the first place. Rather, it is that to use language in a meaningful way is to act in accordance with some established norm. This requirement, the private language argument establishes, cannot be met when we confine ourselves to some individual's mental sphere.

This is our global angle on the rule-following discussion in *Philosophical Investigations* ## 138 - 242. The meaning of a word, Wittgenstein pointed out in PI # 43, is its use in the language. In the rule-following discussion this perspective on meaning is contrasted with the everyday intuition that in grasping or understanding the meaning of a word, an individual lays hold of something from which the correct future use follows. On this latter perspective, the use of language is not accepted as a given and irreducible datum, but is rather seen as a secondary phenomenon that is derived from what is grasped in such an individual act of meaning or understanding.

By contrasting these two competing perspectives, Wittgenstein raises the question which of these two phenomena - the momentary, individual act of understanding or the communal practice of usage that is extended through time - has constitutive priority over the other. By giving a sustained argument for the priority of use, Wittgenstein strengthens and deepens his own view on meaning, and he brings out what consequences these points about meaning have for how we are to regard of ourselves as persons that are in command of language.

In the next section I will start with an in depth treatment of the rule-following discussion. Firstly, I will look more carefully at the dichotomy between use and graspable item that sets the stage for the discussion. Then I will present Wittgenstein's main negative arguments by giving a sustained exegesis of PI ## 138 - 142. Section IV will subsequently give a presentation of Wittgenstein's positive points concerning meaning and linguistic practices. Finally, in section V I will look at some questions that Wittgenstein's position raises in regard to the metaphysical status of the individual person as a language user.

III. SETTLING THE PRIORITY RELATION

Had Cinderella lost her belt rather than her slipper, she would still be scrubbing floors. For the glass slipper is unyielding; it smoothly fits the future princess' foot, while bloodying the toes of the pretender. The belt, however, fits by being buckled

up according to the size.

Similar considerations directly proceed Wittgenstein's investigation of rule-following. As it is noted in PI # 136, we often define propositions as 'whatever can be true or false' and this way of speaking might tempt us to think that we can grasp the notion of truth independently of our understanding of the concept of a proposition. Propositions, it could then be thought, are those expressions which happen to fit our prior notion of truth. But propositions do not 'fit' some antecedent and self contained notion of truth in the way that cogs may fit a cogwheel. Rather, being true or false *belongs* to our concept of a proposition; the concepts of proposition and truth are mutually dependent notions that have related functions within our language. For that reason, the concept of truth does not provide us with an independent criterion by which the class of propositions can be determined. Or, to put it differently, truth and proposition are more like the waist and the belt than like the foot and the slipper.

Those cautionary remarks on the relation between truth and proposition appear in the context of a discussion on the 'general form of the proposition' that closes off Wittgenstein's direct concern with his former *Tractatus* views. But the theme of 'fitting' some independent criterion carries over to the subject of meaning and rule-following when, in the one but next section, it is asked:

> But can't the meaning of a word that I understand fit the sense of a sentence that I understand? Or the meaning of one word fit the meaning of another?

In fairy tales, there are Cinderella's and mean stepsisters. And there are glass slippers that enable princes to tell one from the other. In our actual employment of language over time there are correct uses of a word, and incorrect ones. And, one might think, there is also a standard or a norm - the meaning of the word - that a speaker can grasp and employ to tell one from the other. Meaning provides us with a foothold for a normative assessment of usage. As the glass slipper fitting the foot, or truth supposedly fitting propositions, so the meaning of a word is a use-independent criterion on which some employments of the word neatly fit, and are therefore correct, while others fail to fit and thereby prove to be incorrect. The meaning of a word, conceived along these lines, is a standard that is prior to its use, and a speaker is thought to rely on his knowledge of this standard to regulate his own use of words and to assess and interpret the speech of his fellow speakers.

This view on meaning also appears to be substantiated by certain features of what we might call the 'phenomenology of meaning and understanding'. Probably each one of us is familiar with the experience of suddenly coming to understand the meaning of a word. Or, since we acquired our words long ago, perhaps one might better think of the way in which we can suddenly grasp the regularity of a numerical series. When asked to write down the numbers that are the continuation of some segment that we have been given, we may initially be at a loss about how to proceed. We ponder the segment, and after some thought we may hit upon the formula that epitomizes its regularity and that unequivocally dictates its further development. After that has happened, then we may act and write down the next numbers, and by our actions we merely bring out into the open what in seminal

form was already contained in the formula that stood before our mind. Or so it seems.

Clearly, the crucial difference between the view on meaning sketched above and Wittgenstein's perspective lies in the priority that the latter gives to usage. Wittgenstein's dictum that meaning *is* use implies that there is no deeper, more fundamental phenomenon that underlies our employment of words and that constitutes what meaning something really consists in. When it comes to meaning, use is for Wittgenstein both the alpha and the omega. This view, however, leaves no room for the idea that meaning is determined by some individually accessible, use independent 'item' on which the use one makes of a word may fit or fail to fit.[1] As Wittgenstein remarks:

> Of course, if the meaning is the *use* we make of the word, it makes no sense to speak of such "fitting." (PI # 138)

In # 138 the Gegner opens his attack on Wittgenstein's idea that use is exhaustive of meaning by pointing out that it is fairly common to understand or to grasp the meaning of a word in a flash.

> But we *understand* the meaning of a word when we hear or say it; we grasp it in a flash, and what we grasp in this way is surely something different from the 'use' which is extended in time! (PI # 138)

The phenomenon of suddenly understanding a word is indeed something different from the communal practice of actually employing that word, and the content of such understanding, the Gegner now suggests, has priority over usage in being itself something use-independent that dictates the correct employment of our words.

In order to appreciate the Gegner's objection and Wittgenstein's counter arguments that we are about to expounded, we would do well to bear in mind the prima facie *strangeness* of Wittgenstein's dictum. The meaning of a word is its use, Wittgenstein assures us, yet the use of an expression is a kind of phenomenon that strangely seems to overflow the boundaries within which we tend to reflect on meaning. For instance, the use of a word is made up of *actions*, of the actual employments of the word in particular circumstances, and whatever prior mental phenomena might happen to be related with the use of a word, such phenomena must on Wittgenstein's view be categorically different from what constitutes the meaning of the word itself. Also, the use of a word is not determined by what a single speaker does, but rather, it involves a community of speakers that interact with each other and together establish patterned linguistic practices. Furthermore, such practices are typically stretched out over time, and can neither be confined to what happens at a particular moment - e.g., at the moment of suddenly understand-

[1] Throughout the *Investigations* Wittgenstein discusses a broad array of things and phenomena that might be thought of as a use-independent underlying foundation of meaning, e.g. mental states and processes (PI # 139 ff., PI # 205), feelings (PI # 169 ff.), Platonic entities (PI # 218), intuitions (PI # 213) etc. I will use the term "item" for general reference to all such things that are prior to usage.

ing something - nor even to what happens at a definite stretch of time. But when meaning consists in the various actions of a community of speakers over time, then where does this leave the individual language user? From the view point of a single speaker, the phenomenon of meaning may now seem to transcend his own individual determinations to such an extent that it may come to appear as something completely intangible.

Now, as was pointed out in the previous section, the Gegner's role throughout the discussion should not primarily be regarded in the light of some philosophical position he appears to defend. Rather, we should see the Gegner as someone who well appreciates the ostensibly 'intangible' character of meaning conceived as use, and who is deeply worried by it. Time and again, his contribution to the discussion in the second part of the *Investigations* consists in the attempt to cut down meaning to a size he takes to be more in accord with the demands of individual competence, and he frequently voices the worry that without such an underpinning, meaning would be beyond a speakers grasp and understanding. Such worries, as Wittgenstein makes clear, are mistaken. But that should not make us forget that the Gegner is after all Wittgenstein's 'shadow', and as such the concerns that he voices were not unfamiliar to Wittgenstein himself, as is being testified by such remarks as:

> In order to describe the phenomenon of language, one must describe a practice, not something that happens once, *no matter of what kind.*
> It is very hard to realize this. [Das ist eine sehr schwierige Erkenntniss.] (RFM, VI 34)

The consequence of Wittgenstein's adage that meaning is use, is that the very phenomenon of language is by nature an extended phenomenon that cannot be reduced to momentary events involving single speakers. In fact, the phenomena of meaning and understanding as they pertain to an individual speaker only make sense against a given background of extended linguistic and non-linguistic practices. This is indeed a difficult insight.

However, such insights are not ours yet. As the Gegner points out in PI # 138, the phenomenon of sudden understanding presents a fundamental *prima facie* objection to the unconditional priority that Wittgenstein gives to usage. If, for example, we conceive of this momentary understanding as suddenly having something before one's mind, then the contrast between such understanding and a practice of use is sharply brought out.

> When someone says the word "cube" to me, for example, I know what it means. But can the whole *use* of the word come before my mind, when I *understand* it in this way? (PI # 139)

The answer, obviously, must be negative. Concerning the things that might come before one's mind, one could perhaps have a *representation* of the use before one's mind (we will look closer at this suggestion below), but the use of a word itself, the actual employment of a word under specific circumstances, is not something that one can have before one's mind. Use consists in a pattern of actions, not in grasping a single mental item.

So, how are use and sudden understanding related? No matter what importance we give to that which comes before our minds, we can hardly deny that in assessing what someone means by a word we also steer by the lights of how the word is put to use.

Well, but on the other hand isn't the meaning of the word also determined by this use? And can these determinations now contradict each other? Can what we grasp *in a flash* accord with a use, fit or fail to fit it? And how can what is present to us in an instant, what comes before our mind in an instant, fit a *use*?(PI # 139*)[1]

If we want to regard that which is grasped in an act of sudden understanding as the locus of meaning, we must still give some explanation of how this understanding is related to the use that is made of the word and we must make clear how it is possible for us to treat this usage as a criterion for what someone means by that word. The intimate relation between understanding and use that we are then looking for cannot consist, as was noted above, in the actual use being already before one's mind when understanding the meaning of the word. Rather, it is now suggested, what comes before one's mind is related to use as a criterion on which certain employments of a word fit and others do not fit, depending on the very nature of this mental item itself. If this were to be the case, then the Gegner could plausibly argue that usage is a derived and secondary phenomenon while still granting Wittgenstein the fact that we do ordinarily employ the use that is made of a word as a (defeasible) criterion for what is meant by it.

Wittgenstein probes the idea that meaning is something on which the use can be fitted with the example of the picture of a cube that comes before someone's mind when hearing the word 'cube'. How could this drawing dictate the use of the word? How could the picture - as an item that is allegedly prior to usage - all by itself fit or fail to fit a use?

In what sense can this picture fit or fail to fit a use of the word "cube"? - Perhaps you say: "It's quite simple; - if that picture occurs to me and I point to a triangular prism for instance, and say it is a cube, then this use of the word doesn't fit the picture." - But doesn't it fit? I have purposely so chosen the example that it is quite easy to imagine a *method of projection* according to which the picture does fit after all. (PI # 139)

The alternative method of projection that is meant here, is to project the four corners of the bottom plain of the cube onto the four corners of the bottom plain of the prism, and all four corners of the cube's top plain onto the one top-point of the

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[1] The English translation of "Und können sich diese Bestimmungen nun widersprechen?" ("And can't these ways of determining meaning conflict?") is misleading in as far as the question seems to presuppose that we now have two independent ways of determining meaning and it is (rhetorically) asked whether these can conflict in the sense of rendering different verdicts concerning the meaning of a word. (The answer, on this reading, would have to be: yes, if these are indeed two different "ways of determining meaning" then it would have to be possible for them to conflict.) What is actually asked, as the next two sentences make clear, is whether use can conflict with a mental item in as far as the use fails to meet some prior norm or criterion that is laid down by this mental item. (And, as we will see, the answer to this is: no, because the mental item cannot function as a norm in the first place.)

prism. Obviously, depending on the projection one chooses, the drawing of the cube may fit either cubes, or prisms. As Wittgenstein puts it:

> The picture of the cube did indeed *suggest* a certain use to us, but it was possible for me to use it differently. (PI # 139)

At this point it might be objected that this situation merely testifies to the incompleteness of the initial picture; apart from the drawing, we also need to have the *method of projection* before our mind. Now, we should be careful about what exactly we mean by the phrase 'method of projection'. Ordinarily speaking, a method of projecting a picture is a particular way of actually employing it, a particular use that one might make of it. Provided that we can take a certain use of the picture for granted, then the picture might indeed have some role to play in connection with our employment of the word 'cube'. However, the Gegner, in his attempt to ground use on something that is itself prior to usage, cannot argue that the picture stands in need of a method of projection in this sense of the word. He would, in effect, be admitting defeat if he granted this. So what the Gegner must mean with his objection that we also need a method of projection is that one needs to have yet another use-independent thing before one's mind in order to determine the application of the initial picture. Yet, Wittgenstein asks,

> How am I to imagine this? - Perhaps I see before me a schema shewing the method of projection: say a picture of two cubes connected by lines of projection. - But does this really get me any further? Can't I now imagine different applications of this schema too? (PI # 141)

The answer, obviously, must be positive. The initial picture of the cube merely suggested a use, but could be used differently, and the very same problem arises for the picture of the method of application that we now add to the initial picture of the cube. If we do not already presuppose any particular employment of this more complex picture, then there are many different uses that could be made to accord with it. So, rather than fixing the application of the cube-picture, this second picture merely shares in its fate: both pictures are on themselves merely inert items that do not bear any intrinsic relation to a particular employment.

The Gegner, at this point, makes a last and somewhat desperate move by ejecting:

> Well, yes, but then can't an *application come before my mind*?

As we saw above, it was already asked in PI # 139 whether the whole *use* of a word can come before my mind when I understand that word in a flash. The (implicit) answer to that question was negative: the *use* of a word, which consists of concrete *actions*, is simply not the kind of thing that one can have before one's mind. Of course this point applies to a single application just as much as it does to the whole use. An application, as a concrete action that one performs in a particular situation at a particular point in time, is itself not a mental item; it is something one does, not something that may come before one's mind. Nevertheless, rather than appealing to the point already made in PI # 139 and giving a negative answer to the question whether an application can't come before one's mind, Wittgenstein says:

It can: only we need to get clearer about our application of *this* expression. (PI # 141)

On first sight, this response might strike one as somewhat puzzling. We must realize, however, that this answer signals a change in the perspective from which mental items are regarded. The picture of the cube and the picture of the method of projecting cubes were invoked by the Gegner as items that were meant to dictate a use while being themselves use-independent. As such, they were of no help. Still, it is uncontroversial that we do sometimes form ourselves mental pictures and that we do, ordinarily speaking, say such things as 'the application of the formula now stands clearly before my mind'. It was such ways of talking that lay at the root of the Gegner's mistaken idea that the use of words could be derived from a use-independent mental item. By presently granting that an application be come before one's mind, Wittgenstein does not retract his view that pictures *conceived of as use-independent items* are of no help to the meaningful employment of language. Rather, as is already indicated by the cautionary remark 'only we need to get clearer about our application of *this* expression', Wittgenstein is now about to turn his attention away from pictures as mental items that are supposedly prior to usage, and back to our ordinary talk about pictures and other things that can 'come before our mind'. And, as he makes clear in the remainder of the section, in as far as one may saliently invoke a picture that one has before one's mind, such pictures are not prior to usage but do themselves presuppose a conventional practice of employment.

However, before going into this point, I want to return to the cube argument that was summarily presented above. In PI # 139 it was suggested that the mental picture of a cube would fit one particular usage of the word 'cube' while ruling out other employments. Nevertheless, it became clear that even though the picture of the cube did suggest a certain use to us, it was possible to use it differently. In PI # 140, Wittgenstein presents us with his assessment of the Gegner's predicament and with his own view on what exactly this cube argument accomplishes. In my view, these remarks present an excellent example of Wittgenstein's particular philosophical method, which aims at dissolving, rather than solving philosophical problems. Since this section raises many exegetical difficulties, I will try to unpack it slowly and carefully.

Wittgenstein starts his observations by asking where exactly we went wrong with regard to the cube-picture.

Then what sort of mistake did I make; was it what we should like to express by saying: I should have thought the picture forced a particular use on me? How could I think that? What *did* I think? Is there such a thing as a picture, or something like a picture, that forces a particular application on us; so that my mistake lay in confusing one picture with another? (PI # 140)

When we explained the Gegner's purpose for introducing the cube picture, we said that this picture, as an item prior to usage, was supposed to dictate a particular employment of the word 'cube', and that some uses of this word would fit the picture, while others would fail to fit it. The picture of the cube, it was suggested, would fit actual cubes just as Cinderella's slipper fits her foot, and it would thereby

leave us no choice but to employ it in a particular way.

Let us start by examining this idea that the picture would determine a use by fitting a certain kind of objects rather than another kind. When we describe the intended role of the cube-picture in this way, then we take it for granted that such expressions as 'to determine' and 'to fit' can be employed in this context unproblematically, and it looks as if we have a clear idea of the relation that has to hold between the mental item and the use of the word. We know the job to be done and need only to find something that can actually do it. And in that respect the cube picture failed dramatically since it merely suggested a way of employing the word 'cube' without unequivocally determining one. Though it seemed that the picture would only fit cubes, it could just as well be made to fit prisms.

When faced with the cube-picture's failure we might now be tempted to conclude that the difficulty really resides in our unfortunate choice of the picture, so that a more carefully selected picture might yet do the job that the cube picture failed to do. Where we needed a glass slipper, the cube-picture turned out to be a mere rubber galosh and consequently we should renew our quest. This, Wittgenstein now tells us, is a superficial and misleading way of putting it. The point is not that the cube picture failed at a clear and well circumscribed job, but rather, the problem is that we do not really have a clear idea of what job is to be done in the first place. Our employment of such phrases as 'the cube picture *fits* a certain use' was lacking in content.

Let me explain. The expression 'to fit' has of course a perfectly proper everyday use. For instance, we know that slippers are used for walking and we are aware of the fact that footwear that induces blisters or bloody toes is hardly conductive to free locomotion. It is against this background that we know what it is for a glass slipper to fit, and when the little doves cry 'blood in the slipper... blood in the slipper ...', then the lovesick prince knows that no fit has been accomplished. The foot and the slipper are concrete, three-dimensional physical objects, and given that these objects are functionally related to each other there is a natural relation of fit which is determined by the properties of these objects. It is by this kind of natural fit that the Gegner takes the cube-picture to be related to actual cubes.

Now, by focussing on the suggestion that the meaning of the word 'cube' resides in some mental *picture* that fits some kind of objects, Wittgenstein makes the Gegner's case as strong as possible: a picture and a cube have more features in common than, e.g. the sound 'cube' and a cube. But still, a picture and a cube are obviously not two objects from the same three-dimensional domain that are functionally related to each other. In our ordinary employment of pictures as conventional signs we have abstracted from certain features of the objects meant to be designated - we employ two-dimensional signs for three-dimensional objects - and subsequently we need a conventional way of employment to relate picture and object. Where the shoe and the foot are objects from the same domain of three-dimensional physical objects that are functionally related to each other, a picture of a cube (normally speaking) and a cube are 'objects' from different domains that are conventionally related.

So we should distinguish several things here. Firstly, we have the glass slipper that fits Cinderella's foot. Given the function that slippers play in locomotion, there are global constraints on the possible form of slippers - a slipper cannot have the form of a perfectly flat surface - and there are certain restrictions on, e.g. the possible tightness of fit between a slipper and a foot. Given such a functional background, there is a perfect, natural fit between the slipper and Cinderella's foot. Secondly, we have the picture as a sign that may designate cubes provided that we have a conventional method of projection, that is, provided that we employ the picture in a particular way. When we talk, in this case, about the sign 'fitting cubes', then such a fit should not be confused with the fit holding between the foot and the slipper: when we say that the sign fits cubes rather than balls, then we say something about the conventional employment of this sign, and we are not reporting on a kind of natural fit as it obtains between slipper and foot. Thirdly, we have the (mental) picture that is isolated from any conventional method of projection.

The Gegner's idea that the use-independent picture will naturally fit on cubes and only on cubes is now due to the following confusion. Our ordinary, conventional way of employing the picture as a 'sign in use' comes natural to us. This naturalness of employing the sign for certain objects, which is basically nothing but our intimate familiarity with a particular convention, is now misinterpreted by the Gegner as something that springs from an underlying natural fit between picture and cube. In other words, the naturalness of our conventional employment of such pictures is mistaken for a natural relation of fit such as obtains between slipper and foot, which relation is subsequently projected on the picture in isolation from any convention. However, the notion of fit lacks any real content when employed in this way. Of course, a two-dimensional graphical object can be a picture of a three-dimensional object presupposing that there is a conventional employment relating the graphical object to some kind of three-dimensional objects. In that case, we might indeed speak of the picture fitting these objects, provided we bear in mind the convention that lies at the root of such a possibility of fit. Obviously, this is not how the use-independent picture can function. But neither is there a natural fit between the picture, as a graphical object that is isolated from a method of projection, and some three-dimensional object. Pictures simply do not fit cubes in the sense that the slipper may fit a foot. So the very thing that we professed to believe, i.e., that the picture 'would fit or fail to fit a use' or that it 'would force a use upon us' now turns out to have no real content at all. So what did we actually believe? Well, Wittgenstein tell us,

> ... our "belief that the picture forced a particular application upon us" consisted in the fact that only the one case and no other occurred to us. (PI # 140)

The idea that our belief about the picture 'fitting a use' had a definite content turns out to be the result of mistaking our utter familiarity with the ordinary employment of such pictures for some kind of 'natural fit', and wrongfully projecting this familiarity onto the picture conceived as an item *prior* to any employment. What looked to us as a belief with a clear content turns out to be nothing but the expression of a shortsightedness induced by our habitual employment of cube-pictures.

And the picture, as something that is prior to any employment, now stands revealed as a mere item, that is unrelated to the meaningful employment of the word 'cube'.

So, the idea that the word 'cube' acquires its meaning by its association with a mental picture that naturally fits a particular kind of objects holds no water. The supposed fit between mental picture and use turned out to be an unstable amalgamate forged by combining the naturalness with which we conventionally employ pictures with the natural fit that can obtain between objects. But could we now rephrase this point by saying that the mental picture merely has put us under a psychological compulsion, which was wrongly interpreted as being semantically commanding? It might be tempting to put matters like that, as Wittgenstein himself notices. Nevertheless, PI # 140 clearly indicates that it would be wrong to summarize the argument in that way:

> For we might also be inclined to express ourselves like this: we are at most under a psychological, not a logical, compulsion. And now it looks quite as if we knew of two kinds of case. (PI # 140)

As we saw, we should not talk about the use-independent picture in terms of fitting or not fitting. But neither, Wittgenstein tells us here, should we describe this picture as putting us under a psychological rather than a logical compulsion since that would make it look 'as if we knew of two kinds of case'.

This last remark raises difficulties that are absent in the case of 'fitting'. It was misleading to say that the mental picture 'did not fit a use' because this would make it look as if we know what such a fit amounts to. But since we lack any clear idea of what it would be for a use-independent picture to fit some kind of objects, we do not really have any idea of what it would be for such pictures *not* to fit either. However, when we are told that it is misleading to talk about a distinction between psychological compulsion and logical compulsion with regard to the mental picture - since this would make it look as if we knew of two cases - then we cannot straightforwardly interpret this remark along similar lines, since the notions of logical and psychological compulsion lack the polarity that applies to the notions of fitting and not-fitting. The fact that we have no idea of what it would be for a certain thing to compel us logically, does not by itself imply that it is also senseless to speak of psychological compulsion with regard to that thing. For that reason the remark quoted above raises several questions. When Wittgenstein tells us not to describe the use-independent picture in terms of a contrast between two cases - that of psychological and of logical compulsion - then he certainly implies that it makes no sense to talk about *logical* compulsion with regard to such a picture. But if this mental picture of a cube cannot logically compel us to a particular application, then is this only because of the practice-independent nature of this picture, so that the notion of logical compulsion still makes sense within the confines of established practices, or is the problem more fundamental and should we discard any notion of logical compulsion tout court? Furthermore, if it makes no sense to speak of the use-independent picture as logically compelling us, then indeed we do not know of two cases - but does that mean to say that we know only of *one* case: that of the

picture putting us under a psychological compulsion? Or does it, on the other hand, rather mean that neither notion can be applied with regard to the cube picture? But if that is how we read the remark, we would also have to explain why the notion of psychological compulsion cannot be applied here, since this does not straightforwardly follow from the inapplicability of the notion of logical compulsion. So, what we should ask ourselves in regard to the remark that we do not have two kinds of case here is, firstly, whether Wittgenstein merely holds the notion of logical compulsion to be inapplicable in regard to the use-independent picture, or whether he hints at a more general problem regarding such compulsion. Secondly, we must ask whether we can still meaningfully talk about psychological compulsion in regard to this picture and if not, what the reason for such a negative answer could be.

In the light of such questions, we might turn to Baker and Hacker's extensive and influential commentary on the *Philosophical Investigations*. In their exegesis of PI # 140, Baker and Hacker have this to say on the reason why it is misleading to talk about two kinds of compulsion:

> ... it suggests that we can and do distinguish two kinds of case, that of psychological, and that of logical, compulsion. In the sequel, and elsewhere, Wittgenstein argues extensively against the intelligibility of 'logical compulsion', for there is no such thing as 'logically compelling', and the inexorability of logic is our inexorability in applying it as we do. ... The illusion that a picture forces an application on us merely reflects the fact that by habit and training only one application is naturally suggested to us. (Baker and Hacker (1980b), p. 261)

With regard to the questions formulated above, it is clear that Baker and Hacker read Wittgenstein as denying the cogency of the notion of 'logical compulsion' in general, and not merely in the case of the mental cube picture. Also, from their remark on 'our inexorability in applying it as we do', it appears that they do, on the other hand, acknowledge such a thing as 'being psychologically compelled to make a certain application'. This is born out by the remainder of the section, where Backer and Hacker tie in these remarks on the cube-picture with the general discussion of rule-following:

> The matters raised so briefly in this and the adjacent sections are explored exhaustively in the subsequent discussion of following a rule. For just as having a mental picture in mind does not guarantee its application, so too having a rule in mind does not guarantee applying it correctly. Likewise, just as a picture cannot logically compel, neither can a rule; just as some applications of a picture come naturally and seem inexorable, so too do rules. (Ibid., p. 261 - 262)

Noteworthy about this passage is that Baker and Hacker freely extrapolate their remarks about a picture *in mind* and a rule *in mind* (items that have artfully been isolated from a practice of use or a projection method), to a picture and a rule as they actually function within a practice of employment. In both cases, they appear to hold, there is not really any such thing as logical compulsion; that which makes certain applications of a picture or a rule seem inexorable is merely that we are under a psychological compulsion. So, Baker and Hacker's answer to the questions raised above is clear. When Wittgenstein tells us that we are not dealing with two cases, this is because *in general* there is not such a thing as logical compulsion.

Instead, a picture may exert a psychological compulsion, and with regard to such psychological compulsion it is irrelevant whether we are dealing with a picture in use, or with a picture as an item that is isolated from any practice of employment.

Now, bearing in mind the discussion in the previous chapters, it is clear that this position comes very, if not dangerously close to Kripke's view that normative logical or semantical phenomena are at bottom level merely descriptive psychological phenomena. Later on in this chapter we will go into this point rather extensively, and here I merely want to treat of this issue to the extent that it concerns Wittgenstein's remark in PI # 140. In my view, the key to a proper - and very different - understanding of this section is to look carefully at how Wittgenstein himself continues with the assessment of his cube-argument. After pointing out that it would be misleading to talk about two kinds of compulsion with regard to the cube-picture, Wittgenstein continues, in PI # 140:

> What was the effect of my argument? It called our attention to (reminded us of) the fact that there are other processes, besides the one we originally thought of, which we should sometimes be prepared to call "applying the picture of a cube". So our 'belief that the picture forced a particular application upon us' consisted in the fact that only the one case and no other occurred to us. "There is another solution as well" means: there is something else that I am also prepared to call a "solution"; to which I am prepared to apply such-and-such a picture, such-and-such an analogy and so on.

There is a particular feature of this remark (I might confess to the reader) that has been nagging me for a very long time: why this seeming indirectness in describing the argument and what is the point of shifting from the material to the formal mode of speaking, from applications of the cube picture to what we *call* 'applying the picture of a cube'? For quite naturally we would, I think, expect Wittgenstein to say something like this: 'What did my argument establish? It showed that different applications of the cube were possible.' Instead we are told (literally): 'What then did my argument do? It called our attention to (reminded us of) the fact that there are other processes ... which we would under certain circumstances be prepared to call 'applying the picture of a cube'.'[1] Looking beyond the sections presently under discussion, it is also quite remarkable that the very same shift appears in PI # 201, where Wittgenstein summarizes the rule-following discussion by giving a general description of the 'regress of interpretations argument' that he gives in regard to the cube. As it is put in PI # 201 (translated quite literally): 'Thereby we show that there is a way of understanding a rule which is *not* an *interpretation* , but which, from application to application, rather expresses itself in what we call 'following the rule' and 'acting against it'. So Wittgenstein's shift from the material to the formal mode appears to be quite principled, and we do well to pay close attention to it.

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[1] A literal translation of these sentences much stronger brings out the functional character of Wittgenstein's description of the argument than does the Anscombe translation. The primary importance of the argument, according to Wittgenstein, does not in the first place reside in a conclusion that is logically established by it, by rather, in what the argument *does*; that is, in its capacity to change our point of view by calling attention to certain obvious facts that our desire for a foundation of meaning had made us lose track of.

Now this way of putting things in the formal mode naturally raises several questions which do not press themselves upon us when we put the point in the material mode. For example, if there are other things, besides the usual procedure, that we are prepared to call 'an application of the picture of the cube', then presumably there are also things that we are *not* prepared to call 'an application' - what kind of things are these, and why wouldn't we be prepared to call them 'applications'? ... Or, what are the circumstances that decide whether we are also prepared to call something else an 'application', and what is the relevance of mentioning the circumstances surrounding such a predication in the first place?

I think that the key to answering such questions lies in the following observation. By putting his conclusions about the picture in the formal mode rather than in the material mode, Wittgenstein is drawing our attention to the fact that our very *notion* of an application is itself anchored in the actual practices that we have for the use of words or pictures. For that reason, when we completely abstract from these ordinary practices - as the Gegner attempted when he invoked the mental picture of a cube in PI # 139 - then it is no longer clear what we might and might not call 'an application' of such a use-independent item. By the same token, it makes no sense to speak of such a picture as 'psychologically determining an application'. This is not because such an item is by definition psychologically inert (after all, we might well imagine a person who is under some psychological pressure to behave in a certain way whenever the picture of a cube were to appear before his mind). It is, rather, because no matter to what action such a picture might psychologically compel us, when we call that action an 'application' we implicitly and - given the context of the present discussion - *illicitly* make an appeal to our ordinary practice for applying such pictures. From a point of view that is really practice external, our usual notion of an 'application' is no longer applicable, and thus neither is the notion of 'psychologically compelling towards an application'.

Let me elaborate somewhat on this point. We might start by tracing out the line of thought that might lead from Wittgenstein's argument to a Kripke-like view. The Gegner assumed that there would be some intrinsic semantic relation between a use-independent picture and a particular employment of the word. Yet it turned out, as we might want to say, that even though our familiarity with the ordinary employment of such pictures made us expect a certain use, we could readily imagine other uses of the picture. Thus we might be tempted to think that even though such use-independent pictures do not bear any semantical relation to a particular application, they may nevertheless psychologically force a certain application upon us: applying the picture to cubes is supposedly the result of such psychological pressure, applying it to prisms supposedly is not. Presumably then, an individual may possess psychological mechanisms that are logically (though not genetically) independent from any existing practice and that can relate a picture to some particular application of it. The next step in this line of thought is to designate these natural and objective psychological relations between mental picture and application as the substratum of our shared praxis of language use. The basis for a Kripkian paradox and the building blocks for a community solution are ready at hand on such an interpreta-

tion of Wittgenstein's cube argument. For even though an individual's mental make-up does not stand in a semantical relation to his language use, it nevertheless constitutes a realm of practice-independent psychological facts (which are basically equal to Kripke's 'blind inclinations') that might provide the key to a reductive explanation of our actual practices.

Wittgenstein's use of the formal mode should be seen in contrast to the line of thought sketched above. When it is pointed out that there are other things that we are prepared to *call* an 'application', Wittgenstein diverts our attention from such an alleged realm of praxis independent psychological facts to our very concept of an application itself. And in this respect it is important to notice that while using the cube picture for cubes is what we would call the standard application, and using it for prisms is something that we would, under certain circumstances also be prepared to call an application albeit a non-standard one, still, there are other things besides these employments that we would simply *not* call an application at all. If a person were to have the inclination (or would even be 'psychologically compelled') to lift his index finger whenever the picture of a cube came before his mind, then I think that we would not be prepared to call this an 'application' of that picture.[1]

But why wouldn't we call it an application? The answer, I think, must be roughly along the following lines. We have standard practices for applying two-dimensional pictures and particular projection methods for relating them to three-dimensional objects. When it comes to the use of a picture, our notion of an 'application' is first and foremost defined in reference to these standard procedures. Yet, this does not mean that our notion is exhausted by them. One might envision different procedures which somehow bear enough similarity to the ordinary methods so as still to qualify as an 'application'. Under certain circumstances, that is, if a person could explain and teach us his deviant method, if we could discern so many similarities that we might regard what he does as a variation on our ordinary employment, and if, perhaps, that person could explain to us the point of what he was doing - under such circumstances we might be willing to accept that this too would be a way of applying the picture. Yet, in the case of a mere quirk such as lifting your index finger these conditions do no apply, and no matter how strongly such an action was psychologically determined by the picture of a cube, we would not be willing to countenance it as an application of that picture.

Now, my specification of the circumstances under which we would be prepared to call some non-standard procedure a way of applying the picture was rather vague, and that vagueness is intentional. I think that our notion of an *application* (in

[1] Here one might observe that whenever a person would really be *compelled* or *forced* by the picture towards a particular action, then that would be reason enough not to call his action an "application", since the applications that we really make are never of such a compulsive nature. I think this is correct, but by focussing on the particular form or strength of the use-independent psychological relation between picture and action this observation fails to address the principled objection that *no* such psychological relation - be it ever so weak or strong - could all on itself, independently from any existing practice, give us a reason for calling an action an "application" of the picture.

the sense of a projection method) is what Wittgenstein calls a 'family resemblance concept'. What we are to count as a way of applying a sign is not determined by some psychological nexus that holds independently from our ordinary practices of using language or pictures. Rather, our point of reference for applying this notion consists in the multitude of actual practices that we have. With regard to these practices for applying words and pictures we might make the same observation as Wittgenstein makes with regard to the myriad of activities that we call 'games': 'we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail' (PI # 66). Now, when we have to determine whether we would still call something 'a way of applying the cube-picture', our judgement will depend on whether we can discern sufficient similarities with our ordinary ways of applying such pictures. Below, when we take a closer look of Wittgenstein's treatment of the concept of reading - a family resemblance concept that concerns a paradigmatic rule governed activity - we will have occasion to go into more detail concerning the ramifications of such family resemblance. For our present concerns, however, it suffices to notice that our concept of an application is itself intrinsically dependent on the motley of actual practices and projection methods that we possess. So when it is remarked in PI # 139 that there are different ways of applying the picture of the cube, the point is not only that the use-independent cube picture - other than the Gegner assumed - has no intrinsic relation to a particular way in which it might possibly be applied. For we should also realize that when we concern ourselves with determining possible non-standard methods of applying such a picture, we are already implicitly invoking the background of our standard practices, rather than determining what holds of the picture in isolation from any standard practice of use.

This, I think, is what Wittgenstein tries to bring out by presenting the upshot of his argument in the formal, rather than the material mode. By talking about what we would be prepared to *call* an 'application' - Wittgenstein counteracts the temptation to presume that there is at least a use-independent, practice-external psychological relation between picture and application. When it comes to determining what other things we would call an application, we are already assuming a familiarity with our ordinary practice; the very notion of an application is a family resemblance concept that is tied to our standard practices.[1]

Consequently, when Wittgenstein warns us with regard to the (use-independent) cube picture about distinguishing between logical and psychological compulsion because this would make it look as if we knew of two different cases, he does not mean - as Baker and Hacker think - that we know only of one kind of case: the case where the picture psychologically compels us to make a particular application of it. In fact, we know of neither case when it comes to such use-independent pictures since our notion of an application loses its sense when it is thus isolated from all of our existing practices. Accordingly, in the first paragraph of PI # 140 Wittgenstein shies us away from supposing that we may trace out a realm of practice independent

[1] It might be noticed that the present point is basically the same as our argument against Kripke's notion of a "blind inclination" in the closing section of chapter 2.

psychological facts that relate the picture to certain applications. It is wrong to think that the cube argument still leaves room for such an endeavor. What the argument did accomplish, it is pointed out in the second paragraph of PI # 140, is to draw our attention to the fact that there are other uses of such a picture which we would also be prepared to regard as an application of it - that we might think of other conventions for the employment of this picture that would be sufficiently similar to our ordinary practice still to qualify as an 'application'. With such an observation, however, we have left the alleged practice external point of view behind us, and fully rely on the background of our actual practices.

In the concluding paragraph of PI # 140, these different lines are tied together and applied to the initial problem about the meaning of the word 'cube':

> What is essential is to see that the same thing can come before our minds when we hear the word and the application still be different. Has it the *same* meaning both times? I think we shall say not. (PI # 140)

As we explained above, there is no substance to the idea that the cube-picture that stands before one's mind determines an application.[1] So people to whom the picture comes to mind when hearing the word 'cube' might still apply this word in different ways - say, one as denoting cubes, the other as denoting prisms. (It is of course perfectly clear that there is no question which of these two projection methods is the conventionally correct one - the point is just that this conventional employment - or any employment for that matter - is unrelated to the cube-picture.) If two people were to use the word 'cube' in such different ways, then the word obviously would not have the same meaning in both cases. The appearance of a mental picture bears no relation to the subsequent employment of the word, and it is this employment by which we will settle the questions about the meaning of the word.[2]

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1 In fact, I think that we can put Wittgenstein's point in a nutshell by imagining a little dialogue between two speakers of English:

A: "When I hear the word "cat", a picture comes before my mind and the whole use seems to be contained therein."

B: "In my case it is even simpler: when I hear the word "cat", the whole use seems to be contained therein."

B's idea that the use can be contained in a "sound image" is completely on a par with A's idea that it can be contained in a "visual image". Still, it obviously makes no sense to talk of the use as being contained in the word. With his statement, B does not indicate some mysterious property of the word, but merely expresses his thorough familiarity with its conventional employment, just as A merely expresses his familiarity with the conventional employment of such words and pictures.

2 By the same token, two people might of course have different things before their mind while applying the word in the very same way. It is obvious, I think, that in such a case we would have no qualms about saying that the word means the same thing in both cases.

It is worthwhile to notice how Wittgenstein formulates his point that the word will have a different meaning when applied differently. In section II of this chapter we discussed Wittgenstein's remark on meaning and use in PI # 43, and it was argued that there Wittgenstein makes an observation about our employment of the notion "meaning", rather than giving a philosophical definition of the term. It was also pointed out that, consequently, the argument in PI # 139 ff did not depend on the prior acceptance of a philosophical notion of meaning, but rather, that it merely

We have treated Wittgenstein's own description of the crux of his argument rather extensively because of its relevance to the systematical problems about normativity and reductionism that are our main focus. Let us now return to the point where we broke off our discussion of Wittgenstein's line of thought (halfway PI # 141) and briefly review the chief points of the remainder of this opening part of the rule-following discussion.

In PI # 141 the Gegner, who became somewhat exasperated because neither the cube-picture, nor the additional picture of a projection method could determine the application of the word 'cube', finally called out '... but then can't an *application come before my mind*?' To which Wittgenstein answered: 'It can: only we need to get clearer about our application of *this* expression.' As was pointed out above, this answer does not go against the observation that an application, as an action that one actually performs, is not the kind of thing one can have before one's mind. Rather, the answer signals a change from conceiving of the things that can come before one's mind as use-independent items meant to ground a practice of application (as the Gegner vainly attempted to do), to looking at them as pictorial signs of which the meaning is completely dependent on our shared conventions of employment. We do, under certain circumstances, say about a person that 'the application now stands clearly before his mind'. Suppose that in a specific case, where we explain different methods of projection to someone, a picture comes before that person's mind. What would in that case be the criteria for saying that now the application we intended indeed stands before his mind? Wittgenstein's answer is striking, since it brings us right back to the dichotomy that formed the starting point of our discussion in PI # 139:

> Now clearly we accept two different kinds of criteria for this: on the one hand the picture (of whatever kind) that at some time or other comes before his mind; on the other, the application which - in the course of time - he makes of what he imagines. (PI # 141)

When we explain a method of projection to someone, and a picture comes before his mind, then, we are now told, we may have *two* genuine criteria for determining whether this person understands us: the picture that instantaneously pops up, *and* the application that is stretched out over time. The difference between this remark and our initial problem setting is so striking that we do well to bring those first paragraphs back to mind:

> When someone says the word "cube" to me, for example, I know what it means. But can the whole *use* of the word come before my mind, when I *understand* it in this way?
>
> Well, but on the other hand isn't the meaning of the word also determined by this use? And can these determinations now contradict each other? Can what we grasp *in a flash* accord with a use, fit or fail to fit it? And how can what is present to us in an instant, what comes before our mind in an instant, fit a *use*? (PI # 139)

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invoked our ordinary employment of this notion. This point is further born out by PI # 140: when Wittgenstein asks "Has [the word] the same meaning both times?" and he answers "I think we shall say not.", he is making an observation about what we would *ordinarily* say about the meaning of the word, not about what we *ought* to say, once we have accepted a definition of meaning as use.

Here, in PI # 139, the juxtaposition of sudden understanding and extended usage started the hopeless quest for a use-independent foundation of meaning. In the ensuing discussion it turned out that the things, such as pictures, that could be grasped when suddenly understanding the meaning of a word could in no way determine the use that is made of that word. In fact, it proved that we even lacked a clear idea of what such a 'determination' would come to in the first place. And so, when it is asked in PI # 139 whether 'these determinations can now contradict each other', we may with hindsight give a negative answer: there cannot possibly be any contradiction between the graspable item and the use, because that which can be grasped is not a 'determination of meaning' in the first place. Nor can such an item be a criterion for what someone means by a word, because 'the same thing can come before our mind when we hear the word and the application still be different' (PI # 140). In the light of this discussion it could strike us as odd or even contradictory when we are now told, in PI # 141, that both the use and the picture that comes before someone's mind are criteria for assessing whether he has understood the projection method that we explained to him. Here, however, we must bear in mind the global dialectical structure of this part of the *Investigations* as it was expounded in the previous section of this chapter. As was explained there, it is not Wittgenstein's intention to argue that pictures (mental or otherwise) can never be more than meaningless items that have no conceivable role to play in our employment of words. Rather, he argues for the priority of a shared practice of usage that is extended over time, over anything momentary and use-transcendent that is possessed by an individual speaker all on his own. In an ordinary setting, a picture of a cube may be a perfectly meaningful sign since there is an established convention for using it. When, on the other hand, we attempt to see such a picture as an item that grounds a practice of use rather than requiring such a practice itself, then it turns out that we lose our foothold since what appeared as solid ground turns out to be quicksand.

In the previous section we argued for this general reading by pointing out passages in the first part and the second part of the *Investigations* that are remarkably similar in phrasing, but that nevertheless seem to make exactly the opposite point. Such seeming contradictions, we pointed out, are easily resolved when seen in the context of the priority question that Wittgenstein raises. The object discussed in such cases, e.g. an arrow schema or a picture, is in one of the remarks treated as a sign that is embedded within a practice of use and that functions unproblematically. In the other remark, it is treated as a use-independent item - an interpretation or a *Deutung* - that is supposed to ground a practice of use but that turns out not to perform any function whatsoever. The remarks presently under investigation present us with yet another example of this stylistic device. In PI # 139 the picture of the cube is presented by the Gegner as something in which a practice of use can be grounded. In that capacity it was the subject of Wittgenstein's devastating criticism. In PI # 141 the tables are turned, and the dichotomy between sudden understanding and the application that is stretched out over time is resolved by reversing the priority relation between these two phenomena. A picture that comes

before someone's mind may indeed function as a criterion by which to assess that person's claim to understanding, provided that there already exists a practice for using such pictures of which this person has also learned to partake. The question whether these two criteria may contradict each other now allows of a clear answer:

> Can there be a collision between picture and application? There can, inasmuch as the picture makes us expect a different use, because people in general apply *this* picture like *this*. (PI #141)

Of course, the same question whether there could be a collision between picture and application was raised in PI # 139, and in that context the answer had to be negative. For there the Gegner suggested that the picture (conceived of as a *Deutung*) could collide with an application in as far as the application would fail to fit the picture or would fail to be one of the applications that is determined by it. As we saw, the idea of a collision in that sense proved to be without substance. However, the situation becomes different when we regard the picture against the background of an established practice of use. In that case, the picture and the application may collide in as far as a particular application of the picture does not accord with the established practice for using such pictures. It is the public practice and not the picture that has priority here since the practice lays down the norm for how the picture that comes before one's mind in an instant is to be applied. To the extent that a particular application violates this norm, we may indeed say that the picture conflicts with the application. A consequence of this inversion of the priority relation between practice and mental item is of course that such mental pictures now loose their seemingly exceptional status, and turn out not to be fundamentally different from other signs for which there is a conventional employment. As Wittgenstein puts it:

> And can't it be clearly seen here that it is absolutely inessential for the picture to exist in his imagination rather than as a drawing or model in front of him; or again as something that he himself constructs as a model? (PI # 141)

With the tables turned in this way, the argument for the priority of use that is presented in these opening sections is drawn to a close. Wittgenstein will return to this point again and again throughout the remainder of the rule-following discussion, and will develop its consequences in considerable detail. However, one implication of the view that meaning fully resides in a practice of usage that is not fixed by any underlying, use-transcendent determination, is already summarily touched upon in the sections that presently occupy us; this is the fact that meaning is inherently subject to natural constraints. I will close the analysis of ## 138 - 142 by having a short look at this issue.

When we properly regard the picture as a sign that is dependent on a practice of use, rather than as a use-transcendent item, then the meaningfulness of the picture proves to be of a quite different nature and to be subject to different presuppositions than was initially envisioned in PI # 139. This is what Wittgenstein hints at when he concludes PI # 141 by saying:

> I want to say: we have here a *normal* case, and abnormal cases.

The semantic fit by which the Gegner tried to relate picture and use, was not really subject to constraints outside the mind of the individual language user. For the mental picture, as the Gegner conceived of it, was meant to determine the use of the word unequivocally under all possible circumstances while not itself requiring any circumstance dependent employment. Meaning was conceived of by the Gegner as something that anticipates reality while being itself independent on any contingent circumstances. On the other hand, a practice of using words is a way of acting and our ways of acting are subject to both human and non-human, natural constraints. On the basis of our ingrained propensities, we have learned to employ words for a particular yet familiar purpose, under the normal, everyday circumstances that weave the contingent fabric of our lives. Meaning, as it becomes manifest in our linguistic practices, is therefore tied to this matrix of natural preconditions, and we would lose our grasp on meaning if such ordinary facts were to change drastically. As Wittgenstein says:

> It is only in normal cases that the use of a word is clearly prescribed; we know, are in no doubt, what to say in this or that case. The more abnormal the case, the more doubtful it becomes what we are to say. And if things were quite different from what they actually are [...] this would make our normal language-games lose their point. (PI # 142)

And in a footnote to this remark the same point is made in a more general way:

> What we have to mention in order to explain the significance, I mean the importance, of a concept, are often extremely general facts of nature: such facts as are hardly ever mentioned because of their great generality.

Remarks such as these refer us to what might be called Wittgenstein's 'naturalism' - the view, roughly put, that the practices that are constitutive of linguistic meaning are intrinsically dependent on a framework of human and non-human natural facts and preconditions.[1] Though labeling Wittgenstein a naturalist may be helpful in order to draw a global contrast with the Gegner's ideas about meaning, we will need to go much deeper into the role and status of such natural preconditions and, in particular, we will have to spell out their bearing on the normative nature of language use. Although we have already touched upon this topic in our discussion of the picture's alleged 'psychological compulsion', we will defer a more principled discussion of this issue to the next section of this chapter and in chapter VI that deals with *On Certainty*.

It has been my aim in this section to illustrate the thesis that the crux of the rule-following discussion is to argue for the constitutive priority of practice over 'item', mental or otherwise. To that purpose, I have preferred to offer the reader an in-

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[1] This point is also brought out in PI # 80, where it is pointed out that our word 'chair' is properly meaningful despite the fact that the rule for its use does not cover (imaginable) cases where chairs suddenly appear and disappear without good reason. From such examples we may learn that our rule for a word does not cover all logically possible cases, but is internal to a framework of very global, but natural and contingent facts about nature such as the (relative) permanency of objects.

depth analysis of the opening of the discussion in PI ## 138 - 142, rather than following Wittgenstein's regress argument as it keeps surfacing in different argumentative contexts throughout the rule-following discussion. However, Wittgenstein himself gives a final summary of this argument in the well-known sections 201 and 202. These sections also featured in the previous chapters on Kripke, who saw his own sceptical paradox and sceptical solution embodied in these remarks. I want to close our current discussion by looking at these sections once again, now from the vantage point presently reached.

It has been stressed in the fore-going that throughout the rule-following discussion Wittgenstein abides by the view that the meaning of a word resides in the communal, temporally extended practice for its use, and that he strengthens this point by arguing that these practices have constitutive priority over any 'item' that might be grasped or possessed by a single individual speaker. Thus, it turns out that our linguistic practices or ways of operating with words are primitive, in the sense that a practice cannot be grounded in or derived from some semantically more basic phenomenon. In fact, the phenomena that we might erratically regard as being more basic to the meaning of a word than the use that we make of it, either turn out to be semantically inert, or they are themselves already dependent on a prior conventional practice of employment. This point also stood out in our discussion of PI ## 138 - 142, where it became clear that the cube-picture, as a practice external mental item, could be made to 'fit' on many different employments of the word 'cube', so that, in fact, the very notion of a 'fit' between an independently given picture and a practice proved to be without content. On the other hand, in as far as a cube-picture might saliently be employed as a criterion for judging a person's understanding, it is not a practice external item but a sign for which there exists a conventional employment of which the person in question already knows how to partake.

Now, obviously, this point does not involve any sceptical worry or paradox about the factuality of meaning and rule-following. In fact, Wittgenstein is not really concerned with the 'factual status' of meaning at all, (he simply takes its existence for granted), but rather with its proper location in our practices for using expressions. Yet, when we follow in the footsteps of the Gegner, and wrongfully locate meaning in some practice independent item, the ensuing situation might look paradoxical indeed. For if we were to look upon such an item as a mental picture as the underlying meaning or rule that determines a particular employment of a word, then it needs only little consideration to see that such a picture might in fact be reconciled with any number of different, unintended employments. And when, subsequently, we try to come up with something that is more basic still (such as the 'projection method'), in order to determine a unique employment of the initial item, then we will merely discover that this item too can be reconciled with any course of action. It is this 'paradox' to which the Gegner's foundational attempts fell prey and to which Wittgenstein refers back in the opening sentence of PI # 201:

> This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if everything can be made out

to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here.

So, the 'rule' (or the 'meaning') with which every course of action can be made to accord is not the rule or the meaning as it is exhausted by our practice for the employment of a word. Rather, it is that which in the eyes of the Gegner constituted the real underlying rule or meaning: some item that is itself independent from any conventional employment and 'which is the *source* of the correct use' (PI # 146). And as we saw earlier, in regard to such items or 'rules' there can indeed neither be conflict nor accord, neither be correctness nor incorrectness, neither be fit nor a lack of fit. This paradox, however, does not follow from the supposition that our words really, 'factually' have a meaning; rather, it results from entertaining a wrong conception of meaning. Wittgenstein is clear on this point when he continues:

It can be seen that there is a misunderstanding here from the mere fact that on this line of thought we give interpretation [Deutung] after interpretation [Deutung]; as if each one contented us at least for a moment, until we thought of yet another standing behind it. Thereby we show that there is a way of understanding [eine Auffassung] a rule which is *not* an *interpretation* [Deutung], but which, from application to application, rather expresses itself in what we call 'following the rule' and 'acting against it'.

The alleged paradox results from a *misunderstanding* about meaning[1], which comes to the fore in the fruitless attempt to place interpretation after interpretation. And this regress of interpretations shows that there is a way of understanding a rule (eine Auffassung) that is not an interpretation. It should be noted that there is a particular difficulty in translating this passage into English. The contrast that Wittgenstein draws is between a 'Deutung' of a rule, and an 'Auffassung' of a rule. Now, both German expressions could in principle be translated with the English 'interpretation'. Yet, the difference between them can well be brought out by a look at the standard contexts in which they are employed. My dictionary lists as a typical context for 'Deutung': 'die Deutung eines Gedichts' ('the interpretation of a poem'), and as the typical context for 'Auffassung': 'die Auffassung einer Rolle' ('the interpretation of a role').[2] These examples well illustrate the difference that Wittgenstein intends to make. The interpretation of a poem is itself predominantly a verbal activity. One interprets a poem by explaining its metaphors, rephrasing certain strophes, explaining the mood expressed by the poet etc. The actor's interpretation of a role, however, is not manifested by any explanations that he offers to his audience, but rather by his actual performance of the role on stage. How one understands a role, is expressed in how one acts it out, rather than in the comments one might give when off stage. Likewise, the way in which we understand a rule of language is not by hitting on some ultimate interpretation that somehow subsumes all possible applications, but by acquiring a way of acting or a technique - by

[1] On the basis of this remark, Baker and Hacker (1984a) p. 10 ff. argue against Kripke's claim that Wittgenstein endorses a sceptical paradox. And indeed, the only time that Wittgenstein mentions a paradox about rules (PI # 201), he straightforwardly tells us that this paradox results from a misunderstanding.

[2] van Dale's Duits woordenboek.

learning how to actually employ language, from occasion of use to occasion of use, in the particular way that counts as 'following the rule' in the community of which we are a member.[1]

Now, in the passage above, Wittgenstein also tells us that the mistaken tendency to place interpretation after interpretation nevertheless points the way towards the proper conception of a rule. ('Dadurch zeigen wir nämlich ...') It is not immediately clear how this is to be understood. I think that what is meant is the following. What we are inclined to do, when following the Gegner's foundational line of thought, is to place item after item in order to catch the meaning of a word and still, almost as soon as we come up with some item, we realize that it fails to solidify meaning in this way. The fact that we incline to pin down meaning in a *series of items* and yet realize the futility of this very inclination, reveals the fact that meaning actually is manifested in a *pattern of actions* that are stretched out over time and allow of no practice external foundation. So, Wittgenstein concludes PI # 201:

> Hence there is an inclination to say: every action according to the rule is an interpretation [Deutung]. But only to substitute one expression of the rule for another should we call 'an interpretation' [Deutung].[2]

The fact that our practical understanding of a rule cannot be grounded in some item that is the general embodiment of the rule by containing all its possible applications, might tempt us to think that therefore each and every separate action of following the rule must depend on a separate interpretation of it. Yet, it is clear by now that no such series of specific interpretations is either helpful or required. What we need to do, time and again, is not to interpret the rule, but simply to act upon it, and if our action is in accord with the established communal pattern of usage then it can rightly be said that we follow the rule.[3]

In PI # 202 Wittgenstein continues:

> And hence also 'following the rule' is a practice. And to *believe* one is following the rule is not: following the rule. And hence one cannot follow the rule 'privately': otherwise believing one was following the rule would be the same thing as following it.

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[1] See for the significance of this shift to the material mode the discussion of # 140.

[2] The Anscombe edition here translates 'sollte man nennen' with 'ought to restrict'. In the light of the remark made above it may be clear that this translation is somewhat misleading and merely results from the fact that the meaning of the English 'interpretation' is much broader than that of the German 'Deutung'. Wittgenstein does not want to restrict the meaning of the German 'Deutung' but merely makes an observation about its correct ordinary employment.

[3] See also PI # 186, where Wittgenstein had already addressed the idea that there must be a separate interpretation or intuition grounding each separate application of a rule. Wittgenstein answers this suggestion by pointing out: 'Instead of saying that at every point an intuition is needed, it would almost be more correct to say that at every point a new decision is needed. It would almost be more correct to put matters this way, since thereby our attention is drawn to the fact that to follow the rule is a way of acting, rather than a question of being passively guided by intuitions or interpretations. Nevertheless, even this way of putting it is incorrect. To act in accord with the rule needs no more be founded on decisions, than on intuitions or interpretations. As Wittgenstein puts in in PI # 219: 'When I follow the rule, I do not choose [or decide]. I follow the rule *blindly*.' Below, we will go deeper into this point.

To follow the rule is a practice or a way of acting. However, the distinction that Wittgenstein subsequently draws in order to hammer this point home is not that between acting out a blind inclination as an individual 'in isolation', and acting as a member of a speech community. He merely makes the common sense observation that to believe that you are acting in a certain way is not the same as acting in a certain way. In other words, he points out that what distinguishes genuine rule following from merely thinking that you are following the rule is the existence of a criterion of correctness that is independent from your own particular beliefs about your actions. That this criterion can only consist in the blind inclinations of fellow speakers is not something that we are being told here, and in fact, since that interpretation of PI # 202 can only be inspired by the now amply refuted sceptical paradox, we no longer have any reason to read such a view in this section. Nor does the remark on the impossibility of following a rule 'privately' give any support to a Kripkian interpretation. From PI # 202 we can only learn that 'privately' refers to a situation where your own assessment of your action is at the same time the only possible criterion on which that very assessment is based. To which extent this leaves open the possibility that an individual can follow a rule on his own in the sense of having a genuine practice of which he is in fact the sole member is a question which we will address below.

So, Kripke's reading of a community solution in PI # 202 can not be substantiated by Wittgenstein's actual words, even though these do not unequivocally refute such an interpretation either. For that reason, Kripke's only support for such a reading of PI # 202 can only be that it is systematically forced upon us by the sceptical paradox that is presumably expounded in PI # 201 and elsewhere. Since we have already presented both exegetical and systematical reasons for denying that Wittgenstein endorses such a sceptical paradox, we may also rule out Kripke's reading of PI # 202.

In the next section, I want to look at several consequences of Wittgenstein conception of meaning and rule-following as a practice.

IV. PRACTICE AND NORMATIVITY

I have now supplied ample evidence for my global reading of Wittgenstein's discussion on rules and meaning in PI ## 138 - 242. In these sections it is Wittgenstein's aim to strengthen his previously expressed insight that the meaning of a word is completely determined by its use in the language. To that purpose, he scrutinizes the Gegner's opposite claim that the use of a word must rather follow from some use-independent state or item that the individual language user may grasp or possess. The ensuing investigation then turns around the question which of these two - an item (in the broadest sense) or a practice of usage - has constitutive priority over the other when it comes to meaning something by a word. In the course of the discussion, this question is given an unequivocal answer. An 'item' as the Gegner conceives of it (as something that is allegedly prior to a practice of

usage) has no constitutive role to play in regard to our meaningful use of language, and to the extent that pictures or formulas *ordinarily conceived* may be regarded as meaningful or may have some function to fulfill in our employment of words, this is so because of their embedding within a prior practice of use.

Now that these points are made, I want to continue by giving a summary of the most important implications of Wittgenstein's view that meaning is constituted by a practice of use. Of course, both in the discussion of Wittgenstein's negative points above, and in the section preceding it, I have already gone into several issues that are related to Wittgenstein's conception of meaning. In section I, for example, several things have been said on the anti-foundational nature of Wittgenstein's position, and on his non-reductive naturalism. Furthermore, it was pointed out in the previous sections that a practice of meaningful language use is subject to natural and contingent constraints of both a human and a non-human nature. Several of these issues - in particular those relating to Wittgenstein's anti-foundationalism - will be taken up again in the next chapter where we will scrutinize Wittgenstein's views on certainty and knowledge as expressed in *On Certainty*. At this point, I want to tie together the treads of this somewhat scattered treatment of Wittgenstein's positive points. This will also prepare the ground for the more systematical discussion concerning the nature of linguistic normativity and the status of the individual language user which will conclude this chapter. My presentation of Wittgenstein's views will be point-wise and concise. The issues that I have selected for discussion do not exhaust Wittgenstein's positive views, and, certainly, there is much more that could be said about each separate point.

Let us begin by looking at the anti-foundational aspects of Wittgenstein's view on meaning.

a. *Meaning something or, more generally, following a rule is not grounded in anything transcending a practice of usage. It is not founded on anything an individual might grasp or possess, and it is not determined by reasons or justifications.*

Mainly, this point has already been established above. Our words, we have seen, are meaningful due to our practice for using them; due to the role they play within our 'language games'. For that reason meaning cannot be determined by any use-transcendent item, state or object. By the same token, since meaning is completely manifested in the patterns of our overt actions, it is clear that no state or item that is confined to our 'inner space' or that might be grasped with 'the mind's eye' can have a meaning-bestowing role to play. As Wittgenstein pungently reiterates this point in PI p. 217: 'If God had looked into our minds he would not have been able to see there whom we were speaking of.' Whom we are speaking of when using a particular expression cannot be determined by the intrinsic features of any item we have in mind but will come to the fore only in our employment of the expression.

This praxiological view on meaning has of course consequences for the role and status that we allocate to our intellectual capacities. The Gegner, as we saw, defends a picture of language use that is not only foundational, but that more in particular tends to ground meaning in specifically intellectual acts of understanding

or grasping. Wittgenstein's arguments also undercut this kind of view on our linguistic capacities as being dependent on any such intellectual underpinning. As it is put in OC # 204: 'It is not a kind of seeing on our part, but our acting that lies at the bottom of the language game'. In this context, 'seeing' of course does not refer to seeing with the bodily eye, but rather, to seeing with the minds eye; it goes proxy for all the overtly intellectual acts on which we wrongly tend to ground meaning. It is not a kind of seeing on our part that lies at the bottom of the language game - but neither is it a kind of insight, of thinking, of understanding, of deliberating or grasping. Rather, the framework that is made up of our ungrounded and ungroundable ways of acting is a prerequisite of all such intellectual acts, and, for that reason, these actions that are constitutive to meaning cannot be given any ultimate reason or justification.

Thus, we might notice that Wittgenstein's position is anti-foundational in both an ontological and in an epistemological sense. Ontologically, there is no use-transcendent item that grounds our linguistic practices. Epistemologically, our ways of acting cannot be sustained by some ultimate, self-evident reason or justification. However, we must bear in mind that these two kinds of anti-foundationalism are based on different reasons. In the ontological case, the point is that there simply cannot exist any such thing as a meaning-bestowing, use-transcendent item. Such items turn out to be chimerical. But the reason underlying Wittgenstein's epistemological anti-foundationalism is of course not that we never have any means by which we can justify our use of language. For obviously, we are sometimes asked for what reason we employ a particular word in a particular context, and in such cases we usually can come up with a justification. The point is, rather, that such ordinary practices for justifying and explaining our use of words already presuppose that in general, we can take meaning for granted. In other words, our justifications - real and important as they may sometimes be - cannot have a foundational role to play because they already presuppose what they would have to ground.

Let us take a somewhat closer look at our reasons and justifications and to the point in which they terminate.

b. *The reasons and justifications that we have for using language as we do ultimately run out and terminate in a 'bedrock' of unpremeditated, immediate action. (Though it is a crucial feature of our practices that reasons and justifications can and must sometimes be given)*

Our ability to give reasons for our use of words at some point comes to an end, and since the possibility to give reasons and justifications is itself internal to a priorly established framework of practices, when our reasons run out we hit praxiological rockbottom. The important simile of a bedrock of action that underlies our explicit justificational practices makes its appearance in PI #217, where Wittgenstein asks:

> 'How am I able to follow a rule?' - if this is not a question about the causes, then it is about the justification for my following the rule in the way I do. If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: 'This is simply what I

do.' (*)

And in PI # 219, after observing that we follow a rule in such a matter of fact way that it might strike us as if the rule leaves us no choice, Wittgenstein adds:

> When I follow the rule, I do not choose. I follow the rule *blindly*. (*)

Bedrock, it is clear from PI # 217, marks the point at which my reasons and justifications run out. It is the terminus at which I lose my explicit discursive grasp on my way of following rules, or rather perhaps, it is the point at which my reasons and justification have completely run their course and now no longer have any substantial role to play. In that case, I can only refer to the fact that *this* is how I, as a matter of fact, unthinkingly and without any reliance on reasons or deliberations, act upon the rule.

Now, how exactly should we conceive of this bedrock that Wittgenstein invokes? Let me first point out three exegetically uncontroversial features of this praxiological rockbottom, before turning to the disputed question what status this bedrock has from a normative perspective. Firstly, it must be noted that the bedrock underlying my linguistic competence is something that I share with my fellow speakers; it is the source of our massive agreement in our employment of language. In that respect, as PI # 240 puts it, bedrock constitutes 'the framework out of which our language works':

> Disputes do not break out (among mathematicians, say) over the question whether a rule has been obeyed or not. People don't come to blows over it, for example. That is part of the framework out of which our language works (for example, in giving descriptions). (PI # 240)

Or, to quote RFM VII 40, where the impossibility to supply ultimate reasons for giving a certain description is explicitly tied in with this shared, mutual agreement:

> By what do I know that something is red? By the agreement of the colour with a sample? What right have I to say: 'Yes, that is red'? Well, I say it; and it cannot be justified. And it is characteristic for this language game ... that it takes place with the peaceful agreement of all people.

This, we should notice, does not mean that Wittgenstein embraces a consensus theory of truth; to share a bedrock is to agree in the language that we use, it is not to agree in what we hold to be true or false *given* that we use a certain language.[1]

Secondly, the fact that justifications run out and terminate in a bedrock of action does not imply that they are somehow superfluous. As was already pointed out, the ability to give a justification or explanation for one's use of words can in certain situations be a prerequisite for saliently claiming to have understood that word, and a justification can be an important means for settling what seems to be a fundamental disagreement between my own use of words and that of my fellow speakers.

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[1] See, e.g. PI ## 241, 242, or the remainder of RFM VII 40. In general a sharp distinction between a constitutive framework and what we may hold true given such a framework cannot be made, and that in certain cases a disagreement about the truth or falsity of a judgements would reflect on the issue whether we still share the same framework. For this reason it is said in PI # 242 that 'If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also ... in judgments. See for this issue also the next chapter.

Wittgenstein's point is, rather, that only against the background of a massive agreement in actions, justifications and explanations can be employed to settle a local disagreement.

In order to illustrate the importance that justifications and explanations have for Wittgenstein, one might invoke PI # 75, where it is asked what it means to know what a game is. Such knowledge, Wittgenstein tells us, does not depend on the ability to give or recognize a *definition* of what a game is (after all, the notion of a game is a family-resemblance concept). However, Wittgenstein continues,

> 'Isn't my knowledge, my concept of a game, completely expressed in the explanations that I could give? That is, in my describing examples of various kinds of game; shewing how all sorts of other games can be constructed on the analogy of these; saying that I should scarcely include this or that among games; and so on'.

It must be noted that it is said that these abilities completely *express* my knowledge of what a game is; they do not constitute or ground my practical grip on this concept. Yet, it is my capacity to express the content of this concept in this way which may be of crucial relevance in my intercourse with my fellow speakers when it comes to giving instructions or to attuning our use of words to each other.

Thirdly, the fact that in following the rule as I do, I can *ultimately* only rely on a bedrock of unpremeditated action does not imply that an element of doubt or uncertainty pertains to my rule-following. On the contrary. As will be made clear in the next chapter, the complex fabric of immediate action that lies at the bottom of my linguistic competence should be conceived as a framework of certainties which is presupposed by any specific, local doubt. Since a sensible doubt requires reasons, and the possibility to give reasons requires the existence of a prior bedrock of action, this bedrock itself is immune to any reasoned doubts, even though it might perhaps be forcibly upset if the world or my fellow human being would start to behave strangely enough.[1]

I now want to turn attention to the question how we should conceive of the normative status of bedrock. To give reasons and justifications is obviously a normative practice, and when Wittgenstein says that such practices terminate in a bedrock of direct action, then it might be thought that this termination point coincides with the limit of the normative domain. On this view, the term 'bedrock' would designate a complex of brute behavioural inclinations and regularities; a non-normative domain that sustains our explicitly normative practices. I think that this view on bedrock is incorrect, and there is certainly nothing in the text that warrants these assumptions. On the contrary. Section 217 opens with the question 'How am

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[1] In the next chapter, we will go deeper into the possibility that certainties which cannot be doubted might still be forcibly upset.. See also point d. below, where it is pointed out that our practices of language use presuppose a framework of natural and contingent conditions and regularities of both a human and non-human kind. In order to have already some idea of what I mean, one might remember the case of the disappearing chair in PI # 80, which was mentioned on page ?. No matter how much my usual employment of the word 'chair' is a certainty to me, it could nevertheless be thrown into disarray if chairs started appearing and disappearing without good reason.

I able to follow a rule?', and continues by saying that if this is not a descriptive question about the causal mechanisms that may be relevant to my linguistic competence, that then it can only be a normative question about my justifications. Now, it is clear that the causal antecedents of my rule-following are of no interest to Wittgenstein, and that he addresses the question in the latter, normative sense.[1] Taken in that sense, however, the question can in the last instance only be answered by pointing at the bedrock of actions that come naturally to me; ultimately 'I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: 'This is simply what I do.' Yet, what I do in that case cannot be regarded as 'following a brute inclination' or 'letting some causal mechanism run its course'. For in that case, the question that was asked would after all turn out to be one about the causal antecedents of my rule-following, and we would have to interpret Wittgenstein as actually saying that if the question is not about causes, then it is about justifications, in which case it is, ultimately, still about causes. This, I think, is to misconstrue Wittgenstein's words. What I do, at that instant where all I can say is that 'this is simply what I do', is *to follow the rule*, not to exercise a behavioural automatism. In other words, explicit justifications do not exhaust the normative domain.

This, I think, is also clear from PI # 219, when it is remarked that 'when I follow the rule, I do not choose, I follow the rule *blindly*.' This particular remark, as we have seen, is frequently invoked by Kripke in order to substantiate his claim that to follow a rule is basically to follow a non-normative, 'blind' inclination. But of course, no such shift from the normative domain to some non-normative realm of inclinations can be read in this remark. The term 'blindly' in PI # 219 is an adverbial, and qualifies the way in which I exercise a normative ability: my ability to follow the rule. It is not an adnominal that qualifies the nature of that which is being exercised, as when, for example, it would have been said that 'I follow my blind inclinations'. So, the mistake which Kripke makes, is to suppose that when my reasons and justifications run out, and I act 'blindly', that then I have crossed over from the normative to the causal domain. Yet, my blind actions are a manifes-

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[1] I have said little to nothing about Wittgenstein's views on the causal mechanisms that might underlie our linguistic competence. One reason for this is that in this respect Wittgenstein's remarks are scanty, to say the very least. A second reason is that I take his views, as far as I can make them out, to be basically similar to my own views as these have elaborately been expounded in Chapter 3. One of Wittgenstein's few remarks on causal mechanisms to be found in the rule-following discussion is PI # 149, where it is said: 'If one says that knowing the ABC is a state of the mind, one is thinking of a state of a mental apparatus (perhaps the brain) by means of which we explain the *manifestations* of that knowledge. Such a state is called a disposition. But there are objections to speaking of a state of the mind here, inasmuch as there ought to be two different criteria for such a state: a knowledge of the construction of the apparatus, quite apart from what it does.' As I read this remark, we can only speak of an underlying state when we have definite (causal) criteria for identifying it. Yet, if we had these, and we wanted to identify 'knowing the ABC' with being in such a state, we would have two only contingently related and perhaps diverging criteria for what it is to know the ABC: the causal criteria, and the overtly behavioural criteria, and in such a case, it would still be the behavioural criteria which would be decisive. (Compare the arguments that were brought forward against Goldfarb in Chapter 3, section 5.)

tation of my certainty about the correct application of the rule, they are not actions which I just 'happen' to perform, lead as I am by instincts and neural mechanisms.

Baker and Hacker present an interpretation of bedrock that is similar to Kripke's in as far as they, too, regard bedrock as a basically non-normative realm.[1] Yet, Kripke, as we saw, basically proceeds 'bottom-up', with the intent to argue that, since an individual's bedrock is non-normative, every (communal) practice that is build upon it must be non-normative too. Baker and Hacker reject such an 'atomistic' view, and straightforwardly accept the normative nature of our ordinary linguistic practices. Nevertheless, the specifically normative nature of these practices is in their view intrinsically and exclusively tied up with such explicitly verbal abilities as giving justifications and reasons, explaining the meaning of a word or formulating rules and describing acts of following them. Apart from such verbal practices, normativity can get no foothold. By implication, bedrock - which lies beyond these practices, must on itself be regarded as a non-normative domain which at best provides behavioural preconditions for genuine normativity that consists in our mutually shared employment of explanations, justifications or rule-formulations.

As will be extensively motivated below, I disagree in this respect with Baker and Hacker. Indeed, giving justification is a verbal, normative practice. But the termination point of that practice is not the beginning of the causal realm. For linguistic normativity goes beyond the explicitly discursive. One might wrongly be tempted to the view that it is a justification or the possibility of a justification which must be added to an action in order to "make" it into a normative action. Yet, that which "makes" an action normative - that which accounts for the fact that this action is an instance of following a rule, rather than a blind quirk - is the "complex environment" in which the action takes place. It is not that the actor always has to be able to add an explicit justification to the action, but rather, that the action must be performed within a particular context.

With these short remarks I will leave Baker and Hacker's interpretation for now. The bone of our discontent is clear; I have no quarrel with them for taking linguistic normativity to be a real, irreducible phenomenon, but rather, I disagree with them to the extent that they locate linguistic normativity exclusively in explicitly verbal (meta-)practices.

Let us now turn our attention to Wittgenstein's remarks concerning the training of novices. It is perhaps not far-fetched to think that a misunderstanding about Wittgenstein's views on this topic might be one of the roots of the mistaken idea that the bedrock of unpremeditated action underlying our rule-following is a domain of non-normative habits and inclinations.

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[1] I will here only mention Baker and Hacker's views in order to illustrate what is at stake explicating the nature of bedrock. Baker and Hacker, in my mind, are two of the most important Wittgenstein scholars, and their interpretation of the rule-following discussion merits more attention than I will pay to it at this place. At the end of the present section I will elaborate upon their views.

c. *The process by which we (onto-genetically) become a member of a practice is by drill and dressage, not by any intellectual grasp.*

We have seen that one of Wittgenstein's concerns is to counterbalance an overtly intellectual view on our linguistic capacities by stressing the direct, unpremeditated action that lies at the root of our employment of words. To that effect, Wittgenstein often pictures situations in which a child is being introduced to some very simple linguistic practice. In such cases it is stressed that both natural and acquired reactions are a precondition for learning how to employ words as we do, and that such reactions constitute a necessary framework within which we can give justifications or explanations and can converse intelligibly with each other about what is the *right* way of following a rule, or about how one is *meant* to follow it.[1] In the context of such examples, *Abrichtung* (dressage) is one of Wittgenstein's favorite terms for describing the pupil's training.[2] For example, in PI # 5 Wittgenstein tells us that to imagine 'primitive kinds of application' might give us a clearer view on the 'aim and functioning' of words, and he adds:

> A child uses such primitive forms of language when it learns to talk. Here the teaching of language is not explanation, but dressage. (*) (PI # 5)

Now dressage, it might be thought, is the kind of training that can only be instrumental in producing blind behavioural regularities. That idea, combined with the assumption that it is such dressage that constitutes the bedrock underlying our linguistic competence, might subsequently lead us to think of bedrock (and of the practices sustained by it) as basically non-normative.

As an illustration of this line of thinking, of the problems to which it gives rise, and of the root of these problems, we might turn to McGinn, who draws the following conclusion from Wittgenstein's anti-rationalist stress on *Abrichtung*:

> Wittgenstein is here advocating a sort of anti-intellectualism [...] he wishes to emphasize the *habitual* character of rule-following and to discourage an overtly rationalistic conception of the nature of this form of behaviour. To put his view crudely: we do better to compare our use of language with the trained behaviour of a dog when it puts out its paw than with the reflections of a

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[1] See PI # 185, which stresses, firstly, that sharing such propensities is a precondition for mutual intelligibility and, secondly, that this function cannot be taken over by more 'intellectual' means such as explanations or justifications.

[2] Anscombe often translates *Abrichtung* somewhat euphemistically with 'training'. 'Dressage', for which the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* has as entry: 'training a horse to perform various movements that show its obedience to its rider', is truer to the German, except that the standard employment would concern dogs, rather than horses. A native German speaker of my acquaintance can get genuinely indignant concerning Wittgenstein's use of the term *Abrichtung* in regard to children, and I think that to some extent his employment of this word is rhetorical. The point of using the word *Abrichtung*, is that *Abrichtung* takes place where there is no prior understanding of the wishes or designs of the trainer on the part of the trainee, so that what gets acquired during dressage does not depend on priorily acquired skills or insights and is, in that sense, the groundwork of competence. Personally, I think that this does not really do justice to the training of children, which heavily relies on a mutual empathy which is absent in the case of dogs or horses. (Since I take such empathy to be a natural phenomenon, this observation, of course, does not contradict Wittgenstein's philosophical point.)

scientist weighing evidence and doing experiments. (McGinn (1984), p. 24)

To be fair, McGinn adds that his way of phrasing this point is 'really *too* crude', although he then also points out that Wittgenstein himself claims that we may teach children language in the very same way as we may train a dog. However, the crucial problem concerning McGinn's comparison does not concern its crudeness. The problem is that extrapolating from *Abrichtung* to the nature of 'our use of language' leads to the kind of whole-sale, unrestrained scepticism that was characteristic of Kripke's paradox. McGinn's simile nicely illustrates this point. For when McGinn claims that 'we do better to compare our use of language with the trained behaviour of a dog when it puts out its paw', then the 'we' that McGinn is talking about embraces all language users, scientists included, so that the scientist when weighing evidence should in fact also best be seen as a dog when it puts out its paw. If dressage leads to blind behavioural inclinations that subsequently characterise the nature of our language use, then blindness will prevail all across the board.

Nevertheless, I think that the passage quoted above also shows why no such conclusion can be inferred from Wittgenstein's remarks on *Abrichtung*. For where Wittgenstein merely talks about *Abrichtung* in those situations where a child gets *introduced* into our linguistic practices by being drilled, McGinn talks about the nature of 'our use of language' itself. In other words, McGinn fails to distinguish between the way in which one may (partly) acquire linguistic competence, and the nature of this competence once one has acquired it. Yet, to draw this distinction is crucial for seeing Wittgenstein's remarks in the right perspective.

In order to explain what I mean, I want to look somewhat closer at PI # 6. As we saw in the previous section, Wittgenstein introduces the notion of *Abrichtung* and contrasts it to the giving of explanations. In PI # 6 he discusses what role such *Abrichtung* might play in acquiring the language of the builders from PI # 2. When children are being taught this language, Wittgenstein observes, then 'an important part of the dressage (*Abrichtung*)' will consist in the teacher pointing out objects, drawing the child's attention to them, and uttering such a word as 'slab'. We might call this form of drill 'ostensive teaching'. (We should already notice at this point that we are dealing with two people here: there is one person (the child), who does not yet know the language and who is being drilled, but there is also a second person (the teacher), who is already master of this language and who does the drilling. It seems obvious to me that the capacities that the teacher employs when drilling the child cannot themselves exhaustively be characterized in terms of *Abrichtung*.) The ostensive teaching of the child, Wittgenstein continues, 'can be said to establish an association between the word and the thing'; for example, at the hearing of the word, a picture may come before the child's mind, and such pictures might even be helpful to attain the actual purpose of the words that form the language of the builders. Yet, Wittgenstein observes, 'in the language of # 2 it is *not* the purpose of the words to evoke images'; in other words, the mechanism that is established by the *Abrichtung* of the child does not bring about the full-blown linguistic competence, or the understanding of the child. Concerning the relation

between *Abrichtung* and understanding Wittgenstein then remarks:

> But if the ostensive teaching has this effect, - am I to say that it effects an understanding of the word? Don't you understand the call 'Slab!' if you act upon it in such-and-such a way? - Doubtless the ostensive teaching helped to bring this about; but only together with a particular training. With different training the same ostensive teaching of these words would have effected a quite different understanding.
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> "I set the brake up by connecting up rod and lever.' - Yes, given the whole of the rest of the mechanism. Only in conjunction with that is it a brake-lever, and separated from its support it is not ever a lever; it may be anything, or nothing. (PI # 6)

Two important points are being made here. Firstly, the abilities which one acquires by means of dressage, need not be those in which understanding expresses itself. In the language-game of the builders, the word 'slab' is used to give orders in the context of building activities, and someone's understanding of an order is expressed in acting upon it in a certain way. The ability to make such a use of "slab" can have preliminary requirements (for people such as us) that may nevertheless drop out of consideration when it comes to the full-blown use that is expressive of understanding.[1] So, far from suggesting that a person's full-blown linguistic competence can be exhaustively characterized in terms of the abilities acquired by drill and dressage, Wittgenstein indicates that we must make a distinction between preliminary abilities due to drill, and full understanding that is manifested in the employment of words.

Secondly, and even more importantly, # 6 tells us why we cannot appeal to *Abrichtung* in order to qualify the nature of linguistic understanding. The drill to which the pupil was subjected can only be instrumental to understanding provided that it takes place within a broader context of teaching or education (*Unterricht*).[2] Or even stronger - as is indicated by the simile of the brake at the end of PI # 6 - is constitutively dependent on a broader educational context. If this context had been different, then the *Abrichtung* which is now instrumental in bringing about an understanding of the order 'slab', might have brought about anything ... or nothing. In regard to the language that is spoken by the builders, it is clear what this context embraces. For example, the child has to be educated in fulfilling a particular social role within the framework of the building activities. It has to learn the point of these activities and it must understand what contribution he himself is supposed to make to them. In general, it must learn how to employ words in a context of other, non-verbal activities, that are undertaken together with other people, to a particular purpose under particular external circumstances. In as far as an understanding of "slab!" is relative to such a broader context, the same drill (i.e. ostensive teaching) might have brought about a different understanding if the global

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[1] In PI # 7 it is said that the activity of naming of slabs may also be part of the teaching of the language of # 2. It should be noted that in this case too, naming itself is simply not a part of the actual employment of the order 'Slab!'.

[2] *Unterricht*, it should be noted, stands in a marked contrast with *Abrichtung*. In most contexts, *Unterricht* designates formal education, and its use ranges from the instruction received at primary school to the education one gets at a university.

context had been different.

This observation, I think, gives us a principled reason why the *Abrichtung* which may be part of the initial stages of language learning cannot be conceived as leading to the acquirement of blind inclinations that constitute the bedrock underlying our linguistic competence. Such an atomistic and reductionistic picture is explicitly rejected and the tables are turned when it is pointed out in PI # 6 that a particular *Abrichtung* can only be helpful in bringing about understanding, and in fact, that it can only *be* the particular *Abrichtung* that it is, provided that it is locked into a broader, normative context of linguistic and non-linguistic practices. (Below, under points f. and g., we will see that this point does not only apply to the *Abrichtung* of pupils, but that the single acts of meaning or intending of a ordinary language user are also constitutively dependent on a broad, normative context of social practices.)

So, Wittgenstein's employment of the notion of *Abrichtung*, though intended to bring out the fact that we do not acquire our linguistic capacities by means of some intellectual process, cannot be invoked in order to argue for the non-normative nature of the linguistic competence that we do acquire or of the bedrock that underlies it. In fact, I think we should not conceive of bedrock along such atomistic lines at all. Bedrock is where my reasons give out and I simply follow the rule in a direct and unpremeditated way. But bedrock, conceived like this, is still informed by the full-blown normative practices into which my actions are locked, not by any non-normative, practice independent inclinations.[1]

Let us leave the issue at this, and continue with the next point.

d. *Our practices of language use presuppose a framework of natural and contingent conditions and regularities of both a human and non-human kind.*

I want to be brief here, since we have already gone into this point on several occasions.[2] Our words, as Wittgenstein stresses, are meaningful due to our practices for employing them, and these verbal practices are interwoven with our non-verbal practices and activities from which they derive their point. This close interrelationship between verbal and non-verbal practices is something which Wittgenstein often stresses; in fact, one of his first explanations of the term 'language game' is 'the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven'. (PI # 7) Now, our practices and our ways of acting are attuned to the world around us, and require for their point and their very existence that the circumstances within which our actions are embedded remain on the whole constant. In regard to these 'circumstances', it is clear that Wittgenstein thinks both

[1] The view of bedrock expounded here is closely similar to the view that McDowell defends (see McDowell (1984) and (1994)) McDowell warns us not to regard bedrock as a non-normative domain, and he qualifies the behaviour that makes up this bedrock as a 'second nature' that must be qualified as social and normative. Considerations of space and scope unfortunately preclude a (no doubt very rewarding) systematical in depth analysis of McDowell's views.

[2] See, e.g., chapter 4, section 2, where it was explained by means of the picture of a man climbing up a hill that our use of pictures is constrained by natural regularities, chapter 5, section 1, and our discussion of # 141 in the previous section.

of certain features that concern human beings, and of features concerning the non-human world around us. People like us, for example, have standard ways of reacting to gestures as, for instance, we naturally react to the gesture of pointing with the hand by looking in the direction from wrist to finger-tip, and not from finger-tip to wrist, or merely to the finger itself, as a cat does. (PI # 185) The objects in the world around us have an enduring permanency without which many of our practices would become unintelligible, as the practice of selling cheese by the weight would lose its point if pieces of cheese were often to grow or shrink for no obvious reason. (PI # 142)

To quote more extensively the remark from PI # 142 that we looked at above:

> It is only in normal cases that the use of a word is clearly prescribed; we know, are in no doubt, what to say in this or that case. The more abnormal the case, the more doubtful it becomes what we are to say. And if things were quite different from what they actually are - if there were for instance no characteristic expression of pain, of fear, of joy; if rule became exception and exception rule; or if both became phenomena of roughly equal frequency - this would make our normal language-games lose their point. (PI # 142)

In regard to our epistemic practices, we will pay more attention to this framework of trivial but all important preconditions in the next chapter. Here we might conclude by pointing out the element of contingency that this observation incorporates into our conception of our linguistic practices. For whereas we often tend to think of meaning as something that anticipates all possible circumstances, Wittgenstein, on the contrary, stresses that our language use is preconditioned by a massive amount of purely contingent features concerning ourselves and the world around us.

e. *Acting in accordance with a rule is primitive in the sense that it cannot be reduced to a more basic 'agreement in actions' or to 'objective' regularities.*

As we have seen, there are many natural preconditions to our practices of rule-following. The initial stages of being introduced to a practice can be described as a drill or a dressage, to which the pupil has to react in the standard way that comes natural to beings such as we are (and, as # 185 makes pungently clear, the absence of such standard reactions leads to a breakdown of training and learning and precludes mutual intelligibility). In order to be trainable at all, a pupil must have a natural understanding of what we all, just as naturally, regard as 'going on in the same way'. For the very existence of a linguistic community as a whole, it is essential that such a globally shared, but primitive agreement obtains between its speakers. Now, it could be thought that such agreement might provide us with a key to a foundational account of the nature of rule-following, and that following according to the rule could at a more basic level be explained in terms of 'going on in the same way', or 'agreement between actions'.

According to Wittgenstein, it would be a mistake to think so. At many occasions in the *Philosophical Investigations*, but particularly in the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, Wittgenstein explicitly rejects the possibility of giving such a reductive account of rule-following. 'Agreement' or 'going on in the same

way' cannot be regarded as non-normative phenomena that are prior to what counts as 'following the rule'. One has to learn what can count as 'agreement' in a particular case, and learning this, Wittgenstein stresses, is not basically different from learning what counts as 'following a rule'. As he puts it:

> Once you have described the procedure of teaching and learning, you have said everything that can be said about acting correctly according to a rule. We can go no further. It is no use, for example, to go back to the concept of agreement, because it is no more certain that one proceeding is in agreement with another, than that it has happened in accordance with a rule. (RFM VII 26)

Or,

> The word 'agreement' and the word 'rule' are *related* to one another, they are cousins. I teach anyone the use of the one word, he learns the use of the other with it.
>
> The use of the word 'rule' and the use of the word 'same' are interwoven. (PI ## 224, 225)

Indeed, such normative abilities as following according to a rule are acquired on the basis of ingrained behavioural regularities and a training that is given in a complex social surrounding. Yet, the capacities that one acquires in this way - the practical grasp on what it is to go by a rule - cannot subsequently be accounted for by going back to some primordial non-normative level. This practical understanding is a given, primitive datum beyond which our explanatory accounts cannot go. For a practical understanding of what it is to follow a rule belongs to the very framework that is a prerequisite for giving explanations in the first place.

In the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, - which is an earlier work than the *Investigations* - we still see Wittgenstein frequently banging his head against this framework in an attempt to explain the nature of rule following in more 'basic' terms. Wittgenstein is unequivocal concerning the result of these attempts:

> To what extent can the function of language be described? If someone is not master of a language, I may bring him to a mastery of it by training. Someone who is master of it, I may remind of the kind of training, or I may describe it; for a particular purpose; thus already using a technique of the language.
>
> To what extent can the function of a rule be described? Someone who is master of none, I can only train. But how can I explain the nature of a rule to myself? The difficult thing here is not, to dig down to the ground; no, it is to recognize the ground that lies before us as the ground. For the ground keeps on giving us the illusory image of a greater depth, and when we seek to reach this, we keep on finding ourselves on the old level.
>
> Our disease is one of wanting to explain. (RFM VI 31)

Nevertheless, it must be noted that the kind of account rejected here is an external account of normative phenomena - a philosophical explication of the nature of rule following or the 'function of language' which is foundational in the sense of grounding these phenomena in a way that does not already presuppose them. This does not mean that Wittgenstein also rejects an internal account of what it is to follow a (particular) rule, e.g., the kind of account that one might give in a linguistic or semantic context:

> Does this mean that 'following a rule' is indefinable? No. I can surely define it in countless ways. Only definitions are no use to me in these considerations. (RFM VI 18)

f. *A practice is a temporally extended phenomenon, and single acts of meaning or intending require a proper embedding in such an extended practice.*

In order to mean something by a sign or to follow a rule for it, there has to be a practice for employing that sign. But a practice, as a pattern of actions, is by its very nature something that is extended over time. Meaning has for that reason an ineliminable temporal dimension and cannot be contracted in any momentary phenomenon of whatever kind. As Wittgenstein puts it emphatically:

> In order to describe the phenomenon of language, one must describe a practice, not something that happens once, *no matter of what kind.*
> It is very hard to realize this. (RFM VI 33, 34)

Or,

> It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which someone followed a rule. It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which a report was made, an order given or understood; and so on. - To follow a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are *customs* (uses, institutions) (PI # 199)

But when rule-following is a practice or a custom, then it also follows that a proper embedding within a temporally extended context is a constitutive prerequisite for some action, or even for some sequence of actions, to be the kind of rule-governed activity that it is. This point has radical consequences for how we must conceive of the actions of an individual and of the complex of actions of a whole community (and indeed, as Wittgenstein says in RFM VI 34, to realize this point fully is *eine sehr schwierige Erkenntnis*).

Let us first look at this issue as it concerns phenomena that are broader and more complex than those pertaining to a single language user. The central importance of this temporal dimension for a complete community of speakers is very well brought out by one of Wittgenstein's rather stunning thought experiments in the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*:

> Let us imagine a god creating a country instantaneously in the middle of the wilderness, which exists for two minutes and is an exact reproduction of a part of England, with everything that is going on there in two minutes. Just like those in England, the people are pursuing a variety of occupations. Children are in school. Some people are doing mathematics. Now let us contemplate the activity of some human being during these two minutes. One of these people is doing exactly what a mathematician in England is doing, who is just doing a calculation. - Ought we to say that this two-minute-man is calculating? Could we for example not imagine a past and a continuation of these two minutes, which would make us call the processes something quite different? (RFM VI 34)

And, of course, we can. Even in regard to a whole community of people with their complete surroundings, such short span of time as two minutes is not sufficient for determining what practices and institutions these people have, and, consequently, it is not yet settled what kind of rule-governed activities these people engage in.

In regard to single individuals, it is even harder to overstress the importance of the temporally extended context of practices and ways of life in which the acts and actions of a speaker must be embedded. In general, Wittgenstein claims,

What, in a complicated surrounding, we call 'following a rule' we should certainly not call that if it stood in isolation. (RFM VI 33)

Of course, we have already met with this view in the discussion on the cube drawing in PI ## 138 -142, and in that context it was sharply contrasted with the Gegner's position. As we saw, the Gegner defends the view that the meaningfulness of a speaker's words can be grounded in a practice-independent state or item which the speaker can possess of grasp at a single instant. Putting it roughly, on the Gegner's view everything about meaning lies contained in a very 'rich' inner item, while the external circumstances surrounding a speaker's use of words have no essential role to play. On the other hand, Wittgenstein argues that the notion of such 'rich' inner items is mythical, and results from an illicit projection of our familiarity with the use of signs in an ordinary context onto ordinary inner items such as a drawing. Of course, a drawing that comes before my mind *can* function as a sign designating cubes. But when it functions as the picture of a cube, this is not due to the intrinsic features of the mental item itself or to any concomitant mental states, but rather, it is due to the embedding of the drawing within a broader context of practices. Provided there is such an embedding, a drawing that comes before my mind can be regarded as a sign, picturing cubes. In isolation from such an embedding context, it is not a sign but a mere drawing, that could mean anything or nothing. So, putting it somewhat roughly, where the Gegner appeals to 'semantically rich' inner items while denying any intrinsic role to the context of use, Wittgenstein points out the 'semantically barren' nature of such items when taken by themselves, while stressing that they may nevertheless function as meaningful signs provided that there is a proper embedding context.

Let me give a few examples in order to illustrate the general view underlying this point. Firstly, it was noted above that the *Abrichtung* of a child is something that is intrinsically related to a embedding context of practices. When training a novice builder by ostensively teaching him the use of the word 'slab', it is crucial, PI # 6 pointed out, that this teaching takes place within a particular context. The same applies to the reactions that guarantee the understanding of such a pupil.

If the pupil reacts to [the training] thus and thus; he has internalized the rule. But *this* is important, namely that this reaction, which is our guarantee of understanding, presupposes as a surrounding particular circumstances, particular forms of life and speech. (As there is no such thing as a facial expression without a face.) (RFM VII 47)

Only within the context of particular activities and specific practices for the use of words are the reactions of the pupil instances of going by a certain rule, and only relative to such a context can we say that the pupil has now fully understood the rule.

A similar point applies to ostensive definition.[1] In teaching someone such words as 'round' or 'blue', we may point at a particular shape or at a particular colour. But what, it is asked in PI # 33, makes a particular act of pointing your finger at some-

[1] Wittgenstein distinguishes ostensive definition from 'ostensive teaching' in as far as the pupil is already capable, in the former case, of asking what a particular something is called.

thing 'pointing at the shape', rather than, say, 'pointing at the colour'? Here it may be tempting to think that, together with the bodily movement, we also perform a particular mental act of 'meaning the shape' that differs from an act of 'meaning the colour'. Here, in PI # 33 ff., Wittgenstein does not give us the principled argument against 'mental acts of meaning' that he is to give in PI # 138 ff. He merely points out that, even though there may be characteristic experiences that go together with our pointings, there simply is no uniform mental act that is characteristic to 'pointing at the shape' as opposed to 'pointing to the colour'. And he adds:

> Besides, even if something of the sort did recur in all cases, it would still depend on the circumstances - that is, on what happened before and after the pointing - whether we should say 'He pointed to the shape and not to the colour''. (PI # 35)

It is not a singly act of whatever kind that makes the pointing a 'pointing to the shape', but rather, it is within the complex and temporally extended context of teaching a person a particular word that my pointing can qualify as a 'pointing at the shape'.

These examples well illustrate the general drift of the present point. In general, we can say that Wittgenstein holds that the single, momentary acts and actions of an individual, in order to qualify as 'meaning something', 'following a rule', or 'intending to perform some rule-governed activity' stand in need of an embedding context of practices on which they are constitutively dependent. This point is made forcefully towards the end of the rule-following discussion, where it is tied in with the preceding discussion on rules:

> 'It's as if we could grasp the whole use of a word in a flash.' - And that is just what we say we do. That is to say: we sometimes describe what we do in these words. But there is nothing astonishing, nothing queer, about what happens. It becomes queer when we are led to think that the future development must in some way already be present in the act of grasping the use and yet isn't present - For we say that there isn't any doubt that we understand the word, and on the other hand its meaning lies in its use. There is no doubt that I now want to play chess, but chess is the game it is in virtue of all its rules (and so on). Don't I know, then, which game I want to play until I *have* played it? or are all the rules contained in my act of intending? ... Where is the connection effected between the sense of the expression 'let's play a game of chess' and all the rules of the game? - Well, in the list of rules of the game, in the teaching of it, in the day-to-day practice of playing. (PI # 197)

g. *Our practices for using language are in fact of an intrinsically social nature. To the extent that our practices for language use are social practices, the 'facts about meaning' are social facts. And to that extent, facts about individuals are not constitutive for meaning.*

An individual's actions, in order to qualify as meaningful or as instances of rule-following, must be embedded in a context of practices, techniques and institutions. But it is still an open question whether, according to Wittgenstein, the practices that are constitutive to meaning and rule-following are intrinsically social, or whether it is also possible that an individual follows a rule on the basis of his own, individual practice.

In order to be clear about what is at stake, let me first rule out two cases. By an

'individual practice', I do not mean some idiosyncratic rule that might be thought out and employed by an ordinary language user, for example, a cipher-script used for writing in a diary. There is no question that such rules are possible, but since they are arguably parasitic on the social linguistic capacities that one already possesses, such rules are not really interesting. Secondly, by an 'individual practice' I do not mean a practice that is in principle of such a nature that other people could not possibly understand it or partake of it. The idea that expressions can be meaningful due to such a practice is tantamount to the idea that there can be a private language. I take Wittgenstein's arguments in PI ## 243 ff. to give a convincing refutation of that suggestion. The question that I have in mind is rather this one: could a person, who had never learned how to partake of any social practices, techniques or institutions, nevertheless develop a practice which would be such that we would have to conclude that he follows a rule or means something.

Now, as we have seen above, this question has a central place in Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein, and on the premisses of Kripke's sceptical paradox it should be given a negative answer. The facts about an individual, Kripke argues, are exhausted by his non-normative inclinations, so that no action or pattern of actions performed by an individual can be straightforwardly, factually qualified as normative. Consequently, it is only within a social context where the blind inclinations of several speakers can agree or conflict, that the *semblance* of normativity can be accounted for. Or so Kripke claims. Yet, we have seen by now that there are good reasons to reject Kripke's argument. For instance, we have expounded and defended Wittgenstein's claim that our practices of language use and the rockbottom of action on which an individual speaker ultimately falls back, must be seen as full-bloodedly normative. In other words, Wittgenstein rejects the reason for which Kripke denied an individual the possibility of following rules, e.i., that there are no normative facts about individuals. Yet, from our exposition of Wittgenstein's views it was also clear that when Wittgenstein discusses the practices that uphold meaningful language use, these practices are in fact always social practices. So, we should still ask ourselves whether Wittgenstein gives any principled reason for assuming that the practices that account for genuine normative facts about people must nevertheless be social practices.

When turning to Wittgenstein's work in order to find an answer to this question, we are struck by the almost complete absence of evidence either pro or contra. Certainly, we find many related questions. For instance, it is asked:

> As things are I can, for example, invent a game that is never played by anyone. - But would the following be possible too: mankind has never played any games; once, however, someone invented a game - which no one ever played? (PI # 204)

The answer must certainly be no, but the question asked here is not our present one. We would like to know whether it is possible that under these circumstances someone invented a game - and frequently played it all by his own.

Also, Wittgenstein asks:

> Is what we call 'following a rule' something that it would be possible for only *one* man to do, and to do only *once* in his life? (PI # 199)

No, it certainly is not. But, we now ask whether following a rule is something that could repeatedly be done by one man in the everyday context of his life.

In PI # 243 Wittgenstein says that we could imagine 'human beings who spoke only in monologue; who accompanied their activities by talking to themselves'. Yet, it is clear that in this case we are dealing with a whole community of 'monologue speakers', not with a single individual. In fact, the only place known to me where Wittgenstein explicitly poses the question whether a single speaker might have a normative practice all by himself is in the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, where it is asked:

> Could there be only one human being that calculated? Could there be only one that followed a rule? Are these questions like, say, this one: 'Can one man alone engage in commerce?' (RFM VI 45)

But, notably, the question is left hanging in the air and the next remark addresses a different theme.

So, Wittgenstein presents us with little to no evidence for deciding our question, and in general I think that his attitude towards individual rule-followers is highly cautious and somewhat ambivalent. This attitude is well brought out by the following remark in the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*:

> The word 'agreement' and the word 'rule' are *related*, they are cousins. The phenomena of agreement and of acting according to a rule hang together.
>
> There might be a cave-man who produced *regular* sequences of marks for himself. He amused himself, e.g., by drawing on the wall of the cave:
>
> -. --. --. --.
>
> or
>
> -.-..-...-....-
>
> But he is not following the general expression of a rule. And when we say that he acts in a regular way that is not because we can form such an expression.
>
> But suppose he now developed π! (I mean without a general expression of the rule.)
>
> Only in the practice of a language can a word have meaning.
>
> Certainly I can give myself a rule and then follow it. But is it not a rule only for this reason, that it is analogous to what is called 'rule' in human dealings?
>
> When a thrush always repeats the same phrase several times in its song, do we say that perhaps it gives itself a rule each time, and then follows the rule?

I have quoted the remark in full, because it well brings out Wittgenstein's way of circumambulating a question by imagining different cases. Wittgenstein begins by pointing out that the notions 'rule' and 'agreement' (and, for that matter the notion of 'regularity') are related (see point e. above). The cave-man, we are then told, is not following a rule in a full-blooded sense, but nevertheless his actions do manifest a regularity. This regularity, furthermore, is grounded on his own actions and not on the fact that *we* are able to formulate a rule for his sequence of marks. So, to the extend that the notions of 'regularity' and 'rule' are related, we may perhaps say that our cave-man, though not really following a rule, is nevertheless engaged in some 'proto rule-following activity'. But there are definite limits concerning such activities. If he were to go on by scratching what is in fact the development of π on the wall of his cave, we would probably have no idea what to

say anymore. For genuinely developing π one needs real rules and these our cave-man does not have. The development of π requires practices (the social 'practice of a language') that are much more complex than anything the cave-man engages in. Wittgenstein subsequently concludes the remark by contrasting the intermediate case of the solitary cave-man with the two other sides of the spectrum: a thrush, that really does not follow any rules at all, and myself, whose rule-following capacities are related to 'what is called 'rule' in human dealings'.[1]

In the light of this remark, I want to suggest that Wittgenstein regards the possibility of a solitary practice sustaining solitary rule-following with great caution, and that he sees it as a limiting case of what we ordinarily regard as 'following a rule'. Still, he does not unequivocally rule out this possibility. That, we might now think, is correct, since the example of the cave-man can easily be extended in such a way that we could rightly say that he is following rules. For instance, our cave man might have a palm leave at hand, on which he has scratched '--. --. --.', and we might imagine that in scratching the sequence '--. --. etc' on the wall of his cave, he sometimes takes his palm leave in order to check whether he is still following the initial pattern and that he corrects himself if he doesn't. In that case, would he not really be following a rule in the ordinary sense?[2]

Nevertheless, even such a simple extension of the example already leads to problems. For Wittgenstein tells us that the solitary cave-man 'amuses himself' by scratching these signs on the wall. But if *amusement* is the sole purpose of his practice, then what reason would he have for appealing to his palm leave and correcting a deviant sequence? After all, such a sequence might really be just as amusing as the initial one - or even more so, when it alleviates his tedium. The point is, that the very purpose of this practice - to find some amusement on a lonely Pleistocene Saturday night - cannot supply sufficient ground for normative, self-corrective behaviour.

This brings us to a point that is in my mind of crucial importance to this issue. In our discussions on the possibility of a solitary practice of rule-following, we tend to pay too little attention to a question that is for Wittgenstein always of paramount importance: what is the point of such a practice; what practical purpose does it serve? In order to have a genuinely normative practice of rule-following, this practice must serve a purpose to which it actually *matters* to perform this practice in

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[1] Baker and Hacker (1984a) pp. 21 mentions other manuscript sources that in their mind support the idea that an individual on his own can develop a practice that sustains his rule-following. These are MS 165 (a pocket notebook, circa 1941 - 1944 - see von Wright (1969)), where we once again meet with a solitary cave-man, and MS 129 (first entry dated 17.08. 1944)
I have not been able to check these references, but since these remarks are written earlier than the final selection made for PI, (see von Wright (1979)) and do not appear in PI, one might wonder how much weight Wittgenstein himself gave to them.

[2] Basically, this is what Baker and Hacker argue (see e.g. Baker and Hacker (1984a), (1984b) or (1985). In their view, rule-following intrinsically requires the ability to formulate rules, to explain them, justify them etc. At the end of this section, we will go deeper into their position.

this particular way. When Wittgenstein stresses the *social* nature of our actual practices, then this, in my view, is precisely because it is only in a social context that the overwhelming bulk of our practices serve such a purpose. We use language to give orders, describe things to each other, tell stories, and to a myriad of other purposes that are intrinsically social in nature and that are performed in a predominantly social context of non-linguistic practices.[1] When we radically think away these social aspects and try to imagine a single, solitary language user, we largely eradicate the very setting that gives the kind of practices that we uphold their *raison d' être*. Consequently, it will be extremely hard to think of an actual purpose that could, in the practical context of the solitary speaker's everyday life, sustain a genuinely normative practice of rule-following.

In order to illustrate this point, one might imagine, for example, that Robinson Crusoe had reached his island at a pre-lingual age. The question that is usually raised in regard to such a case is whether Robinson could have invented a practice for the use of a particular category of words, say, colour words. Subsequently, the arguments focus on what Robinson would have to do in order to invent such a practice, and how we could tell whether his behaviour was normative. In my view, however, such questions and arguments already take too much for granted. First of all we have to ask ourselves what Robinson's 'practice for the use of colour words' would actually look like; what it is that our solitary Robinson is really going to do with such colour words, and what purpose these words are going to serve. These questions are difficult, if not impossible to answer. *We* use colour words in communication with each other - in order, for example, to direct someone to the *red* book, rather than the green one, to describe the sky in Sicily, to get our money back at the grocer's etcetera. From such an employment our solitary Robinson is barred. Are we then to imagine that he just strolls over his island, pointing at the sky and saying 'blue', at the grass, saying 'green', at the sand, muttering 'yellow' to himself? Frankly, I find it hard to see what actual use these words could have for him, and whatever he were to do with them, it would certainly be far removed from our employment of such words. Think, on the other hand, how the situation changes when Friday arrives at the island. Now the word 'green' could perhaps be employed for scolding someone for bringing green bananas, 'yellow' for ordering the proper kind of bananas etcetera. Of course, when colour words are the only words available, the practices for employing them will remain extremely simple, but still, within this minimal social context we at least have some idea of how these words could saliently be employed in the first place. The normative character of our employment of words is tied up with the actual social purposes that our words serve us, so that in isolation from any social context it is rather difficult to engage in a really purposeful practice or to gain a foothold for genuine normative behaviour.

To summarize this point, I think that Wittgenstein stresses that our actual practices or rule-following are intrinsically social, that the normative character of

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[1] See, e.g., the list of different 'language games' that Wittgenstein gives in PI # 23. These are mostly, if not all, social in nature. Or compare PI # 199, where it is stressed that rule-following is a practice. The practices mentioned there are all in fact social.

our practices is locked into their social nature, and that it is from this social setting that our practices derive their real point. Apart from any social context, it is difficult if not impossible to imagine a genuine normative practice. To the extent that our practices for language use are social practices, the 'facts about meaning' are social facts.

h. *Wittgenstein's positive points primarily bear on philosophical anthropology, rather than on semantics.*

It is often assumed by commentators that Wittgenstein's overriding concern in the rule-following discussion is with the nature of meaning in what might roughly be called a 'theoretical' or a 'semantical' sense. By this I mean the kind of concern with the meaning of natural language that would usually express itself in the attempt to develop an operatively fruitful general conception of meaning, (e.g, a conception of meaning as being primarily expressed in the truth- or justification conditions of sentences, in the referents of words, in an expression's potential for information-change etc.), in order subsequently to employ this notion for the development of a descriptively adequate theory of the meaning of sentences and words and the logical relations obtaining between them. And of course, someone whose overriding concern it is to argue that such a general conception of meaning can either not be found or can not be employed for the intended theoretical purposes, would still be driven by such a broad 'theoretical' concern with meaning.

Wittgenstein's later work has often been regarded as being driven by such a (negative) theoretical involvement with meaning. As an example of such a view, we could turn to McGinn, who's description of Wittgenstein's interest in meaning is *prima facie* very convincing:

> ... Wittgenstein's aims are primarily negative: he sees himself as dislodging certain natural and tempting misconceptions of the matter at hand, as protecting us from certain sorts of error. ... We should not, then, expect from Wittgenstein the sort of positive theory of meaning characteristically proposed by philosophers whose intentions are less therapeutic: Wittgenstein is not out to give a 'theory of meaning' in the usual sense of that phrase. (McGinn (1984), p. 1)

McGinn is undoubtedly right in pointing out Wittgenstein's therapeutic intent and his concern for 'dislodging' misconceptions about meaning. Yet, as a general characterization of Wittgenstein's concerns this description leaves one dissatisfied. If meaning is something about which one might have a theory at all, then the effectiveness of the 'therapy' that Wittgenstein presents would greatly be enhanced if he also were able to offer a satisfactory theory of meaning which is grounded in the proper general conception of meaning. In other words, it remains unclear on McGinn's view why Wittgenstein did not *both* offer a 'therapy' *and* supply us with the kind of theory that 'less therapeutic philosophers' usually give us.

Of course, a possible explanation for such an omission would be that Wittgenstein deemed any theoretical approach towards meaning in principle impossible, as is argued, for example, by Baker and Hacker. Personally, I doubt whether this view is correct. Even though Wittgenstein is obviously very critical of certain assumptions that are often made by semanticists, it is far from clear to me whether

he indeed intended to rule out any descriptive linguistic theory of meaning whatsoever. More importantly, though, on this view we still take a narrow concern with meaning and theories of meaning as our main focal point for looking at the *Investigations*. As a result, we will still be left with a general conception of Wittgenstein's philosophical intentions that is primarily negative and tends to blind us to any substantial positive points that Wittgenstein makes.

I would here like to suggest an alternative general point of view. I take it that in the *Investigations* Wittgenstein is not primarily driven by a narrow concern about linguistic meaning or about theories of meaning at all. Rather than arguing against certain theoretical conceptions of meaning or theories of meaning in general, Wittgenstein argues for a re-orientation of our philosophical anthropology. The points made above give a good indication of what I have in mind. There we saw that Wittgenstein argues extensively for a view of language users (and thus of human beings in general) that gives priority to action over thought and insight, to the social over the individual and to temporally extended phenomena over momentary phenomena. Human beings are not primarily individual thinking subjects whose intellectual capacities lay the foundation for all their endeavors, but, on the contrary, humans are in the first place social beings who are primarily defined by their actions. These actions are intrinsically tied up with a complex, contingent 'environment' in which it is embedded and they require that a massive amount of natural human and non-human regularities obtain. Such preconditions are in their turn also contingent, and allow of no foundation or justification but have to be accepted as a given datum.

In many respects, these views go radically against the more traditional philosophical conception of what it is to be a human being. To my mind, this reorientation of our philosophical anthropology is the real import of Wittgenstein's investigation of meaning.

Appendix: the Hazards of Harmony[1]

I want to close the present section with a discussion of the central tenet of Baker and Hacker's interpretation of the rule-following discussion. My reasons for doing so are, firstly, that this interpretation, put forward by two of the foremost Wittgenstein scholars, involves a substantial thesis that merits closer attention, and, secondly, that at certain central points Baker and Hacker's views differ markedly from the ones that I have expounded above, so that an investigation of their interpretation gives us a fuller grasp on the issues involved.[2]

According to Baker and Hacker, the key to understanding Wittgenstein's view on rules is to realize that rule-following concerns one more instance of a broader

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[1] An earlier version of the following was presented at the *17th International Wittgenstein Symposium 1994*. See Stein (1994)

[2] A similar interpretation of Wittgenstein's remarks on meaning and rule-following can be found in Arrington (1991).The arguments that I bring forth below also cover Arrington's views.

phenomenon which they denominate "the harmony between language and reality".[1] One aspect of this 'harmony' which occupied Wittgenstein during the thirties, and which is also discussed in the *Philosophical Investigations*, is 'the harmony between thought and reality': the intimate relation between thoughts, expectations or desires, and the facts which fulfil them. For instance, Wittgenstein tells us, we might be tempted to regard an expectation and the fact which fulfils it as two logically independent items that belong to different ontological realms: the mental and the (physical) world. This would be a mistake. There is an intimate fit between these two that goes beyond any external empirical relation. The expectation and its fulfilment are, as Wittgenstein calls it, 'internally related', in the sense that it is unthinkable that *these* two things should not stand in *this* relation. The expectation 'that John will drop by' would simply not be the expectation that it is, if it would not be fulfilled by the event of *John's dropping by* and by that event only.[2]

In deeming such relations to be internal, Wittgenstein did not commit himself to ineffable metaphysical connections. 'Like everything metaphysical' it is remarked in *Zettel* 55, 'the harmony between thought and reality is to be found in the grammar of the language'. Our concept of what it is to have expectations is closely connected with the ability to give expression to them, and it is a fact of grammar that a phrase only expresses an expectation, if it contains a description of its fulfilment. Or, as Baker and Hacker explain such remarks:

> The metaphysical harmony between language and reality is a reflection of a transparent connection between the uses of symbols, e.g. 'the expectation that p' $=_{df}$ 'the expectation that is fulfilled by the event p'. ... it is evident that no shadowy intermediaries are necessary to connect an expectation and its fulfilment, since they are connected in language. (Baker and Hacker (1985), p. 88)

At this place, I will not go into Wittgenstein's views on intentionality or the 'harmony between thought and reality', since this would need an extensive discussion of Wittgenstein's philosophy of mind.[3] Rather, let us focus on Baker and

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[1] Baker and Hacker ((1984a) p. xii) claim that 'Wittgenstein's remarks about rule-following are ... one facet of his general concern with what *he called* 'the harmony between language and reality'. [my italics] Nevertheless, I want to stress that this is probably a slip of the pen on Baker and Hacker's part. Baker and Hacker fail to give any reference to a place where Wittgenstein uses the term 'harmony between *language* and reality', and to my best knowledge it does not appear in the Wittgensteinian corpus. We do find Wittgenstein occasionally discussing 'the harmony between *thought* and reality', and telling us that this relation is 'mediated by grammar'. It is of course a crucial question whether the same thing can be said about the relation between language and reality, or that between a rule and an act of following it.

[2] See for a summary of Wittgenstein's views concerning the 'harmony between thought and reality' e.g., Glock (1996) INTENTIONALITY.

[3] Still, even when it concerns the relation between intentions and the acts that fulfil them we should not too hastily opt for an *exclusively* 'grammatical' theory. Above, under point f., we have discussed PI # 197 where it is asked how the intention to play chess is related to the rule-governed activity of playing chess that fulfils it. In the present context it is important to remember that Wittgenstein's answer was *not* 'by a grammatical relation between the description of the intention and a description of the act', but rather: 'Well, in the list of rules of the game, in the teaching of it, in the day-to-day practice of playing'.

Hacker's claim that Wittgenstein regarded the relation between a rule and an act according with it as yet another instance of the general 'harmony between language and reality'. Baker and Hacker motivate this claim pointing out that, firstly, a rule and the acts which accord with it are internally related, just as an expectation and its fulfilment are. *This* rule, e.g., developing the series of even numbers, would not be the rule which it is if certain acts, e.g., writing '1002' after '1000', did not count as being in accord with it.

Secondly, in Baker and Hacker's view this internal relation is also a reflection of the grammar of our language:

> ... a sentence asserting an internal relation between two things (e.g. 'writing '1002' after '1000' is in accord with the rule '+2' at the 500th step') never expresses an empirical proposition and is not a description of two objects. It is rather the expression of a grammatical rule (e.g. that instead of 'He acted in accord with the rule '+2' at the 500th step' one may say 'he wrote '1002' after '1000'') ... An internal relation *is* a shadow of grammar, and can as well be called a grammatical relation.' (Baker and Hacker (1985), p. 105)

For that reason, it is only by investigating the grammar of our language that we can hope for enlightenment about the relation between rules and acts:

> ... the relation between a rule and what is in accord with it is rendered unmysterious and perspicuous by grammatical remarks ... it is a grammatical truth that an F's ϕing in circumstances C is an act in accord with the rule that F's should ϕ in C; and equally 'The rule that F's should ϕ in C' = 'The rule that is followed by an F's ϕing in C'. ... It is *in language* that a rule and the act in accord with it ... make contact." (Baker and Hacker (1985), p. 91)

From the above it may be clear why Baker and Hacker think that Chomsky's and Kripke's views on rules are misguided. If a rule and the actions which are in accord with it are *internally* related, then there simply is no occasion for positing 'connecting mechanisms', nor is there any call for sceptical ruminations when such mechanisms prove to be lacking. Furthermore, such internal relations are quite unmysterious, and can be explained as a reflection of the grammar of our language.

So, to summarize Baker and Hacker's account, the internal relation between a certain rule (formulated as 'R') and this action of obeying it (called 'r-ing'), is merely a reflection of the following grammatical observations about our language:

a. that 'the rule to R' $=_{df}$ 'the rule obeyed by r-ing'

b. that this rule we call 'R'

c. that this action we call 'r-ing'.

The first statement expresses a grammatical rule of English for relating the expressions 'R' and 'r-ing', the two other statements partly lay down their correct use.

If asked *why* we call this action 'r-ing', Baker and Hacker might rightly point out that in as far as this question aims at some ultimate justification for our use of language, it is misguided. Grammar does not allow or need any such justification.

Departing from the correct observation that the relation between a rule and what accords with it is internal, Baker and Hacker thus present us with an unequivocal interpretation of Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following, which also succeeds in relating those reflections to Wittgenstein's remarks about the 'harmony between

thought and reality'. Yet, I think that those advantages are merely chimerical, since it is quite wrong to think that rules and the acts which are in accord with them are related in *grammar*.

The problems with this view become apparent once we realize that grammar, as is stressed by Baker and Hacker, is an array of rules for the use of the expressions of a particular language. Both features, grammar being language *specific* and it being an array of *rules*, lead to difficulties.

Firstly it may be observed, that despite significant grammatical differences between Dutch and English, the English and the Dutch follow the very same rule for developing the series of even numbers, and that they acknowledge the same relation between this rule and acting in accord with it. In as far as both languages can be said to be similar in talking about following such rules, it is because of the same, non-language specific practice which the speakers of both languages have.

Secondly, if grammar is itself an array of rules, it is impossible to see how the detour via grammar could provide us with the required explication of internal relations in the first place. After all, a grammatical rule for the use of expressions is itself internally related to certain speech acts in which those expressions are used. *This* rule of grammar would not be what it is, if *those* speech acts were not in accord with it, and vice versa. Thus, even if we were to claim that the internal relation between rules and acts is a reflection of our ways of formulating rules and describing acts, then this would still not be a general explanation of internal relations. Rather it would presuppose such relations on the grammatical level.

Yet, apart from such internal difficulties, I think we should not see the accord between rule and act as a reflection of the rules of grammar at all. Whether an act is in accord with a certain rule is not a *reflection* of the fact that in our language the formulation of the rule is grammatically related to act-descriptions. It is a reflection of the fact that we have certain practices, which need not be linguistic. Therefore we can also follow rules even if we lack the appropriate vocabulary for formulating them or describing the acts which are in accord with them. For example, we have a practice of giving and continuing series and patterns. Now, take this pattern:

∂ ‡ ¥ ∂ ‡ ¥ ∂ ‡ ¥ ∂ ‡ ...

Certainly this pattern would not be what it is, if ¥ was not the next element in its continuation, in the same way as the series 2, 2, 2, 2, ... or the series 1, 2, 3, 4, ... would not be what they are if their continuation was not 2 and 5. In this case we have the same mutual dependency which we have between a more ordinary rule and an act in accord with it. Yet, this example is deliberately constructed in such a way that we lack any obvious linguistic means of describing the pattern. Of course we might artfully devise such means. But even then it would be topsy-turvy to claim that the internal relation between the pattern and its proper continuation is a reflection of some grammatical relation between the description of the pattern and the description of its continuation. Given our nature, our training, our practices, we cannot help seeing here a pattern and a continuation.

Yet, let us also approach Baker and Hacker's suggestion from a different angle by looking at instances of rule-following where we do have rule-formulations and

act descriptions. In such cases, however, one might invoke a Wittgensteinian regression argument against Baker and Hacker. For on Baker and Hacker's view, the question what counts as the continuation of the series 1, 2, 3, 4, ... has no answer apart from a linguistic description of that series (e.g., 'the series of natural numbers') that is *grammatically* linked with an act description. So, in cases where there is a question about how the series is to be continued, - think, for example, of PI # 185 where a pupil who has been trained up to 1000 in continuing the series of even numbers, inexplicably goes on by adding 4 after 1000, adding 6 after 2000 etcetera. - we first will have to find a description of the series, in order next to derive a description of the acts that are in accord with it. But such a description of the series must of course be the *proper* description of the series, and someone who continues the series in a way that I take to be incorrect, will probably also disagree with me about the proper general description of the series. But then it must first be settled what can count as the proper description of the series, presumably by invoking more descriptions and grammatical relations. It is clear that in this way we end up with the well-known Wittgensteinian regression.

Now, there is a way in which Baker and Hacker can short-circuit the regression. After all, they are committed to the first step of the regression only, that from the series to the description of the series. For that reason they might cut of the regression that threatens by claiming that 'this is just what this series is called - what we have been trained or learned to call the series'. However, even though it is correct to claim that it is simply a primitive fact how we should call the series, this observation is not going to do Baker and Hacker much good. For it now becomes obvious that the detour via language was completely superfluous in the first place. The very claim by which Baker and Hacker cut off the regression that threatens might after all also be invoked one step earlier, when it is asked what the relation is between the series and our continuation. The point is this: the 'grammatical solution', in order to work, needs to invoke primitive patterns of acting and reacting; firstly, patterns by which we tie expressions to rules and acts, and secondly, patterns by which expressions are tied to expressions. But in that case, when the question is what number one should write down in order to follow in accordance with the rule, we might simply invoke the first kind of patterns tie the series to the continuation, and grammar drops out of our account as an irrelevant detour.

The outcome of these reflections is that grammar cannot play the role which Baker and Hacker assign to it. The relation between our rules and the acts which accord with them is not the reflection of a grammatical 'orchestration', rather, grammar itself depends on such internal relations too.

But in rejecting the suggestion that such internal relations are a reflection of grammar, are we not therefore committed to ineffable metaphysical relations? In order to get a foothold, we should distinguish two questions:

1. What is the content of a rule?
2. What constitutes the content of a rule?

The first question concerns formulations and descriptions. It is a question which

can be asked and answered by those who are already basically involved in our practice of language use. The second, constitutive question can only be answered by pointing out that a community of speakers has a certain practice, that they are trained in a particular way, that they by nature have certain responses, and so on.

It is this distinction which is also crucial for understanding Wittgenstein's 'deviant pupil' example in PI # 185, The chasm gaping between us and the pupil cannot be closed within the confines of our practice of teaching and explaining mathematics, because it concerns the very 'bedrock' on which those practices rest, the natural frame-work in which those practices are embedded. As Wittgenstein concludes about the deviant pupil:

> In such a case we might say something like: By nature this person understands this order, in response to our explanations, as *we* understand the order: 'Add 2 up to 1000, 4 up to 2000, 6 up to 3000 and so on.' (PI # 185)

We are different from the pupil in what actions come naturally and unreflectively to us. Not in how those actions should be described. The fact that we acknowledge internal relations by following rules in certain ways, is presupposed by all our normative practices. As Wittgenstein puts it in the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Mathematics* VI 28: 'Following according to the rule is at the BOTTOM of our language-game'.

The accord between rule and act which we acknowledge by following the rule as we do is *rooted* in our nature, our training and our practices. Internal relations are 'primitive'; they are given and cannot be derived from anything else. They are simply there, just as our natural ways of acting and reacting or our practices. Internal relations are not to be found in grammar, but rather in the unassailable certainty of our actions.

V. OPEN QUESTIONS

We have seen that Wittgenstein's positive point consists in arguing for a general reorientation of our priorities. If one were to put it in a nutshell, one might say that in the *Investigations* Wittgenstein points out the priority of action over insight and of community over individual. The two notions on which I have focussed in my presentation of Wittgenstein's positive views are those of 'bedrock' and 'practice'. I argued that Wittgenstein's remarks on bedrock are best understood in relation to his rejection of a foundational account of meaning. The crux of Wittgenstein's negative argument is that any 'item' that an individual speaker might grasp or have before his mind and any state that he might be in, lacks an intrinsic connection to his use of language and is therefore semantically inert. The normative irrelevancy of any such 'items' is the rock that shipwrecks all attempts at a foundational account of our language use. Once that point has been made, the observation that justifications or explanations of our way of following a rule terminate in a bedrock of direct, unpremeditated action, can provide an antidote to the craving for those alleged foundations of rule-following. Our use of language rests on a secure bedrock of

direct action that needs no propping up by reasons. Rather, such basic patterns of action provide the necessary background for the more overtly intellectual activities of justifying and explaining one's use of language.

Yet, not only can meaning not be explicated in terms of anything transcending the use that a person makes of a word, we also saw that Wittgenstein strongly suggests that the individual's use of language, in order to be properly meaningful, must be embedded in a common practice of language use that is shared with other speakers. So, the use that an individual makes of words does not qualify as rule-informed because it can be measured against a use-transcendent norm that this person somehow incorporates - as the negative argument showed, but neither does his use by itself qualify as rule-guided on the basis of some 'objective' regularity that it displays in isolation from established social practices for the use of words.

The upshot of our discussion may therefore be epitomized by saying that meaning lacks any foundation in the individual speaker, and that the social practices that uphold our meaningful use of language must simply be regarded as given. Nevertheless, the account we have supplied thus far leaves unanswered some rather substantial questions about the precise nature of individual competence and about the relation between individuals and the required supra-individual context of their language use. One set of problems becomes particularly pressing when we bring to mind Kripke's overriding concern with the *factual* status of meaning. For instance, if we assume - as Kripke does - that the *facts* about a person meaning something must ipso facto be the facts that are *constitutive* of meaning, then the very anti-foundationalism inspiring Wittgenstein's position seems to raise some awkward problems about the factual status of meaning after all. For if nothing about an individual, taken by himself, can account for the very meaningfulness of his words, then in what sense could it be proper to say that it is really, factually true that his words carry meaning? If a person is a language user only in virtue of participating in (normative) practices that exist independently of him, then is his command of language not something rather extrinsic; something not belonging to him in the same straightforward way as those capacities that are fully dependent on his own constitution alone? These questions are somewhat tentative, and in order to sharpen and to answer them we not only have to draw on our intuitions about meaning, but we would have to scrutinize and perhaps to reconsider our very idea of what it really is, in a metaphysical sense, to be an individual person. Admittedly, this task is far beyond the scope of the present book; not only would it involve a sustained systematical investigation, but it would lead us far beyond the work of Wittgenstein that is the main focus of our present investigation. Nevertheless, I want to draw the present chapter to a close by sketching how the above mentioned problems concerning the status of the individual language user emerge in the context of our present discussion. Though Wittgenstein does not explicitly answer - or even raise - these questions in the *Philosophical Investigations*, in the next chapter we will have a short look at *On Certainty*, which, of everything written by Wittgenstein, is the work that comes closest to addressing the issues that we are now about to take up.

The position that in the previous sections I presented as Wittgenstein's differs from that of Kripke's in accepting the reality of linguistic norms. It differs both from Kripke's and and from the mentalist's view in as far as it denies that those norms can or need be constituted by facts about an individual speaker, that is, it differs in being anti-foundational. In the previous sections I have presented ample argument against the Kripkian and the mentalist views, but I have not addressed what I take to be the metaphysical perspective on the individual language user that underlies these two positions. This perspective is not all together easy to articulate and it has to my knowledge no official appellation. In order to have a tag, I will call it the 'individual as a substance view', drawing on one of the traditional features of the notion of a substance as that which is capable of independent existence. We might tentatively describe this view by saying that it regards an individual human being as something that in its essential respects possesses ontological independence. In a basic, constitutive sense, an individual human being stands on his own two feet, and the facts that make him the very being that he is, apply to him in virtue of his own constitution only. He is who he is, because of what he is all by himself. He is an autonomous, self-sustained substance, to whom anything external is extrinsic. This is of course not to deny that every individual finds himself within a particular natural and social context, in virtue of which he has certain characteristics he would otherwise lack. Yet, ontologically, rather than onto-genetically speaking, the individual precedes the social in the order of things as the fibers precede the fabric out of which it is woven.

Admittedly, this is just the merest thumbnail sketch of a multi-faceted idea that has deep roots in the culture and philosophy of Europe in the modern age, and that draws both on relatively recent historical developments such as the rise of individualism, the growing secularization of our society and the development of a scientifically inspired anthropology, as on ideas that belong to our classical heritage. At this point I will only try to sketch how it surfaces in the context of our current discussion on the factuality of meaning. Firstly, I will state the problem in its general form, then I will illustrate in more detail how it is intertwined with the positions that we have treated of thus far.

In order to see the problems that face us, we can start by noting how central the possession of linguistic competence is to being the individual that one is. I may wonder what it would be like if I had acquired Swahili as my mother tongue and I may ponder the effects that would have had on me. What I am then envisioning, is how *I* would have been affected by such a situation. Yet, I cannot in that same way wonder what it would have been like for *me* never to have acquired any language at all. The better I succeed in envisioning such a "languageless" human being, the more I see that it cannot be *me* that I am thinking about. The thoughts, wishes and intentions that characterize someone such as I, cannot even find a foothold in such an imaginary mute counterpart. My command of language is not only crucial for being the particular person that I am, but even for being the kind of being that I am. In other words, we tend to regard someone's command of language as essential to

what constitutes him as an individual person.

Now, if we conceive of an individual as a self-sustained substance and thus assume that the features that make him into what he is are dependent on facts about himself alone, then we will naturally assume that there is some set of facts about a person all by himself that is constitutive for such an intrinsic feature as his command of language. However, given the normative nature of language no such set of purely individual facts exists. This I take to be established by Wittgenstein's negative argument. One reaction to this is to embrace the strongly anti-factual conclusions that Kripke draws. A second option is to locate the factuality of the normative in social, rather than in individual facts. Yet, even if we succeed in vouchsafing the factual nature of meaningful language use by tying meaning in with the social realm, the price that we would still have to pay is that of demoting the *status* of such facts with regard to an individual speaker conceived of as a substance. Being social in nature, such facts about meaning would now be extrinsic to an individual speaker and when it comes to being an individual person, a command of language could no longer have the central importance that we intuitively give it. If we take this outcome to be unacceptable, and are not willing to adopt Kripke's unfactual position either, then we have no option but to discard the substance view of individuals. We will then have to explain how some of the features that are most essential to an individual can be constitutively dependent on contingencies external to him.

Therefore, the problem facing us is the following. The view of an individual as a substance, when paired with Wittgenstein's negative argument, presents us with a dilemma that forces us to redirect our thinking about what it is to be an individual person. For either we hold on to the individual as substance view, in which case we will at least have to accept - our intuitions to the contrary notwithstanding - that a person's command of language is an extrinsic feature of him and that all by himself an individual is an intrinsically normless and "languageless" being. Or we hold on to the idea that linguistic competence is central to being an individual person, in which case we have to give up the view of an individual as a substance and are faced with the difficult task of explaining how things intrinsic to an individual can be constituted by supra-individual features.

Let me fill in the details of this sketch. I take it that both Kripke and the mentalist implicitly adhere to the view of an individual as a substance. This shows forth most clearly from their assumption that in order for some act of an individual to qualify as meaningful in a full-blown realist sense, the norms that are the determinants of meaning must be constituted by some fact about this individual and this individual alone. Obviously, Kripke and the mentalist differ on the question what those facts might consist in. Kripke's view of what constitutes an individual is overtly naturalistic or reductionistic. A mentalist, on the other hand, might also countenances the existence of specifically mental facts that cannot be reduced to some more basic category. Yet, in as far as those facts are to be constitutive to linguistic competence, they are deemed to be strictly individual by the mentalist too. If, therefore, no facts

about an individual can be constitutive of the meaningfulness of his words, then in a strict sense it cannot really be a fact about this individual that his words carry a meaning in the first place. This assumption is at its most pronounced in Kripke's line of arguing. After establishing that no facts about an individual language user can constitute the normative features intrinsic to meaning, Kripke concluded that, therefore, there is no such fact as anyone meaning anything by his words at all.

Of course, this strong, anti-factual conclusion can only be derived on the assumption that there are no irreducible social phenomena. In other words, Kripke not only assumes that normative facts about meaning must be constituted by facts about an individual, but he also takes it that those individual facts for some reason exhaust the categories of facts that may properly be said to apply to an individual. If normative phenomena can not be grounded in the individual level, then - Kripke implicitly assumes - they cannot make their appearance on the social level either. If individuals are 'blind' in the Kripkian sense, then supposedly nothing that a community of such blind individuals does could ever give rise to *genuine* norms. Thus, we can regard Kripke's position as combining the 'individual as substance view' with a form of social reductionism which holds that there are no categories of facts irreducible to those categories of fact that are to be found on the level of the individual. Only when that latter assumption is added, can we derive the sceptical conclusion that there are no normative facts at all.

Yet, this kind of reductionism is an unmotivated and an intuitively unappealing assumption. We certainly believe that there are intrinsically social facts that apply to an individual, but that are neither grounded in that individual himself, nor are the sumtotal of facts that can be specified in purely individual terms. No fact about me alone can account for my being a citizen of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, yet it would be absurd to claim that therefore there is no such thing as anyone being a citizen of any nation, or to deny that it is really a fact about me that I am a citizen of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.[1]

The insight that Kripke's view on social phenomena is unwarranted, suggests an easy way of dealing with the sceptical conclusion that he draws. Indeed, we could grant Kripke that no fact about an individual can constitute his meaning something and we could even invoke Wittgenstein's argument in support. But now we might attempt to short-circuit Kripke's conclusion that it is not a fact that anyone means anything by his words, by pointing out that meaning is an intrinsically social phenomenon and that there is no reason to assume that social facts cannot really and properly apply to a person. Yet, if in order to escape the unappealing non-factual conclusion about meaning, we argue that meaning is a properly factual, *social* phenomenon, and we intend this to imply that the fact of meaning something by your words is on a par with the fact of being a citizen of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, then we may have jumped from the frying pan into the fire. In fact,

[1] It would be of no help in this respect to claim that those facts are facts about a whole bunch of individuals on their own. The obvious problem that arises if we make such a move is to set the boundaries of the bunch without appealing to such overtly social determinations as that everyone making it up is Dutch.

we have chosen our paradigm of a social phenomenon in such a way, that we may perfectly well concede the factual status of such social phenomena while still not being able to accommodate our intuition that a command of meaningful language is of intrinsic importance to being an individual person. After all, the individual-as-substance view need not deny that there are facts that are not individual in a strict sense, and may therefore still be upheld after we have granted the social nature of facts about meaning. For the basic intuition sustaining this view is that what an individual really and truly is, what constitutes an individual in his most essential and basic aspects, is due to this individual and this individual only. That idea might well be combined with the view that there may be other facts about an individual that apply to him as part of a broader context, as long as such facts can be shown to be less basic than the facts that apply to him as an individual substance and do not enter into what constitutes this person as an individual being. In this respect, the property of being a citizen of a nation state provides a good illustration. It may be a straightforward fact about a particular person that he is a citizen of a particular nation, yet this fact is not as intrinsic to what he is as other facts are. For instance, citizenship is a feature that can rather easily be changed or lost, e.g., by marrying a foreigner or by taking up military service in a foreign army. One might even lose one's citizenship without having any knowledge of it. That is not to say that such a fact cannot have far reaching consequences, or that a person cannot hold such a fact to be of great personal importance. Yet, it is still the very same person suffering those consequences, the same individual that bears such social changes. Thus, we tend to distinguish between such facts as are crucial for being the individual that you are and those that are only of relative importance in this respect. The first set of facts, we are inclined to think, must apply to an individual in virtue of what that individual is by himself, the second kind of facts may apply to him in virtue of some broader context of which he is a part.

So, we might hold on to the general metaphysical view of an individual as a substance (as, I take it, Kripke does), while still denying the validity of his paradox by pointing out that there can be irreducible social facts that apply to an individual. In other words, one might well combine the view of an individual as a substance with a non-reductive view on social phenomena.

Nevertheless, when it comes to the role of language, we will be faced with a problem. We certainly tend to regard having a command of language as intrinsic to being the person that you are, and a command of language seems to be independent of outside circumstances in a way in which citizenship is not. One cannot lose one's language by a simple change in one's social relations, and it certainly does seem that if all my co-speakers of Dutch were to perish overnight, this would not make me wake up speachless.[1] The capacity to make a meaningful use of language therefore seems an intrinsic feature of an individual if anything is. Nevertheless, as Wittgenstein argued convincingly, there simply are no facts about an individual that can constitute such a purely individual command of language in any ordinary sense,

[1] But imagine also this: something happens overnight that kills all my fellow human beings but leaves me immortal. What about my command of language, 60 million years after this event?

and a context of social practices is necessary for the existence of the norms with regard to which an individual's actions can qualify as meaningful. We are thus being pulled in two directions. On the one hand a command of language is such an inalienable part of a person that we tend to assume that it must really belong to him in the sense of being constituted by facts about this very individual and him alone. On the other hand, the established impossibility of such individual facts playing a constitutive role and the crucial importance of social practices, draws us to the assumption that a command of language does not really qualify an individual in the strong sense in which we thought it did.

In my view, the proper way to get out of this deadlock is by both holding on to the intuition that language is essential to being a human person, and to the view that language is nevertheless a social phenomenon that cannot be constituted by any purely individual facts. This means that we must reject the traditional view of an individual as a self-sustained substance, and have to give an account of the fact that an individual, even regarding his most intrinsic features, can only be what he is within the confines of a broader, supra-individual framework. Thus, we would have to articulate a radically different perspective on what it is and what it takes to be an individual human being.

To execute this task would take us far beyond the scope of the present work.[1]

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[1] A deeper investigation of these issues would also force us to take account of related discussions in other philosophical fields that the philosophy of language. In this respect, an interesting parallel to the points made here can be found in Charles Taylor's *The Ethics of Authenticity*. Addressing what has been described as the 'narcissistic' character of much of our contemporary western culture, Taylor points out that underlying this narcissism is the genuine moral ideal of authenticity. Yet, this concern with authenticity - which one might roughly define as the articulation of one's individuality and in particular of one's own personal values and moral aims, is often and self-defeatingly combined with hyper-individualistic forms of 'soft relativism' and subjectivism about values. The articulation of an authentic moral point of view, it is then assumed, is a task which an individual person can and should accomplish without relying on socially established, supra-individual notions of what is significant. Thus, the metaphysical locus of value is situated in the single individual who does the valuing, and for that reason, the values for which an individual 'opts', cannot be subjected to the rational criticism of other persons. Such subjective relativism, Taylor convincingly argues, destroys the very conditions for realizing authenticity itself.
In order to make this point, Taylor starts by observing that 'when we come to understand what it is to define ourselves, to determine in what our originality consists, we see that we have to take as background some sense of what is significant.' To define oneself as 'being the only person with 3,732 hairs on his head' is hardly intelligible (except, perhaps, when 3,732 happens to be a sacred number in one's culture), but it does make sense to define oneself as 'the best Hammerklavier player in the world'. Now, the problem of importing subjectivism into the quest for authenticity, is that it is simply not up to an individual's feelings or decisions to determine what can count as significant. 'I couldn't just *decide* that the most significant action is wiggling my toes in warm mud. Without a special explanation (perhaps mud is the element of the world spirit, which you contact with your toes) this is not an intelligible claim. So I wouldn't know what sense to attribute to someone allegedly *feeling* that this was so. What could someone mean who said this? ... Things take on importance against a background of intelligibility. Let us call this a horizon. It follows that one of the things we can't do, if we are to define ourselves significantly, is suppress or deny the horizons against which things take on significance for us.' (p. 37 - 38)

Yet, one of the notions that will be of crucial importance to any such account, is the notion of a supra-individual framework that is constitutive for the fabric of abilities, believes and values that makes us the persons that we are. In this respect, we still have not exhausted Wittgenstein's work. The central concern of his 'swan-song' *On Certainty* is to investigate precisely such a framework.

Thus, the articulation of authenticity requires pre-established, non-individual notions of what counts as being significant. Against the background of such a framework, an individual person can try to articulate his own 'authentic self'. Yet, the attempt to make this framework dependent on the individual himself, would turn genuine authenticity into mad idiosyncrasy.

6

Wittgenstein on Certainty

I. Introduction

The book published by Wittgenstein's literary heirs in 1961 under the title *On Certainty* consists of a bundle of twenty sheets of paper left in G.E.M. Anscombe's house and a selection of three notebooks.[1] The remarks contained in them were written in the last one and a half years of Wittgenstein's life, the last entry being recorded two days before his death on April 29th 1951. Wittgenstein didn't have the time to order and select the material, and as a result *On Certainty* is just a succession of ideas and suggestions which are presented in the order in which they were conceived. The remarks are sometimes beautiful and enlightening, sometimes repetitious or rather obscure.

Because of the amorphous nature of *On Certainty*, it is a common expositional aid to contrast Wittgenstein's views with those of some other philosopher. Moore and Descartes are obvious candidates[2]. Moore, because his *In Defense of Common Sense* and *Proof of an External World* triggered Wittgenstein's reflections on the subject. Descartes, because one might regard Wittgenstein's remarks, like those of Moore, as directed against the 'methodological doubt' which Descartes took as the starting point of his epistemological reflections.

However, we should not think that in *On Certainty* Wittgenstein conducts a straightforward dialogue with his philosophical precursors. In that respect, we should bear in mind the story related by Ray Monk about Wittgenstein's partaking of a gathering of Oxford philosophers at which the validity of Descartes' *cogito* was to be discussed.[3] Monk tells us that the debate deteriorated into a Babel-like confusion of tongues. Wittgenstein doggedly insisting that 'If a man says to me, looking at the sky, *I think it will rain, therefore I exist*, I do not understand him'. A vexed Pritchard countering with: 'That's all very fine; what we want to know is: is the *cogito* valid or not'.

I think we should heed the warning this anecdote contains. Certainly Wittgenstein's epistemological views lend themselves well to being contrasted with

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[1] The other remarks appearing in these notebooks have been published independently under the title 'On Colour".

[2] For a comparison of Wittgenstein's views with those of Moore see Malcolm (1977), Ch. 8, and Stroll (1994). For a comparison with Descartes see Malcolm (1986), Ch. 11, Kenny (1972), Ch. 11 (who claims that OC can be read as a ongoing dialogue with Moore and Descartes) and Edwards (1982), Ch. 6.

[3] Monk *The Duty of Genius*, pp. 496-7. Monk has pieced together the story from the accounts of Mary Warnock, Oscar Wood, and Isaiah Berlin.

those of Descartes. For instance, Wittgenstein challenges the cogency of a global skepticism and he stresses that some ordinary judgements are beyond doubt. But in doing so, Wittgenstein is not primarily intent on refuting any *specific* Cartesian views. That is to say, Wittgenstein does not offer us a new epistemological key meant to be superior to Descartes' methodological doubt, and he does not want to supply us with a foundation of certain knowledge that is superior to the *cogito*. Wittgenstein is rather going beyond the Cartesian framework of justificational epistemology as such. He is not intent on presenting his own alternative grounding of knowledge, but deems such a quest misguided in the first place.

Descartes, shocked by the sceptical hooliganism of his days, came to regard certainty as a Philosopher's Stone which can only be obtained after the elaborate labour of purifying our stock of knowledge of everything that can conceivably be doubted and that can thus provide a foothold for the sceptic. The idea that the unconditional exclusion of doubt is a necessary prerequisite for obtaining certain knowledge thus is basic to the Cartesian program.

Wittgenstein, on the other hand, regards such an approach as holding the wrong end of the stick. In his view, certainty is not a consequence of the impossibility of doubt, but rather, the very possibility of doubt already presupposes a massive certainty. Those certainties are not the result of the individual *res cogito* winning through to a 'clear and distinct perception', but belong to our 'inherited' background of linguistic and epistemic practices, and derive from the common fabric of human actions and instincts. According to Wittgenstein, such 'blind certainties' form a framework which we utilize with a complete, almost instinctive reliance, and it is this framework that sets the standards for acquiring and testing our knowledge. For that reason, this background of certainties plays a constitutive role with regard to our everyday epistemic practices. Only within the confines of such a structure is it settled what counts as justification, evidence and argument, and, by the same token, what can count as genuine knowledge and doubt. As Wittgenstein puts it:

> The *questions* that we raise and our *doubts* depend on the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn. That is to say, it belongs to the logic of our scientific investigations that certain things are *in deed* not doubted. ... If I want the door to turn, the hinges must stay put. (OC 341-3)

Since our notions of knowledge and doubt are only applicable within the confines of this setting of certainties, those certainties themselves do not allow of an assessment in such terms. Doubt, Wittgenstein stresses, cannot apply to this structure itself, and neither can it be said to be known. Of the things which make up this structure we cannot in an ordinary sense say that they correctly represent reality or that they are true; they are, as Wittgenstein formulates it, 'true inasmuch as they are a unmoving foundation of the language game'. (OC 403).

Although this synoptic view of Wittgenstein's epistemological position stands in need of further qualification, it goes some way in showing the dangers which lurk in a detailed comparison of Wittgenstein's views with those of Descartes or a post-Cartesian philosopher. Such an approach tends to obscure the radical change of perspective that Wittgenstein adopts. Traditional approaches to epistemology are pre-

dominantly concerned with the attempt to supply the individual subject of knowledge with a category of judgements which are known with absolute certainty and which can therefore function as an unshakable foundation for the other, less certain items of knowledge which he may possess. Uncertain knowledge, so it is argued, must be founded on certain knowledge. Wittgenstein on the other hand rejects this individualistic and foundational epistemological model as much as he rejects a similar model for meaning. It is his contention that the idea that our ordinary knowledge-claims need a foundation is mistaken, and stems from the philosopher's blindness to the knowledge-transcending framework of certainties that is just as much a primitive fact as our natural reactions and behaviour.

In the next sections I will firstly present a more detailed exposition of *On Certainty*, and in doing so, I will focus primarily on the considerations Wittgenstein himself adduces for his views. Still, I will make references to Moore and to classical epistemological conceptions when in my opinion this contrast sheds light on Wittgenstein's views. Secondly, I will sketch how Wittgenstein's epistemological considerations can be seen as both a parallel and a supplementation to his views on meaning and rule-following.

II. Reasons for Knowledge, Reasons for Doubt

Doubt, as well as knowledge, stands in need of reasons

At least since Plato's *Theaetetus* philosophers have been well aware that our concept of knowledge is characterized by the fact that we use it to mark off those of our true beliefs which we deem to be properly justified. Of these two components of knowledge - truth and justification - it is the latter which has always proved to be the most central and the most elusive. The metaphysical nature of truth is debatable, but only at the price of logical inconsistency can it be maintained to be outside our reach. Not so with justification. A conspicuous feature of our practice of justifying our beliefs is that our reasons and explanations soon give out or tend to become circular. Not only philosophers are familiar with this fact. It may also be attested to by any parent of a child that has discovered the game of reducing adults to despair by turning every answer into a new question. As a philosopher, however, one tends to feel that this regress of justifications cannot be broken off by an irritated silence or by a harsh 'Because I say so'. Rather, we tend to feel that if some bedrock of ultimate justifications could not be reached, the whole tower of knowledge would threaten to totter and collapse. For it is the ability to justify a judgement which, by connecting it with a body of accepted truths, differentiates a genuine insight from a true hunch. Were a God of dubious benevolence to offer us a list containing all true statements, at the price of making us blind to their justificational relationships, we would do well to refuse such a 'gift'. Paradoxically, such a revelation would leave us blind, since the pattern of reality can only be discerned in the woven fabric of knowledge, not in the single threads that make it up.

In *On Certainty* Wittgenstein repeatedly stresses the importance of justification as

the kernel of our concept of knowledge. The ability to give reasons is what differentiates true belief from knowledge, and where a justification cannot be given, knowledge cannot be claimed:

> If someone believes something, we needn't always be able to answer the question 'why he believes it'; but if he knows something, then the question 'how does he know?' must be capable of being answered. (OC 550)

We should understand such remarks in a strong sense, as making an observation about the range of application of our concept of knowledge. The very intelligibility of a claim to knowledge, Wittgenstein holds, presupposes a context in which it is possible in principle to give a justification. If, on the other hand, the context is such that we do not have any conception of what could possibly qualify as a justification for a certain statement *p*, then, Wittgenstein holds, one cannot, under those circumstances, meaningfully claim to know *p*. As he stresses in OC 432:

> The utterance 'I know...' can only have its meaning in connection with the other evidence of my 'knowing'.

Now of course it is not left to personal caprice what counts as an acceptable answer to the question how one knows something:

> ... if one does answer this question, one must do so according to generally accepted axioms. *This* is how something of this sort may be known. (OC 551)

Justifications are therefore objective in the sense that knowing how to justify a statement or knowing what would be evidence in favour of it or against it, belongs to the public domain of operating with language. If a statement is of the kind that can be justified, learning *what* is a possible justification is a central aspect of learning how to operate with that statement. In that sense, 'the concept of knowing is coupled with that of the language-game'. (OC 560)

Those two views - firstly, that the possibility of giving reasons and justifications is a necessary precondition for the very intelligibility of a claim to knowledge, and secondly, that what can count as a justification of a statement is determined by the public rules for its proper use - do not make their debut in *On Certainty*, but already feature prominently in the *Philosophical Investigations*, for instance, where the possibility of a private language is discussed. (PI # 243 ff.). There the Gegner, in order to explain the 'private' nature of pain, claims that 'only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it' (PI # 246). Where upon Wittgenstein observes that, ordinarily speaking, other people often know that I am in pain, can doubt whether I am really in pain, and can give reasons for such knowledge and doubt. Yet, I myself, while I can *be* in pain and can *express* my pain, I cannot sensibly claim to *know* or to *doubt* that I am in pain. For our use of first-person expressions of pain is such, that giving reasons or justifications for such expressions simply does not apply.

With an eye on the more sustained discussion on knowledge and justification in *On Certainty*, several things about Wittgenstein's discussion of knowledge of sensation-statements may be worthwhile to note. Firstly, it may be clear that it is not Wittgenstein's contention that I am somehow lacking knowledge about my own

pain, or that others know more about my sensations than I do myself. Rather, the point is the same as in *On Certainty*: it would be misusing the word 'knowledge' if I were to apply it to such expressions as *I am in pain*. So, since I do not *know* about my pains in the first place, neither can I be said to know more or less about them than other people do.

Another salient feature of the discussion on pain which reappears in *On Certainty*, is that Wittgenstein regards it as very context-dependent whether a claim to knowledge can be made cogently. The contextual feature which takes pride of place in the discussion on sensation-language is the speaker. My own pain can never be an object of knowledge for me, even though I may perfectly well know that someone else is in pain, and other people may know the same thing about me. In the case of sensation-language this epistemological distinction ties in with Wittgenstein's claim that self-ascriptions of sensations should not be seen as descriptions of facts, but as 'avowals', on a par with exclamations such as *Hurray!* or *Ouch!* Yet, as will be explained below, indexical features are also relevant to the cogency of knowledge claims where such a distinction between expression and description does not apply. Even concerning such properly descriptive predicates as '... has never been to the top of the Himalaya', there is a salient difference between claiming that I myself have never been to that place, or making that claim about someone else.

In *On Certainty*, apart from this first-person / third-person distinction, Wittgenstein brings contextual features in play which are more difficult to define. Those concern the fact that the cogency of justifying a claim to know *p*, hangs together with the conceivability of challenging it, and thus with the question whether it can, under those circumstances, sensibly be doubted. Doubt, as Wittgenstein points out, is a correlate of knowledge. In the structure of our epistemic concepts, our notion of doubt occupies the same 'niche' as our notion of knowledge. Doubt is not the ever-present ground against which the figure of knowledge laboriously has to be drawn. Neither is it a fall-back mechanism which starts operating when our reasons are running out. Rather, just as the cogency of our knowledge-claims is dependent on the possibility and propriety of justification, and thus on our ability to present evidence, so the intelligibility of doubt is dependent on the possibility to adduce counter-evidence and therefore doubt stands in need of reasons itself. For example, it would mean nothing if under normal circumstances I were to tell you that I doubted whether my house was still there, while at the same time being unable to give any reasons for this alleged doubt.[1] And if I were to give reasons, they would have to be of the proper kind. If I only pointed out the general effect of erosion by polluted air on buildings made of stone, it would remain unclear what, if anything, my doubt amounted to. In order to doubt something I need to have a ground, and what counts as a possible ground is not decided by me, but by the place a statement has within our common language and within the global structure of our knowledge.

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[1] Compare Wittgenstein's remarks in PI ## 84 ff., where a similar point is being made, and our discussion of these sections in chapter 5, section II.

Wittgenstein's perspective on doubt might strike one as unwarranted. One reason for feeling that it is inappropriate to treat doubt in parallel fashion with knowledge, is that doubt, other than knowledge, may seem to depend on being in a particular subjective state of mind. The root of this idea might be the fact that *knowing that p* implies the truth of *p*, which of course cannot be safeguarded by any state of mind, while doubting whether *p* does not carry any such implication of veracity and might therefore seem to be 'merely subjective'. Yet, a little consideration clearly shows the untenability of this view. When I express doubt about a proposition *p*, I might well be asked to explain myself, and I cannot do so by saying that I just have adopted a certain attitude towards that proposition, or by claiming that I happen to be in a particular state of mind. The intelligibility of my claim to doubt *p*; the very fact whether my expression can qualify as an expression of *doubt* in the first place, depends on whether I have reasons which count as possible counter-evidence for the truth of *p*. Reasons, not feelings, determine whether the statement 'I doubt...' is an expression of genuine doubt or of galloping madness.

Because both doubt and knowledge stand in need of reasons and justifications, Wittgenstein holds that we can only know where we can doubt and doubt where we can know. Where questions of evidence and justification simply do not apply, knowledge and doubt are both ruled out.

Classic Certainty

These observations concerning Wittgenstein's conception of knowledge and doubt set us off on the right footing, but they do not yet strike to the core of his epistemological position. The proper road to this heartland is a consideration of Wittgenstein's examination of certainty. Wittgenstein's conception of the nature and status of certainty differs greatly from the traditional view. To complicate things, his remarks on certainty are partly motivated by a conception of the relation between meaning and judgement which is usually not shared by 'classical' epistemologists and which makes it particularly relevant in the present context.

As a preliminary clarification it might therefore be useful to point out one particular distinction which Wittgenstein, other than his predecessors, does make, and one distinction which he explicitly rejects.

Traditionally, the concept of certainty is thought to belong to the same domain as the concepts of knowledge, justification and truth. As was pointed out previously, it was held that the very conceivability of a judgement being untrue was regarded as a reason for doubt, and therefore as a sign that this judgement could not qualify as certain knowledge in the required ultimate sense. The way certainty can, in this view, be achieved, is by finding a category of judgements which are perfectly justified, or rather, which are 'self-justifying'. Such a self-justification would guaranty the unconditional truth of that judgement, and would rule out any possibility of doubt. Thus, such an ultimately justified judgement is not 'merely known', but is 'known with certainty'; a distinction meant to highlight its indubitably true and justified character, and its fitness to function as a foundation on which to erect the higher strata of the edifice of knowledge. Certainty, on this view, is the hallmark of

those judgements which live up to our most stringent epistemological requirements.

In the background of this time-honoured quest for certainty and the elimination of doubt is a specific (pre)conception of language which tends to dramatize things. It is presupposed that there is a categorical distinction between meaning and judgement, in the sense that, apart from 'analytic' statements, our meaningful use of language carries no commitment regarding the truth of the judgements we make. Language, in other words, is epistemically inert or neutral because our command of meaningful language does not influence or restrict the epistemic endeavour. The example which most dramatically testifies to this presupposition about language is Descartes' attempt to doubt the veracity of all empirical statements[1] while retaining the power of speech. Yet, the same point can be illustrated with more restricted questions. When it is asked how, given our 'sensory input' or our 'sense-impressions', we can justify the truth of our beliefs about ordinary things 'outside us', the content of those questionable beliefs and thus the meaning of our words for such 'things outside us' are taken for granted.

This epistemological distinction between grasping the meaning of a term 'a' and being committed to judgements about a's is rejected by Wittgenstein. It is Wittgenstein's contention that I cannot be said to know the meaning of a word such as 'hand', unless there is a massive amount of judgements concerning hands - other than the traditional 'analytic' statements - about which I cannot be anything but absolutely certain. Yet, it should not now be concluded that Wittgenstein thinks that a grasp on meaning somehow presupposes massive *knowledge* about empirical things. What preempts that conclusion, is Wittgenstein's simultaneous rejection of the equivocation of the domain of certainty with that of knowledge, justification and truth. Certainty, as it is presupposed by our ordinary linguistic practices does not belong to the latter, discursive domain, and is therefore not something which, just like knowledge, has to be attained by discursive means. Our certainties, as Wittgenstein conceives of them, are closely connected with our natural ways of acting and behaving. Thus our certainties differ qualitatively from the things we can know and justify and rather belong to a level which underlies and gives direction to our ordinary quest for knowledge.

In what follows I want to give this preliminary sketch of Wittgenstein's conception of certainty more substance. I will start by considering the way in which Moore's views triggered Wittgenstein's reflections.

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[1] Actually, Descartes' doubt was of course also meant to apply to mathematical and logical statements. Yet there the point is not to doubt whether a logical constant means what it does, but rather to ascertain whether, given that it means what it actually means, I may not have misapplied it. As may be clear, the whole idea of being massively mistaken already presupposes a fixed meaning to substantiate what counts as a mistake in the first place.

III. MOORE ON CERTAINTY

'I know it, with certainty, to be true that I am a human being'

The kind of statements with which Wittgenstein starts off his investigation into the concepts of certainty and knowledge could, for want of a better term, be loosely described as Moorean truisms. Moore tried, in *A Defense of Common Sense*, to rebut idealism and scepticism by giving a list of truisms such as 'There exists at present a living human body, which is *my* body' which he 'knew, with certainty, to be true'. And in *Proof of an External World* we find Moore engaged in the attempt to prove the existence of 'things outside of us' from the premise 'Here is one hand ... and here is another', which statement he also claimed to be certain of.[1] Wittgenstein is little impressed by what Moore defended and allegedly proved. He deems Moore's line of arguing completely misdirected, and remarks that:

> 'Doubting the existence of the external world' does not mean for example doubting the existence of a planet, which later observations proved to exist. Or does Moore want to say that knowing that here is his hand is different in kind from knowing the existence of the planet Saturn? Otherwise it would be possible to point out the discovery of the planet Saturn to the doubters and say that its existence has been proved, and hence the existence of the external world as well. (OC 20)

Now of course, Moore didn't mean his truisms to have some special status. For if they could not be regarded as ordinary empirical statements about physical objects, then how could they possibly 'refute the idealist'? But on the other hand, if they *are* just ordinary empirical propositions, then why is it so ludicrous trying to refute the idealist by pointing out the proven existence of Saturn? But in fact there is a salient difference between the Moorean truisms and such statements as the one about Saturn, and this difference Wittgenstein *did* find most impressive and revealing. The statement about Saturn is an ordinary empirical statement, which once, we may assume, was a daring hypothesis and which by now has been properly corroborated and has become part of our knowledge of the world. Yet, the things that Moore tries to express are of a completely different nature:

> Moore's assurance that he knows... does not interest us. The propositions, however, which

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[1] Uncontroversial as Moore's truisms appear to be, there still is room for debate when it concerns the use to which he puts them. The standard interpretation of Moore sees him as simply and dogmatically claiming against the sceptic that we do know such things as that *this is a hand*. However, Baldwin (1990), Ch. IX offers a more interesting interpretation. Baldwin argues that in *A Defense of Common Sense* Moore presents an 'argument from differential certainty' by which he means to refute scepticism without at the same time having to show how knowledge is possible. This argument grants that there is some logically valid argument from premisses p_1 ... p_n to a sceptical conclusion c, but observes that, since the negation of that conclusion is much more certain than the set of premisses from which it is derived, we should accept this valid argument in its contraposed form as a refutation of one or more of its premisses.
The question whether Moore indeed presents us which such an argument, and if he does, whether it is convincing, are not of present relevance. Wittgenstein's interest focuses on Moore's claim that such truisms were proper and ordinary items of knowledge.

Moore retails as examples of such known truths are interesting. ... When Moore says he *knows* such and such, he is really enumerating a lot of empirical propositions which we affirm without special testing; propositions, that is, which have a peculiar logical role in the system of our empirical propositions. (OC 136-7)

Those things which Moore enumerates are not the fruits of any ordinary epistemic endeavour, but rather belong to our *certainties.*

Expressive Intermezzo

Before we continue with a sustained discussion of Moore's certainties, it is, I think, of the utmost importance to be clear about the precise use we are going to make of the term 'to be certain' and about what exactly it is that we will call 'certainties'. Several uses of the term stand out. Firstly, we may talk about the certainty with which someone performs an action, e.g., we might remark upon the animal-like certainty of a soccer player's movements while scoring a goal. Secondly, we might note that, while scoring, the player was certain that he was within shooting distance of the goal. When talking like this, we are not committing ourselves to any proposition which this player might or even could have formulated during his actions. In yet a third sense, we talk about people being absolutely certain about the truth of propositions. In that case, the use of 'being certain' is restricted to 'having a particular attitude towards a proposition'; as we might restrict the term 'to believe' in similar fashion. There are several reasons why taking the term 'certainty' primarily in the last of those three senses leads to serious difficulties when it comes to understanding Wittgenstein's remarks. Firstly, Wittgenstein strongly emphasized the relation between certainty and (both verbal and non-verbal) behaviour and action. This relation should definitely not be so conceived, that our actions are derived from specific propositions the truth of which we are certain about. Rather, the fact that we are certain about something finds its most proper and direct expression in our actions themselves. One of Wittgenstein's remarks about 'belief' in the *Philosophical Investigations* may be illuminating in this respect. In PI ## 574-5 it is remarked that:

A proposition, and hence in another sense a thought, can be the 'expression' of belief, hope, expectation, etc. But believing is not thinking. ... When I sat down on this chair, of course I believed it would bear me. I had no thought of its possibly collapsing.

In order to believe something, I need not first entertain a thought or give verbal expression to that belief. Rather, the belief may be uncontroversially clear from the way in which it directly manifests itself in my actions. By the same token, just as believing something may consist in acting and having certain thoughts *not*, so being certain may consist in acting and having certain doubts not. Thus, the locus of certainty does not reside in holding some propositions to be undoubtedly true, but resides primarily in the actions which manifest my certainty. This point is also being made in PI # 472 and # 474:

The character of the belief in the uniformity of nature can perhaps be seen most clearly in the case in which we fear what we expect. Nothing could induce me to put my hand into a flame - although after all it is *only in the past* that I have burnt myself. ... I shall get burnt if I put my

hand in the fire: that is certainty. That is to say: here we see the meaning of certainty. (What it amounts to, not just the meaning of the word 'certainty'.)

The 'character of the belief in the uniformity of nature' is that of blind certainty, and what that amounts to, cannot be shown better than by the way in which one shuns the fire. In other words, a certainty is primarily something which becomes manifest in our behaviour, and not in a particular attitude towards a proposition from which behavioural guidelines can be derived.

Yet, there are also reasons why our certainties should be distinguished from our beliefs in general, and those considerations in a different way point out the dangers involved in taking the third, propositional sense of 'certainties' as wearing the trousers. Indeed, believing something is not the same as thinking or verbalizing it. Still, it might plausibly be held that ordinary beliefs such as *Saturn is the sixth planet in our solar system* can only be ascribed to someone when that person is capable in principle of formulating this belief or assenting to a formulation of it.[1] If this person can also give some acceptable grounds for that belief, we may say that he *knows* this fact about Saturn. The situation is different when we are dealing with our certainties. As we will see, there is a problem about *knowing* a statement which is meant as a verbalization of one of our certainties, and there is just as much a problem about the very *meaning* of such a statement itself. In the light of Wittgensteinian dictum that the meaning of a statement is the use which we make of it, the problem which we run into is apparent. Formulating a shared certainty, giving vent to something which is perfectly indubitable for both speaker and hearer, cannot serve any obvious communicative goal whatsoever, and is therefore a paradigm of making a literally useless statement. This fact, that the attempt to formulate something which we accept as a certainty leads us to make statements of which the very meaningfulness is questionable, is hammered home time and again in *On Certainty*. What this seemingly paradoxical situation exactly shows us about the relation between our certainties and the realm of our ordinary discursive practices will be a matter of later concern. At this point it is important to realize the immense problems which this situation would present if we were to think of certainties primarily in terms of 'propositions which are certain'. A short look at Elisabeth Wolgast's article *Whether Certainty is a Form of Life* may prove to be illustrative for such problems. Wolgast asks herself how, in the light of his own considerations about meaning, Wittgenstein can assign such fundamental importance to our certainties, which, after all, are useless propositions. To her mind, Wittgenstein's way to reconcile his views on meaning with the importance he gives such propositions, is to attempt 'to treat the 'comfortable certainties' as special cases, namely as propositions which are important but fall outside language' (Wolgast (1987), p. 161). Wittgenstein's many descriptions of our certainties in terms of 'images of construction and support, of fixedness and durability' (Ibid., p.

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[1] Wittgenstein does allow for a limited number of beliefs that might be ascribed purely on the basis of behaviour without the possibility of any verbalization. Compare PI p. 174, where it is observed that a dog can be said to believe that its master is at the door, yet cannot be said to believe that its master will come the day after tomorrow.

164) should be seen as attempts to appropriate a niche for those important, yet useless propositions. Still, Wolgast argues, there is something particularly strange and almost 'un-Wittgensteinian' about this procedure:

> One needs to remember ... that what he was dealing with is *propositions*. It is as if he thought of language and knowledge as a construction out of propositions, some of which hold up and support others. But this is a most fanciful idea: What are propositions that they can do this ...? (Ibid., p. 164)

What are they indeed? To place such propositions 'outside language', Wolgast thinks, can hardly be more than an ill-begotten attempt to conceal the fact that assigning a paramount importance to such useless propositions just cannot be squared with the central tenets of Wittgenstein's own view on meaning. The only way out of such difficulties, Wolgast argues, is

> ... to characterize the comfortable certainties as curiosities, as relics in a philosophical museum, [rather] than to try to give them a role in some dynamical system of propositions. (Ibid., p. 165)

Just as a set of Roman carpentry tools which are on display are still put to some use, even if this is a more modest use than that of making chairs, so being on display in the 'philosophical museum' is, according to Wolgast, the only discernable use of those propositions that express certainties. However, had Wittgenstein only tried to find out what use such propositions can have, he would have realized that certainties simply cannot play the role which he was tempted to assign to them. In that case,

> [Wittgenstein] *might* well have argued that dealing with the comfortable certainties as propositions with some profound significance, as having a weighty though silent role in our lives, was a case of misguided thinking ... In that case he should have proceeded consistently with the method and argument of the *Investigations*. (Ibid., p. 165)

It goes without saying that we should be somewhat heedful of interpretations that lead to the conclusion that the writer, because he was blind to the tools of his own devising, proceeded in a way which is inconsistent with his own method. I think that in Wolgast's case, this conclusion could have been preempted by avoiding any rash equivocation of certainties with propositions. So much more because, even if such propositions were perfectly meaningful, any interpretation of *On Certainty* that takes Wittgenstein as assigning a fundamental role to some set of *propositions*, rather than to patterns of behaviour and practices, would be just as difficult to reconcile with his views in the *Philosophical Investigations*.

For those reasons, we should be careful not to give priority to a conception of our certainties as a particular kind of propositions. Accordingly, when talking about our certainties below, I will use the term 'certainty' predominantly in the second sense, and sometimes in the first sense of the three senses previously distinguished.[1]

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[1] By anchoring our certainties in patterns of behaviour rather than in propositions, we have safeguarded the cogency of the notion of a certainty (which was threatened by Wolgast's argument. The meaningfulness of propositions that express or attempt to express certainties remains a conundrum though. After all, if the meaning of an expression is to be seen as its use in the

More Moore

When we return to Moore and to the truisms that he pressed on the sceptic, the first thing we might observe is that there is indeed a multitude of ordinary things about which we are indeed utterly and perfectly certain. As I am sitting here at my desk, nothing could be more certain than that those are my *hands* with which I am touching the keyboard. Yet, this certainty about my hands is not the result of any process of verification, and my certainty is not a question of being convinced about an empirical hypothesis which has been perfectly corroborated. Actually, when it comes to my hands it would make little sense at all to say that I have *corroborated* their existence. For what method could I use under normal circumstances for convincing myself of the existence of my hands? Am I to *look* at them... and what if I didn't see them, am I then to conclude that suddenly they went out of existence, or rather that something had gone badly wrong with my eyesight?

The fact is that in this case there is no method of verification which is more trustworthy than the belief about the existence of my hands and which supposedly supports or refutes this fact. The situation in which I suddenly wouldn't see my hands anymore is so utterly bizarre that my methods of gathering evidence and checking things out do not provide for it. Under such circumstances any conclusion could be warranted. But since no method of verification can, under the present circumstances, unequivocally establish that my hands no longer exist, neither can it establish that they do exist. Such certainty as we have about our hands is not the result of any process of verification, and it would therefore be misleading to call such a statement an *hypothesis*. As Wittgenstein says:

> [The] situation is thus not the same for a proposition like 'At this distance from the sun there is a planet' and 'Here is a hand' (namely my own hand). The second can't be called a hypothesis. (OC 52)

Yet, it would also be too hasty if we were to conclude that since such Moorean truisms cannot be regarded as ordinary empirical statements, they therefore are non-empirical 'logical' statements which can be known:

> It is wrong to say that the 'hypothesis' that *this* is a bit of paper would be confirmed or disconfirmed by later experience, and that, in 'I know that this is a bit of paper,' the 'I know' either relates to such an hypothesis or to a logical determination. (OC 60)

So according to Wittgenstein one notable feature of the Moorean truisms is that they do not quite fit into a dichotomy of non-empirical logical statements versus empirical hypotheses. The certainty I have about this being my hands, though having to do with my hands, and not with the logical structure of language, nevertheless stands outside the ordinary vicissitudes of evidence and counter-evidence and differs in that respect from ordinary empirical statements. This difference,

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language, then such propositions can lay little claim to meaningfulness. It is tempting to assign to such propositions a status which is similar to that which the *Tractatus* gives to tautologies and contradictions. As is the case with the propositions that (attempt to) express certainties, tautologies and contradictions do not meet the criterion for meaningfulness, but by that very token they show something about the transcendental framework that is constitutive of meaning.

Wittgenstein stresses, is not merely one of degree. Our certainties should not be seen as those beliefs to which we have come to assign a maximum probability on some gradually increasing scale. Rather, their certainty differs in quality, not in quantity from ordinary empirical judgements. Certainty is not something which has to be approximated to a higher or lesser degree:

> ... are we to say that *certainty* is merely a constructed point to which some things approximate more, some less closely? No. Doubt gradually loses its sense. This language-game just *is* like that. (OC 56)
>
> For it is not true that a mistake merely gets more and more improbable as we pass from the planet to my own hand. No: at some point it has ceased to be conceivable. (OC 54)

According to Wittgenstein, the unreflective certainty that one tries to express by the Moorean truisms could best be characterized by saying that in such cases doubt just couldn't arise, or that an error would be logically impossible. These two features of Moorean truisms - the senselessness of doubt and the (logical) exclusion of error - are driven home in all possible variations and reformulations throughout *On Certainty*, and merit some elucidation.

Concerning the point that doubt is senseless in regard to our certainties, it has already been observed that Wittgenstein stresses the fact that doubt stands in need of reasons. In the light of this, it might be tempting to misinterpret the statement that in some cases doubt does not make any sense as meaning that in such cases it is *logically impossible* that anything might occur which would throw doubt on the things of which I am certain; that no logically possible circumstance could provide a reason for doubt. However, such an interpretation of Wittgenstein's views would still pay too much allegiance to the Cartesian framework. Indeed, Descartes held that the mere possibility of an *Evil Demon* jeopardizes our ordinary knowledge-claims and that therefore we can only reach epistemically safe grounds by finding a judgement which not even the possibility of an malevolent spirit would render doubtful. If Wittgenstein were to hold that in regard to our certainties doubt is senseless because it is logically impossible that there are circumstances that belie these certainties, then he would in effect be claiming that our certainties can actually live up to the Cartesian challenge. Wittgenstein, however, rejects this very challenge itself. His point is, that even though there may be possible circumstances that would contravene our certainties, still this mere possibility sufficient to raise a sensible doubt.

This point might be better understood by looking at an ordinary statement of a kind Wittgenstein much elaborated upon, e.g., *My name is Harry Stein* - spoken by me when, for example, introducing myself to someone. I am perfectly certain that Harry Stein is indeed my name. The fact that it is, is attested to by an enormous number of things - I know my parents were called 'Stein', I receive my mail under that name, it is the name by which other people call me etc. In regard to doubting whether my name is H.S., I have no idea where, under the present circumstances, a doubt could possibly set in, and if I were to use a verbal expression of doubt when introducing myself by saying 'Good morning, I think my name is Harry Stein, though I have my doubts about it', then these words could not be interpreted as

voicing a sensible caution, but would probably show me up as a crackpot or a practical joker.

Still, it would be quite misleading to say that in this case my certainty is the result of incontrovertible evidence. It is not logically impossible for me to discover that I am the offspring of some nobleman, that I was kidnapped by Gypsies at an early age and that I am actually named differently. Accordingly, the statement 'I think my name is H.S., though I am not quite sure' would make good sense when on the brink of making such a discovery. But it is important to realize that in order to *actually* lose my certainty, such circumstances would *actually* have to occur. The mere conceivability of special circumstances under which a doubt would be sensible is of no consequence to my practical certainty, and does not make a doubt any more real. Of course I can imagine reasons for doubt, and if I had these reasons, I might doubt. But an imagined ground for doubt just as little leads to doubt, as an imagined justification leads to knowledge.

So for me, under the usual every-day circumstances, doubt about my name could not possibly find a foothold even though, if things got strange enough, it could be a viable possibility. However, for the use of our own proper name it is essential that the common conditions apply. As children, we all have learned to respond to our names in a matter of fact way, and we have learned how to answer when asked for our names, long before any doubt could be contemplated or voiced. This certainty remains typical for the use we make of proper names, also after we have learned, in other contexts, how to doubt things, and for what reasons. This certainty is not logically unassailable, but is presupposed by the common course of things: it is the ordinary background against which the language game with proper names is being played. If people generally were prone to sudden bouts of amnesia, or were commonly and frequently renamed by foster-parents, by-and-by our current use of proper-names would start loosing its point. Thus the question whether doubt is or is not logically excluded need not in any way affect my practical reliance on a proposition, and this reliance itself is not an epiphenomenon, but a built-in prerequisite for playing the language-game at all.

Yet, however unassailable my own certainty in this case might be, that does not mean that other people need to share this certainty. After all, what could be more contingent than that my name is what it actually is? So, even though in general my certainties will largely be the same as these of the other people in my culture or speech community, there may also be certainties that belong to my particular framework only. My certainty about my own proper name is an example of such a case. Wittgenstein summarizes the peculiar role such statements can have, and the different features which are relevant in this respect, by saying:

> When we say 'Certain propositions must be excluded from doubt', it sounds as if I ought to put these propositions - for example, that I am called L.W. - in a logic-book. For if it belongs to the description of a language-game, it belongs to logic. But that I am called L.W. does not belong to any such description. The language-game that operates with people's names can certainly exist even if I am mistaken about my name, - but it does presuppose that it is nonsensical to say that the majority of people are mistaken about their names. On the other hand, however, it is right to say of myself 'I cannot be mistaken about my name', and wrong if I say 'perhaps I am mistaken'.

But that does not mean that it is meaningless for others to doubt what I declare to be certain. (OC 628 - 629)

So instead of looking for propositions which can under no circumstances be doubted, Wittgenstein tries to divert our attention from this endeavor to the massive amount of things which are practically undoubted within a certain framework. The philosophical importance of this observation becomes clear when we realize that this practical certainty is hooked up with our command of language and the possibility of real doubt and knowledge within the framework of our language. This is also made clear by the following observation:

> Imagine a language-game 'When I call you, come in through the door'. In any ordinary case, a doubt whether there really is a door there will be impossible. What I need to shew is that a doubt is not necessary even when it is possible. That the possibility of the language-game does not depend on everything being doubted that can be doubted. (OC 391 - 2)

We do not need any metaphysical certainty in order to set up this language-game with the door. There simply is not any issue of whether doubt about the existence of the door is logically excluded or not, because doubt, be it practical or speculative, does not come in in the first place. Doubt about the brittleness of a falling glass does not need to be excluded, logically or otherwise, in order to reach out and catch it. The language-game can be set up because it fits in with the behavior that comes natural to me; it is built on the unreflecting and direct confidence with which I know my way around in the world. It is this certainty which impregnates our language-games and forms the background for the cases in which we can have a reasonable doubt.

A second feature of the Moorean truisms which Wittgenstein stresses is that making an error concerning such judgements is logically excluded. This should be understood along similar lines as the impossibility of doubt. The reason why doubt concerning the Moorean truisms is excluded, is because we lack actual reasons for doubt, and not, as was stressed, because no circumstances could *ever* supply us with such a reason. In similar vein, when Wittgenstein says that an error is logically excluded in such cases, what he means is not that one is of necessity always right about such judgements:

> In certain circumstances a man cannot make an *error*. ('Can' is here used logically, and the proposition does not mean that a man cannot say anything false in those circumstances.) (OC 155)

So if future circumstances would - *mirabile dictu* - render the correctness of my judgement that *this is my hand* questionable, then still I could not be said to have *erred* myself previously. In order to make an error, there first of all has to be an established framework of rules that determine what counts as acquiring and weighing evidence. When, within the confines of such a framework, I apply these rules for the gathering of evidence wrongly or carelessly, I can be said to have made an error. Yet, if I were proved wrong in regard to *this being my hand*, then the reason could not be that I had sinned against the codex of an established evidential frame. For as we saw, this certainty about my hand is not the result of any ordi-

nary process of gathering evidence in the first place. And secondly, if I somehow were to be proved wrong in regard to such basic certainties, then my very evidential framework itself might start to become unhinged.

To ask in a specific case whether an error is logically excluded matters in as far as it shows the 'logical role' of such a judgement both in our language games and in the whole framework of our knowledge. When it is observed that we cannot have *erred* in thinking that the earth is much older than 5463 years, it thereby also becomes clear that this statement is so central to the framework of the physical sciences, that it itself has become a criterion for the correctness of our methods of investigation. If proven wrong - however that might be accomplished - these methods and the whole structure which is based upon them would be invalidated. Furthermore, the fact that I cannot possibly have made an error in thinking, under ordinary circumstances, that this is my hand, does not only show that this belief lies outside our ordinary evidential framework, but it also draws our attention to the fact that judgements like these have a particular status when it comes to the use of the word 'hand'. For if such a judgement could prove to have been an error, then how can I be sure what the word 'hand' means in the first place? In order to make an ordinary meaningful use of the word 'hand', it is required that under particular conditions the judgement that this is my hand is beyond any possible doubt.

So the importance of showing that sometimes an error is logically excluded is not that it directly charges any sceptical claim. Nevertheless, this impossibility of error does show that the kind of certainties which Moore tries to press on us have an exceptional status. It also goes to show that the sceptical picture of independently meaningful propositions which can separately be checked for their degree of certainty is misguided. In pointing out that an error can be logically excluded Wittgenstein stresses the interdependency of meaning and judgement, and draws attention to the fact that our view of the world is a net of interconnected and coherent beliefs.

To Recapitulate

Wittgenstein starts his investigation of the concept of certainty by focussing on the Moorean truisms. Moore presented these truisms as proper empirical statements which he claimed he knew to be true with perfect certainty. Contrary to Moore, Wittgenstein holds that the certainty which attaches to such judgements as *This is my hand*, *My name is A.*, or *The earth existed long before my birth* is not that of empirical statements with maximal evidential support. In fact, our usual epistemological concepts make little sense when we try to apply them to the things about which we are certain in this way. For instance, our ordinary methods of evidential support cannot be invoked to justify our certainties, because the validity of these methods is not more trustworthy than the certainties that they are supposed to justify. Where evidence would seem to belie our certainties, the evidential methods themselves would become questionable. The absence of actual reasons for doubt and the impossibility of having erred oneself concerning these certainties is a further indication that they occupy a place outside our ordinary epistemic frame of refer-

ence. For such reasons Wittgenstein claims that being certain about something differs in quality, and not just in quantity from our ordinary reliance on empirical statements.

Certainty is to be located at a different and deeper level than doubt and knowledge. For partly, our certainties spring directly from the natural and purposeful behaviour on which our language games are based, partly they are derived from the trustful manner by which we grow into our view of the world. In fact, our certainties and the practices and behaviour in which they are rooted provide a groundwork that is a prerequisite for more sophisticated epistemological endeavours concerning knowledge and doubt. It is for this reason that Wittgenstein regards Moore's epistemological use of such statements as completely misleading. Rather than being instances of perfectly certain empirical knowledge, Moore's truisms, when used in an ordinary context, are a few threads of the massive network of certainty that is a precondition for attaining empirical knowledge in the first place.

IV. CERTAINTY'S ANATOMY

What does our certainty consist of?

Up to this point, I have without much further ado equated our certainties with the Moorean truisms. It would be well if we would now try our hand at a somewhat more specific characterization of the judgements in question. This is not an easy task. In *On Certainty* Wittgenstein uses a great variety of examples, ranging from statements about which a single speaker is perfectly certain at a specific occasion, to judgements about which all speakers are certain on virtually all occasions. This diversity need not surprise us when we keep in mind that it is not Wittgenstein's intention to present a typology of logically undoubtable propositions, but that he rather wants to draw our attention to the complex network of everyday certainty which is presupposed by our ordinary linguistic and epistemic practices.

Yet, I think that in order to highlight some salient features of the role which our certainties play, we might do well to single out two kinds for further discussion. For lack of a better term we might call those two kinds of judgements: 'criterial judgements' and 'background judgements'. The first kind could be illustrated by such statements as *This is red* said when pointing at a ripe tomato, or *This is my hand* when holding up my hand. We could call such statements 'criterial' in the sense that the ability to make such judgements is a criterion for understanding the meaning of the terms involved. It is by making and evoking such statements that we teach and test the command little children and foreigners have of our language. And if I myself were to make 'mistakes' with judgements like these, the 'mistake' would not so much testify against the sanity of my beliefs, as against my understanding the meaning of these words. Meaning and judgement are in these cases inseparably connected. For this reason Wittgenstein says that:

> The *truth* of my statements is the test of my *understanding* of these statements. That is to say: if I make certain false statements, it becomes uncertain whether I understand them. (OC 80 - 1)

For that reason, a massive certainty is already presupposed by the sheer fact of my linguistic competence:

If you are not certain of any fact, you cannot be certain of the meaning of your words either. (OC 114)[1]

Thus, even though such criterial judgements are empirical in the sense of being about ordinary things, still they help to set the confines of our meaningful use of language. Partly we have learned the meaning of words by having learned how to use them for making certain prototypical judgements. For that reason those judgements are practically unassailable; any philosophical attempt to question our right to such judgements would immediately raise doubt about the very meaningfulness of the terms involved. The judgement that *this is a hand* when made under normal circumstances concerns an ordinary object, i.e. my hand, yet the fact that this statement under those circumstances can count as an explanation of the meaning of the word 'hand' partly circumscribes the general use of this word. As Wittgenstein puts it:

What counts as an adequate test of a statement belongs to logic. It belongs to the description of the language-game. The *truth* of certain empirical propositions belongs to our frame of reference (OC 82 - 3)

The second kind of certainties that I want to mention are those that we make our own - or, to borrow a phrase from Wittgenstein - that we 'grow into' in the process of attuning ourselves to the community and culture around us. Wittgenstein calls the totality of these judgements our 'inherited background' (OC 94) or our 'picture of the world' (*Weltbild*) (OC 93), or even, in order to stress that the complex woven by such judgement lies beyond justification or refutation, he speaks about 'a kind of mythology' (OC 95). Such judgements constitute the frame of common convictions that is shared by virtually all members of our community, and they concern such beliefs as:

I believe that I have forebears, and that every human being has them. I believe that there are various cities, and, quite generally, in the main facts of geography and history. I believe that the earth is a body on whose surface we move and that it no more suddenly disappears or the like than

[1] Antony Kenny (1973), p. 206, in the context of discussing Wittgenstein's impact on Cartesian scepticism, gives a weaker interpretation of such remarks. According to Kenny, what Wittgenstein means is that '... if Descartes is really to doubt whatever can be doubted, then he should try to doubt the meanings of the words he uses. ... But if the Cartesian doubt is taken thus far, it refutes itself. If the evil genius is deceiving me totally, then he is deceiving me about the meaning of the word 'deceive'; and so 'The evil genius is deceiving me totally' does not express the total doubt that it was meant to.' Thus Kenny regards contingent judgements about the meaning of words as a last line of defence, which still stands strong even when all other judgements have become doubtful. However, I interpret Wittgenstein as arguing that this last ditch cannot be reached in the first place, because judgements about the meaning of our words and empirical judgements stand or fall together. (Compare also OC 519, where Wittgenstein stresses that genuine doubt presupposes the meaningful use of language, but that in its turn presupposes that *some* empirical judgement about things must be beyond doubt.)

any other solid body: this table, this house, this tree, etc. If I wanted to doubt the existence of the earth long before my birth, I should have to doubt all sorts of things that stand fast for me. (OC 234)

But such a massive doubt cannot be envisaged because it would also affect the substance of our notions of truth and evidence themselves, and for that reason would lead us into utter incoherence:

> If someone doubted whether the earth had existed a hundred years ago, I should not understand, for *this* reason: I would not know what such a person would still allow to be counted as evidence and what not. (OC 231)

So Wittgenstein holds that our notions of evidence, truth and correctness are internal to such a framework of background knowledge. Or, using some traditional philosophical idiom, we might say that Wittgenstein regards this background as a transcendental condition for knowledge and truth.[1] For that reason, it makes little sense to say that we possess this net of convictions because we have convinced ourselves of its truth or because all evidence is in favour of it.

> I did not get my picture of the world by satisfying myself of its correctness; nor do I have it because I am satisfied of its correctness. No: it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false. (OC 94)

To mention one of Wittgenstein's examples, I do not really know what evidence speaks in favour of my belief that things do not just disappear without any cause or good reason. Still, I have no idea how to test this belief or what would speak against it. Or rather, in respect to this belief I refuse to acknowledge anything as counter evidence and I have thereby rendered this belief immune to any possible refutation. I am certain that things do not just disappear without any good reason, despite the fact that I also know that all over the world, thousands of people disappear each year without ever being found again, and disregarding the fact that I am personally know of at least a dozen objects that have irretrievably disappeared in my household without any known cause.[2] Still, even if I saw objects around me evaporate before my very eyes, most probably I still would hold that there must be some proper natural explanation for it. In respect to a worldview, Wittgenstein says, there

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[1] It should be pointed out that a weaker reading of such remarks is also possible, i.e. that a framework of certainties is constitutive not to any notion of truth, knowledge and evidence *as such*, but merely to what are in fact *our* notions of truth, knowledge and evidence. One would then allow for the possibility of other frameworks than our own, in which other notions of truth, knowledge and evidence are employed, and would thus give a relativist reading of Wittgenstein's remarks. For my present purposes it is not necessary to go into the question whether such a reading of Wittgenstein's remarks is exegetically correct or whether such relativism is systematically viable. I will leave these questions open, and when I speak below of, e.g., 'the framework of certainties that is constitutive to our notion of evidence', I mean such expressions to be neutral towards the question whether other frameworks, constituting other notions of evidence are also possible.

[2] In the Netherlands alone, according to a recent newspaper article, of all the people who are reported missing each year, an average of forty people are never seen or heard of again. They have literally disappeared without leaving any trace.

is no question of convincing, at most there is conversion.

Although our methods of inquiry and doubt are relative to this whole complex of background knowledge, not all beliefs which form a part of it are as deeply entrenched and as central to our epistemological practices as the ones just mentioned. Because our background beliefs are also tied up with the prolonged, communal endeavor for knowledge, it is a rather heterogeneous structure. On one side of the spectrum we have such mostly unspoken beliefs as that things do not disappear without natural causes. Those Wittgenstein characterizes as the hinges around which ordinary investigations can turn and without which the whole fabric of conviction and enquiry would start to unravel. On the other side of the scale we find the more humdrum facts of history and geography which are known to everyone with an elementary school education. Furthermore, with time the question what belongs to the background and how deeply it is entrenched, allows of a different answer. To describe this slowly but perpetually changing background Wittgenstein uses the famous analogy of a riverbed:

> It might be imagined that some propositions, of the form of empirical propositions, were hardened and functioned as channels for such empirical propositions as were not hardened but fluid; and that this relation altered with time, in that fluid propositions hardened, and hard ones became fluid. ... The river-bed of thoughts may shift. But I distinguish between the movement of the waters on the river-bed and the shift of the bed itself; though there is no sharp division of the one from the other. ... And the bank of that river consists partly of hard rock, subject to no alteration or only to an imperceptible one, partly of sand, which now in one place now in another gets washed away, or deposited. (OC 96-9)

Thus, even though the structure of our background convictions is not fixed once and for all, it is a prerequisite of our method of doubt and inquiry to treat certain contingent propositions about the world as solid, to take other things at face-value, and to exclude certain doubts. Actually, according to Wittgenstein the borders of what we regard as rational are not only set by what a person beliefs and the way in which he reasons, but just as much by the fact that there are particular things which he refuses to doubt. The very absence of doubt can be a criterion for rationality. For example, it is not impossible that our forebears for some reason wanted to play an enormous hoax on us by making us believe in the existence of some completely fictional figure called 'Napoleon'. It is conceivable that they massively fabricated documents and 'eyewitness accounts' testifying to the deeds of this phantom, and that, when sitting around the hearth at evening, they had a merry time in contemplating the credulity of future generations. We could imagine that even venerable old Tolstoy was in on the joke, and made his own contribution by writing *War and Peace*. Still, seriously countenancing such possibilities and requiring an 'indubitable proof' before accepting the existence of Napoleon or of historical figures in general would not lead to a more rigorous approach to history, but to its abolishment. The attempt to turn sceptical paranoia into method destroys the very possibility of inquiry itself.

The proposition that our forebears were not a bunch of practical jokers, and that their testimony was delivered with roughly the same standard of truthfulness as we

ourselves uphold, is neither to be found in a logic book, nor in a history course. No one has ever told us these things, and yet we have taken them in and act upon them. We treat them as norms which underlie and uphold sane inquiry, and which distinguish it from the paranoid ruminations of madmen. As a consequence, the confines of our common background form the cornerstones of rationality itself.

Justification comes to an end in action and practices

We have seen that our certainties, according to Wittgenstein, circumscribe the confines within which justification takes place. For that reason certainties may also be regarded as the terminus of justification; they are those beliefs that we might eventually come up with when we are exasperated because our usual justifications have run their final course. For instance, when making historical inquiries, it is a standard procedure to question and evaluate the reliability of particular sources. It is possible to give reasons and justifications for or against the use of a specific document or testimonies. Yet, if such procedures were to be pushed to the limit and one demanded a justification of the dependability of historical sources in general, then ultimately we could only voice our conviction that *of course* our forebears, like us, in general intended to tell the truth. This belief constitutes the boundary within which the ordinary justification of historical sources takes place, but it is not itself justified. As Wittgenstein says:

> At the foundation of well-founded belief lies belief that is not founded. The difficulty is to realize the groundlessness of our believing. (OC 253, 166)

No justification can be given for such beliefs, and neither can it be said that they are 'self-justifying' by being self-evidently true.

> Giving grounds ... comes to an end; - but the end is not certain propositions' striking us immediately as true, i.e. it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game. (OC 204)

At first sight, those two statements of Wittgenstein seem to contradict each other, since it looks as if we are presented with two different answers to the question about the terminus of justification. *OC* 253 tells us that justification ends in certain *beliefs*, while in *OC* 204 it is said that justification ends in *action*. Yet, here one should heed the distinctions made above in our discussion of Wolgast, were we mentioned Wittgenstein's observation that 'believing something' or 'being certain of something' does not imply 'thinking of something' or taking a certain stance towards a proposition. According to Wittgenstein, the most proper manifestation of such certain beliefs, and often the only manifestation, is action. What makes such convictions utterly certain for us, it is not their truth which forces itself upon us, but the complete naturalness of the behaviour and the practices in which they manifest themselves. If, e.g., anything accounts for our belief in the general trustworthiness of historical sources, it is the fact that truthfulness is the global precondition of our own practice of reporting and describing events, and in this respect we do, as a matter of fact, look upon our forebears as members of our our own community.

From an epistemological or linguistic point of view our behaviour and our

practices are primitive data. Certainly, mankind has been shaped by eons of environmental pressure, and more insight into the evolution of our species might reveal causes for our behaviour. But with such investigations we leave the normative realm in which epistemological questions have their place. The vicissitudes of the African savannah may explain some of our practices; they do not justify them. In this respect it is important to notice that Wittgenstein draws an explicit distinction between on the one hand reasons and grounds, and on the other hand causes. Reasons and grounds apply to the domain constituted by our certainties, not to those certainties themselves. Yet our certainties and the behaviour and practices manifesting them may be said to have particular causes:

> Just as in writing we learn a particular basic form of letters and then vary it later, so we learn first the stability of things as the norm, which is then subject to alterations. This game proves its worth. That may be the cause of its being played, but it is not the ground. (OC 473 - 4)

In other places experience is marked as being a possible cause of our certainties (OC 429), or the cause of our 'game of judging'. Yet, in that case, too, Wittgenstein strongly denies that our experience can be a ground by which we can legitimize our way of judging or measure its correctness:

> But isn't it experience that teaches us to judge like *this*, that is to say, that it is correct to judge like this? But how does experience *teach* us, then? *We* may derive it from experience, but experience does not direct us to derive anything from experience. ... No, experience is not the ground for our game of judging. Nor is its outstanding success. (OC 130 - 1)

By the same token, our certainties, just as our language-games, are subject to particular natural constraints. Our operating with language and our way of treating particular things with blind certainty is only possible given a massive amount of natural regularities in human behaviour and the world at large. Our practice of fixing the price of a piece of cheese by its weight, to use the example of *Philosophical Investigations* # 142, depends on particular characteristics of human behaviour, as well as on the fact that the pieces of cheese do not unpredictably bulge and shrink. Yet, the fact that normal conditions apply, and remain to apply, is something that cannot in any sense be guaranteed. In as far as our certainties are dependent on such natural preconditions, they might in principle be upset when those conditions would stop holding. On several occasions Wittgenstein imagines such nightmarish occurrences, and discusses our possible reactions towards them. For instance, in OC 513 he asks himself:

> What if something *really unheard-of* happened? - If I, say, saw houses gradually turning into steam without any obvious cause, if the cattle in the fields stood on their heads and laughed and spoke comprehensible words; if trees gradually changed into men and men into trees. Now, was I right when I said before all these things happened 'I know that that's a house' etc., or simply 'that's a house' etc.?

What makes this last question indeed difficult to answer, is that such happenings seem to upset all our ordinary certainties, and thereby threaten the very framework within which it makes sense to talk about houses in the first place. Wittgenstein envisages three possible reactions to such bizarre happenings: we might actually

start doubting the truth of our beliefs while retaining the ability to make judgements, we might experience a semantic breakdown and be dumbfounded, or we might stubbornly stick with our original beliefs. In which of these three ways we would actually react is not something we can say in advance. Partly so because the things that we are certain of are rather diverse and tied-up in different ways with the rest of our knowledge. It does seem possible that under certain conditions I would actually start doubting whether my name is H.S., without thereby completely losing my foothold. It is harder to imagine how I could doubt whether I ever had a body, or whether the universe is really older than five minutes. Were circumstances to occur which seemed to point in such a direction, my faculties of judgement would be under serious stress, and what would have to give way, my assessment of reality or my ability to use language and to make judgements, is not easy to say. In particular because it would in principle always be an option simply not to acknowledge the apparent counter-evidence. I might always plead madness, or consider myself the victim of some devious deception. Because of this possibility one might indeed declare to be perfectly certain that the world has existed for more than five minutes, and say that nothing could ever count as evidence against that statement. But this is not so much ascribing a necessary feature to reality, as voicing a decision to stand by one's conviction, whatever the odds against it might be.

Thus, if it be asked whether the things which we are certain about are *true*, we now have an inkling of Wittgenstein's answer. Firstly, it has already been observed that our certainties, according to Wittgenstein, play a constitutive role and are constitutive of the framework within which our ordinary notions of justification and evidence are brought into play. For that reason, those certainties themselves cannot said to be true in the sense in which we hold a well-justified statement to be true. In this respect, there is a categorical difference between our certainties and our knowledge, and Moore's principle failure, according to Wittgenstein, was to treat certainties as ordinary items of knowledge:

> To say of man, in Moore's sense, that he *knows* something; that what he says is therefore unconditionally the truth, seems wrong to me. It is the truth only inasmuch as it is an unmoving foundation of his language-games. (OC 403)

The notion of truth as it applies to items of knowledge within an established framework we might dub an 'internal' notion of truth. Wittgenstein's remarks about truth in this internal sense has strong verificationist overtones, and it is suggested that the notion of truth should not be explicated as correspondence with reality or with the facts in a metaphysically realist sense:

> If everything speaks for an hypothesis and nothing against it, - is it then certainly true? One may designate it as such. - But does it certainly agree with reality, with the facts? - With this question you are already going round in a circle. (OC 191) The reason why the use of the expression 'true or false' has something misleading about it is that it is like saying 'it tallies with the facts or it does not', and the very thing that is in question is what 'tallying' is here. Really 'The proposition is either true or false' only means that it must be possible to decide for or against it. (OC 199 - 200)

Since our certainties circumscribe our methods of deciding for or against a

proposition, rather than themselves being subject to those methods, they cannot be true or false in the internal sense. Now, it might be thought that, being beyond justification, those certainties are also beyond truth and falsity and cannot be held answerable to any external constraints. Some of Wittgenstein's remarks indeed suggest such a view. In OC 205, for instance, it is stated that 'if the true is what is grounded, then the ground is not *true*, nor yet false'. Yet, such remarks are not typical. Indeed, we do not know how to justify such certainties as that the earth did not come into being five minutes ago or that this here is a hand, and surely such certainties function as norms against which we measure the truth and falsity of ordinary empirical statements. But still, such certainties are in a sense contingent, and if asked whether they are true, we would not want to reply by saying that they are neither, but rather by saying that they are not 'just true', but 'true if anything is'. Thus, we do bring some notion of truth to bear on our certainties, and OC 205 continues with:

> If someone asked us 'but is that *true*?' we might say 'yes' to him; and if he demanded grounds we might say 'I can't give you any grounds, but if you learn more you too will think the same'. (OC 206)

In similar fashion it is stressed in OC 83 that 'the *truth* of certain empirical propositions belongs to our frame of reference'. This notion of truth as it applies to our certainties has to be different from the verificationistic, internal notion; we might dub it the 'external' notion of truth.

It should be noted that the distinction of those two notions of truth is left implicit, and that nowhere in *On Certainty* does Wittgenstein offer us any sustained discussion of either notion. In particular, I have to confess to finding the precise nature of truth in the external sense somewhat chimerical. Therefore, instead of trying to give a systematical reconstruction of the scanty remarks Wittgenstein does make, I rather want to point out some important aspects of this notion of 'external truth' which are of particular relevance and which may help to pin it down to some extent.

The first point, which is repeatedly stressed by Wittgenstein, is that as far as our certainties can be said to be true, this truth can never be taken for granted. Even though certain things stand fast for us, this attitude might in principle be upset, as could be the case if the nightmarish situations which Wittgenstein imagines were to occur. In fact, throughout *On Certainty* reverberates the idea that brute reality is an independent factor. As the natural environment within which we hold things to be certain, reality could in principle also upset or even overturn these certainties.

Thus there is a pronounced realistic element in Wittgenstein's considerations. Indeed, our certainties cannot said to be true in the sense of 'corresponding with a realm of metaphysically independent facts'. As we saw, the question whether a statement 'tallies with the facts' can only be asked within a framework of established certainties. Yet, on the other hand, our certainties, being an outgrowth of primitive, instinctive human behaviour within our natural environment, remain answerable to natural constraints. Indeed nature appears to us in the mold of the discursive framework constituted by our certainties. Behind those certainties, however, lies what we might call 'brute', 'unconceptualized nature' which 'directs'

us in holding particular things for certain and is the ultimate arbiter to decide whether our practices are successful and prove their worth.

For this reason truth, as it can be predicated of our certainties or our 'Weltbild', should be seen as a predominantly pragmatic notion. We cannot justify the correctness of our certainties or show their truthful correspondence with the world. Yet, it is in our dealings with the world that our certainties prove themselves, and the possibility of this success involves objective factors that go beyond our attitude of holding things to be certain.

Can we meaningfully express our certainties?

The question whether we can meaningfully express our certainties has in the foregoing been treated with informed disregard. With an eye on Wolgast's views I have pointed out that we should not primarily conceive of certainties as propositions that have a special status within some propositional framework, and I have stressed that according to Wittgenstein our certainties are first and foremost manifested by our actions. However, to underline the non-propositional nature of certainties still leaves unanswered the question whether certainties can also be expressed by verbal means. There are two reasons why one might want to address Wittgenstein's considerations about this point explicitly. Firstly, since it is Wittgenstein's functional conception of language that appears to raise difficulties concerning the expressibility of certainties, his considerations could perhaps further illustrate and illuminate his conception of meaning. Furthermore, we have seen that certainties, according to Wittgenstein, are partly definitive for the meaning of our words. They circumscribe our way of operating with language and they therefore play a particular *grammatical* role. For that reason, the question about the expressibility of certainties overlaps with the question about the status of the 'logic of language'.

Unfortunately, *On Certainty* does not give us a well worked out and definitive answer concerning the possibility to express certainties. Rather, Wittgenstein's remarks are tentative, impressionistic and ridden with unresolved tensions. In what follows, I will at least try to get some grasp on the elusiveness of this question.

As in the *Philosophical Investigations,* we find Wittgenstein in *On Certainty* often repeating his view that there is an intimate relation between the meaning and the use of linguistic expressions. Even his favourite comparison of words with tools reappears:

> Isn't the question 'Have these words a meaning?' similar to 'Is that a tool?' asked as one produces, say, a hammer? I say 'Yes, it's a hammer'. But what if the thing that any of us would take for a hammer were somewhere else a missile, for example, or a conductor's baton? Now make the application yourself. (OC 351)

The 'application' of this observation which we are asked to make, is to realize that like tools, and unlike natural objects such as animals, the very identity of meaningful items of language is determined by the particular function which they perform in a context of use. Still, such an observation allows of a strong, and a weak reading. The weak, rather trivial reading would be that a word has a different meaning when it is used differently by different linguistic communities. It might be

supported with such uncontroversial observations as that the word 'list' has a different use and therefore a different meaning in both English and Dutch. The strong reading, on the other hand, would be to hold that within one linguistic community an utterance of a sentence or an occurrence of a word might have a different meaning, or even may have no meaning at all, depending upon the specific context of use. This strong reading is how Wittgenstein intends the above remark to be read. As it is made pungently clear in OC 348:

> ... the words 'I am here' have a meaning only in certain contexts, and not when I say them to someone who is sitting in front of me and sees me clearly, - and not because they are superfluous, but because their meaning is not *determined* by the situation, yet stands in need of such determination.

and again, in OC 350:

> ... if someone, in quite heterogeneous circumstances called out with the most convincing mimicry: 'Down with him!', one might say of these words (and their tone) that they were a pattern that does indeed have familiar applications, but that in this case it was not even clear what *language* the man in question was speaking. I might make with my hand the movement I should make if I were holding a hand-saw and sawing through a plank; but would one have any right to call this movement *sawing*, out of all context?

Clearly, the view that the very meaningfulness of an utterance is directly dependent upon a context of communicatively salient use presents formidable difficulties when it comes to verbal expressions of our certainties. As we noted, certainties are intimately related to the very meaning with which we use our words or with our shared background. However, since background and linguistic competence are typically things which I share with the other members of my linguistic community, one might say that generally, the contexts in which I am certain about something are those very contexts in which every other sane and linguistically competent person would share my certainty. Or at least, so as not to forget 'asymmetric' certainties as *My name is HPS*, those contexts are such that the other person, though not himself having the same certainty as I have, nevertheless blindly presupposes that I am certain, and does not dream of asking me for an assurance of my certainty.

So, provided that each and everyone of us is dead certain about the earth having existed for more than five minutes, it is difficult to see what actual use the sentence *The earth has existed for more than five minutes* could have in our speech community. Something similar applies to a sentence like *This is a hand* if one attempted to express a certainty by it. Of course this latter sentence is a perfectly proper piece of English - it could be used when teaching little children the meaning of the word 'hand'... when assembling Barbie dolls... when threatening someone with a spanking... Yet, in neither of those contexts is it used to express my certainty about, say, the nature of the extremity with which I am typing these words. And if I tried to express this certainty to someone present by suddenly holding up my hand and uttering that sentence with a most confident tone of voice, I would accomplish nothing, and would not be understood. Thus, certain as we may be about something, given Wittgenstein's approach to meaning, any meaningful expression of such certainties seems to be preempted. As Wittgenstein puts it:

> My difficulty can also be shewn like his: I am sitting talking to a friend. Suddenly I say: 'I knew all along that you were so-and-so' Is that really just a superfluous, though true, remark? I feel as if these words were like 'Good morning' said to someone in the middle of a conversation. ... Thus it seems to me that I have known something the whole time, and yet there is no meaning in saying so, in uttering this truth. (OC 464, 466)

Such remarks strongly suggest that Wittgenstein thinks that certainties are literally inexpressible. And indeed, such a view would square well with the constitutive, transcendental status that Wittgenstein assigns to our certainties. For our certainties are the 'unmoving foundation of our language-game' (OC 403), 'the basis of action, and therefore of thought' (OC 411), and 'the foundation of all operating with thoughts (with language)' (OC 401). So it would seem that certainties, since they are constitutive of meaning, cannot themselves be meaningfully expressed, just as certainties cannot be known because they are a constitutive prerequisite for knowledge itself. Or, as Wittgenstein says when he observes this possible consequence of the status he assigns to certainties:

> Am I not getting closer and closer to saying that in the end logic cannot be described? You must look at the practice of language, then you will see it. (OC 501)

The transcendental role of certainties in regard to our shared linguistic and epistemic framework, combined with Wittgenstein's use-oriented notion of meaning would seem to imply that any attempt at expressing our certainties must of necessity be absolutely meaningless.

Yet, I do not think that such a blunt claim is intuitively acceptable. In this chapter I have frequently given examples of things that we are certain about, as does Wittgenstein in *On Certainty*. I have used sentences such as *The earth is older than five minutes* and discussed utterances of *This is a hand* when made in an inappropriate context. I have no doubt that the first sentence must strike any ordinary reader as exceedingly odd, and no one will dispute the utter queerness of the latter kind of statement. Yet, this is not due to a complete lack of meaning; with such statements one is not indulging in fanciful gibberish. Nor, Wittgenstein's comparison with 'Good morning!' notwithstanding, are those statements really comparable with uttering a performative out of context. In that latter case, it might be said that I know the meaning or the general use of that sentence, but that, given that sentence-meaning, I cannot find a meaning for a particular utterance in a devious context. For that context, the statement simply does not apply. Yet, in the case of *This is a hand* the problem is definitely not that the statement simply does not apply, but rather, one feels tempted to say, that it 'overapplies'. Such a context it is not simply inappropriate but is more like a focus for our ordinary practice; a single point that is determined by the ordinary use which is both contracted in it, and which, from that point, gets reflected again. Wittgenstein presents us with similar analogies of mutual dependency. We find the relation between certainties and ordinary statements compared to a body and the axis around which it turns:

> I do not explicitly learn the propositions that stand fast for me. I can *discover* them subsequently like the axis around which a body rotates. This axis is not fixed in the sense that anything holds it fast, but the movement around it determines its immobility. (OC 152)

with a door and its hinges:

> ... the *questions* that we raise and our *doubts* depend on the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn. ... If I want the door to turn, the hinges must stay put. (OC 341, 343)

or with a foundation that is carried by the building itself:

> I have arrived at the rock bottom of my convictions. And one might almost say that those foundation-walls are carried by the whole house. (OC 248)

Such analogies rightly qualify the transcendental status of certainties by pointing out that their constitutive nature is intrinsically dependent on the practices they constitute. Yet, our initial problem is hardly touched by such observations. The question was whether our certainties themselves could be meaningfully expressed given Wittgenstein's notion of meaning. The similes of the hinges and the rotation axis can only provide a more pungent formulation of this problem: if the domain of meaning is exclusively restricted that which turns or moves - to that which is being used - then the hinges or the axis that make this movement possible definitely fall out this domain. But in that case, how could we account for the fact that formulations of our certainties, odd as they may be, are not altogether meaningless or simply inappropriate?

I suspect that this question does not really allow of a straightforward answer but leads us into a dead-end street. This is partly due to the strange nature of the question itself. For after all, we do not want to account for the meaningfulness of certain expressions, but rather we want to account for their semblance of meaning. If the expression *This is a hand* when meant to express a certainty was straightforwardly meaningful but useless, then we could conclude that Wittgenstein's view on meaning as use is too restricted. However, since we cannot say that such an expression is properly meaningful but only that it is not completely devoid of meaning, no such conclusion is warranted. Since it is a rather chimerical phenomenon that we want to account for in the first place, it is not at all clear what to conclude about a theory that fails to give us an account of such a phenomenon.

Now, one of the lines along which we might try to answer this question about the meaning of expressions of certainties, is by pointing out that Wittgenstein, when concerned with our understanding of the meaning of a sentence, is usually exclusively concerned with an understanding of the contextually and communicatively salient use of a sentence. Yet, apart from our understanding of the meaning of a sentence in this sense, we of course also have an understanding of the words and phrases out of which the sentence is build up, and of the compositional construction principles governing their construction. Though this feature of our natural language understanding is seldom mentioned by Wittgenstein, we can hardly deny its importance, and we might invoke it to explain why expressions of certainties, though not usable in a salient way, are not completely devoid of meaning. In the case of an expression of a certainty such as *This is a hand* (said when holding up a hand), the sentence is meaningless in as far as it does not allow a communicatively salient use. But we do, however, have a proper understanding of the component parts of such a

sentence and of the principles by which these can be employed in constructing other sentences. It might be argued that it is this latter understanding that explains the degree of meaningfulness which such sentences nevertheless possess.

But perhaps we can to some extent also answer our question by venturing the claim that the semblance of meaning that the expression of a certainty has, is the reflection of other uses of this expression in which this certainty is presupposed but not expressed. In order to see what I mean, one might look at the several (mis)uses of *This is a hand* as we have up till now been looking at. Those roughly fall into three classes, that can be characterized by the following contexts:

1. (I am certain that) *This is a hand.*
2. (I will tell what the word means:) *This is a hand.*
3. (Though the rats have got Ramses II, still I think that) *This is a hand.*

The first case is the problematic attempt to express a certainty. The third case is an ordinary instance of use, where it might sensibly be asked how certain I am, and where I might give an answer and motivate it. The second case is like the third one in as far as I am not expressing a certainty, (rather, I am teaching someone the meaning of a word), but it is different from the third case in as far as it does not make sense to ask me how certain I am that this is indeed a hand. That very certainty is presupposed in this case. And since this certainty is presupposed in the very explanation of the meaning of the word 'hand', it cannot in its turn be expressed by a statement that already presupposes the meaningfulness of the word 'hand'. So, indeed I know what it is to be certain about this being a hand. That certainty lies at the very foundation of my ability to explicate the meaning of the word. But for that reason it cannot be meaningfully expressed by saying 'this is a hand', and any semblance of meaning that such an attempt at expressing it has, is merely the reflection of other uses that presuppose this certainty without expressing it.

Similar things might be said about such certainties as *My name is H.P.S.* The ordinary, informative use of this sentence is to introduce myself to someone. When I do so, I am indeed perfectly certain about that being my name, even though that is not what I am expressing. Rather, that certainty is presupposed in my very command of the use of proper names and my hearer, although I present him with a new piece of new information, will share this presupposition in as far as he takes me to be a competent user.

Yet, in this respect, I think we have to conclude that in as far as our certainties are constitutive for our use of language, and belong in that respect to the 'logic of language', this is a logic which cannot be expressed. Indeed, as it is said in OC 501: 'You must look at the practice of language, then you will see it'.

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De Vezel en het Weefsel

Een onderzoek naar Wittgenstein's opvattingen over regelvolgen en linguïstische normativiteit

Hoofdstuk 1 geeft een critische introductie tot Kripke's *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* en legt de fundering voor een systematische discussie van dit werk. Er wordt aangetoond dat de paradox die Kripke in Wittgenstein's werk leest volgt uit de combinatie van een normativiteitsconditie en een reductieconditie. Voorts wordt Kripke's 'sceptische oplossing' voor deze paradox besproken en wordt beargumenteerd dat enkele standaard objecties tegen Kripke's betoog niet steekhoudend zijn.

Hoofdstuk 2 presenteert een onderzoek naar Kripke's sceptische oplossing en toont dat deze niet voldoet aan Kripke's eigen vereisten. Deze tekortkoming blijkt principieel onoplosbaar te zijn.

Hoofdstuk 3 onderzoekt en verwerpt de mogelijkheid om aan Kripke's paradox te ontsnappen door de normativiteitsconditie los te laten en een reductionistische verantwoording van betekenis te geven. Speciale aandacht wordt geschonken aan Chomsky's pleidooi voor een 'I-taal'. In de overige hoofdstukken staat de niet-reductionistische benadering van Wittgenstein centraal.

Hoofdstuk 4 bespreekt Wittgenstein's filosofische methode en gaat uitgebreid in op de cruciale rol die beelden ('Bilder') daarin spelen.

Hoofdstuk 5 geeft een interpretatie van Wittgenstein's opmerkingen over betekenis en regelvolgen. In deze secties verdedigt Wittgenstein geen 'sceptische paradox', maar bespreekt een bezwaar tegen zijn eigen opvatting van betekenis. We geven een uitgebreide exegese van de secties waarin Wittgenstein dit bezwaar ontkracht, en bespreken zijn belangrijkste positieve punten.

Hoofdstuk 6 bespreekt Wittgenstein's opvattingen over kennis en zekerheid uit *Über Gewißheit* en plaatst daarmee de voorafgaande discussie over betekenis in een breder kader.

(Voor een uitgebreide samenvatting van de inhoud wordt de lezer verwezen naar de Engelstalige 'overview' aan het begin van dit werk.)

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