

**Resolute Readings of Later Wittgenstein and  
the Challenge of Avoiding Hierarchies in Philosophy**

Dissertation

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von

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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

This dissertation is concerned with an issue related to the so-called “resolute reading” of the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein. The term “resolute reading”<sup>2</sup> has evolved as a label for the readings of Wittgenstein’s work which have been advanced by Cora Diamond, James Conant, Michael Kremer, Thomas Ricketts, and others<sup>3</sup>. An earmark of these readings is that they all take Wittgenstein’s primary goal – in his early as well as in his later work – to be that of introducing ways of *dissolving philosophical problems*. In this view, a philosophical problem concerning a certain topic is seen as a seeming contradiction between, on the one hand, how we think things concerning this topic *must* be, and, on the other hand, how we perceive these things to *really be*. Dissolving such a philosophical problem then means to come to see that this contradiction was merely apparent. This involves coming to see that our idea of how things *must* be was founded on an illusion – an illusion induced through our misunderstanding the forms of expression which we had used in formulating our apparent contradiction. Once such a contradiction has been exposed as based on such an illusion, resolute readers hold, the problem falls away, and the task of philosophy is finished. For resolute readers, bringing out this aspect of Wittgenstein’s philosophy means to reject readings of Wittgenstein which put the main focus on purported claims of his concerning topics in the *philosophy of language* – topics such as how language hooks on to the world or what the necessary preconditions of language use are. As resolute readers take it, Wittgenstein concerns himself with *language* and *meaning*, not because he wishes to give any theoretical answer to the question “How does linguistic meaning come into being?”, but because his proposed ways of dissolving philosophical problems involve asking ourselves whether the *linguistic* forms of expression which we call upon in formulating our philosophical problems really have the sort of *meaning* that we imagine them to have. Connected to this is another earmark of resolute readings: Not only

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to express my deepest thanks to Hans Julius Schneider. Without his continuous and generous support, this dissertation project would not have been possible. Also, our joint seminar on Wittgenstein with the opportunity to introduce resolute readings was of great value for the present project. Moreover, this dissertation project owes greatly to the most generous support of James Conant. His untiring encouragement, the opportunity to thoroughly discuss my ideas, his utterly helpful advice concerning how to organize them, and, most importantly, the opportunity to spend a year as a Visiting Graduate Student at the University of Chicago, were of crucial significance for the success of the present project. Lastly, I wish to thank the participants of the Contemporary Philosophy and the Wittgenstein Workshops of the University of Chicago for their valuable comments on previous versions of Chapter 3.

<sup>2</sup> The label “resolute” for these kinds of readings is first due to Thomas Ricketts. It has been first used in print by Warren Goldfarb in his “Metaphysics and Nonsense: On Cora Diamond’s *The Realistic Spirit*” (1997)

<sup>3</sup> These other resolute readers include: Alice Crary, Ed Dain, Piergiorgio Donatelli, Juliet Floyd, Warren Goldfarb, Logi Gunnarsson, Rupert Read, Matt Ostrow, and Ed Witherspoon. Although Margaret Anscombe could

do these readings reject the idea that Wittgenstein were concerned with providing an answer to the question “How does linguistic meaning come into being?”, but furthermore, these readings insist that Wittgenstein’s proposed ways of dissolving philosophical problems may not be taken as themselves *depending* on any theoretical answer to the question “How does linguistic meaning come into being?” According to resolute readers, the main question with which Wittgenstein was concerned throughout his philosophical career was this: How to achieve the aim of putting forward a way of dissolving philosophical problems – which way involves asking ourselves what we mean by our words – without making any claims about the essence of language and meaning?

Most of the discussion of resolute readings has focused on how to read Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*,<sup>4</sup> or on how to conceive the relation of the *Tractatus* to Wittgenstein’s later work.<sup>5</sup> However, some resolute readers have discussed the main question – How can the aim of putting forward a way of dissolving philosophical problems without making any claims about the essence of language and meaning be achieved? – focusing chiefly on Wittgenstein’s *later* works.<sup>6</sup> When it comes to reading Wittgenstein’s later works, a major point of criticism for resolute readers is the reading of Wittgenstein’s later philosophy which has been put forward by Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker. Important resolute readers who have offered detailed criticisms of Baker and Hacker are Martin Gustafsson and Oskari Kuusela.

In his *Entangled Sense: An Inquiry into the Philosophical Significance of Meaning and Rules* (2000), Gustafsson sets out to determine the role that the recourse to *rules* can play in philosophy. Gustafsson rejects the idea that it is the role of philosophy to furnish an explanatory account of meaning, and that rules can play any part in such an account. He agrees with Baker and Hacker that, rather, the recourse to rules can be instrumental in the dissolution of philosophical problems. In *Entangled Sense*, as also in his “Nonsense and Philosophical Method” (2006), Gustafsson then goes on to show, against Baker and Hacker, that the role of

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not be counted as a resolute reader, her article “The Reality of the Past” (1950) contains lines of thought which can be seen as a first articulation of a resolute reading.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the collection of essays in the first half of Cora Diamond’s *The Realistic Spirit* (1991), her articles “Logical Syntax in Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*” (2005), and “On Reading the *Tractatus* Resolutely” (2004, with James Conant), James Conant’s “The Method of the *Tractatus*” (2002), Michael Kremer’s “The Purpose of Tractarian Nonsense” (2001), “Mathematics and Meaning in the *Tractatus*” (2002), “To What Extent is Solipsism a Truth?” (2004), and “The Cardinal Problem of Philosophy” (2007), Thomas Ricketts’s “Frege, the *Tractatus*, and the Logocentric Predicament” (1985), “Pictures, Logic and the Limits of Sense in Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*” (1996), and “Wittgenstein against Frege and Russell” (2002).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. James Conant’s “Why Worry about the *Tractatus*?” (2004), “Wittgenstein’s Later Criticism of the *Tractatus*” (2006), and “Mild Mono-Wittgensteinianism” (2007).

<sup>6</sup> Besides Martin Gustafsson and Oskari Kuusela, these readers include Rupert Read (cf. his “Throwing Away the Bedrock”, 2004) and Avner Baz (cf. his *When Words are Called For*, forthcoming).

rules in such a dissolution cannot be that of distinguishing sense from nonsense in philosophy, but merely that of describing different forms of use of expressions. As Gustafsson points out, philosophical problems cannot be treated, as Baker and Hacker argue, by diagnosing whether these rules have been “violated” – but rather by our coming to realize that we have unconsciously been vacillating between these different forms of use of expressions, thereby *entangling* ourselves in them.

In *The Struggle against Dogmatism* (2008), Kuusela criticizes Baker and Hacker for not fully grasping the radical way in which Wittgenstein transformed his philosophy as a lesson from the failure of the *Tractatus*. As Kuusela highlights, Wittgenstein, in the *Tractatus*, aimed to put forward a way of dissolving philosophical problems which did not rest on any answer to the question “How does linguistic meaning come into being?” This aim Wittgenstein attempted to achieve by merely introducing a *tool* for conceptual clarification: the logical analysis of propositions. Yet, as Kuusela holds, in claiming that he, by introducing this tool, had solved all philosophical problems “in essentials”, Wittgenstein had saddled himself with an (implicit) *thesis* about the nature of the proposition. Wittgenstein later recognized this as a crucial mistake – a mistake which, in his own eyes, meant that his first attempt at a way of dissolving philosophical problems which did not rest on any answer – however implicit – to the question “What constitutes a meaningful expression?” had failed. According to Kuusela, in his later philosophy, Wittgenstein analyzed his mistake as that of turning a useful *comparison* – namely, that of propositions as *pictures* of states of affairs – into a thesis about what propositions *must* be. Kuusela criticizes Baker and Hacker for not clearly seeing the radical consequence Wittgenstein drew from this when it comes to the role of rules in the dissolution of philosophical problems. Baker and Hacker take Wittgenstein’s comparing language to a game with fixed rules such as chess to license the conclusion that everyday language use is *governed* by such rules. Also, they take it that Wittgenstein introduced this comparison in order to do justice to the fact that speaking a language is an *activity*. Kuusela agrees with Baker and Hacker that it can be helpful in the dissolution of a philosophical problem to describe the use of language *in the form of* rules. Yet against Baker and Hacker’s idea of the role of rules, Kuusela argues that Wittgenstein employed rules as mere *objects of comparison*. Against Baker and Hacker, Kuusela holds that Wittgenstein’s reason for describing language use in the form of rules of language games was not that this way of describing language better *fits* the way language really is, but because it is a *helpful means* for clarifying the use of words. In Kuusela’s eyes, the problem with Baker and Hacker’s conception is that it still ties Wittgenstein’s way of dissolving philosophical problems to a certain conception of what lan-



guage is *really* like. In order to appreciate how later Wittgenstein succeeded in fully moving away from his way of dissolving philosophical problems being tied to any answer to the question “What are the conditions of meaningful speech?”, Kuusela holds, we need to recognize that grammatical descriptions *in the form of rules* are mere *models* – not to be taken as characteristic of the object of investigation, but merely of a certain *mode of presentation* – a mode of presentation which is answerable, not to how language really is, but solely to how helpful it is in clearing up conceptual confusions.

An important corollary of this, for Kuusela, is the absence of *hierarchies* in Wittgenstein’s later philosophy. In the *Tractatus*, the dissolution of *any* problem had unwittingly depended on the solution of the *one* problem “What is the essence of the proposition?” According to Kuusela, Wittgenstein’s later reaction to this issue was to now conceive of each philosophical problem to be on a par with any other – no dissolution of any *one* problem was to be fundamental to the dissolution of *any other* problem. Kuusela attacks Baker and Hacker’s idea that Wittgenstein establishes the fact that language is a rule-governed activity through an investigation of the grammar of “rule” – which then results in his describing language in the form of a game according to fixed rules. Against this, Kuusela shows how this idea leads into a regress. According to Kuusela, this shows that in later Wittgenstein, there is no such thing as the investigation of the grammar of *one* concept being fundamental to the investigation of the grammar of *any* concept. Kuusela holds that for Wittgenstein, there are no fundamental concepts or “super-concepts” which constitute the foundation of his philosophy: every grammatical investigation stands or falls on its own, without needing any backing from any “grammatical truth” established through another grammatical investigation.

In this dissertation, I will take up Kuusela’s conclusion that fully appreciating how later Wittgenstein aimed to achieve the goal of putting forward a way of dissolving philosophical problems without making any claims about the essence of language and meaning means to appreciate how he aimed to do away with any *hierarchies* in philosophy. My lead question will be: What does it mean to come to see that the investigation of the grammar of *particular* concepts cannot have a bearing on Wittgenstein’s way of dissolving philosophical problems *as such*? Do Gustafsson’s and Kuusela’s own reading arrive at fully appreciating this point?

Under this aspect, I will take a close look at Gustafsson’s reading of later Wittgenstein. One of the major outcomes of Gustafsson’s *Entangled Sense* is that we can draw a lesson from the role that a background of *agreement* plays for our talk of “meaning” – which

role comes out during the dissolution of the rule-following problem – for the role which *agreement* plays for the dissolution of philosophical problems in general. As Gustafsson takes it, whatever our talk of “meaning” turns out to rely on, this holds for the dissolution of philosophical problems in general. Gustafsson takes Wittgenstein’s remarks on rule-following to disclose facts such as that the dissolution of philosophical problems relies on a “massive unanimity in unreflective language use”. I will argue that this idea of Gustafsson’s rests on a conflation of what, in later Wittgenstein, is tied to the dissolution of a *specific* philosophical problem and what is tied to the dissolution of philosophical problems *in general*. A major focus of this dissertation will be to bring out this distinction as clearly as possible. To this end, I will reread Wittgenstein’s remarks on rule-following in the *Investigations*, focusing on how the notions of *use* and *application* figure on two distinct logical levels in the dissolution of the rule-following paradox.

Another major focus of this dissertation will be on Kuusela’s reading of later Wittgenstein’s recurrent remarks on a relation of the meaning of expressions and their use – remarks such as “the meaning of a word is its use in the language” (PI 43). I will take a close look at how Kuusela attempts to account for the fact that these remarks are not intended as furnishing an answer to the question “How does linguistic meaning come into being?” In his view, Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning and use have the status of remarks clarifying the grammar of the word “meaning”. His account of why these remarks do not form *theses* about what meaning *must* be centers on exploiting his basic idea that the rules which we describe in a grammatical investigations are mere *objects of comparison*. Accordingly, Kuusela holds that “meaning is use” is one of the rules which Wittgenstein employs to make the fluctuating actual use of the word “meaning” perspicuous to us. One element of Kuusela’s account is that Wittgenstein, in adopting his way of philosophical clarification as the description of language use, is *following* the “meaning is use” which he employs to make the grammar of the word “meaning” perspicuous to us. I will show how Kuusela, in postulating such a connection between an investigation of the grammar of “meaning” and Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification as such, is not fully minding a distinction, drawn by Conant, of how “use” and “employment” figure on two distinct logical levels in the full wording of PI 43. As I will show, Kuusela’s account of the role of remarks such as PI 43 as having a bearing on Wittgenstein’s way of dissolving philosophical problems *as such* amounts to assigning this *particular* grammatical investigation a special role for the whole of his philosophy – thereby reintroducing a *hierarchy* into later Wittgenstein. Moreover, I will show that this idea leads into a regress of the same type as in the case of Baker and Hacker. The aim of this dissertation is to

show that in order to fully appreciate that “meaning” is not a “super-concept”, we need to recognize that remarks on the grammar of “meaning” such as PI 43 *cannot* stand in the kind of foundational relation to Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification which Kuusela envisages.

The structure of this dissertation is as follows. There are four chapters:

In Chapter 1, I will introduce the idea of a resolute reading of Wittgenstein’s later philosophy. I will present the interpretative challenge for reading his work as understood by resolute readers. I will then present different stages of how different commentators have dealt with this challenge. The first stage of commentators I will turn to are Robert Brandom and Crispin Wright. After this, I will introduce the reading of Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker. Then, I will start my introduction into the idea of a resolute reading of later Wittgenstein by giving an overview of the readings of James Conant, Cora Diamond, Stanley Cavell, Hilary Putnam, John McDowell, and Hans Julius Schneider. Finally, I will give a detailed introduction into the three resolute readers on whom will be the main focus of this dissertation: James Conant, Martin Gustafsson, and Oskari Kuusela.

In Chapter 2, I will turn to my first step in clarifying what, in later Wittgenstein, is tied to the dissolution of *specific* philosophical problem, and what is tied to the dissolution of philosophical *in general*. I will offer a detailed discussion of Wittgenstein’s rule-following paradox in the *Investigations*. I will expose my understanding of Wittgenstein’s dissolution of the paradox by contrasting it with the accounts of Saul Kripke and Crispin Wright. I will show how in Wittgenstein’s dissolution, notions such as *uses*, *application* and *practice* figure on two distinct logical levels: a *global* one and a *local* one. This distinction of logical levels I will then explore.

In Chapter 3, I will turn to my second step in clarifying the distinction of the level of the dissolution of *specific* philosophical problems and that of the dissolution of philosophical problems *in general*. I will present an example of what goes wrong if the difference between these two levels is not carefully observed: Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker’s idea that Wittgenstein’s remarks on rule-following in the *Investigations* stand in the service of answering a “vital” question about rules of grammar in general, and that these remarks therefore have a special significance for Wittgenstein’s way of dissolving philosophical problems as such. I will present an argument to the effect that this idea leads into a regress. I will then give an alternative account of the role of the rule-following remarks for Wittgenstein’s philosophy as a whole.

In Chapter 4, I will turn to a discussion of Gustafsson and Kuusela. I will concern myself with what Gustafsson says about the role that the dissolution of the “problem of meaning and rules” has for a resolute way of dissolving philosophical problems as such. I will present an argument to the effect that his idea is based on the same conflation of logical levels as in the case of Baker and Hacker. In the remainder of the chapter, I will turn to the issue of why Wittgenstein’s recurrent remarks on a relation between the meaning of words and their use have no *foundational* role for his way of dissolving philosophical problems as such. I will turn to Kuusela’s explanation of this non-foundational role of these remarks. I will explore the connection which Kuusela draws between Wittgenstein’s remarks on the grammar of “meaning” and his way of philosophical clarification in general. I will then – drawing on James Conant’s discussion of PI 43 – present an argument to the effect that Kuusela’s way of connecting Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification to his investigation of the actual use of “meaning” leads into a regress. I will also show that, contrary to the case of rule-following, *some* of Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning and use are indeed intended to be related to his way of philosophical clarification as such. I will then bring out that these *global* remarks on meaning and use cannot be explained, as Kuusela does, as remarks on the grammar of the word “meaning”. Finally, I will show why, although these global remarks on meaning and use are not remarks on the grammar of the word “meaning”, they also are not meant to furnish an answer to the question “How does linguistic meaning come into being?”

## 1. The Idea of a Resolute Reading of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy

The idea of a “resolute” reading of Wittgenstein’s work has first come up in the context of how to read Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*. It emerged in a dispute about how to deal with this work’s great interpretative challenge – namely, the fact that Wittgenstein, in the famous closing lines of his early work, had said: “My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as *nonsensical*”. The resolute reading of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* grew out of a dissatisfaction with the following interpretation: In the body of the work, Wittgenstein introduces an account of the conditions of meaningful speech. When applied to the very propositions that express it, it comes out that they do not meet the criteria which they themselves lay out as conditions of meaningful speech, and therefore are to be regarded as *nonsense*. As resolute readers pointed out, there is something paradoxical about this interpretation: If these propositions really were *nonsensical*, they would not be able to convey any account of the conditions of meaningful speech in the first place. What this interpretation must claim is that when the reader supposedly “applies” the account which these proposition putatively “disclose” to these proposition themselves and so finds out that they are actually nonsensical themselves, he must retain a grip on what these sentences would say if they had a sense. This interpretation, resolute readers hold, would therefore have to commit itself to ascribing to Wittgenstein a conception of nonsense according to which propositions can have a “senseless sense”: a conception according to which it is perceptible through the way a nonsensical proposition is constructed what this proposition “attempts” to say although it cannot say it. Yet, resolute readers insists, everything that Wittgenstein says in the *Tractatus* about how to identify nonsense points to the fact that he rejected precisely such an account of nonsense.

In this chapter, I will turn to the interpretative challenge in Wittgenstein *later* work which has given rise to a similar dispute: namely, Wittgenstein’s well-known pronouncements such as his statement that in philosophy, “we may not advance any kind of theory” (PI 109), or that “if one tried to advance *theses* in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree to them” (PI 128). Just as in the case of the *Tractatus*, where readers might receive the impression that what Wittgenstein is up to is developing an account of the conditions of meaningful speech – and is then puzzled by Wittgenstein’s calling the sentences which the reader took to express such an account “nonsensical” – in the case of his later work, readers are puzzled by Wittgenstein’s rejection of *theories* and *theses* in a

moment where it appears that Wittgenstein is actually engaging in the business of furnishing an answer to the question “How does linguistic meaning come into being?” In this chapter, I will describe how a certain group of readings of later Wittgenstein has emerged from a certain kind of dissatisfaction with how commentators have (and have not) accounted for Wittgenstein’s puzzling remarks about method and aim of his philosophy.

This chapter has seven sections. In Section 1.1, I will present a very basic reading of Wittgenstein’s *Investigations* which will lead us to the interpretative challenge for reading his work as understood by resolute readers. In the remainder of the chapter, I will then present different stages of how different commentators have dealt with this challenge. In Section 1.2, I will introduce a group of commentators who hold that this challenge actually needs to be declined: Robert Brandom and Crispin Wright. For the remainder of the chapter, I will then turn to the commentators who declare to accept the challenge. In Section 1.3, I will introduce the reading of Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker. In Section 1.4, I will start my introduction into the idea of a resolute reading of later Wittgenstein by giving an overview of the readings of James Conant, Cora Diamond, Stanley Cavell, Hilary Putnam, John McDowell, and Hans Julius Schneider. In the remainder of the chapter, I will give a detailed introduction into three resolute readers who have offered a detailed criticism of Baker and Hacker: James Conant (Section 1.5), Martin Gustafsson (Section 1.6), and Oskari Kuusela (Section 1.7). I will end with a summary (Section 1.8).

## 1.1 The Basic Challenge

In contemporary Wittgenstein scholarship, the idea is widespread that the *Philosophical Investigations* is to be understood in the first instance as a contribution to a particular area of philosophy – the philosophy of language. In this perspective, Wittgenstein’s concern with language and meaning in that book is understood as a contribution to this delimitable self-standing subspecialty of philosophy. In accordance with this schema of interpretation, Wittgenstein’s overarching aim is taken to be that of offering an adequate account of this particular “linguistic” region of philosophical investigation – and of providing an answer to a question that, in the first instance, is the purview of this particular kind of philosophical specialist: the philosopher of language. The book thereby comes to be read in a manner that places in the foreground the following philosophical question: “How does linguistic meaning come into being?” This question is taken to constitute the point of departure of Wittgenstein’s investigation. This forces a reading of the book in which its various moments all come to appear to

form a series of attempts to approach this particular question from as large a variety of directions as possible, in the service of delivering a maximally accurate and detailed answer to it. The contemporary literature on this book has therefore come to focus almost exclusively on a single question: what is the nature of language? Commentators try to extract Wittgenstein's own answer to this question by triangulating from his alleged critique of various supposed competitors to his own preferred later account of the nature of language (where one of the salient supposed competitors includes the particular competing account that Wittgenstein is alleged to have advocated in his own early work). According to this line of interpretation, one of Wittgenstein's central philosophical claims in *Philosophical Investigations* is that language does not form a single unified systematic structure, in the fashion that traditional philosophers of language (including his own earlier self) are held to have assumed. Later Wittgenstein is additionally credited by this literature with having advanced a number of further significant philosophical claims, such as that language is essentially interwoven with non-linguistic practices and that language necessarily presupposes the existence of a community of speakers. All of these claims, on this received reading of Wittgenstein, come into play in the course of his effort to deliver a satisfactory answer to the question: what are the conditions under which the phenomenon of (the speaking and understanding of) language is so much as possible?

Leaving aside the merits of this line of interpretation of the *Investigations* when it comes to a close reading of what Wittgenstein has to say about language and meaning, what is first striking about these authors is the fact that remarks of Wittgenstein's such as the following are generally passed by completely:

Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. — Since everything lies open to view, there is nothing to explain. For what is hidden, for example, is of no interest to us. (PI 126)

And we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place. And this description gets its light, that is to say its purpose, from the philosophical problems. (PI 109)

If one tried to advance *theses* in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree to them. (PI 128)

For the clarity that we are aiming at is indeed *complete* clarity. But this simply means that the philosophical problems should *completely* disappear. (PI 133)

These are remarks from the well-known stretch of the *Investigations* where Wittgenstein writes about the nature and aim of philosophy. Now it is no surprise that remarks such as these do not figure in the writings of the advocates of the reading that I just outlined. Since clearly, what Wittgenstein says here does not appear to sit too well with this interpretation. For are not claims such as that language is essentially interwoven with non-linguistic practices or that language necessarily presupposes the existence of a community of speakers philosophical *theses*? In the literature that follows this line of interpretation, these claims are presented to stand in direct opposition to our intuitive view of the matter – a view, moreover, that is presented as that of the philosophical tradition. Wittgenstein is then presented as delivering carefully tailored arguments against this received view. But, in the light of these quotes from his remarks on philosophy, is not this a case of *deducing* – which he rejects in PI 126? And even if we grant these authors that Wittgenstein’s alleged answer to the question “How does linguistic meaning come into being?” can come to appear to us – after some time – as intuitive and not debatable any more, the clarity which we are to gain through arriving at such an account of the conditions of the phenomenon of language still seems to be at odds with the *complete* clarity that Wittgenstein envisions for his readers in PI 133: since the clarity he speaks of there has to do with the *complete* disappearing of philosophical problems, not with arriving at a *complete* (theoretical) overview of a philosophical topic such as “linguistic meaning”.

Thus, juxtaposing this widespread reading of the *Investigations* with Wittgenstein’s remarks on philosophy which we happen to find in that same book leads us to the following challenge to any serious reading of *Philosophical Investigations*: How do we integrate what Wittgenstein says about language and meaning with his self-description as a philosopher? Let us now turn to some key commentators of the *Investigations* and see how they have tried to meet this interpretative challenge.

## 1.2 The Readings of Robert Brandom and Crispin Wright

The first group of commentators that needs to be mentioned here are those who react to this challenge by, on the one hand, admitting that Wittgenstein, being true to what he says about the aim of philosophy, indeed does not furnish a detailed account of how linguistic



meaning comes into being – yet, on the other hand, also hold that he supplies insights that can – and in fact need to be – integrated into such an account.

One of these authors is Robert Brandom. In his *Making It Explicit* (1994), he undertakes an investigation into the nature of language<sup>7</sup>, a task which for him takes the form of developing a theory of discursive practice<sup>8</sup>. This project is presented as proceeding in the footsteps of Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein.<sup>9</sup> One of the main concerns of his is to give a satisfying account of linguistic normativity – of what makes the application of concepts correct or incorrect. In the beginning of the book, he credits Wittgenstein with having raised an important problem for a received account of linguistic normativity – an account which Brandom attributes to Kant. According to this Kantian account, the correct application of a concept consists in its application according to an explicit rule.<sup>10</sup> Now Brandom credits Wittgenstein with having delivered the following argument against this conception of norms: An explicit rule of how to apply a certain concept is something general. Yet in order to determine if a particular application of that concept was correct or incorrect, this general rule must be applied to particular circumstances. Applying this general rule to particular circumstances is something that itself can be done correctly or incorrectly. Now according to the conception in question, this would mean that there must be an explicit rule for this kind of applying, too. In other words: this conception would mandate that there needs to be an explicit rule for how to apply the explicit rule that tells us whether that concept has been applied correctly or incorrectly. As Brandom puts it: “Rules do not apply themselves”.<sup>11</sup> And, of course, it would not end here: a similar argument can be raised against the idea that the second rule which tells us how the first rule is to be applied could “apply itself”. Therefore, the argument ends, the Kantian idea that the form of the norm is the explicit rule leads into a regress, and thus needs to be rejected.<sup>12</sup> Now the conclusion that Brandom draws from “Wittgenstein’s Regress Argument” as he presents it is that we need an alternative to this “regulist” conception of norms. What Brandom takes Wittgenstein to have uncovered is that there must be a form of correctness that is not *explicit* in rules, but *implicit* in practices. He takes Wittgenstein’s remarks that following a rule requires the background of a practice to point to a two-level-structure of the following form: a primitive and fundamental level of norms which are *implicit* in practices and –

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<sup>7</sup> cf. Brandom 1994, xi

<sup>8</sup> cf. Brandom 1994, xii

<sup>9</sup> cf. Brandom 1994, xi

<sup>10</sup> cf. Brandom 1994, 10, 19

<sup>11</sup> Brandom 1994, 20

<sup>12</sup> cf. Brandom 1994, 20/21

on top of that – a level of norms codified in *explicit* rules.<sup>13</sup> As Brandom takes it, this level of explicit rules depends on the existence of the primitive level of norms: “Rules-based proprieties of performances depend on practice-based ones”.<sup>14</sup> These primitive norms are not rules, but proprieties of practice of another kind. Brandom:

The regress argument does not by itself provide such a conception of properties of practice; it just shows that without one we cannot understand how rules can codify the correctness that they do.<sup>15</sup>

What Brandom takes from Wittgenstein, then, is an argument revealing the existence of a primitive level of normativity which is the precondition of the level of normativity which is expressed in explicit rules. Thus emerge the key questions that any account of linguistic normativity, according to Brandom, has to face: “[H]ow to understand proprieties of practices, without appealing to rules, justifications, or other explicit claims that something is appropriate. What does the practical capacity of ‘know-how’ to distinguish correct from incorrect performances consist in? This is to ask what it is to take or treat a performance as correct-according-to-a-practice. [...] In what sense can norms (proprieties, correctnesses) be implicit in a practice?”<sup>16</sup> When it comes to the notion of correct-according-to-a-practice, Brandom credits Wittgenstein with another key argument. This argument is directed against a seemingly straightforward answer to Brandom’s challenge of how to understand this notion without appealing to rules: namely, the idea that series of past performances always exhibit a pattern of regularity which would supply us with a standard of correctness.<sup>17</sup> This standard of correctness would literally be “implicit” in this practice and therefore qualify as normativity without rules in Brandom’s sense. The argument that Brandom ascribes to Wittgenstein is then this: “Any further performance will count as regular with respect to some of the patterns exhibited by the original set and as irregular with respect to others. [...] There simply is no such thing as *the* pattern or regularity exhibited in a stretch of past behavior, which can be appealed to in judging some candidate bit of future behavior as regular or irregular, and hence, on this line, as correct or incorrect.”<sup>18</sup> The conclusion is that this “regularist” idea of how a norm – a standard of correctness – can be implicit in a practice does not work. In order

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<sup>13</sup> cf. Brandom 1994, 21-23

<sup>14</sup> Brandom 1994, 22

<sup>15</sup> Brandom 1994, 22

<sup>16</sup> Brandom 1994, 25

<sup>17</sup> cf. Brandom 1994, 26-28

<sup>18</sup> Brandom 1994, 28

for it to work, some of the many regularities or irregularities exhibited by a set of performances must be picked out as privileged – which, on pain of circularity, this account of norms cannot provide us with.<sup>19</sup> Thus, since this simple solution has been rejected by another argument of Wittgenstein’s, Brandom concludes, the following challenge still stands:

[A]n account is needed of what it is for norms to be implicit in practices. Such practices must be construed both as not having to involve explicit rules and as distinct from mere regularities. Wittgenstein, the principled theoretical quietist, does not attempt to provide a theory of practices, nor would he endorse the project of doing so. The last thing he thinks we need is more philosophical theories. Nonetheless, one of the projects pursued in the rest of this work is to come up with an account of norms implicit in practices that will satisfy the criteria of adequacy Wittgenstein’s arguments have established.<sup>20</sup>

Here, we get the picture of Wittgenstein as a philosopher who furnishes two arguments revealing the need for a new answer to the question “How does linguistic normativity come into being?” – yet refuses to furnish the answer out of principled reservations: namely, because of his “theoretical quietism”<sup>21</sup>. In Brandom’s eyes, these reservations against philosophical theorizing are something that we can simply bypass, extracting from Wittgenstein only those “criteria of adequacy” that a theory of discursive practice needs to meet. In other words, we are to extract from Wittgenstein only those things which will help us to develop an adequate theory of linguistic normativity while not bothering ourselves with why Wittgenstein thinks theories are the last thing we need. While Brandom’s reading of Wittgenstein at least acknowledges that Wittgenstein does not intend to give detailed answer questions such as “How does linguistic normativity come into being?”, Brandom’s very idea that we can proceed in the way he does in *Making It Explicit* suggests that Wittgenstein’s self-image as a philosopher is somehow at odds with his philosophical achievements.

Another commentator who holds that Wittgenstein reveals the need for a constructive answer to the question “How does linguistic meaning come into being?” – which he then fails to provide – is Crispin Wright. Initially, in his *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics* (1980), Wright attempted to explicate the way Wittgenstein dissolved the rule-following

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<sup>19</sup> cf. Brandom 1994, 28

<sup>20</sup> Brandom 1994, 29/30

<sup>21</sup> see also Brandom 1994, xii/xiii

paradox in the *Investigations*. At that time, it was Wright 's intention to capture what it means that in dissolving his paradox, Wittgenstein rejects a particular idea of what linguistic normativity consists in. Wright's comments regarding the consequences of this paradox and the conditions of its dissolution were meant to stay within an interpretative framework which attempted to retain the overall integrity of Wittgenstein's outlook. Yet later, Wright came to doubt his way of explicating how the paradox dissolves. Then, he started to voice a dissatisfaction with Wittgenstein. In his "Critical Notice: Colin McGinn's *Wittgenstein on Meaning*" (1989), he argues that Wittgenstein's paradox reveals the need for a more constructive answer to the question "How is linguistic normativity so much as possible?" than we find in the *Investigations*.

In his discussion of rule-following in *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics*, Wright reconstructs Wittgenstein's argumentation in the following way. Wittgenstein starts out with the commonplace idea that in meaning an expression in a certain way, we have a grasp of a pattern of application of this expressions that extends beyond the cases that we already have encountered.<sup>22</sup> Then, Wittgenstein introduces the case where a teacher sets out to teach a pupil the application of the rule "+2". At first, the pupil appears to have mastered the system of the series by now being able to continue a series such as 10, 12, 14 by writing 16, 18, 20. But then, when the teacher asks him to continue the series after 1000, the pupil writes 1004, 1008, 1012. Wright then discusses the following way of taking this example: Since whatever way in which the teacher attempted to communicate to the pupil his grasp of the pattern of application of "+2" (general formulations, examples) could not get this understanding across to the pupil, this shows that our understanding of concepts is actually *incommunicable*.<sup>23</sup> After all, our understanding of a concept requires of us a definite application of this concepts in cases we have not encountered – but whatever the teacher could communicate to the pupil could not uniquely contain this application. Wright: "For, as Wittgenstein never wearied of reminding himself, no explanation of the use of an expression is proof against misunderstanding; verbal explanations require correct understanding of the vocabulary in which they are couched, and samples are open to an inexhaustible variety of interpretations."<sup>24</sup> Wright then sketches the following picture which we might be inclined to develop from this line of thought: Since the pattern of use of "+2" which the teacher has in mind is incommunicable, the pupil can only *guess* as to what pattern of use the teacher has in mind. The resulting picture is that each of us knows of an ideolectic pattern of use of concepts, but

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<sup>22</sup> cf. Wright 1980, 20-22 / 216

<sup>23</sup> cf. Wright 1980, 32-37 / 216

<sup>24</sup> Wright 1980, 216

we cannot *know* whether another person has the same pattern in his mind – we can only *pre-sume* this based on the limited set of application of these concepts that we can witness.<sup>25</sup> Now Wright takes Wittgenstein’s rule-following considerations to be mainly directed against this idea of “ideolectic understanding”.<sup>26</sup> In Wright’s view, Wittgenstein’s criticism of the idea of a “private” language comes to bear to the case of teacher and pupil in the following way: In the picture under consideration, the pupil is taken to form a “hypothesis” about what pattern of use the teacher intends to get across to him. This entails that the pupil knows what he himself has come to mean by “+2”. This *meaning* “+2” in a certain way is itself (as the picture under consideration must hold) *ideolectic* – the pupil cannot communicate it to anyone. Now, according to Wright, this puts the pupil in the following situation:

*We* cannot tell whether he implements his hypothesis correctly, that is, whether his expectations here really are consonant with the interpretation he has put on our treatment of, say, the samples which we gave him; and *he* cannot provide any basis for a distinction between their being so and its merely seeming to him that they are.<sup>27</sup>

In other words, Wright takes the pupil to be a case of a “private” rule-follower – i.e. as a case just like the philosopher who sets out to develop a language whose words “refer to what can be known only to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations” which Wittgenstein introduces in PI 243.<sup>28</sup> And just like Wittgenstein there, Wright thinks it also here to be the problem that this “private” speaker is lacking a standard against which to measure the correctness of his use of words. Thus, Wright concludes his presentation of Wittgenstein’s example with teacher and pupil by stating:

The proper conclusion is not merely that the hypothetico-deductive picture is misleading, but that there cannot be such a thing as first-person privileged recognition of the dictates of one’s understanding of an expression, irrespective of whether that understanding is shared.<sup>29</sup>

In other words: In rejecting the “hypothetico-deductive” picture of an incommunicable, ideolectic understanding which each of us is supposed to have of concepts, Wittgenstein is taken

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<sup>25</sup> cf. Wright 1980, 216-7

<sup>26</sup> cf. Wright 1980, 32

<sup>27</sup> Wright 1980, 217

<sup>28</sup> cf. Wright 1980, 36

<sup>29</sup> Wright 1980, 217

to endorse a picture where the agreement with the responses of other members of the linguistic community introduces the standard of correctness that is purportedly lacking in the case of the pupil. Wright:

[...] I cannot legitimately credit myself with the capacity to recognise that *I* am here applying an expression in the same way as *I* have used it before, if this capacity is to be indifferent to whether I can persuade others of as much or whether that is the way in which the community in general uses the expression.<sup>30</sup>

Like everyone else, I am tempted to reply that a solicitable community of assent just does make the relevant difference, just does supply the objectivity requisite to transform one's unilateral response into a matter of recognition or mistake.<sup>31</sup>

None of us unilaterally can make sense of the idea of correct employment of language save by reference to the authority of securable communal assent on the matter.<sup>32</sup>

Applied to the case of the teacher and pupil: The response of the teacher is the correct one – and therefore faithful to the pattern of application the grasp of which his meaning “+2” consists in – because, when *he* writes 1000, 1002, 1004, he could secure the assent of the linguistic community. Whereas, when the pupil writes 1000, 1004, 1008, it comes out that he has simply *not understood* the meaning of “+2” – i.e. that he has *no* grasp of the pattern of application that “+2” requires of him. In Wright's reconstruction, then, Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following being a “practice”, “custom”, and “institution” are meant to point to the fact that “communal assessment” provides the standard of correctness which the picture of “ideolectic understanding” could not make intelligible.<sup>33</sup> This view of linguistic normativity is presented as a by-product of Wittgenstein's dissolution of the rule-following paradox – a paradox which in Wright's view had resulted from the breakdown of the idea of an *ideolectic* grasp of the application of concepts.

Later, Wright came to doubt whether this way of dissolving the paradox really works, and whether it could rightfully be attributed to Wittgenstein. In his “Critical Notice: Colin McGinn's *Wittgenstein on Meaning*”, he is much more alert to what exact role the notion of

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<sup>30</sup> Wright 1980, 218

<sup>31</sup> Wright 1980, 219

<sup>32</sup> Wright 1980, 220

<sup>33</sup> cf. Wright 1980, 37-38 / 217-20

“agreement” in Wittgenstein can be attributed when it comes to dissolving the rule-following paradox. Yet more importantly, he raises a doubt about his proposed way of saving the notion of linguistic normativity. In his “Critical Notice”, he formulates the following requirement for an effective resolution of the rule-following paradox: “[A] conception of rules and rule-governed practices which allows a sufficient gap between the requirements of a rule and a subject’s reaction in any particular case to make space for something worth regarding as normativity, yet abrogates the spurious autonomy which gave rise to the difficulties.”<sup>34</sup> This “spurious autonomy” was the idea of the requirements of a rule in particular cases being contained in an (ideolectic) grasp of a pattern of application in the subject’s mind. Now at this point, Wright denies that his former idea of a “community of assent” does allow for such a “sufficient gap” between the requirement of a rule and the subjects’ reactions. After all, when it comes to determining if the requirements of a rule have been fulfilled, it is precisely such *reactions* that are being compared for agreement. As Wright now sees it, the very idea that we are working with *reactions* here – rather than with something that is *independent* of these reactions, in a fashion that the idea of “ideolectic” understanding at least seemed to be able to accommodate – results in the effective surrendering of the notion of a requirement altogether.<sup>35</sup> It is at this point that he can concede that Wittgenstein in fact never did not assign “agreement” the role Wright previously had. What Wittgenstein, according to Wright, does in fact say is that “the requirements of rules exist only within a framework of institutional activities which depend in basic human propensities to agree in judgements; but he reminds us that such requirements are also, in any particular case, independent of our judgements, supplying standards in terms of which it may be right to regard those judgements, even if they enjoy consensus, as incorrect”<sup>36</sup>. In other words, Wittgenstein does not hold that agreement in judgment does supply a standard of correctness in any particular case – rather, agreement in judgment is merely one feature of the overall framework in which rules exist at all. It is at this point – when Wright realizes that his former account of linguistic normativity is flawed and, moreover, cannot be attributed to Wittgenstein, that he voices doubts about Wittgenstein:

So we have been told what does *not* constitute the requirement of a rule in any particular case: it is *not* constituted by our agreement about the particular case, and it is not constituted autonomously [...] our ability to follow which would be epistemologically unaccountable. But we have not been told what *does* constitute it; all we have

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<sup>34</sup> Wright 1989, 303-4

<sup>35</sup> cf. Wright 1989, 304

<sup>36</sup> Wright 1989, 304

been told is that there would simply be no such requirement [...] but for the phenomenon of actual, widespread human agreement in judgement.

I fear that it is probably vain to search Wittgenstein's own texts for a more concrete positive suggestion about the constitutive question. His later conception of philosophical method seems to be conditioned by a mistrust of such constitutive questions.<sup>37</sup>

It is not that Wright did not see that Wittgenstein's idea of philosophical method is to dissolve a paradox, not to answer "constitutive questions". He does know that it is Wittgenstein's aim to remove misunderstandings – false pictures – without supplanting them with new pictures or theories<sup>38</sup>. Yet he thinks that Wittgenstein, in his rule-following considerations, failed to deliver on this intention of his:

I mean that to be recognizable as an 'official' Wittgensteinian line. I do not know whether it is really Wittgenstein's own; and in so far as it may be, I suspect that he did not succeed in clearly representing to himself a sound theoretical basis for declining rather than – perhaps quixotically – rising to the challenge posed by his own thought [...]<sup>39</sup>

Just like Brandom, Wright emerges as a commentator who holds that Wittgenstein reveals the need for a constructive answer to the question "How does linguistic normativity come into being?", yet, for reasons not quite intelligible, does not supply it. Contrary to Brandom, who from the start sets out to develop a theory of discursive practices, Wright originally set out to describe how Wittgenstein dissolves the rule-following paradox in a way consistent with his ideas about philosophical method. Yet later, when he sees that his proposed dissolution does not work, and that it cannot be rightfully attributed to Wittgenstein, Wright sees no way how Wittgenstein *could* dissolve it without actually furnishing a positive answer to the question "How is linguistic normativity constituted?" Like Brandom, he now thinks that Wittgenstein's ideas about philosophical method are a hindrance to the constructive work that the philosopher of language needs to do.

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<sup>37</sup> Wright 1989, 304-5

<sup>38</sup> cf. Wright 1989, 305

<sup>39</sup> Wright 1989, 305



### 1.3 The Reading of Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker

After having seen two examples of commentators who actually decline the interpretative challenge which I had formulated – how to integrate what Wittgenstein says about language and meaning with his self-description as a philosopher? – let us now turn to those commentators of the *Investigations* who do intend to rise up to it. These are the commentators who believe that without taking seriously what Wittgenstein says about the aim and methods of philosophy, we will fail to appreciate at all what he has to say about language and meaning.

The first commentators that deserve to be mentioned in this category are Gordon Baker<sup>40</sup> and Peter Hacker. In their *Wittgenstein: Understanding and Meaning* (1980) and *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity* (1985)<sup>41</sup>, they insist that Wittgenstein's aim in the *Investigations* is not to explain the phenomena of language and linguistic normativity, but to offer an analysis of the genesis of philosophical problems, and ways for us to dissolve them. They hold that the things that Wittgenstein says about language and meaning are directly tied to this project of supplying us with means to dissolve philosophical problems. They reject the picture of Wittgenstein as a philosopher of language in favor of the picture of a philosopher who seeks to dissolve philosophical problems by asking whether we, in drawing upon certain words and sentences while formulating these problems, still make sense. According to Baker and Hacker, in the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein gives the following analysis: the general source of philosophical problems is that we, misled by superficial analogies between certain words and sentences of our everyday language, have lost our overview of how these words and sentence are actually supposed to be applied.<sup>42</sup> This “lack of surview” makes us ask philosophical questions such as “We know that objects continue to exist unperceived, but how can we know this when we cannot perceive that they exist unperceived?” or “How is it possible to us to measure time when the past is gone and the future has not yet arrived, and the present is an extensionless point?” Philosophy seeks not to find *answers* such questions, but to *dissolve* the puzzlements which such questions are symptoms of. It is typical of philosophical puzzlements that in them, things that are wholly familiar to us (and are expressed in wholly familiar terms) suddenly seem mysterious.<sup>43</sup> One way of dissolving such puzzlements

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<sup>40</sup> Later, Baker began to distance himself from the views which had been presented in his joint work with Peter Hacker, moving closer to the kind of “resolute” reading of Wittgenstein which I am introducing in this chapter. See his *Wittgenstein's Method: Neglected Aspects* (2004).

<sup>41</sup> A reading along these general lines had been first presented by Hacker in his *Insight and Illusion* (1972).

<sup>42</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1980, 468-9

<sup>43</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1980, 473-4

is to show that the questions themselves lack any sense at all – i.e. that they are nonsense.<sup>44</sup> For Baker and Hacker, a piece of nonsense is a sentence that on the surface looks like a well-formed meaningful sentence, but in subtle ways violates the rules of language, in that it contains combinations of words that are illegitimate in our language.<sup>45</sup> Another way of dissolution is to show that what we take to be suitable *answers* to those questions – e.g. the sentence “I cannot *know* how you feel”, which seems to express a deep insight about the limits of knowledge<sup>46</sup> – are equally forms of nonsense.<sup>47</sup> Another way of showing the emptiness of such “philosophical” answers is to point out that what seems like insights into necessary features of reality are just “grammatical truths” – i.e. mere rules for the use of expressions.<sup>48</sup> Apart from asking nonsensical questions and giving nonsensical answers, philosophical puzzlement can also assume the form that we take our ordinary forms of expressions to mean something different from what they mean according to their actual rules of use. One way this happens is that pictures embedded in our language (like the “inner/outer” picture of psychological states, or the picture of time as a river) make us think that these pictorial expressions *have* to be applied in a way that ultimately creates a puzzle, especially when two of these pictures clash.<sup>49</sup> In this case, we need to look away from the picture toward its application.<sup>50</sup> Another way in which we are being led away from the real use towards an imagined one is through the psychological experiences which accompany the use of certain expressions of our language. We are led to think that these “inner states” are what really matters about the use of these expressions – e.g. we then believe that “meaning” and “understanding” something is a matter of being in certain psychological states.<sup>51</sup> To dissolve philosophical puzzles arising from this, the philosopher needs to describe the variety of criteria that we apply when using these expressions in actual circumstances.<sup>52</sup>

From this short introduction, one might get the impression that for Baker and Hacker, the dissolution of philosophical problems required a plurality of methods and approaches. Now while they do mention the variety of ways in which Wittgenstein approaches philosophical problems –such as inventing new language games, imagining changes in general

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<sup>44</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1980, 473, 478

<sup>45</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1980, 479-80

<sup>46</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1980, 479

<sup>47</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1980, 480

<sup>48</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1980, 477

<sup>49</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1980, 482

<sup>50</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1980, 487

<sup>51</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1980, 487, 482

<sup>52</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1980, 487

facts of nature, or replacing mental mechanisms by physical substitutes, etc.<sup>53</sup> – for Baker and Hacker, they in fact come down to one principle approach:

The task of philosophy is to clarify the rules for the use of expressions, especially to remove philosophical misunderstandings by rendering these rules surveyable.<sup>54</sup>

Philosophy, Wittgenstein claimed, is a grammatical investigation (PI §90) in which philosophical problems are resolved and misunderstandings eliminated by describing our use of words, clarifying the grammar of expressions and tabulating rules.<sup>55</sup>

Philosophical questions concern the bounds of sense, and these are determined by the rules for the use of words, by what it makes sense to say in a language. *This* is the source of philosophy's concern with grammatical rules. For by their clarification and arrangement philosophical questions can be resolved and typical philosophical confusions and paradoxes dissolved.<sup>56</sup>

The reason why the task of dissolving philosophical problems comes down to the clarifying of grammatical rules is that in Baker and Hacker's view, all methods employed by Wittgenstein in various parts of the book are seen as standing in the service of restoring, however indirectly, our "surview" of the actual rules for the use of expressions – the very surview the loss of which through analogies in the surface grammar of our language Baker and Hacker had identified as the general source of philosophical problems in the first place.<sup>57</sup>

Before we can deal with what form this "clarifying rules of grammar" takes for Baker and Hacker when it comes to dissolving concrete philosophical problems, we need to take a closer look at their conception of "rules of grammar". It comes out quite clearly in this quote from *Rules, Grammar and Necessity*:

Fundamental to Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy is the comparison of speaking a language with playing a game in accord with definite rules. [H]e [...] compared speaking with playing chess, words with chess pieces, explanations of words with rules of chess, and the meanings of words with the powers of chess pieces. This pic-

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<sup>53</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1980, 487

<sup>54</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 154

<sup>55</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 52

<sup>56</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 54

<sup>57</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1980, 468-9

ture is built into his employment of the term ‘language-game’. Making use of expressions is engaging in some language-game whose structure is given by a set of rules (especially by explanations of meaning).<sup>58</sup>

Here, Baker and Hacker move from Wittgenstein’s comparing language with chess to the general claim that language games are structured by “a set of rules”. In their book, they also formulate this point by saying that rules of grammar “inform” the actions that a part of a language game (as opposed to merely “defining” them)<sup>59</sup>, and that language games are “governed by” such rules of grammar<sup>60</sup>. Now the upshot of this picture for the task of dissolving philosophical problems comes out the clearest when we turn to the cases where the philosopher – in asking certain questions or giving certain answers – has lapsed into *nonsense*. In these cases, the role of “clarifying rules of grammar”, according to Baker and Hacker, is this:

Grammar, as Wittgenstein understood the term, is the account book of language (PG 87). Its rules determine the limits of sense, and by carefully scrutinizing them the philosopher may determine at what point he has drawn an overdraft on Reason, violated the rules for the use of an expression and so, in subtle and not readily identifiable ways, traversed the bounds of sense.<sup>61</sup>

Our lapsing into nonsense, as Baker and Hacker see it, is the result of our having “violated” the rules for the use of certain expressions. In their books, Baker and Hacker give many examples of such “violations”. Let us take a look at one example in order to see in what exactly these violations of grammatical rules consist in. In *Understanding and Meaning*, they comment on some examples drawn from the *Investigations* where Wittgenstein thinks his interlocutor has lapsed into forms of nonsense. These include utterances of the words “I cannot feel your pains”, “I know that I am in pain” and “I cannot know how you feel”. Baker and Hacker’s comment:

They look like well-formed meaningful sentences, being constructed on analogy with legitimate sentences, but in subtle ways they violate the rules of language. Where such sentences appear pregnant with philosophical implications, e.g.[...], it is the task of

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<sup>58</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 154

<sup>59</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1985, 154

<sup>60</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1985, 39

<sup>61</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 55

philosophy to reveal why such combinations of words are illegitimate in our language.<sup>62</sup>

As Baker and Hacker see it, these examples from the *Investigations* are examples of nonsensical utterances because the *sentences* that are uttered consist of “combinations of words are illegitimate in our language”. In other words, these utterances of Wittgenstein’s interlocutor can be diagnosed as nonsensical by simply looking at the sentences themselves – i.e. at the combination in which certain words occur in them. As we can now see, Baker and Hacker’s approach to the examples of philosophical problems which they give in *Rules, Grammar and Necessity* is shaped by this account of nonsense. Baker and Hacker:

The philosopher can dissolve conceptual puzzles and resolve confusions about perception and our knowledge of the world, for example, by clarifying, arranging and contrasting the different rules for the use of sensation- and perception-words. He will point out that it makes sense to say ‘I see better, more distinctly, than you’, but not ‘I feel pain better, more distinctly, than you’; it makes sense to say ‘I think I can see a house in the distance, but I’m not sure; let’s go closer’, but not ‘I think I feel pain in my knee, but I’m not sure’.<sup>63</sup>

In this passage, Baker and Hacker draw a sharp boundary between utterances that make sense and those that do not. This they can do since in their view, the philosopher can diagnose “nonsense” by simply looking at the sentences we are inclined to utter while doing philosophy. As a result, for Baker and Hacker, by looking at a sentence and concluding that it is a “violation” of a rule of grammar, the essential step in the dissolution of a philosophical problem has been achieved. This, then, is one of the main things to what, in Baker and Hacker’s view, “clarifying rules of grammar” comes down to: the insight that some of the utterances we tend to make while doing philosophy are nonsense because they contain sentences which consist of illegitimate combination of words.

As I said, Baker and Hacker reject the idea that Wittgenstein is interested in the phenomenon of linguistic normativity as such – i.e. independently of his project of offering ways of dissolving philosophical problems. This entails that they cannot – like Brandom or Wright – hold that Wittgenstein’s remarks on rule-following in the *Investigations* are concerned with

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<sup>62</sup> Baker/Hacker 1980, 480

getting clear about linguistic normativity for its own sake. Rather, some relation to Wittgenstein's ideas about philosophical method must hold. Indeed, one of the main topics of *Rules, Grammar and Necessity* is to assign the rule-following remarks their proper role within the overall framework of Wittgenstein's philosophy. Above, I also said that Baker and Hacker hold that the things that Wittgenstein says about language and meaning are directly tied to his project of offering ways of dissolving philosophical problems. Their account of the status of the rule-following remarks within Wittgenstein's philosophy is a good example for this. As we saw, Baker and Hacker read Wittgenstein in such a fashion that the dissolution of philosophical problems always involves the clarification of *rules* of grammar. Now according to them, the rule-following considerations in the *Investigations* fit in with this fact in the following way: In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein had already entertained the idea of offering means of dissolving philosophical problem by asking if the words in which we formulate these problems at all make sense. Therefore, he was already concerned with linguistic rules and their violation.<sup>64</sup> But, in that early work, Wittgenstein held a "calculus view of language" – a view of language focusing exclusively on *formal* aspects of language rather than its *uses*. The later comparison of language to a *game* such as chess was meant to correct that view – to open our eyes to the fact that language is a (rule-governed) *activity*.<sup>65</sup> The role of the rule-following considerations, according to Baker and Hacker, is then this:

Wittgenstein had, in the *Tractatus*, seen that philosophical or conceptual investigation moves in the domain of rules. [...] But his misconception of the normative character of language had led him to erect a mythology of symbolism. Hence his later reflections on rules play a pivotal role in the whole of his mature philosophy.<sup>66</sup>

Thus, according to Baker and Hacker, Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following in the *Investigations* are meant to correct a "misconception of the normative character of language" – a misconception that underlay his earlier way of dissolving philosophical problems. As Baker and Hacker go on to expose in *Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, the role of these remarks in the later philosophy is to correct that misconception – by furnishing a detailed answer to the question "How are rules (of grammar) involved in speech activities?"<sup>67</sup> Since the dissolution of philosophical problems always involves clarifying *rules* of grammar, they take it to be

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<sup>63</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 55

<sup>64</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1985, 34-7

<sup>65</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1985, 38-9

<sup>66</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 39

<sup>67</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1985, 154-5

“vital”<sup>68</sup> to know the answer to this question. Thus, Baker and Hacker see the rule-following remarks in the *Investigations* as being directly tied to the whole of Wittgenstein’s philosophy: what Wittgenstein says there about linguistic normativity is directly tied to his way of dissolving philosophical problems by means of clarifying grammatical rules – in the way that Wittgenstein there answers the question of exactly how these rules of grammar do govern speech activities.

#### 1.4 Resolute Readings of Later Wittgenstein: A First Overview

Let me now turn to a separate group within the group of commentators of Wittgenstein’s later works which I am currently introducing. Like Baker and Hacker, these commentators wish to rise up to the interpretative challenge as I had formulated it: How to integrate what Wittgenstein has to say about language and meaning with his remarks on philosophical method? And, like Baker and Hacker, these commentators reject the picture of Wittgenstein as a philosopher of language in favor of the picture of a philosopher who seeks to dissolve philosophical problems by asking whether we, in drawing upon certain words and sentences while formulating these problems, still make sense. Yet crucially, these commentators hold that appreciating what it means to *completely dissolve* philosophical problems entails going further than Baker and Hacker in bringing out that Wittgenstein’s approach does not involve any *theses* about what language and meaning really are.

In order to get a first idea of what it means, for these commentators, to stress (against authors like Baker and Hacker) the idea that philosophical problems are *completely dissolved*, let us take a look at an introductory article by one of these commentators, James Conant. In his “Preface” to Hilary Putnam’s *Words and Life* (1994), Conant employs what Wittgenstein says about *pictures* in PI 422-7 to illustrate what he takes to be Wittgenstein’s lessons regarding how a philosophical problem originates, and how it can be dissolved. Conant cites these remarks of Wittgenstein’s:<sup>69</sup>

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. [...] (PI 425)

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<sup>68</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 154

<sup>69</sup> cf. Conant 1994, lv, lvi

A picture is conjured up which seems to fix the sense *unambiguously*. The actual use, compared with that suggested by the picture, seems like something muddled. [...] (PI 426)

“While I was speaking to him I did not know what was going on in his head.” In saying this, one is not thinking of brain-processes, but of thought-processes. The picture should be taken seriously. We should really like to see into his head. And yet we only mean what elsewhere we should mean by saying: we should like to know what he is thinking. I want to say: we have this vivid picture – and that use, apparently contradicting the picture, which expresses the psychical. (PI 427)

What Conant finds in these paragraphs is Wittgenstein’s account of how a philosophical problem arises when an apparently straightforward “literal” sense of a picture in our language – in this case, “to see into someone’s head” – urges itself upon us. When we then view the manner in which we ordinarily employ the expression through the lens of this way of understanding it, it comes to be a mystery how it can be properly called upon in those everyday situations in which it is used: what now comes to appear to us to be the most straightforward case of what the expression “really” means now stands in conflict with these ways in which the word is actually used. Conant:

Misled by the picture, we lay down requirements as to what would count as *really* seeing inside someone’s head. We make the picture “vivid.” Thus we come to be in the grip of a (literalistic) view of what it would be for the picture to apply, compared with which any other use of the picture seems merely figurative. It comes to seem as if we lay claim, in our ordinary discourse, to forms of knowledge which we are, strictly speaking, unable to attain.<sup>70</sup>

When we are thus in the grip of a literalistic view of the picture, it appears to us that what “seeing inside someone’s head” *really* should involve is seeing past something *outer* into something *inner*: to see past the person’s outward behavior “into his thoughts themselves”. According to Conant, this is how a typical philosophical problem like that of the relation of “inner” mental states to “outer” physical expression evolves: when we take the literalistic un-

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<sup>70</sup> Conant 1994, lvi



derstanding of “to see inside someone’s head” as *the* understanding of this expression, it appears to us that all we can *really* see is the outside of his head.<sup>71</sup> In other words, this apparently innocent “literal” way of construing the sense of the expression insinuates a requirement – one that seems unavoidable and yet at the same time unsatisfiable. There thus arises the impression of a gap between what *must* be the case (in order for such an expression to be rightfully employed) and what we “actually” have at our disposal (when we consider what is involved in any actual case of its employment). According to Conant, Wittgenstein tries to show us how that this comes to be the form of the problems with which we are presented in philosophy.<sup>72</sup>

Now what is crucial, in Conant’s eyes, for a dissolution of a problem such as this involving the “inner” and the “outer” is that we do not draw the consequence of *rejecting* the picture, but to *respect* it. Conant:

We need therefore, in a sense, to distinguish between two pictures: the picture implicit in our practice and the filled-in version of the picture. It is the former which is to be respected. It is the latter which holds us captive and which eventually induces us (through our misdirected attempts to free ourselves from its grip) to treat the former as a superstition.<sup>73</sup>

According to Conant, such “misdirected attempts” include typical philosophical reactions to the problem of the inner and the outer. Conant gives the example of the resulting theory of the existence of a radically private inner mental realm, which then gives rise to the problem of skepticism concerning other minds. This threat is, in turn, attempted to be controlled by the concession that while we may never have *direct* knowledge of our minds, we may have *indirect* knowledge of them. The next step in this philosophical dialectic is then that we realize that we are actually unable to make real sense of such an idea of “direct knowledge”. Conant:

So, in the end, in search of a way out of our problem, (rightly) unwilling to settle for a radically private realm accessible only to one person, we decide to throw away the picture of an inner world altogether. We come to look at our ordinary idioms (which involve talk of the inner) as just so many expressions of metaphysical confusion.

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<sup>71</sup> cf. Conant 1994, lvii

<sup>72</sup> cf. Conant 1994, xlvi-lviii

<sup>73</sup> Conant 1994, lvii

Hence we begin our search for a philosophically respectable substitute [...] for the ordinary idiom.<sup>74</sup>

As Conant states here, it is a typical philosophical reaction to the “problem of the inner” to discard any talk of “seeing into someone’s head” etc. as being shot through with bad metaphysics. But according to Conant, what we need to instead realize is that the idea of “direct knowledge of other minds” has nothing to do with what we *really* mean by “seeing into someone’s head”. As Wittgenstein stated, what we really mean by that is something very banal – namely, knowing what somebody else is thinking. This is something which we sometimes do and sometimes do not know. Once we become clear how our view of the use of this expression has been hijacked by such a picture, the requirement in question – the one that appeared to issue in a contradiction between what “could” be the case and what “must” be – comes to be unmasked as the opposite of what we thought it was: not one that is highly exiguous, but rather one that is utterly *empty*. In this manner, if Wittgenstein’s treatment of the problem is fully successful, (what we take to be) the philosophical problem itself fully *disappears*. This means that the impression that we have made a *discovery* – such as that we cannot *really* know another person’s mind – is to be unmasked as partaking in the illusion which we are under while in the grip of a picture, too. As Conant stresses in his “Preface”, what dissolving the problem involves is

[...] rejecting a metaphysically loaded conception of the relation of the inner and the outer (as two independent realms, the metaphysically private and the inexpressively public), while treating with respect a picture of the inner and the outer which has great weight in our lives (and in which the inner and the outer are inextricably entangled and intimately interdependent).<sup>75</sup>

The group of commentators who, like Conant here, have focused on Wittgenstein’s aim being that of doing away with any *discoveries* or *theories* in philosophy include Cora Diamond, Stanley Cavell, Hilary Putnam, John McDowell, Hans Julius Schneider, Martin Gustafsson, and Oskari Kuusela.

In *The Realistic Spirit* (1991), Cora Diamond elucidates Wittgenstein’s way of dissolving philosophical problems by way of interpreting the following remark of his: “Not empiricism and yet realism in philosophy, that is the hardest thing” (RFM VI 23). According to

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<sup>74</sup> Conant 1994, lviii

Diamond, what the “yet” here points to is that Wittgenstein viewed empiricism to be a misfired attempt at a desirable realism. In the chapter “Realism and the Realistic Spirit”, Diamond sets out to explain this. She there distinguishes the “realistic spirit” from philosophical (or metaphysical) realism, as traditionally understood. She chooses the example of Berkeley’s criticism of metaphysical realism as an example of how empiricism can point the way of a treatment of philosophical problems in this “realistic spirit”. According to Diamond, what is Wittgensteinian about Berkeley’s treatment of metaphysical realism – the idea that the distinction between what there really is and what is chimerical *must* depend on something which is beyond anything we perceive – is that he looks at how we, in our lives, *practically* distinguish between real and imagined things. As Berkeley brings out, this involves nothing beyond what we perceive, but “some perceived difference”<sup>76</sup>. Diamond highlights the fact that Berkeley, like Wittgenstein, thinks that this looking away from the actual circumstances in which our words do their work has to do with a false idea of what it is for a term to be kept to a fixed meaning.<sup>77</sup> The result of this misconception is that the philosopher puts up a requirement of how things *must* be – rendering him unable to appreciate what we really do and have (such as our ordinary procedures of telling something real from something imagined). He now, when viewing our everyday practices, can only perceive this *ideal*:

The details appear irrelevant, because we think we can make out something *else*, which, if we did not have it or at least believe that we did, would make pointless our actual practices of using evidence as we do in judging what is real.<sup>78</sup>

Yet according to Diamond, what really happens is that the metaphysical realist – in believing that “real” must involve something beyond any experience – is

[...] engaging in the purest fantasy. He *thinks* he thinks of objects with non-sensible properties and unknown natures, he *thinks* he thinks of matter, a substratum of the objects of sense, but all he has is a construction of *words*, linguistic surfaces, [...] far removed from any practice of comparison with the world [...]<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Conant 1994, lviii

<sup>76</sup> Berkeley, *Works*, Vol. II, 235

<sup>77</sup> cf. Diamond 1991, 50, 57-8

<sup>78</sup> Diamond 1991, 49

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, 58

Now the reason why Diamond holds that empiricism is merely pointing the way to the realism that Wittgenstein aspires – why Wittgenstein says “*not* empiricism, yet realism” – is that empiricism entertains the idea of a *given*. Berkeley, for instance, goes on from his pointing to how we *practically* distinguish real from imagined things to insist that all there really is are our own thoughts, and that philosophers need to analyze the meaning of “real” in terms of pattern and regularities within these thoughts. Diamond goes on to show how Wittgenstein departs from this idea of the given by contrasting her account of how he dissolves the rule-problem with that of Saul Kripke. According to Diamond, Wittgenstein does not wish to *answer* the challenge how a rule (or definition) can unambiguously fix the application of an expression by pointing to *a different kind of given* – namely, communal agreement (as Kripke holds) –, but to the practical application of expressions such as “he is always to go on in that way”. *This* approach – just like in the case of Berkeley against the philosopher’s fantasy of “absolute reality” – will make us see that the *requirement* which fuels the paradox – namely, that something be found which can exclude any misunderstanding of the rule beyond the things that settle any *practical* misunderstanding – is, just through being thus detached from any practical way of explaining what it means to “go on in the same way”, a philosopher’s fantasy as well. “Not empiricism, yet realism in philosophy”, according to Diamond, is an approach which, contrary to how Kripke sees it, does not *solve* a problem by showing us what there really (merely) is – communal agreement – and then analyzing meaning in terms of *that*, but rather an approach that *dissolves* the problem:

Realism in philosophy, the hardest thing, is open-eyedly giving up the quest for such an elucidation, the demand for a philosophical account of what I mean make clear how it is fixed, out of all possible continuations, out of some real semantic space, *which* I mean. Open-eyedly: that is, not just stopping, but with an understanding of how the quest depended on a fantasy.<sup>80</sup>

In *The Claim of Reason* (1979), Stanley Cavell sets out to show how an idea which is at the base of traditional (i.e., empiricist as well as rationalist) approaches to epistemology – the idea that our relation to the world *comes down to* our having “sensations” or “sensual experience” – is actually not a *discovery*, but an “illusion of meaning”. Cavell traces the hold this idea has on us to the purported naturalness of saying something like “Whenever we see an

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<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, 69

object, we do not see *all* of it – since its back half is always hidden from view.” According to Cavell, utterances such as this only have their force because they are considered in a “non-claim context”<sup>81</sup>: in concrete contexts, the question “Did you (see, hit, break, smoke) all of it?” sometimes has a clear sense, and when not, it can be given one by inventing a new context (such as for “you did not break *all* of the cup!”: meaning we left too large chunks which are unsuitable for the person to give to the natives on his trading route).<sup>82</sup> But, as Cavell brings out, in none of these contexts does “not seeing all of it” involve not seeing a “back half” which depends on our geometrical position towards the object<sup>83</sup> – like the one alluded to in “Whenever we see an object, we do not see *all* of it.” Cavell thus diagnoses the following:

The ‘dilemma’ the traditional investigation of knowledge is involved in may now be formulated this way: It must be the investigation of a concrete claim if its procedure is to be coherent; it cannot be the investigation of a concrete claim if its conclusion is to be general. Without that coherence it would not have the obviousness it has seemed to have; without that generality its conclusion would not be skeptical.<sup>84</sup>

In other words: what “Whenever we see an object, we do not see *all* of it – since its back half is always hidden from view” draws on is the sense which a *claim* of “you did not see all of it!” has in concrete contexts – but in none of these contexts this “back half” would count as “being hidden from view” (as opposed to details or features on what now appears to be the “front half”). Consequently, Cavell holds, the sense of this *general* “claim” is not fixed:

The combination of the fact that in the epistemologists’s context a concrete claim cannot be under scrutiny, together with the fact that one must be imagined as being under scrutiny, ought to explain why he imagines himself to be saying something when he is not, to have discovered something when he has not. Someone in these particular straits may be described as hallucinating what he or she means, or as having the illusion of meaning something.<sup>85</sup>

Now according to Cavell, the philosopher’s idea of “the senses” or “(sense) experience” is directly tied to his (confused) idea of “the whole object”: if, as the philosopher hallucinates, it

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<sup>81</sup> Cavell 1979, 218

<sup>82</sup> cf. *ibid.* 194-7

<sup>83</sup> cf. *ibid.*, 202

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, 220

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, 221

makes sense to say “we never see whole objects”, it seems natural to conclude that all we ever see is their surface. This is how the particular philosophical idea of “the senses” emerges: “‘the senses’ the philosopher is left with, or comes up with, is as a matter of construction *opposed* to the revelation of things as they are” (ibid., 224). The philosopher has now introduced an unbridgeable gap between perception and objects: his idea now is that objects are unknowable by the senses alone.<sup>86</sup> According to Cavell, this idea common to both Empiricism and Rationalism is the product of the “hallucination of meaning” described. When we see this, we can find back to our ordinary understanding that the senses do indeed reveal a world (of objects) to us. Then, the philosophical problem which traditional epistemology attempted to address *dissolves* – with no need for a “theory of perception” remaining. Cavell:

What I wish to convey is not that the conclusion that sense-experience is inadequate as a basis for knowledge as a whole [...] is *false*, and in *that* sense not a discovery; but rather that it is neither false nor true, that it is not what we should call a ‘discovery’.”<sup>87</sup>

In his *Words and Life* (1994) and *Pragmatism – An Open Question* (1995), Hilary Putnam takes issue with the lesson Richard Rorty draws from Wittgenstein (among others) regarding the issue of truth and representation. Rorty, in his “Pragmatism, Davidson, and Truth” (1986) – as also in his *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989) and “Is Truth a Goal of Enquiry?” (1995) –, had argued that the idea of truth as a relation between language and something extralinguistic makes no sense, since we have no access to “unconceptualized reality”: we are unable to “stand back” and compare our thoughts (framed in a language) with the world how it would be if it were not described in any language. From this Rorty concludes that philosophers should give up on the very idea that there is a relation of “representation”, “correspondence” or “agreement with facts” between our words and the world, and instead acknowledge that the only relation between our words and the world is a *causal* one.<sup>88</sup> What Putnam takes issue with is Rorty’s move from declaring that the idea of an “access to unconceptualized reality” is *unintelligible* to presenting us with an *impossibility*. Putnam:

In stating the argument that I just criticized, I said that it is impossible to stand outside and compare our thoughts and language, on the one hand, with the world on the other;

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<sup>86</sup> cf. ibid., 222

<sup>87</sup> ibid., 223

<sup>88</sup> cf. Rorty 1986, 307-9, Rorty 1989, ch. 1, Rorty 1995, 297-300

and, indeed, this is the way Rorty puts the matter. But if we agree that it is *unintelligible* to say, ‘We sometimes succeed in comparing our language and thought with reality as it is in itself,’ then we should realize that it is also unintelligible to say, ‘It is *impossible* to stand outside and compare our thought and language with the world.’ [...]

Rorty seems to be telling us of an impotence, [...] but it turns out on examination that the impotence is a mirage, or even less than a mirage – that it is chimerical”.<sup>89</sup>

Moreover, in Putnam’s eyes, Rorty fails to see that this idea of “direct access to reality” has nothing to do with what we ordinarily mean when saying that something “agrees with the facts” or “correctly represents a state of affairs”:

[Rorty] moves from a conclusion about the unintelligibility of metaphysical realism (...) to a skepticism about the possibility of representation *tout court*. We are left with the feeling that there is no metaphysically innocent way of saying that our words *do* “represent things outside themselves.

While I agree with Rorty that metaphysical realism is unintelligible, to stop at that point without going on to recover our ordinary notion of representation (and of a world of things to be represented) is to fail to complete that journey ‘from the familiar to the familiar’ that is the true task of philosophy.<sup>90</sup>

As Putnam argues, the failure of a particular philosophical theory of representation has no bearing on our right to speak of “representation” and “correspondence” in ordinary discourse. Putnam wishes to defend this “common-sense realism” against “Realism” – philosophical theories which purport to *capture* this common-sense realism, thereby reformulating it “with the aid of a great deal of supposedly explanatory machinery”<sup>91</sup>. Unlike Rorty, Putnam argues that philosophers should do away only with this philosophical machinery while recovering the ordinary senses of expressions such as “that agrees with the facts”. This is, in Putnam’s view, the principle Wittgensteinian lesson which Rorty ignores:

Wittgenstein never suggested that our ordinary ways of talking and thinking – our *ordinary* talk of ‘following a rule’ [...] – are shown to be mere *mythology* by the fact that

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<sup>89</sup> Putnam 1994, 299

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*, 300

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, 303

our accounts of what it is to follow a rule [...] run thin. We walk on thin ground, but we do walk. Rorty, however, does suggest that even ordinary talk of objectivity, or rational acceptability, or truth is something mythological”.<sup>92</sup>

In his *Mind and World* (1994), John McDowell argues against two opposing views of the kind of constraint that experience imposes on our thinking about the world. The basic problem he deals with there is the following: the realm of thought is the realm of concepts, justifications, and inferential relations – yet in order for thought to be about the world, our thinking appears to have to be open to input from *outside* this realm. Experience is to supply just this sort of input. One of the views McDowell criticizes is the one put forth by Gareth Evans in his *Varieties of Reference* (1982). Evans holds that in experience, a subject acquires “informational states” which are non-conceptual. In a second step, Evans holds, through “exercising basic conceptual skills”, the subject moves from this “perceptual experience” to a judgment about the world – a judgment “based upon” that state.<sup>93</sup> In this way, experience is taken to be able to justify beliefs about the world. Against Evans’s view, McDowell argues that the idea of an experience having a “non-conceptual” content is empty, since the idea of “content” is necessarily linked to the application of concepts. According to McDowell, Evans’s idea that this “non-conceptual” content is being turned into “conceptual” content through the subject’s activity of “conceptualization” is, on the face of it, just a version of the “Myth of the Given”: the idea that a belief about the world can be *justified* by something which has no conceptual structure at all.<sup>94</sup> As Wilfrid Sellars had argued in his “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind” (1956), we cannot really understand the relations in virtue of which a belief is justified except as relations within the “space of reasons”<sup>95</sup>: relations such as “implies” or “makes probable”. These relations hold only between members of this space of reason – leaving it unexplained how experience (conceived as “non-conceptual”) could *justify* (as opposed to *cause*) a belief. As McDowell puts it, “the idea of the Given offers exculpations where we wanted justifications”<sup>96</sup>: experience, as conceived by Evans, offers *some* con-

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<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*, 345 (A more detailed account of Putnam’s of why Rorty is not following in Wittgenstein’s footsteps can be found in *Pragmatism – An Open Question* (1995), ch. 2 (“Was Wittgenstein a Pragmatist?”), esp. 32-41. There, as in his *Renewing Philosophy* (1992), Putnam also sets his face against relativist consequences drawn from Wittgenstein’s employing of the term “language game” (cf. Putnam 1992, 158-79).)

<sup>93</sup> cf. Evans 1982, 227

<sup>94</sup> cf. McDowell 1994, 53

<sup>95</sup> Sellars 1956, 289-9

<sup>96</sup> McDowell 1994, 8



straint on our thinking, but not the kind we were looking for: *rational* constraint, i.e. *justifications* of beliefs about the world.

The other view McDowell discusses in *Mind and World* is the one which has been advanced by Donald Davidson. In “A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge” (1986), Davidson had argued that “nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief”<sup>97</sup> – that experience (“sensations”) is of merely *causal* relevance to a subject’s beliefs and judgments, having no bearing on the status of our beliefs as *justified* or *warranted*<sup>98</sup>. There, Davidson argued that the idea of a confrontation of beliefs with the deliverances of the senses “one by one” makes no sense<sup>99</sup>. McDowell criticizes Davidson for recoiling too far from the “Myth of the Given”:

Davidson’s picture depicts our empirical thinking as engaged in with no rational constraint, but only causal influence, from outside. This just raises a worry as to whether the picture can accommodate the sort of bearing on reality that empirical content amounts to [...]. I think we should be suspicious of his bland confidence that empirical content can be intelligible in our picture even though we carefully stipulate that the world’s impacts on our sense have nothing to do with justification.<sup>100</sup>

According to McDowell, this worry is not alleviated through Davidson’s argument that, while we cannot confront our beliefs with the world “one by one”, we can still know that “belief is in its nature veridical”<sup>101</sup> – that *most* of the beliefs in our “body of beliefs” about the world are true. This is so, according to Davidson, because in order to find out what beliefs a speaker holds, we must *interpret* him, and it is in the nature of interpretation that in order to be able to do that, we must find him to be mostly right about the world with which we observe him interact causally.<sup>102</sup> What McDowell criticizes is not the argument itself, but Davidson’s entitlement to call what is being so shown to be mostly in sync with the world a “body of beliefs”:

[W]e can have empirical content in our picture only if we can acknowledge that thoughts and intuitions are rationally connected. Davidson undermines his right to the

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<sup>97</sup> Davidson 1986, 141

<sup>98</sup> cf. *ibid.*, 143

<sup>99</sup> cf. *ibid.*, 143-4

<sup>100</sup> McDowell 1994, 14-5

<sup>101</sup> Davidson 1986, 146

<sup>102</sup> cf. *ibid.*, 146

idea that his purportedly reassuring argument starts from, the idea of a body of beliefs.<sup>103</sup>

In order to be a *belief* about the world at all, McDowell insists, something needs to be subject to a *rational* – rather than merely *causal* – constraint to begin with. According to McDowell, Evans and Davidson are occupying two horns of a dilemma which is put into place by the following seemingly innocent idea: As rational animals, we are participating in the realm of Nature – as well as in the realm of (social) Norms. As animals, we have powers of perception which are not different in kind from those of other animals. Yet as rational creatures, we also have the power to judge – to form *beliefs* about the world. Now the conception of how beliefs about the world are justified by experience which naturally arises from this is Evans's: Namely, that in perception, we are given the same content as would any other animal – and then, this content is being “conceptualized” by a faculty which is distinctively human. The result is something which can figure as a *justification* for a belief. When we realize that this idea is just a version of the Myth of the Given, we arrive at Davidson's position: Experience can only be causally related to our beliefs about the world.

What McDowell urges us we need to do in order to escape the dilemma – including the two unsatisfying accounts of Evans's and Davidson's which form its horns – is to reject the two-stage conception of experience which is at the root of the dilemma.<sup>104</sup> This would mean to give up on the idea that “receptivity makes an even notionally separable contribution to its co-operation with spontaneity”<sup>105</sup> – to accept the fact that the content of experience is “conceptual all the way down”.<sup>106</sup> McDowell:

The relevant conceptual capacities are drawn on *in* receptivity. It is not that they are exercised *on* an extra-conceptual deliverance of receptivity. We should understand [...] experiential intake not as a bare getting of an extra-conceptual Given, but as a kind of occurrence or state that already has conceptual content. In experience one takes in, for instance sees, *that things are thus and so*. That is the sort of thing one can also, for instance, judge.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> McDowell 1994, 18

<sup>104</sup> cf. McDowell 1994, 62-3

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*, 51

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*, 41

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, 9

According to McDowell, conceptual capacities, which are *exercised* when we, for instance, *judge* that there is a table in front of us, are already *operational* when we perceive the table in front of us.<sup>108</sup> No mysterious, posterior “conceptualization” of this perception takes place. A corollary of this is that McDowell rejects the picture of our sharing with animals a certain “bare” type of perception. Rather, McDowell insists that for rational animals, perception is of a different *type* than that of other animals:

We do need to say that we have what mere animals have, non-conceptual content, and we have something else as well, since we can conceptualize that content and they cannot. Instead we can say that we have what mere animals have, perceptual sensitivity to features of our environment, but we have it in a special form. Our perceptual sensitivity to our environment is taken up into the ambit of the faculty of spontaneity, which is what distinguishes us from them.”<sup>109</sup>

Now McDowell does not wish to replace one mysterious idea – that in perception, we move from a “non-conceptual” state to a conceptual one – by another mysterious idea – that as rational animals, we are occupying two unrelated spheres: the sphere of Nature and the sphere of Norm.<sup>110</sup> McDowell turns to Aristotle to highlight how the idea of a “second nature”<sup>111</sup> can be exploited to show that there is nothing mysterious about our inhabiting these two spheres:

We cannot credit appreciation of them [norms] to human nature as it figures in a naturalism of disenchanted nature, because disenchanted nature does not embrace the space of reasons. But human being are intelligibly initiated into this stretch of the space of reason by ethical upbringing [...]. The resulting habits of thought and action are second nature. This should defuse the fear of supernaturalism. Second nature could not float free of potentialities that belong to a normal human organism. This gives human reason enough of a foothold in the realm of law to satisfy any proper respect for modern natural science.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> cf. *ibid.*, 10/11, as well as McDowell’s essay “Conceptual Capacities in Perception” (2009), section 2

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*, 64. See also Matthew Boyle’s paper “Additive Theories of Rationality: A Critique” (2010) for an elaborate discussion of this contrast between (how Boyle terms them) “additive” and “transformative” approaches to rationality.

<sup>110</sup> cf. *ibid.*, 77-8

<sup>111</sup> cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 2

Now it is through this rendering less mysterious of the things that we are already acquainted with how McDowell wishes to follow Wittgenstein's way of dissolving philosophical problems. He contrasts his way of making the dualism of Norm and Nature look philosophical unthreatening with accounts which ascribe to Wittgenstein the idea that our occupying the sphere of Norms is inherently mysterious, and that therefore the sphere of Norms has to be reconstructed out of materials drawn exclusively from the sphere of Nature: *social interactions*, conceived as non-normative to begin with, can be taken as the material out of which an account of normativity can then be constructed. McDowell rejects this kind of constructive philosophy as going against Wittgenstein's repeated insistence to not want to provide *theories* in philosophy<sup>113</sup>, and has failing to see how Wittgenstein's aim is to get at the root of the impression of mysteriousness that leads us into philosophical problems in the first place. Accordingly, what McDowell wishes to provide with his "naturalism of second nature" is not a *theory*: McDowell says of the labels which he employs – labels such as this, or as "naturalized Platonism" – that they serve "only as a shorthand for a 'reminder', an attempt to recall our thinking from running in grooves that make it look as if we need constructive philosophy".<sup>114</sup>

In his "Syntactic Metaphor: Frege, Wittgenstein, and the Limits of a Theory of Meaning" (1990), *Phantasie und Kalkül [Imagination and Calculus]* (1992), and "'Syntaktische Metaphern' und ihre begrenzende Rolle für eine systematische Bedeutungstheorie" ["Syntactic Metaphors" and their Limiting Role for a Systematic Theory of Meaning] (1993), Hans Julius Schneider takes issue with the project of a systematic theory of meaning as advocated by Michael Dummett. Dummett, in "What is a Theory of Meaning?" (1975) and "Can Analytical Philosophy Be Systematic, and Ought it to Be?" (1977), had argued that while Wittgenstein's views on language and meaning appeared generally hostile to the project of a systematic theory of meaning modeled after Frege, some of his insights could be integrated into such a theory, while other of his views which apparently questioned such a project altogether could be safely put aside. Against this, Schneider argues that Wittgenstein's views on language and meaning stand in direct opposition to any such systematic approach to language. In his argument against Dummett, Schneider contrasts the ways in which Frege and Wittgenstein interpreted the following linguistic phenomenon: Often, expressions which form part of the sentences of our language are in structural agreement on the *grammatical* level, but not on the *conceptual* level. Frege took examples such as (1) "The evening star is a planet" and (2) "The

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<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*, 84

<sup>113</sup> *cf. ibid.*, 93-4

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*, 95

evening star is the morning star” – where the sameness of the grammatical form *A is B* conceals the fact that in (1), the object “evening star” is brought under the concept “planet”, whereas (2) states the identity (substitutability) of the object names “evening star” and “morning star” – to hint at the existence of a *logical* structure beneath the grammatical. Since we do, in cases such as this one, perceive a difference between what is related grammatically and what is related conceptually, Frege held, we should go about constructing a medium which captures this logical (conceptual) structure, which is obscured by the grammatical structure of our language. In this medium, a *formal* analogy would always express a *logical* analogy – unlike in our language, where formal analogy (on the grammatical level) conceals a difference on the logical level. We could then translate sentences from our language into this medium, thereby revealing their true (logical) structure. While Frege’s aim was to develop this “concept-script” merely for scientific purposes, philosophers like Dummett hold that it can and should be exploited also for the purposes of a theory of meaning of *natural languages*: since, as they hold, in understanding the sentences of our language, we *inexplicitly* draw on what such a “concept-script” aims to make *explicit*, it should be able to play a role in explaining aspects of meaning in natural languages – especially in explaining what conceptual relations hold between expressions forming part of complex sentences (as opposed to the “merely grammatical” relations). As Schneider brings out, later Wittgenstein’s account of what Frege took to be a divergence of the grammatical structure of a sentence from its logical structure is this: The sameness in grammatical form of sentences such as (1) and (2) is not the result of a mapping of a pre-existing multitude of “conceptual” relations onto few linguistic forms – rather, in the evolution of language, forms which were originally developed in specific contexts were *projected* into new contexts. Schneider:

The starting point of a projection in this sense is not a pre-structured reality, waiting to be articulated in language. The uniformity of grammatical forms is not the result of a reduction of an independently existing diversity to a limited number of linguistic forms. Rather, the starting point of a projection is a pre-existing form, at first necessarily specific to a *particular* area of discourse, which then is carried into *new* areas of discourse in a free, spontaneous act of creative imagination.<sup>115</sup>

One of the examples which Schneider gives to illustrate this is the following. Schneider’s point of departure there is Wittgenstein’s language game with the builders from the beginning

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<sup>115</sup> Schneider 1992, 332 [71]

of the *Investigations*. In this language-game, the numerals have been introduced in such a way that it is possible to give the order “five bricks”. Also, there are expressions like “this slab”, serving as expressions for objects (so the language game has a particular version of the form *A is B*, used in sentences such as “these slabs are broken”), and the step from orders to statements has been made. Now in this language-game, the numerals have so far only been used for orders or statements of the form “five slabs” or “four columns”, i.e., in the form *A is B*, a numeral has only appeared at the position of *A*, and never at the position of *B*. And now, Schneider ask us to imagine that a speaker utters the words “these slabs are five”. This means that he metaphorically projects the form “these *A* are *B*” into an area where it has not yet been used. What he does is that he uses a count-word to form an expression that is not expressing an act of counting (but, as we may say, the “result” of such an act). Although this is in a sense a “violation” of the rules of this language-game, the speaker can be pretty sure that the linguistic community will understand the utterance (of the new type “these slabs are *c*”):

The semantic structure ‘*x is/are P*’ must now be interpreted differently from before; an old form of expression is used to establish a new context of action, in which the results of counting activities are communicated (‘...are *c*’) *as if* they were ‘characteristics of things’.<sup>116</sup>

For this, Schneider introduces the expression “syntactic metaphor” (which he finds in Eric Stenius): an *old* form of expression is used to establish a *new* context.<sup>117</sup> According to Schneider, this process is crucial in how language expanded from primitive forms. Our present language is full of these syntactic metaphors, like when we speak not only of someone being in a sitting position, but also of him being “in the position” to issue a search warrant, or when we speak not only of someone having a gold tooth, but also of his “having” a headache or an idea. In each of these cases, the “conceptual” relation expressed by the *same* grammatical form is different: e.g., we do not “have” a headache in the same way as we “have” gold teeth.<sup>118</sup> Now what is crucial for Schneider is that for Wittgenstein, this difference, contrary to how Frege (and Dummett) took it, does not hint at a realm of “thought” (or conceptual structure) containing the true structure of “what is meant”. Rather, this difference results from the application of an *old* form in a *new* functional context. In order to understand what is meant,

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<sup>116</sup> Schneider 1992, 408 [134]

<sup>117</sup> cf. Schneider 1990, 147 / 1992, 332-9 [71-7] / 1993, 477-9

<sup>118</sup> cf. Schneider 1992, 337 [75-6]

the hearer needs to know not only the old form, but also to grasp the *projective step* which takes him to the new meaning.<sup>119</sup>

Now it is crucial for Schneider's argument against Dummett<sup>120</sup> that Wittgenstein not only offers an account for the divergence of grammatical and "conceptual" form which makes the idea of a realm of "thought" (or "conceptual" structure) expendable, but that it also offers the materials to show how Frege's concept-script itself – when, in Dummett's fashion, employed to "make explicit" the underlying "conceptual" structure of a natural language – is vulnerable to the charge of presenting its "conceptual" relations using forms that are suggestive of *other* types of relations. First, Schneider rehearses that in a concept-script, there cannot be syntactic metaphors: unlike the natural language whose "conceptual" form it attempts to capture, in a concept-script, an analogy in form always means an analogy in conceptual relation. In other words, in a concept-script, a difference in conceptual relation may not be presented as a formal analogy for purely syntactical reasons of that medium. Rather, a concept-script is supposed to present these conceptual relations in a *pure* form. This also holds for the step of translating a sentence from natural language into the concept-script: also in this case, the conceptual relation, as originally intended, may not be expressed in a form that would be suggestive of *another* type of relation.<sup>121</sup> Now as is well known, Frege, on the level below quantifiers and logical connectives, allowed for only one type of conceptual relation:  $F(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n)$  – an object falling under a concept (or more precisely: the holding of the relation  $F$  between the objects  $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n$ ). Schneider argues that for Wittgenstein, the relation of "an object falling under a concept" is just a *specific* form – developed in *specific* contexts – which Frege then projects onto *all* types of conceptual relations. As Schneider puts the point in *Imagination and Calculus*:

From the perspective of the projection thesis discussed above, such a reduction is suspected of taking a specific complex building device (oriented at first toward a *particular* content), and turning it into the only allowable 'form of representation', projecting it as a canonical form onto all possible contents. On this view, such a unifying process does not reflect something given, it does not reveal a deeper reality; instead, it forces [...] a form upon us.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> cf. Schneider 1992, 364-6 [98-100]

<sup>120</sup> as exposed in Schneider 1993

<sup>121</sup> cf. Schneider 1993, 483

<sup>122</sup> Schneider 1992, 367 [100-1]

Frege's role model for this "basic logical relation" were obviously mathematical operations such as "multiplied by" or "added to". More generally, Wittgenstein describes this relation as the relation between a "spatial body and its color" (PG 202). If this is so, Schneider argues, the step of translating a sentence from natural language into the concept-script – which involves bringing *any* type of relation into the form "the object a has the property F" – does indeed involve syntactic metaphors: for reasons having to do with the syntax of the concept-script alone, different conceptual relations are expressed in the same form – moreover, in a form that is suggestive of *another* type of conceptual relation. The relation of "the object a has the property F" – which Frege takes to be the basic logical relation – is, for Wittgenstein, just *one* of the grammatical forms of our language – one, moreover, which has been projected into many different kinds of functional contexts. Therefore, if we translate a sentence with another form into *this* form, we are transferring it into a form which is suggestive of *another* type of relation. This means that the translation into a concept-script does not *reveal* the true conceptual structure of a sentence of our language – rather, it merely means to privilege one mode of presentation over others. Like our language, the concept-script is just a *specific* mode of expression, rather than a "pure" representation of "thought".<sup>123</sup> Schneider (in *Imagination and Calculus*):

Yet the generality of this particular device for forming complexes does not, in Wittgenstein's opinion, register a discovery of what joins thought components and thoughts 'in reality', independently of all questions of linguistic expression. The generality results instead from Frege's decision to make a certain form of representation obligatory, in compliance with and in amplification of a certain tradition in logic.<sup>124</sup>

Having thus shown how the idea of a hidden "structure of thought" rests itself on the neglect of the phenomenon of syntactic metaphor, Schneider concludes that the project of a systematic theory of meaning – which aims at revealing the few principles which allow the speaker to "calculate" the meaning of a new sentence out of its constituent parts and the manner of their combination – must fail, because it neglects the activity of *imagination* which comes into play each time when a hearer (or speaker) grasps a projection of an old grammatical form into a new contexts of use.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> cf. Schneider 1993, 485 / 1992, 366-8 [100-2]

<sup>124</sup> Schneider 1992, 367-8 [101]

<sup>125</sup> cf. Schneider 1993, 486 / 1992, 395-7 [124-5] / 1990, 150-2



## 1.5 The Resolute Reading of James Conant

In this dissertation, I will focus on two of the commentators in the group of readers of Wittgenstein which I am currently introducing: Martin Gustafsson and Oskari Kuusela. Also, I will draw on the writings of James Conant. Let me first give a more detailed introduction into the reading of James Conant, before introducing the readings of Gustafsson and Kuusela. Conant has offered an elaborate criticism of the views of Baker and Hacker. He holds that Baker and Hacker, in the way they actually spell out later Wittgenstein's approach to dissolving philosophical problems, still saddle this approach with involving *theses* about language and meaning – thereby in effect distorting Wittgenstein's vision of how philosophical problems can really be *dissolved completely*. Conant argues that Baker and Hacker's account of what the diagnosis of *nonsense* comes down to for the later Wittgenstein is shaped by a misreading of Wittgenstein's conception of nonsense in the *Tractatus*. In his papers "Wittgenstein's Later Criticism of the *Tractatus*" (2006) and "Why Worry about the *Tractatus*?" (2004), Conant argues that already in his early work, Wittgenstein had a conception of nonsense that was far removed from Baker and Hacker's idea of a "violation" of rules (in the case of the *Tractatus*, the rules whose violation they took to yield nonsense where those of logical syntax). Conant argues that by getting clear about what "nonsense" came down to the author of the *Tractatus*, it comes out that later Wittgenstein could not have entertained a conception of nonsense that had anything to do with "violations of rules of grammar". In his paper "Wittgenstein on Meaning and Use" (1998), Conant sets out to clarify, via a critique of the readings of nonsense in later Wittgenstein put forward by Baker and Hacker as well as Marie McGinn, what, in the eyes of the later Wittgenstein, diagnosing nonsense instead comes down to. In "Why Worry about the *Tractatus*?", Conant shows how such "substantial" accounts of nonsense have been used to saddle later Wittgenstein – against his own intentions – with an account of the conditions of meaningful speech. In his "Comment on Diamond's 'Unfolding Truth and Reading Wittgenstein'" (1999), Conant criticizes another way how later Wittgenstein has been saddled with a theoretical answer to the question "What does meaning something consist in?" – namely, by misreading the status of his remarks on a relation between the meaning of words and their use.

In "Wittgenstein's Later Criticism of the *Tractatus*"<sup>126</sup>, Conant gives an introduction into his "resolute reading" of Wittgenstein's early work. At the core of this reading is the re-

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<sup>126</sup> which he had principally laid out in his article "The Method of the *Tractatus*" (2002). This and other articles by resolute readers of the *Tractatus* initiated a large-scale debate on how to read early Wittgenstein's work. Other important articles and books advocating a resolute reading of the *Tractatus* were Michael Kremer's "The

jection of the idea that Wittgenstein there aimed to put forward a theory of the criteria of linguistic meaningfulness – a theory which, when applied to the sentences which putatively express it, yields the verdict that those sentences themselves do not live up to these criteria and therefore are nonsense.<sup>127</sup> The central argument of the “resolute reading” against this received reading is that Wittgenstein’s avowed aim in the *Tractatus* was not to put forward a theory, but to exercise the activity of philosophical elucidation. Conant argues that taking Wittgenstein at his word requires a different account of what nonsense was for him, and of why he wrote about the propositions in the book that serve as such elucidations that “anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as *nonsensical*” (T 6.54). The account of nonsense which Conant rejects holds that the propositions that Wittgenstein speaks of in T 6.54 are to be understood as conveying to the reader *ineffable* insights (about the conditions of the possibility of language) that the reader is supposed to “grasp” although the author cannot “express” them.<sup>128</sup> This reading holds that these insights are conveyed to the reader by the respective ways in which each of these propositions *violate* the conditions on sense which the book seeks to adumbrate.<sup>129</sup> In Conant’s eyes, this comes down to the following paradoxical idea:

The author of the *Tractatus* wants its reader to reject the sentences of the book as nonsense on principled grounds; yet, in the very moment of rejecting them, the reader is to continue to retain a grip on these grounds by continuing to identify, grasp, and believe that which these sentences would say, if they had a sense.<sup>130</sup>

Conant argues that this idea is still part of the ladder that Wittgenstein asks his reader to eventually throw away.<sup>131</sup> Conant rejects the idea that for the early Wittgenstein, nonsense was the result of a sentence being “intrinsically flawed because of its own internal logical or

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Purpose of Tractarian Nonsense” (2001), Thomas Rickett’s “Wittgenstein against Frege and Russell” (2002), Matt Ostrow’s *Wittgenstein’s Tractatus: A Dialectical Interpretation* (2001), and Ed Witherspoon’s “Conceptions of Nonsense in Carnap and Wittgenstein” (2000), as well as other articles published in *The New Wittgenstein* (edited by Alice Crary and Rupert Read). Important articles criticizing resolute readings of the *Tractatus* were Peter Hacker’s “Was He Trying to Whistle it?” (2000), Peter Sullivan’s “On Trying to be Resolute: A Response to Kremer on the *Tractatus*” (2002) and “What is the *Tractatus* About?” (2004), Meredith Williams’s “Nonsense and Cosmic Exile” (2004), Ian Proop’s “The New Wittgenstein: A Critique” (2001), and John Koethe’s “On the ‘Resolute’ Reading of the *Tractatus*”, as well as other articles in Volume 26 (3) of *Philosophical Investigations*. For a recent collection of articles showcasing the debate, see *Beyond the Tractatus Wars* (2011), edited by Rupert Read and Matthew Lavery.

<sup>127</sup> cf. Conant 2006, 174-6

<sup>128</sup> cf. Conant 2006, 175

<sup>129</sup> cf. Conant 2006, 175

<sup>130</sup> Conant 2006, 176

<sup>131</sup> cf. Conant 2006, 176

conceptual structure”<sup>132</sup>. What he instead takes to be behind Wittgenstein’s diagnosis of “non-sense” comes out the clearest in his discussion of the role of the devices of logical notation that Wittgenstein introduces in the *Tractatus*. Conant there criticizes an account of the role of logical notation which comes in the wake of the received (“standard”) reading of the book:

A standard reader will assume that the notation at issue here is one which is to be constructed so as to reflect the requirements of the theory that is laid down in the book: only those sentences the theory deems permissible will be constructible in the notation; and those sentences the theory deems nonsensical will involve illegitimate constructions forbidden by the syntactical rules governing the employment of the notation.<sup>133</sup>

In other words: The received reading of the *Tractatus* holds that Wittgenstein introduces his devices of logical notation as an instrument to determine whether a given sentence has a proper logical syntax or not. If a sentence cannot be translated into the logical symbolism, it is lacking a proper logical syntax and therefore is nonsense. Conant rejects this account of what nonsense is for the author of the *Tractatus*. He argues that the devices of logical notation which Wittgenstein introduces in the book are not meant to reflect the requirements of a theory of the conditions of meaningful speech. Rather, they are elucidatory instruments – which can be employed independently of a putative “theory” that the book allegedly puts forth. In Conant’s view, the purpose of attempting to translate a sentence that we are inclined to utter when doing philosophy into the logical notation is not to diagnose a “violation of logical syntax” – but rather to help us see whether we are unwittingly hovering between two possibilities of making sense. In “Wittgenstein’s Later Criticism of the *Tractatus*”, Conant compares Wittgenstein’s employment of the devices of logical notation with the process of translating a sentence from ordinary English into a language with more resources and distinctions. To him, the intended effect of translating a sentence into a logical notation is just like that of translating a sentence containing the English word “or” into Latin: by reflecting whether to

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<sup>132</sup> Conant 2006, 176. In his “Two Conceptions of *Die Überwindung der Metaphysik*” (2001), Conant charges Hacker with effectively ascribing to early Wittgenstein the conception of nonsense advocated by Carnap in “Überwindung der Metaphysik durch logische Analyse der Sprache” (1932). Hacker, in his “Wittgenstein, Carnap, and the New American Wittgensteinians” (2003), responded by arguing that Conant’s views on Wittgenstein as well as Carnap are misconceived. A similar criticism was put forth by Hans-Joachim Glock against Conant and also Cora Diamond in his “All Kinds of Nonsense” (2004). In her “Logical Syntax in Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*” (2005), Cora Diamond renewed Conant’s charge that the text of the *Tractatus* gives no support for Hacker’s claim that logical syntax is something which “governs” language use, and that the *Tractatus* allowed for such things as “violations” of this logical syntax. In his “Wittgenstein, Contextualism, and Nonsense” (2008), Ed Dain defends Conant’s and Diamond’s accounts against Glock.

choose the Latin word “aut” or “vel” for what we mean there by “or”, we may discover that we have unwittingly been hovering between two possibilities of meaning that word – which in Latin are clearly distinguished as “aut” and “vel”.<sup>134</sup> Conant:

According to resolute readers, this is what nonsense is for the author of the *Tractatus*: an unwitting wavering in our relation to our words – failing to make genuine determinations of meaning, while believing that we have done so (see *TLP* 5.4733).<sup>135</sup>

In “Why Worry about the *Tractatus*?”, Conant puts the same point like this:

The point of employing such a notation was not to demonstrate to the philosopher that he had violated a principle of logical syntax. Rather, faced with a perspicuous representation in a proper logical symbolism of the possibilities available to him for meaning his words, the philosopher was to discover for himself that he had unwittingly hovered between alternative possibilities of meaning them, without determinately settling on any one.<sup>136</sup>

Thus, in recognizing that he had hovered between such alternative possibilities of making sense, the reader of the *Tractatus* recognizes the propositions of the book that serve as elucidations, not as “substantial” nonsense that is designed to hint at a theory of the conditions of meaningful speech, but – in seeing that there is nothing that could count as understanding *them* – as “mere” nonsense. Conversely, the ways that early Wittgenstein employs to make his reader see where he – while taking himself to frame thoughts about the “limits of language” and other philosophical topics – has lapsed into nonsense, do not depend on an antecedently given answer to the question “How does linguistic meaning come into being?”:

The *Tractatus* seeks to bring its reader to the point where he can recognize sentences within the body of the work as nonsensical not by means of an account of the conditions of meaningful speech which legislates certain sentences out of the realm of sense, but rather by bringing more clearly into view for the reader the life with language he already leads – by harnessing the capacities for distinguishing sense from

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<sup>133</sup> Conant 2006, 177

<sup>134</sup> cf. Conant 2006, 177-9

<sup>135</sup> Conant 2006, 178

<sup>136</sup> Conant 2004, 189

nonsense implicit in the everyday practical mastery of language which the reader already possesses.<sup>137</sup>

Now according to Conant, later Wittgenstein essentially retains this early conception of nonsense. Also for him, nonsense is the result of our not having determinately settled on one of many possibilities of making sense.<sup>138</sup> What changes between early and later Wittgenstein are the tools he employs to make us aware of our lapsing into nonsense while doing philosophy. Later Wittgenstein does not award devices of logical notation a privileged role in this elucidatory process any more. In “Wittgenstein’ Later Criticism of the *Tractatus*”, Conant explains how Wittgenstein, although he had set out, with the *Tractatus*, to offer a method of dissolving philosophical problems that did not rely on a theory about the conditions of meaningful speech, later came to recognize that this method unwittingly embodied just such a metaphysics of language. In his early conception of how philosophical elucidation proceeds and the role that a perspicuous logical notion must play in it, Wittgenstein later diagnosed the presence of hidden claims about the conditions of meaningful speech and how language *must* be. In his paper, Conant offers a list of these “unwitting commitments”<sup>139</sup> of Wittgenstein’s early work. These include:

- Through the employment of such a notation, it is possible for propositions to be rewritten in such a way that the logical relations are *all* clearly visible.
- Logical analysis will reveal *every* proposition to be either an elementary proposition or the result of truth-operations on elementary propositions.
- There is such a thing as *the* logical order of our language.
- There is a general form of proposition and *all* propositions have this form.<sup>140</sup>

Conant:

In the actual list above, the italicized expressions in each of the above sentences indicate the occurrence of a moment of (what would count by later Wittgenstein’s lights as) *metaphysical insistence* – a moment in which a requirement is laid down.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Conant 2004, 185

<sup>138</sup> cf. Conant 2004, 189

<sup>139</sup> Conant 2006, 188, 195

<sup>140</sup> Conant 2006, 189

According to Conant, this laying down of requirements was something that completely escaped the attention of Wittgenstein while writing the *Tractatus* – whose aim had been to present a way of dissolving philosophical problems that did not involve any commitments to a specific theory of language or meaning.<sup>142</sup> As a result of this self-diagnosed failure, Wittgenstein altered his approach to dissolving philosophical problems in his later works – while remaining committed to the overall aim of his early book: dissolving philosophical problems *completely* by offering the reader a *perspicuous* representation of the possibilities available for making sense. Conant:

The task of the later philosophy lies in seeking a way to retain these early original aspirations to perspicuity and completeness while purging them of the metaphysical spirit with which they are unwittingly imbued in the early work.<sup>143</sup>

In “Why Worry about the *Tractatus*”, Conant sums up the change in Wittgenstein’s approach to the dissolution of philosophical problems in this way:

In Wittgenstein’s later method of philosophy, there is no longer any privileged role to be played by a logical symbolism. Rather what we find in its stead are a multitude of examples: examples of the sorts of things that we, when doing philosophy, are tempted to exclaim (‘A word stands for a thing’, ‘Only I can know whether I am in pain’ and so on), examples of some of the apparently related sorts of things that we, when not doing philosophy, actually do say or possibly might say (‘What does this word stand for?’, ‘Bring me a slab!’, ‘I wish I knew what was going on inside his head right now’), and (seeming) examples of situations whose possibility we are invited to imagine [...].<sup>144</sup>

In “Wittgenstein on Meaning and Use”, Conant describes in detail how later Wittgenstein sets out to dissolve philosophical problems by way of confronting us with such *examples*. Here is a first approximation:

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<sup>141</sup> Conant 2006, 192

<sup>142</sup> This is a point which those commentators of resolute readings do not fully grasp who charge them with advocating a “strong continuity thesis”. Cf. Meredith Williams, “Nonsense and Cosmic Exile” (2004).

<sup>143</sup> Conant 2006, 194

<sup>144</sup> Conant 2004, 189

Wittgenstein, in his later writings, describes the sort of awkward relation we occupy with respect to our words in such cases as one in which we are led ‘to speak outside language games’. In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein describes what is happening when we ‘speak outside language games’ as case of language ‘idling’ (PI 132) or being ‘on holiday’ (PI 38) because he takes the words we call upon in such cases to fail to engage – and thus fail to be at work in – any actual circumstances of use.<sup>145</sup>

Instead of asking us to translate a sentence which we are inclined to utter when doing philosophy into a logical notation, later Wittgenstein confronts us with a multitude of examples of “actual circumstances of use” – everyday situations in which we might utter this sentence (or the words and phrases of which it makes use).<sup>146</sup> But, against Baker and Hacker, Conant holds that the point of reminding us of our everyday employment of words is not to remind us that we have strayed too far from the ordinary – and thus “violated” the rules which “govern” the use of these words – but rather to bring out whether we have been unwittingly hovering between some of these everyday ways of employing a word without determinately settling on one of them. In “Wittgenstein on Meaning and Use”, Conant chooses the case of Wittgenstein’s treatment of skepticism in *On Certainty* in order to illustrate this. Conant argues that the point of reminding the skeptic of everyday situations in which we use the word “to doubt” is not intended to demonstrate to the skeptic that his use of this word is a violation of some rules which govern the use of “to doubt”, but rather to show him that he is facing a dilemma:

[E]ither he stays within our language-games and his words express a doubt but not the sort of super-doubt that he is after (his doubt will thus not generalize in the way that he needs it to in order to bring the possibility of knowledge as such in doubt), or he will be led to speak ‘outside language-games’, stripping his putative context of use of the concrete specificity (and hence the foothold of our criteria) which permits us to mean and thus say what we do on the occasions on which we ordinarily employ the word ‘doubt’ to express the concept of doubt.<sup>147</sup>

Now this may still sound as if the skeptic’s utterance is nonsense because he has strayed too far from a circumscribed realm of sense – that is, strayed too far from the one *right* way of

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<sup>145</sup> Conant 1998, 248

<sup>146</sup> cf. Conant 2004, 189

<sup>147</sup> Conant 1998, 250

using “to doubt”. But that is not what Conant means. Contrasting his view with Baker and Hacker’s, he writes:

No rule of grammar is adduced to exhibit the ineradicable flaw in the skeptic’s utterances. Rather the grammar of our various language-games is exhibited to the skeptic, in order to present him with an overview of the various possibilities of meaning his words that are available to him. He is to find, once presented with a perspicuous overview of the grammar, that either he is making perfect sense but failing to ask the questions he wants, or that it remains unclear which of the many things he can mean by his words he wants to mean.<sup>148</sup>

Here, Conant argues against Baker and Hacker that the problem with the skeptic’s use of “to doubt” is not that one cannot mean *that* with these words – but rather that it is unclear which of the many things one *can* mean by these words he has settled upon. Conant:

The aim is to offer a perspicuous representation of the various things he might mean by his words in order to show him that, in wanting to occupy more than one of the available alternatives at once and yet none particular at a time, he is possessed of an incoherent desire with respect to his words.<sup>149</sup>

In “Why Worry about the *Tractatus*?”, Conant puts the same point like this – while highlighting the continuity with Wittgenstein’s early view:

The aim, both early and late, is to help the reader or interlocutor to see that, until he settles upon one of the determinate things he can mean by his words, he has not yet succeeded in meaning anything by them. Thus, in both Wittgenstein’s early and later work, it is left for the reader to discover *for himself* that the problem with his words lies neither in the words themselves, nor in some inherent incompatibility between his words and their context of use, but in his confused relation with respect to his own words.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Conant 1998, 250

<sup>149</sup> Conant 1998, 250

<sup>150</sup> Conant 2004, 189-90



In “Why Worry about the *Tractatus*?” and “Wittgenstein on Meaning and Use”, Conant rejects Baker and Hacker’s account of nonsense as resulting from problems “in the words themselves” – namely, as the inherent incompatibility between certain combinations of expressions – and the picture of a “violation of rules” that comes with it.<sup>151</sup> In “Wittgenstein on Meaning and Use”, Conant writes:

[W]hat [...] later Wittgenstein calls grammar is not the name of a grid of rules we lay over language in order to point out where one or another of its prescriptions are violated.<sup>152</sup>

And in “Why Worry about the *Tractatus*?”:

The point of [Wittgenstein’s] examples and invitations is not to mark out some bright line of grammar which the philosopher is forbidden to cross.<sup>153</sup>

Now the passage just quoted above about the continuity between early and later Wittgenstein also refers to another account of nonsense which Conant rejects in these papers: nonsense as “inherent incompatibility between words and their context of use”. This is a misunderstanding of Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning and use that Conant finds embodied in the writings of Marie McGinn. It concerns remarks of Wittgenstein’s such as this one:

A philosopher says that he understands the sentence ‘I am here’, that he means something by it, thinks something – even when he doesn’t think at all how, on what occasions, this sentence is used. (PI 514)

What Conant finds in McGinn is the idea that the meaning of the sentence “I am here” is somehow fixed antecedently to its employment in different contexts, and what Wittgenstein wants to remind us here of is the fact that when the sentence “I am here” is imported into some contexts, the sense of the utterance is not determined – because the meaning of the words “I am here” does not *fit* these contexts. Conant thinks that by paying close attention to

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<sup>151</sup> cf. Conant 1998, 244-50, esp. 249, Conant 2004, 186-8

<sup>152</sup> Conant 1998, 249. However, Conant does not reject the notion of “rules of grammar” altogether. In his view, drawing on such rules has a place in a perspicuous presentation of the ways of making sense that truly are available to us. In this, he diverges from Stanley Cavell, who, in his “The Availability of Wittgenstein’s Later Philosophy” (1962), held that later Wittgenstein wished to show how “inessential the ‘appeal to rules’ is as an explanation of language” (Cavell 1962, 52).

the wording of a remarks of Wittgenstein's on meaning and use such as the following, such a reading can be exposed as being at odds with what Wittgenstein really wants to say:

Just as 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. (OC 348)

Conant:

What Wittgenstein says here is not (as McGinn proposes): it is clear what the sentence 'I am here' means, yet what is meant in saying it remains less than fully intelligible given the unsuitability of the context of use. What Wittgenstein says here about the words 'I am here' is precisely the opposite: that 'their meaning is not *determined* by the situation' – that their meaning still 'stands in need of determination'.<sup>154</sup>

Against McGinn, Conant holds that the meaning of an expression is not something which an expression possesses already on its own and which is then imported into a context of use. Rather, it is only against the background of a specific context of use that the expression acquires meaning at all: The context of use makes a crucial contribution to what thought is expressed by the words "I am here" on different occasions. Wittgenstein's diagnosing certain utterances of "I am here" as nonsensical is then seen by Conant as turning, not on an incompatibility between words and certain contexts of use, but on our having failed to at all supply such a context of use – of our having failed to make clear what we are *doing* with our words here.<sup>155</sup> In so rejecting Baker and Hacker's account of nonsense as inherent incompatibility between certain expressions, as well as rejecting McGinn's account of nonsense as an inherent incompatibility between words and certain contexts of use, Conant makes clear that he takes, in cases of nonsense, the problem to reside not with the words themselves, nor with the occasion of uttering them – but solely with *us*, namely with our "confused relation with respect to [our] own words"<sup>156</sup> – i.e., with our hovering between some of the many ways in which we *can* make sense with our words.

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<sup>153</sup> Conant 2004, 189

<sup>154</sup> Conant 1998, 240

<sup>155</sup> cf. Conant 1998, 241-4

<sup>156</sup> Conant 2004, 190

In his writings about Wittgenstein's later philosophy, Conant labels accounts of what "nonsense" was for later Wittgenstein such as those of Baker and Hacker and McGinn as "substantial nonsense". In doing so, Conant aims to highlight a continuity with the received reading of the *Tractatus*: just as commentators there took sentences of the book which Wittgenstein labeled "nonsense" to hint at a theory of the conditions of meaningful speech, when it comes to the *Investigations* and *On Certainty*, commentators also, through their mistaken accounts of nonsense, read sentences that later Wittgenstein labeled "nonsense" to hint at insights into the essential preconditions of language or of our linguistic practices. In "Why Worry about the *Tractatus*?", Conant gives two examples for this.

One of these examples concerns a certain received reading of Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*. In that book, Wittgenstein deals with an anti-skeptical strategy put forth by G. E. Moore. Moore aimed to counter the skeptic's theoretical doubt by pointing to things that we, in our everyday lives, take for perfectly granted. Thus, in one lecture, he aimed to counter the skeptic's doubt about the existence of the external world by holding up his hand and saying "I know this is a hand". Other examples of this sort of practical knowledge that Wittgenstein discusses in *On Certainty* are "The world existed a long time before my birth", "Things do not go in and out of existence", "Everyone has parents" and "I am here". Now according to Wittgenstein, Moore's utterances of these sentences are nonsense. As we had already seen in the case of "I am here", Wittgenstein, in diagnosing these utterances to be nonsensical, draws on the *circumstances* in which someone like Moore uses them. Now the received reading that Conant wishes to criticize gives the following account of why our uttering something like "The world existed a long time before my birth" is nonsense: These and the other examples are "framework propositions" – i.e. propositions which are part of the framework of our practice of inquiry. According to this reading, what Wittgenstein wants to bring out is that it is a necessary feature of any such practice that it have such a framework – a body of propositions that are taken for granted and never put into doubt. These propositions are the fixed points around which the practice of confirming and disconfirming knowledge-claims revolves. As such fixed points, they can neither be confirmed nor disconfirmed, neither be negated nor asserted. The skeptic's mistake is to believe that he can negate them while still making sense, whereas Moore's mistake is to believe that, in order to refute the skeptic, he can simply *assert* them. Wittgenstein's drawing on the *circumstances* in which Moore uses sentences such as "I am here" is meant to bring out that not the sentence itself is nonsense, but its utterance in a

situation where it plays a role as a framework proposition – i.e., in circumstances where we take it for perfectly granted.<sup>157</sup>

Now for Conant, this reading contains the same paradoxical idea which he criticized in “standard” readings of the *Tractatus*. It is the idea that we are to recognize an utterance of “The world existed a long time before my birth” (when playing a role as framework proposition) as *nonsense* – yet at the same time we are to grasp *what it is* that can neither be known nor doubted here. In other words: although “it” is nonsense, “it” is supposed to be one of the propositions of the body of propositions that are part of the framework of our practice of inquiry – which is necessary for this practice to at all proceed. Conant about the “truths” that “framework propositions” are supposed to display:

If the sceptic’s questions and Moore’s counterassertions are nonsense, then so, too, should be the framework propositions which seek to articulate and display those ‘truths’ – or quasi-truths. But how can the conclusion that they are nonsensical be made to cohere with the claim that they are fundamental to our linguistic practice and that that is why they cannot be doubted in the manner of the sceptic nor affirmed in the manner of Moore? [...] How can that which is asserted by a piece of nonsense be fundamental to anything?<sup>158</sup>

To Conant, the idea that Moore’s nonsensical utterances of things like “The world existed a long time before my birth” could reveal necessary features of our practice of inquiry is intrinsically linked to an account of nonsense à la McGinn. If we take the problem with Moore’s utterances to be that the antecedently fixed sense of his words clashes with the “philosophical” context in which he wishes to import them, then it seems plausible to think that we can still get a hold of this antecedently fixed sense of the words, although Moore’s uttering them *here* yields nonsense. But if we realize what Wittgenstein’s criticism of Moore’s utterance really amounts to, we will see that there is nothing for us to be grasped which somehow shines through an utterance of “The world existed a long time before my birth” when uttered e.g. in a philosophical debate. According to Conant, for Wittgenstein, there are many ways in which we *can* make sense using words like “Things do not go in and out of existence” and “Everyone has parents” – just as there are for “This is a hand” and “I am here”. In these everyday context (which, even if they did not exist to date, we could invent), words like “Everyone has parents” have the same kind of ordinary sense as “This is a hand” – which means, not

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<sup>157</sup> cf. Conant 2004, 177-80

the *foundational* sense of a “framework proposition”. Now when someone like Moore takes them out of these contexts into the limelight of a philosophical debate, this means that he is stripping these everyday phrases of the context of use which determines their meaning – thereby rendering his utterance of them nonsensical. In other words, Moore speaking nonsense is to be traced, not to the incompatibility of the antecedently fixed meaning of his words with their “philosophical” context of use, but to his refusing to settle on one of the everyday ways of making sense with these words.<sup>159</sup>

The point for Conant is that Wittgenstein, just as he aimed, in the *Tractatus*, to show that sentences about “logical form” are *mere* nonsense, aims, in *On Certainty*, to show that sentences about “the framework of our practices” are also *mere* nonsense. This means that just as it is a misconception of the *Tractatus* to believe that those sentences which Wittgenstein asks the reader to recognize as nonsensical reveal a theory of the conditions of meaningful speech which then legislates these sentences as violating these same conditions, it is a misconception of *On Certainty* to believe that there are “framework propositions” which reveal – as a necessary precondition of our practice of inquiry – the existence of “truths” which can be neither negated nor asserted – and that Moore’s utterances of these “framework propositions” are nonsensical because they violate this precondition of our practices by attempting to assert “them”. Rather, in both the *Tractatus* and *On Certainty*, what Wittgenstein diagnoses as generative of nonsense is our hovering between several ways of making sense – something which can be diagnosed by drawing on the lives with our words we already lead, rather than on some putative account of the conditions of meaningful speech or our practice of inquiry.<sup>160</sup>

Conant’s other example concerns a received reading of the “Private Language Argument”<sup>161</sup>. According to this reading, Wittgenstein’s aim in *Investigations* 243 ff. was to show that a “private language” does not satisfy one of the conditions on which language use rests – namely, the necessary *publicity* of language – and that therefore, such a language is *impossible*. This impossibility is to blame for Wittgenstein’s interlocutor lapsing into nonsense when uttering words such as “Only I can know my pain”. Now according to Conant, this way of understanding Wittgenstein’s remarks on a “private” language has the same paradoxical structure as the received readings of the *Tractatus* and *On Certainty*:

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<sup>158</sup> Conant 2004, 180

<sup>159</sup> cf. Conant 2004, 188, Conant 1998, 241-4

<sup>160</sup> cf. Conant 2004, 186-90

<sup>161</sup> cf. Conant 2004, 171-7, 186-8

Thus there is a right way of understanding what Wittgenstein means by ‘private language’ and this is the sort of thing that he is concerned to show cannot be. There is therefore supposed to be a determinate something that is the thing that the philosopher does want to mean that Wittgenstein is taken to be interested in singling out in order to show that that is something that the philosopher cannot mean because it is nonsense.<sup>162</sup>

The problem is that according to Wittgenstein, when we are following through with imagining a “language which describes my inner experiences and which only I myself can understand” (PI 256), we end up speaking nonsense. Yet at the same time, according to the received reading, Wittgenstein wants to show us that there is something definite which *cannot be*. And this would reveal a necessary condition of language use: that language is of necessity a public affair. According to Conant, this paradoxical reading is made possible by an account of nonsense à la Baker and Hacker: Just as they hold that the nonsensicality of a sentence is to be traced to the violation of a rule of grammar which forbids certain combinations of expressions, the received reading of the “private language argument” traces the nonsensicality of the idea of a “private language” to the incompatibility of the meanings which the words “private” and “language” have been antecedently given: these concepts are taken to be *incompatible*.<sup>163</sup> In both cases, strings of words are taken to express a logically incoherent thought – a thought that “is composed of intelligible ingredients combined in an illegitimate way”<sup>164</sup>. Conant rejects this account of nonsense and the reading of the “private language argument” that comes with it. Conant:

The point of the exercise of trying to imagine ‘a private language’ is to work through ‘the seeming possibility’ here – to try to think it all the way through – until we find it dissolves on us. The transition from latent to patent nonsense is the point of the exercise: the task is to help us see how the seeming possibility (of a ‘private language’) dissolves under the pressure of an attempt to work out what ‘it’ (seemingly) requires.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Conant 2004, 187

<sup>163</sup> cf. Conant 2004, 188

<sup>164</sup> Conant 2004, 184

<sup>165</sup> Conant 2004, 187

Thus, Conant rejects the idea that Wittgenstein wants his reader to grasp the definite content of the idea of a “private language” and at the same time realize that “that” is nonsense. Conant:

Rather, the point of the exercise is to get us to see that there is nothing for us to mean by the locution ‘private language’ that corresponds to what we, under the pressure of certain philosophical perplexities, want to mean by it.<sup>166</sup>

Once again, Conant argues that when Wittgenstein wants us to realize that we are lapsing into nonsense, what he means is “mere nonsense”, rather than “substantial nonsense”. The idea that Wittgenstein, in the “private language” sections of the *Investigations*, wanted to highlight one the necessary preconditions of language – the idea that language *must* be public – relies on the notion of there being a definite something which *cannot* be – a private language. Once the underlying “substantial” account of nonsense à la Baker and Hacker has been rejected – which made it seem as if the antecedently fixed sense of “private” and “language” could somehow shine through their illegitimate and therefore nonsensical combination “private language” – the idea that trying to work through the seeming possibility of such a “language” revealed a necessary precondition of language use cannot be sustained any more.<sup>167</sup>

Now when it comes to reading Wittgenstein’s later works, taking sentences which Wittgenstein labels as “nonsense” to hint at various conditions of meaningful speech is not the only thing that Conant criticizes in “standard readings” of the *Investigations* and *On Certainty*. In “Comment on Diamond’s ‘Unfolding Truth and Reading Wittgenstein’”, Conant addresses misreadings of Wittgenstein’s recurrent remarks on a relation between the meaning of words and their use. It concerns readings of remarks such as these:

For a *large* class of cases of the employment of the word “meaning” – though not for *all* cases of its employment – one can explicate the word thus: the meaning of the word is its use in the language. (PI 43<sup>168</sup>)

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<sup>166</sup> Conant 2004, 187

<sup>167</sup> cf. Conant 2004, 186-8

<sup>168</sup> Conant’s translation (Conant 1999, 2)

Asking whether and how a proposition can be verified is only a particular way of asking “How d’you mean?” The answer is a contribution to the grammar of the proposition. (PI 353)

In his paper, Conant sets out to correct the received reading of remarks such as these. The reason is that he sees commentators of these remarks making the following mistake:

[T]hey wind up, either implicitly or explicitly, taking Wittgenstein to be providing us with a general philosophical answer to the question “What does meaning something consist in?”. Wittgenstein ends up being read as answering the question by declaring that the meaning of a word consists in its use in the language, or in its method of verification, or in the conditions under which we are justified in asserting it, etc.<sup>169</sup>

Thus, once again, Conant’s objection to received readings of later Wittgenstein is that commentators have saddled Wittgenstein with a philosophical answer to the question “How does linguistic meaning come into being?” – in other words, with a theory of the conditions of meaningful speech.<sup>170</sup> And like before, Conant goes on to argue that Wittgenstein’s remarks are misread when taken to hint at such a theory. Yet this time, Conant is not dealing with misreadings of sentences which Wittgenstein has flagged as “nonsense”. Therefore, what he criticizes here is not the idea that these remarks were meant to make us “grasp” things that they themselves could not express – an idea facilitated by “substantial” accounts of nonsense. Rather, what is at issue here between Conant and the received readings of Wittgenstein’s later philosophy is the status of remarks of Wittgenstein’s that are not themselves nonsensical, but instrumental in bringing out the nonsensicality of other utterances. What is special about Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning and use comes out in another contrast between “Why Worry about the *Tractatus*?” and “Comment on Diamond’s ‘Unfolding Truth and Reading Wittgenstein’”. In this paper, Conant does not criticize received readings for holding that the conditions on meaningful speech which Wittgenstein putatively aimed to adumbrate in his

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<sup>169</sup> Conant 1999, 1

<sup>170</sup> Conant’s criticism also includes readings such as Baker and Hacker’s: “[C]ommentators wind up giving us a theory about the conditions of the possibility of meaning something by attempting to assign to the concept of a criterion or to the concept of a set of assertibility conditions or to the concept of the rules of a language-games a kind of explanatory weight that Wittgenstein could never have meant any of these notions to bear if he really means what he says [...] – to wit: that *the* mistake is to say that there is anything that meaning something consists in” (Conant 1999, 1). What Conant criticizes is that Baker and Hacker end up saddling later Wittgenstein with a theory about the conditions of the possibility of meaning something by assigning his comparison of language to a game with rules a much too great “explanatory weight” – thus giving an account of how words acquire meaning by being used to explicit rules of grammar.



later works come out *piecemeal* – through different kinds of violations of different kinds of conditions by different kinds of sentences (such as the necessary publicity of language through our lapsing into nonsense when saying something like “Only I can know my pain”, and the necessity of a “framework” of fixed points for our practice of inquiry through our lapsing into nonsense when saying something like “Things do not go in and out of existence”). Rather, what he criticizes about these readings here is that they take the remarks on meaning and use to hint at one *general* philosophical answer to the question “What does meaning something consist in?” Against these readings, Conant sets out to show that if we pay close attention to the wording of Wittgenstein’s remarks such as PI 43 and PI 353, we will see that they are not meant to provide any answer to the question “What does meaning something consist in?” In the case of PI 43, for example, Conant goes on to demonstrate that when we attend to the detailed wording of this passage, the often-quoted words from PI 43 – “The meaning of a word is its use in the language” – turn out, not to be a statement about what linguistic meaning consists in, but as a report on how we use one of the expressions of our language – namely, “the meaning of a word” – in everyday circumstances. Conant:

What Cora Diamond tells us Wittgenstein seeks to do with “truth”, he also seeks to do with “meaning”. Wittgenstein’s aim (in this passage and elsewhere) is not to define, but to explicate – to unfold – what we mean by “meaning” by looking to the ways in which we talk about it. To unfold meaning is not to offer a theory or a definition of it.<sup>171</sup>

## 1.6 The Resolute Reading of Martin Gustafsson

Let me now introduce another author in this category of commentators whom I will focus on in this dissertation: Martin Gustafsson. In his *Entangled Sense: An Inquiry into the Philosophical Significance of Meaning and Rules* (2000), Gustafsson sets out to determine the role that recourse to (linguistic) *rules* can play in philosophy. At the outset of his investigation, Gustafsson rejects a certain idea that he takes to be widespread in current philosophy of language: namely, the idea that such rules can be employed in order to provide an answer to the question: “How does linguistic meaning come into being?” Gustafsson:

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<sup>171</sup> Conant 1999, 2

It seems fair to say that, in the contemporary discussion of meaning and rules, it is usually taken for granted that the fundamental task of the philosophy of language is to provide an explanatory account of meaning. The basic question is supposed to be whether a rule-governed use of words can be what infuses those words with ‘life’.<sup>172</sup>

What Gustafsson goes on to show against this idea – the idea that the rule-governed use of signs can *explain* their meaningfulness – is that we need to take as primary, not “dead” signs that are infused with life by such a rule-governed use, but their being used to express a certain sense. In an argument directed against Dummett and Davidson<sup>173</sup>, Gustafsson shows the following:

[R]ules treat linguistic expressions not as intrinsically inert orthographic or phonological units, but as expressions *already in meaningful use*. This is true, even if the rules are formulated in a way that only ‘mentions’ the expression in question; for, what they then mention are expressions *qua* meaningfully used units. Rather than infusing life into a dead raw material of sounds and shapes, describing what words express means to take the presence of such life for granted.<sup>174</sup>

A crucial corollary of this fact that rules can only serve to describe our linguistic practice from *within*<sup>175</sup>, for Gustafsson, is that the notion of “rules” cannot be used to provide an explanatory account of meaning.<sup>176</sup> After having made clear what the recourse to rules can *not* do in philosophy, Gustafsson turns to the role that, in his view, rules *can* play: namely, that they are “often instrumental in the treatment of philosophical problems”<sup>177</sup>. In *Entangled Sense*, as also in his “Nonsense and Philosophical Method” (2006), Gustafsson then puts forth a detailed criticism of the lessons Baker and Hacker are drawing from later Wittgenstein when it comes to this role of *rules* in dissolving philosophical problems. In *Entangled Sense*, Gustafsson’s target are Baker and Hacker’s pronouncements about the role that those “rules of grammar” are supposed to play in such a dissolution – namely, pronouncements such as that rules of grammar “distinguish sense from nonsense”<sup>178</sup>, that those rules “determine what is a

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<sup>172</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 2

<sup>173</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 25-8

<sup>174</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 28

<sup>175</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 2

<sup>176</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 2, 11, 16, 28

<sup>177</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 3

<sup>178</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 40

correct use of language”<sup>179</sup>, that they “fix concepts”<sup>180</sup>, and that they “license (or prohibit) transitions between concepts”<sup>181</sup>. In “Nonsense and Philosophical Method”, Gustafsson centers his criticism on Hacker’s *practice* of dissolving philosophical problems.<sup>182</sup> In that paper, he focuses on Hacker’s criticism of R. L. Gregory’s theory of perception, as put forth by Hacker in his “Experimental Methods and Conceptual Confusion” (1991). What Hacker criticizes there are passages of Gregory’s such as the following:

[C]urrent physiological knowledge [...] is providing evidence of what features are accepted by the brain from the sense organs; especially what features of retinal images are accepted for vision [...] How are the selected features neurally represented, combined to give perception of objects? [...] It is generally assumed that many signalled features are somehow pieced together, to build up perceptions of objects from available data.<sup>183</sup>

What Hacker criticizes in Gregory is the “homunculus fallacy” – the fallacy of “attributing to *parts* of a human being (or animal) that which can only intelligibly be attributed to the whole human being”<sup>184</sup>. Hacker claims that it makes no *sense* to say of the brain that it “accepts” things from the sense organs, or that the brain “combines” or “pieces together” material from those organs. In other words, Hacker accuses Gregory, in cases such as the passages quoted, of speaking *nonsense*. In support of this, Hacker reminds the reader of the following rules of grammar pertaining to the use of verbs of perception:

Verbs of perception, like verbs of cognition, apply to the whole human being. What perceives is the perceiving person, not the organs with which he perceives, or his brain. It makes no literal sense to say that my perceptual organs see or hear, any more than it makes sense to say that the escapement on a clock tells the time, let alone that it or the clock knows the time. [...] All these verbs are applied by Gregory to the brain [...].

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<sup>179</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 269

<sup>181</sup> *ibid.* All passages cited in Gustafsson 2000, 15-6

<sup>182</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2006, 25

<sup>183</sup> Gregory 1973, 54. Quoted in Hacker 1991, 302. Quoted in Gustafsson 2006, 28

<sup>184</sup> Hacker 1991, 306. Quoted in Gustafsson 2006, 25-6

But not only does it not make sense to attribute these cognitive verbs to the brain, rather, even if it did, it would explain nothing.<sup>185</sup>

In both *Entangled Sense* and “Nonsense and Philosophical Method”, Gustafsson offers a critique of this kind of employment of rules of grammar in diagnosing nonsense. In “Nonsense and Philosophical Method”, Gustafsson criticizes Hacker’s “categorical way of drawing the line between what makes sense and what, supposedly, does not make sense”<sup>186</sup> – his “conceiving the achievement of clarity in a way which implies that philosophical confusions can be correctly identified and diagnosed over the head of the confused person her- or himself, as it were.”<sup>187</sup> In *Entangled Sense*, Gustafsson criticizes Hacker (and Baker) for “conceiv[ing] the possibilities of meaningful expression as, in some sense, *limited* by rules”, for thinking of rules as “*constrain[ing]* what those words can be used to express”, and for having Wittgenstein “seem[ing] to claim that meaning requires rules in the sense that linguistic significance arises because rules dictate what speakers are allowed and not allowed to do.”<sup>188</sup>

Gustafsson’s most thorough discussion of what he takes to be wrong with this way of conceiving the role of rules of grammar in dissolving philosophical problems and diagnosing nonsense can be found in chapter 1 of *Entangled Sense*. There, he furnishes many examples of meaningful speech to illustrate the fact that “rules of usage” (his term for what Wittgenstein calls “grammatical rules”<sup>189</sup>) do not *determine* whether what a speaker says makes sense or not. His first example concerns the rule of usage “The length of a river is specified in spatial terms”<sup>190</sup>. This is a rule to which utterances such as “The Nile River is 6670 kilometers long” do conform. Then, he imagines someone saying “The Nile River is a fortnight long”. At first glance, it seems quite unclear what this sequence of words might mean. Yet this changes if we imagine the following circumstances:

Consider, for example, a group of adventurers who discuss how long it would take to travel by speedboat along various famous waterways. One says, ‘The Rhine should take about 4 or 5 days’; another, ‘The Rio Grande requires longer time, at least a week’; and, a third, ‘The Nile River is a fortnight long’.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Hacker 1991, 306f. Quoted in Gustafsson 2006, 26

<sup>186</sup> Gustafsson 2006, 26

<sup>187</sup> Gustafsson 2006, 24

<sup>188</sup> All passages from Gustafsson 2000, 16

<sup>189</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 17

<sup>190</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 18

Given these circumstances, this utterance *does* make perfect sense – although it does not conform to the rule “The length of a river is specified in spatial terms”. Another example of Gustafsson’s features two people, Jonathan and Isabelle, who work at a printing office. One of their regular jobs is to print posters for the town’s symphony orchestra – posters which, on special occasions, vary in size. Now at one instance, when Jonathan starts loading the presses with paper for such posters, Isabelle notices that he has chosen the wrong size of paper. Isabelle interrupts him, saying “No, no, tonight’s concert is 2 yards 2 feet long”. Gustafsson:

Even if Isabelle’s utterance is not in accordance with the rule ‘The length of musical performances is specified in temporal terms’, and even if her way of talking is not established jargon at the office, the utterance is nonetheless immediately understandable and makes perfectly good sense.<sup>192</sup>

Examples such as these, Gustafsson holds, show that we need to consider things in a reverse order than Hacker does. Hacker takes established rules of usage as primary, and then measures an utterances as to whether it conforms to one of those rules. Gustafsson:

[T]o argue that Isabelle’s utterance is ill-formed nonsense because it does not obey the established rule ‘The length of musical performances is specified in temporal terms’ means to put the cart before the horse. What we should do, rather, is to note that Isabelle’s utterance is meaningful and, *hence*, well-formed, and that the rule fails to capture the form of use which Isabelle’s utterance instantiates.<sup>193</sup>

In other words, Gustafsson holds against Hacker that Isabelle’s utterance’s not conforming to the rule ‘The length of musical performances is specified in temporal terms’ is *irrelevant* to the question whether it makes sense. As we can see, her utterance *does* make sense. And now the only question remaining is *which* rule of usage she is following. As we can see, it is the rule ‘The length of musical performances is specified in terms of the spatial length of the poster advertising it’. As Gustafsson puts it more generally:

These examples illustrate the fact that we cannot *first* decide what rules are in force, and *then* use these rules to decide what, if anything, a given utterance or word-

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<sup>191</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 18

<sup>192</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 27

<sup>193</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 28

combination means. On the contrary, we can state the relevant rules – the rules that are ‘in force’ – only by way of understanding what is being said. It is not in virtue of its fulfilling some externally imposed standards of well-formedness that an utterance manages to express a certain sense. Again, what comes first is the fact that a meaning is being expressed; this *suffices* to make the utterance ‘well-formed’, in the relevant sense of that word. What the rules do is only register, afterwards as it were, wherein this form of use consists.<sup>194</sup>

Consequently, against Hacker’s idea that rules of grammar *determine* what makes sense to say and what does not, Gustafsson holds:

What comes *first* is the fact that something meaningful is being said. The rules serve only as *posterior descriptions* of what is expressed, and cannot determine it beforehand.<sup>195</sup>

This is what Gustafsson calls “*the primacy of meaningful expression*”<sup>196</sup>. With another example, he tries to bring out the confusion of perspectives which he takes to be at the root of Hacker’s conception. The example features Nora and her friend from Paris, Philippe. Nora has written a poem, and she asks Philippe to read it and tell her what he thinks of it. One of the things Philippe says is: “I don’t see why you bracken the final stanza”.<sup>197</sup> Nora responds: “No, no, ‘bracken’ is the name of a kind of plant. The right word is ‘bracket’”. Now on the surface, this example seems to conform to Hacker’s conception: Nora employs the rule of usage “‘bracken’ is the name of a kind of plant” as a *norm* or *prescription*. Yet, as Gustafsson brings out, this has nothing to do with the question whether Philippe’s utterance is *nonsense*. Gustafsson:

The rule “‘bracken’ is the name of a kind of plant” in no ways *stops* the word ‘bracken’ as it occurs in Philippe’s utterance from meaning bracket. Indeed, from *this* viewpoint there is no difference in principle between Philippe’s utterance and constructions [...] where, without previous warning, a word is given a new and yet immediately recognizable function.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 27-8

<sup>195</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 26

<sup>196</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 23

<sup>197</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 31

<sup>198</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 31

In other words, Gustafsson holds that Philippe's "I don't see why you bracken the final stanza" is no different in principle from Isabelle's "No, no, tonight's concert is 2 yards 2 feet long": in both cases, an expression is not used according to an established or "old" rule of usage, yet the utterance still makes perfect sense. Now at this point, Gustafsson imagines someone like Hacker objecting the following: The fact that Philippe's utterance manages to convey the message it conveys has nothing to do with what those words literally mean – for literally, they are nonsense, since the word 'bracken' occurs where, according to its literal meaning, it does not *fit*. Rather, the fact that those words still do convey a message is just a pragmatic *side-effect*. Gustafsson's answer:

In fact, the idea that, *strictly speaking*, Philippe's utterance is ill-formed nonsense, since he use the word 'bracken' where, given its literal meaning, it does not fit, involves a confusion of two quite different perspectives. One is the perspective from which one distinguishes between correct and incorrect English. From this viewpoint, the 'bracken' in Philippe's utterance does indeed constitute a linguistic mistake, and the rule "'bracken' is the name of a kind of plant" functions as a kind of prescription of how units of the orthographic design 'bracken' are correctly employed. The other perspective is one from which the relevant distinction is not between good and bad English, but between meaningful and meaningless speech. From this sort of perspective, Philippe's utterance is not different, in principle, from Isabelle's "Tonight's concert is 2 yards 2 feet long" [...]. This is a perspective from which rules of usage are not conceived as norms, but as mere descriptions of meaningful ways of talking.<sup>199</sup>

In Gustafsson's eyes, Hacker's conception involves a confusion of these two perspectives. Recognizing the difference between them, Gustafsson holds, has the following consequence:

If our concern is not to distinguish between good and bad English, but to capture real-life, meaningful employment of words, rules of usage are to be treated as descriptions rather than as prescriptions. From this sort of perspective, what makes the rules *rules* is not that they tell us what speakers should and should not do, but only that they describe *ways* of linguistic expression [...].<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 32

In particular, what Gustafsson takes the import of rules of usage to be, is that they serve to identify *forms of use* that are common to some utterances, while not common to others. As he elaborates, the rule “The length of a river is specified in spatial terms” serves to capture a form of use that the statements “The Rhine is 1320 kilometers long” and “The Rio Grande is 3030 kilometers long” have in common, whereas the rule “The length of a river is specified in terms of how long it would take to travel along the river by speedboat” serves to capture a form of use that the statements “The Rhine is 4 to 5 days long” and “The Rio Grande is a week long” have in common. What rules of usage are then able to capture is the *difference* in meaning between these two kinds of talking about the length of waterways – the difference in sense in which the length of a river is spoken of in each of these kinds.<sup>201</sup>

Now the import of this possibility of employing rules of usage to capture differences in forms of use – and therefore, differences in meaning – for Gustafsson lies in the fact that, according to him, many philosophical problems arise because we fail to keep apart subtle differences in ways of using our words. Gustafsson:

[M]any philosophical problems emerge from what might be called an *entanglement* in rules, in ways of using language. The rules in question may be perfectly alright in themselves, but when they are, as it were, unconsciously *crossed*, the result is a confusion of the typical philosophical kind.<sup>202</sup>

In *Entangled Sense*, Gustafsson gives the following example of such a confusion:

*Does time have a beginning or not?* On the one hand, it seems clear that time can have no beginning. For suppose that time started, say, 15 billion years ago [...]. Then, trivially, there would be no earlier points in time. For example, ‘16 billion years ago’ would not signify a point in time. But that is surely absurd! *Of course* 16 billion years ago is a point in time. [...]

On the other hand, maintaining that time has been going on for infinitely long seems equally problematic. For that would mean that an infinite period of time has passed before now. But if an infinite period of time had to pass before the present moment occurred, then it seems entirely incomprehensible how the present moment

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<sup>200</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 32

<sup>201</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 32-3

<sup>202</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 35



could occur at all. [...] So, time's having a beginning seems just as absurd as its having a beginning. An that is paradoxical! For, of course, either time has a beginning or it has not.<sup>203</sup>

According to Gustafsson, this seeming paradox is not a paradox at all. Rather, “the illusion of paradoxicality arises because one shifts between the two different forms of use without noticing it”.<sup>204</sup> In each of the two apparently irreconcilable view, Gustafsson tries to bring out, we engage in different ways of using the expressions “time” and “point in time”. As he takes it, in the first view, when we exclaim something like “*Of course* 16 billion years ago is a point in time!”, what we are drawing on is not an extraordinary state of affairs regarding “Time”, but rather our established rule of usage for “*n* years ago”:

This rule means, for example, that, no matter how large *n* is, expressions of the form ‘*n* years ago’ function as true or false answers to questions of the form ‘At what point in time did such-and-such-happen?’<sup>205</sup>

In other words: *this* form of use of “*n* years ago” and “point in time” does not include – as an intelligible mode of speaking – talk of a “*first* point in time”. On the other hand, when in the second view, we reject locutions such as “an infinite period of time has passed before now”, according to Gustafsson, we have switched to another form of using “time”. This form of use occurs in sentences such as “Time starts at 9.00” or “Time’s up!”. Gustafsson:

Here, ‘time’ is used to name a particular process [...]. Roughly, the picture is as follows. Time is a process, somewhat like a particular soccer game [...].<sup>206</sup>

In *this* form of use, talk of “an *infinitely long* time” or of “*infinitely many* points in time” is unintelligible. Now according to Gustafsson, each of these the two form of use of “time” and “point in time” is alright in itself, as each serves a purpose in our language. Yet the paradox of time having a beginning or not can only disappear once we become clear that in each of the seemingly irreconcilable views, “time” and “point in time” occur in these two *different* forms of use. Gustafsson:

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<sup>203</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 35-6

<sup>204</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 36

<sup>205</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 37

<sup>206</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 37/8

Problems arise only if we fail to recognize that this latter kind of use is different from the former one, epitomized by the claim ‘Time has no beginning’. Such failure makes us vacillate between the two and leads us into paradoxical reasoning of the kind rehearsed above.<sup>207</sup>

As Gustafsson highlights, this way of dissolving a philosophical problem stands in direct opposition to the way Hacker propagates:

The disentanglement of such confusions does not consist in deciding which ways of using language are ‘appropriate’ and which are ‘inappropriate’. What is needed is rather a clear identification of those different ways of using language that the confused individual fails to keep separate. The task is not to exercise some kind of censorship, but to help those who fail to keep track of their usage to solve the resulting perplexities by simply describing the relevant habits of speech.<sup>208</sup>

Since the perplexities are not caused, as Hacker takes it, by a speaker’s “violation” of an established rule of usage, but rather by his (unconsciously) *vacillating* between different rules of usage, the task of the philosopher consists, not in reminding the speaker of which rules of usage are *prescribed*, but rather in merely *describing* to him the different rules of usage between which he is so vacillating. Consequently, in “Nonsense and Philosophical Method”, Gustafsson charges Hacker with dismissing Gregory’s words as *nonsense* too easily:

After all, it takes little ingenuity to imagine contexts in which word-combinations such as “My ears and brain must have perceived the sound although I didn’t notice it”, or “My eyes saw what happened, but it was so horrifying that I became aware of it only a few days after the event,” are immediately intelligible. So, the question then becomes: What gives Hacker the right to treat as sacrosanct that particular form of use which he happens to describe, and denounce those other ways of speaking as nonsensical?<sup>209</sup>

Thus, the trouble with Gregory’s utterances cannot be that they do not conform to *any* established rule of usage – all they do is not conform to the *one* rule of usage which Hacker cites.

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<sup>207</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 38

<sup>208</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 35

<sup>209</sup> Gustafsson 2006, 27

According to Gustafsson, *if* there is a problem with Gregory's words, it can only be that he might be vacillating between different forms of use of words such as "to accept" or "to select". This would, of course, require a treatment which is more akin to the paradox of time's beginning. It is a treatment which, as Gustafsson holds, is the one that later Wittgenstein exemplified. Gustafsson:

Wittgenstein's most common reaction to philosophically troubling questions and statements is not to try to provide anything like an argument which demonstrates their nonsensicality. Instead, the first thing he does is often to ask something like: "What might this mean?" And then he goes on to describe different ways in which the question or statement or theory might be understood. Rather than somehow prove that the person who is troubled by the question speaks nonsense, Wittgenstein method is to start a dialogue where he asks, "Is *this* what you mean? Or is it *that*?", and so on.<sup>210</sup>

This method, as Gustafsson holds, is tailored to detect our unconsciously vacillating between different forms of use of an expression – like, in the case of the paradox involving time's beginning, different forms of use of "time" and "point in time". Accordingly, Gustafsson wishes to approach Gregory's words with the question "What is meant here?"<sup>211</sup> Gustafsson imagines asking Gregory the following:

"We don't understand what you are trying to say. We are familiar with applying verbs like 'select' and 'accept' to whole human beings. Thus, we use those words in sentences such as 'The physicist selects certain data from a series of experiments.' However, we have no idea of how to handle constructions such as 'The brain selects certain features of retinal images'. So, how are those constructions of yours supposed to function?"<sup>212</sup>

One of the options Gustafsson discusses is that Gregory comes up with an answer which satisfies us. This, Gustafsson imagines, could mean that he offers substitutes for sentences like 'The brain selects certain features of retinal images' which consist of purely causal-physiological descriptions.<sup>213</sup> In such a case, where Gregory would substitute words which

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<sup>210</sup> Gustafsson 2006, 28

<sup>211</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2006, 28

<sup>212</sup> Gustafsson 2006, 29

<sup>213</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2006, 29

confused us by others which do not confuse us, Gustafsson holds, we need to drop the charge of nonsensicality against Gregory's utterances – the only thing we might still say is that he expressed himself in a misleading way. As Gustafsson highlights:

Notice the considerable difference between this approach and Hacker's. In our imagined dialogue with Gregory, we described a certain use of words such as "accept" and "select". "The physicist selects certain data from a series of experiments" constitutes an instance of that use, whereas "The brain selects certain features of retinal images" does not. However, we did not say that that was a use which Gregory somehow had to follow in order to speak meaningfully. We did not claim to describe a grammatical reality to which Gregory, qua English speaker, is somehow responsible. Rather, we just asked him to clarify what his sentences meant.<sup>214</sup>

Another option Gustafsson discusses is that Gregory *fails* to come up with an answer which satisfies us. In this case, Gustafsson holds, we need to supply more grammatical remarks highlighting the *differences* between the use of "select" in 'The physicist selects certain data from a series of experiments' and 'The brain selects certain features of retinal images'. For instance, we may point out that in the case of the scientist, we can ask "What were his *reasons* for making this particular selection?", and ask Gregory, if he thinks this can be asked of the brain, too. In the case he says that this is what he thinks, Gustafsson holds, supplying more grammatical remarks is in order. Gustafsson:

For example, we may tell Gregory that we do not understand what it would mean to determine the "reasons" a brain may have for "selecting" certain features of retinal images. The usual way of determining a scientist's reasons is to look at what he or she says and writes; whereas, in contrast, investigating the brain's activity seems to involve nothing of the sort. And so on and so forth; the reader may imagine other grammatical remarks that one might want to submit at this point of the investigation.<sup>215</sup>

The crucial difference to Hacker is that we would at no point *interrupt* this process of asking "Do you mean *this*? Or *that*?" by claiming "Now you have slipped into nonsense!"<sup>216</sup> Now

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<sup>214</sup> Gustafsson 2006, 30

<sup>215</sup> Gustafsson 2006, 32

<sup>216</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2006, 31-2

eventually, it may be that Gustafsson's imagined dialog with Gregory may make him pause. As Gustafsson imagines, at some point, Gregory could respond in the following fashion:

“I thought I said something perfectly meaningful when I talked about the brain as ‘selecting’ and ‘accepting’”, he says, “but now I realise that my words were quite unintelligible.”

“I tried to have it both ways: to apply words such as ‘select’ and ‘accept’ to brains, and, at the same time, give those words a sense partly characterised by their not being applied to brains. You made me realise that this attempt wasn't even coherent.”<sup>217</sup>

Now this would be a case where Gregory *himself* diagnosed his speaking nonsense – because he had seen that he was indeed vacillating between two different forms of use of “select” and “accept”. This would mean for him to recognize “how he wanted to use words in two different grammars at the same time.”<sup>218</sup> Accordingly, the way of dissolving a philosophical confusion which Gustafsson advocates is one which, contrary to Hacker's, does not imply that “philosophical confusions can be correctly identified and diagnosed over the head of the confused person her- or himself [...]”<sup>219</sup> It is a way of dissolving philosophical problems in which the role of *rules* is not that of *prescribing* the speaker's sticking to one “established” way of talking, but that of *describing* the many possible ways of talking in order to bring out our having *entangled* ourselves in them.<sup>220</sup>

Now in *Entangled Sense*, Gustafsson is also concerned with bringing out the parallels of his view and the “austere” (or “resolute”) reading of Wittgenstein's way of treating philosophical problems which, as we had seen, has been put forth by James Conant and Cora Diamond. We had seen how Gustafsson criticized Hacker for diagnosing utterances such as “I don't see why you bracken the final stanza” as *nonsense* because the meaning of a word – in this case, “bracken” – does not *fit* the meanings of the other words in this sentence. As Gustafsson diagnoses, this idea is just the “substantial” account of nonsense which is criticized by Conant: namely, the idea that nonsense is the result of an *incompatibility* of the pre-

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<sup>217</sup> Gustafsson 2006, 32

<sup>218</sup> Gustafsson 2006, 32

<sup>219</sup> Gustafsson 2006, 24

<sup>220</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2006, 33-4, Gustafsson 2000, 34-40

established meanings of parts of a sentence (or of the pre-established sense of a sentence and the context of use in which it is to be imported). Gustafsson:

What characterises an advocate of a substantial view of nonsense is precisely that he thinks the nonsensicality of certain word-combinations is the *product* of what the constituent words mean. The idea is that certain combinations are nonsensical because the pre-established meanings somehow clash with each other.<sup>221</sup>

As we had seen, Gustafsson held that we need to take as primary, not the rules which may hold for the employment of the parts out of which a meaningful utterance is “constructed”, but the meaningful utterance *itself*: only after we have seen that sense is present can we determine *which* rules were in force. In other words, the rules do not determine what is meant *beforehand*. Gustafsson links this thought to this interpretation which Conant gives of Frege’s context principle in “The Method of the *Tractatus*”:

In order to determine the meaning of a word, according to Frege, we need to discover the contribution it makes to the sense of a proposition in which it figures. We need to know what logical role it plays in the context of a judgment. What we want to discover is thus not to be seen at all, if we look at the mere isolated words rather than at the working parts of the proposition in action.<sup>222</sup>

What, according to Gustafsson, is crucial here is the following:

[T]he very identification of logical parts is bound up with grasping the meanings of those parts; and grasping their meanings involves grasping the meaning of the whole. If there is no meaningful whole, then there are no meaningful parts either.<sup>223</sup>

So it is not that there are independently identifiable parts – the “meanings” of words – which, together, make up the meaning of the whole. Rather, the meaning of the parts cannot be identified but through identifying the meaning of the whole. This leads to the question: In what sense can we still speak of the *meanings of parts* of the whole? Gustafsson:

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<sup>221</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 65

<sup>222</sup> Conant 2002

<sup>223</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 73

The meaning is not something that precedes or governs the word's being used, together with other [...] symbols, to say something. Rather, the meaning *is* the word's meaningful employment together with other symbols: meaning is use.<sup>224</sup>

It is not that the meanings of the parts of an utterance are already fixed, and out of their combined meaning comes the meaning of the whole. Rather, Gustafsson says, the meaning of the parts comes from their “meaningful employment together with other symbols”. Now what does that mean? A few paragraphs later, Gustafsson uses the following example to clarify his point. If we have an utterance like “Tonight’s concert is 2 hours and 40 minutes long”, the following holds:

[W]hat this sentence means – what symbols it contains – has to do with the possibilities of using those symbols in other constructions. For example, it is essential to the symbol “Tonight’s concert is ... long” which figures in my utterance that it can also occur in “Tonight’s concert is 45 minutes long”, “Tonight’s concert is 3 hours 56 minutes long”, [...], and so on. This symbol is also characterised by there being no such thing as its combination with the ‘2 feet 6 inches’ which figures in ‘This wooden board is 2 feet 6 inches long’ (as this sentence is normally understood) or with the ‘200 pounds’ which occurs in ‘My piano weighs 200 pounds’ (as this sentence is normally understood). And so on and so forth.<sup>225</sup>

So, the question what symbols – i.e., “working parts” – this sentence contains has to do with how these parts can be used in other sentences. Why? As we had seen, Gustafsson holds that what we are describing, when asked for the meaning of a *part* of an utterance – e.g., the meaning of a word – is the *meaningful use* of this word *together with other symbols*. Now to describe this is just to describe in which *other* utterances this same part may make a contribution to a meaningful whole. Therefore, describing the meaning of a *part* of an utterance means to describe its *combinatory possibilities*. Gustafsson:

To identify such combinatory possibilities is to *identify* these expressions *qua* expressions with a certain meaning.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 83

<sup>225</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 88

<sup>226</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 120

[T]he point of the austere conception is that symbols, considered as working parts of meaningful sentences, cannot [...] be identified except in terms of their combinatory possibilities.<sup>227</sup>

Now as we saw, for Gustafsson, *rules* have the purpose of describing (rather than prescribing) the use of expressions. In the context of the discussion of the meaning of parts of utterances, this means that the rule “The length of a musical performance is specified in temporal terms” describes certain *combinatory possibilities* which hold for the symbol “Tonight’s concert is ... long”. It describes a certain use of “Tonight’s concert is ... long”: namely, the one in which it is combined with “2 hours and 40 minutes” or “3 hours 56 minutes”, but *not* with the “2 feet 6 inches” from “This wooden board is 2 feet 6 inches long” or with the “200 pounds” from “My piano weighs 200 pounds”.<sup>228</sup> Gustafsson contrasts this view with the substantial view: According to the substantial view, a rule like “The length of a musical performance is specified in temporal terms” states that it is *impossible* to combine “Tonight’s concert is ... long” with the “2 feet 6 inches” from “This wooden board is 2 feet 6 inches long”. This combinatory impossibility is to follow from the pre-established meanings of the symbols involved – they are taken to somehow *clash*. According to the view advocated by Gustafsson, things are just the other way around:

[T]here is no such thing as first singling out a number of symbols and then ascribing to them certain combinatory possibilities. Rather, to describe the combinatory possibilities *is* to single out the symbols.<sup>229</sup>

The consequence is the following:

It is not that combining the ‘Tonight’s concert is ... long’ from ‘Tonight’s concert is 2 hours and 40 minutes long’ and the ‘2 feet 6 inches’ from ‘This wooden board is 2 feet 6 inches long’ is impossible; rather, there is no such thing as the combination of the ‘Tonight’s concert is ... long’ from ‘Tonight’s concert is 2 hours and 40 minutes long’ and the ‘2 feet 6 inches’ from ‘This wooden board is 2 feet 6 inches long’. And this is

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<sup>227</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 87

<sup>228</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 83-5

<sup>229</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 84



a *platitudinous* characterization of what these symbols *are*, rather than a hypothesis about the prospects of fitting them together.<sup>230</sup>

Only if one holds that a symbol's combinatory possibilities are the *product* of its "meaning" can it appear plausible that there could be such a thing as an utterance with a "senseless sense"<sup>231</sup> – a sense which is the *product* of the "clashing" meanings of the symbols involved. Yet once we see that the symbol's meaning *is* its use – which comes down to seeing, as Gustafsson holds, that its meaning *is* its combinatory possibilities – , we will recognize that the idea of a illegitimate combination of symbols makes no sense: all we should say is that certain symbols *are* combined with certain other, or that they *are not*. And rules of usage just *describe* such ways of combining symbols – rather than, as proponents of the substantial view (like Hacker) do, singling out some of these uses – i.e., ways of combining symbols – as "legitimate" while denouncing others as "illegitimate".

### 1.7 The Resolute Reading of Oskari Kuusela

Let me now introduce the last of the authors in this category of commentators whom I will focus on in this dissertation: Oskari Kuusela. In his book *The Struggle against Dogmatism* (2008)<sup>232</sup>, Kuusela explores the consequences that Wittgenstein drew for his later philosophy from the failure of the *Tractatus* – i.e., the failure of his first attempt at offering a method of dissolving philosophical problems that did not rest on theses about the conditions of meaningful speech but which had nonetheless, through the method of dissolution that it propagated, introduced just such theses about how language *must* be. Kuusela argues that Baker and Hacker, through their failure to see the radical character of the transformation of Wittgenstein's approach to philosophical problems, end up ascribing to the later Wittgenstein a method of dissolving philosophical problems that rests once again on a theory of the conditions of meaningful speech.

Like Conant, Kuusela holds that the *Tractatus* must be read in such a way that Wittgenstein is taken not to have *aimed* at putting forward any *theses* about language and meaning – i.e., as not having *aimed* at proposing a way of dissolving problems that rested on a specific answer to the question "How does linguistic meaning come into being?" Rather, like Conant, Kuusela holds that Wittgenstein aimed to merely propose a certain *procedure* of dissolving

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<sup>230</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 84-5

<sup>231</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 65

<sup>232</sup> as also in his "From Metaphysics and Philosophical Theses to Grammar: Wittgenstein's Turn" (2005)

such problems – namely, logical analysis with the help of a specially designed logical notation (concept-script).<sup>233</sup> And like Conant, Kuusela holds that Wittgenstein later came to see that this proposal itself had yet unwittingly contained *theses* about the essence of linguistic meaning. For Kuusela, this shows itself the clearest in the fact that Wittgenstein, in the *Tractatus*, had claimed that he had solved all philosophical problems “in essentials”<sup>234</sup>. Now the method of logical analysis that Wittgenstein proposes in the *Tractatus* shows how to analyze a proposition into concatenations of “simple names” – thereby capturing any logical distinction that is hidden by the surface of language and that may cause philosophical confusion. Now according to Kuusela, proposing such a method of analyzing propositions alone does not yet constitute a thesis about language. However, Wittgenstein’s claim that he had found *the* method of dissolving *any* philosophical problem entails the claim that this procedure of analysis is extendable to *any* proposition – that “every possible proposition fits the *Tractatus*’s model for analysis”<sup>235</sup>. The problem with this claim, according to Kuusela, is that it amounts to the claim that *all* proposition share a specific form: *all* propositions are analyzable into concatenations of simple names. In this way, Wittgenstein’s seemingly innocent proposal of a certain *procedure* of dissolving philosophical problem unwittingly contains a “relapse into theses”: in order for the method to be applicable to *any* philosophical problem, the essence of *any* meaningful expression must have been determined once and for all.<sup>236</sup> Kuusela:

For although the proposal that we adopt a notation or a particular scheme of analysis does not yet constitute a thesis about anything, the claim that this scheme of analysis is universally applicable to *any* proposition does constitute, in effect, an implicit thesis about propositions.<sup>237</sup>

Thus, contrary to Wittgenstein’s aim, the procedure of dissolving philosophical problems that he had introduced in the *Tractatus* did in fact rest on an implicit determination of the essence of the proposition – i.e. on a once-and-for-all answer to the question “What constitutes a meaningful expression?”

Now according to Kuusela, the main purpose of Wittgenstein’s later philosophy is to develop a style of philosophy that is immune against a relapse into theses of the sort of the *Tractatus*. The question becomes: How can the aim of putting forward a way of dissolving

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<sup>233</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, ch. 2.1

<sup>234</sup> *Tractatus*, preface

<sup>235</sup> Kuusela 2008, 100

<sup>236</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, ch. 3.1, esp. 101

<sup>237</sup> Kuusela 2008, 106

philosophical problems without making any claims about the essence of language and meaning be achieved? Kuusela holds that a first step towards seeing Wittgenstein's answer is to take a close look at his analysis of the mistake that he made in the *Tractatus*. Kuusela quotes these remarks from Wittgenstein's 1937 typescript of the *Investigations* and from *Zettel*:

The tendency to generalize the case seems to have a strict justification in logic: here one seems *completely* justified in inferring: "If *one* proposition is a picture, then any proposition must be a picture, for they must all be of the same nature. (Ts220, §93)<sup>238</sup>

We now have a theory [...] of the proposition; of language, but it does not present itself to us as a theory. For it is the characteristic thing about such a theory that it looks at a special clearly intuitive case and says: "*That* shows how things are in every case; this case is the exemplar of *all* cases." – "Of course! It has to be like that", we say, and are satisfied. We have arrived at a form of expression that *makes sense* to us. [...] (Z 444)<sup>239</sup>

Here, Wittgenstein criticizes himself for having looked at a few examples of propositions and from these having read off what they all must have in common – what their *essence* is. To him, those propositions representing a state of affairs were the "clearly intuitive cases" of propositions. Therefore, he felt justified to infer that the essence of the proposition was to be a "picture" – to represent states of affairs. And from this, as Kuusela takes it, he felt justified to declare that his method of dissolving philosophical problems – i.e., logical analysis of propositions – was universally applicable to any philosophical problem.<sup>240</sup> Now, according to Kuusela, what Wittgenstein later diagnoses as his mistake is not the idea of a proposition as a picture itself, but the *role* that this idea had assumed for him. Kuusela quotes these remarks of Wittgenstein's:

I had used a comparison; but through the grammatical illusion that a certain *one* thing, something *common* to all its objects, corresponds to a concept it did not seem like a comparison. (Ts220, §92)<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> cited Kuusela 2008, 107

<sup>239</sup> cited Kuusela 2008, 106 (my translation)

<sup>240</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 105-7

<sup>241</sup> cited Kuusela 2008, 107

Now everything which holds of the model will be asserted of the objects of the examination; & asserted: it *must always* be... This is the origin of a kind of dogmatism. (Ms115, 56-7)<sup>242</sup>

Kuusela holds that Wittgenstein later criticized himself for failing to see that, rather than having grasped the essence of all propositions, he had found an illuminating *comparison* or *model* for what propositions often are. In other words, what Wittgenstein had failed to see that he had employed a certain *mode of presenting* propositions. Kuusela:

It is not that the *Tractatus*'s conception of propositions as pictures is inherently problematic. It may be illuminating *for certain purposes* to characterize propositions as pictures or (re)presentations of states of affairs [...]. This possibility, however, is eclipsed when the conception is not recognized as a particular way of conceiving propositions or a particular mode of presentation but is turned into a thesis about their essence.<sup>243</sup>

In this context, Kuusela quotes the following remark from Wittgenstein's typescript:

“Every proposition says: This is how things stand.” Here we have the kind of form that can mislead us. (Misled me.) [...]

This is the kind of proposition that one repeats to oneself countless times. One thinks that one is tracing the outline of the thing's nature over and over again, and one is merely tracing round the frame through which we look at it. [...]

Again and again we trace out the form of expression and think we have depicted the thing. (Ts220, §110)<sup>244</sup>

Kuusela's comment:

What Wittgenstein describes in these passages is an example of a philosopher projecting a mode of presentation (form of expression) that she is employing onto the object of investigation and mistaking the characteristics of the mode of presentation for

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<sup>242</sup> cited Kuusela 2008, 109

<sup>243</sup> Kuusela 2008, 108-9

<sup>244</sup> cited Kuusela 2008, 105

the characteristics of the object. Thus in the *Tractatus*, a particular conception of propositions was turned into a metaphysical thesis about what propositions *must* be.<sup>245</sup>

Now how, according to Kuusela, does Wittgenstein, in his later philosophy, set out to prevent the kind of relapse into dogmatism which ultimately compromised the *Tractatus*'s approach to dissolving philosophical problems? Kuusela quotes from Wittgenstein's manuscripts of the *Investigations*:

For we can avoid the injustice or emptiness of our statements only by presenting the model as what it is, as an object of comparison – as, so to speak, a measuring rod – and not as a preconceived idea to which reality must correspond. (Ms142, §122)<sup>246</sup>

The ideal loses nothing of its dignity if it is posited as the principle determining the form of one's approach. (Ms157b, 15v)<sup>247</sup>

Now how does, according to Kuusela, this change become manifest in the practice of Wittgenstein's proceeding in the later philosophy? What kind of model does Wittgenstein use, and how does it manifest itself that it is merely "determining the form of one's approach", rather than imposing its characteristics onto the area of investigation? Primarily, it is the model of language use as the playing of a game according to strict rules (such as chess). Kuusela argues against Baker and Hacker that Wittgenstein's aim is not to show that language is ever used according to such rules – that language were "governed by" such rules. This is still to miss the essence of Wittgenstein's turn away from the *Tractatus*. Rather, Kuusela holds, the lesson Wittgenstein drew from the failure of the *Tractatus* is this:

Rather than maintaining dogmatically that language must conform to the exact rules that one states, rules are to be comprehended as articulating models with the help of which language use is described by way of comparison.<sup>248</sup>

According to Kuusela, in a philosophical clarification, Wittgenstein uses rules only as *objects of comparison*. He cites this remark of Wittgenstein's from 1934:

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<sup>245</sup> Kuusela 2008, 105

<sup>246</sup> cited Kuusela 2008, 126

<sup>247</sup> cited Kuusela 2008, 126

<sup>248</sup> Kuusela 2008, 140

If we look at the actual use of a word, what we see is something constantly fluctuating. In our investigation we set against this fluctuation something more fixed, just as one paints a stationary picture of a constantly altering landscape.

When we study language we *envisage* it as a game with fixed rules. We compare it with, and measure it against, a game of that kind. (Ms140, 33)<sup>249</sup>

Kuusela's comment:

Although actual language use may be fluctuating, such fluctuating uses can, according to Wittgenstein, be studied by comparing them with something more fixed, [...]. In this sense the description of language as a game according to fixed rules provides a particular point of view that may be adopted.<sup>250</sup>

This, then, according to Kuusela, is Wittgenstein's answer to the problem of dogmatism: Rather than, however implicitly, resting on claims about how language *must* be (including the claim that language *must* be used according to explicit rules), later Wittgenstein, when it comes to philosophical clarification, self-consciously retreats to offering mere objects of comparison. *Comparing* language use to the game of chess is not making any claim about how language really is, but merely adopting a "particular point of view". As Kuusela takes it, the problem with the *Tractatus* was that it had employed a particular mode of presentation (proposition as picture) without being aware of it. Later Wittgenstein corrects this by laying open that he is adopting a particular *point of view* on language: language as a game according to fixed rules.<sup>251</sup> And the merit of this object of comparison itself, Kuusela holds, is not to be measured against the reality of language, but against its success in removing philosophical problems by clarifying our use of words.<sup>252</sup> Kuusela:

Whereas the *Tractatus* asserts that language use must be governed by clear and precise rules, Wittgenstein's novel approach abandons all such claims about language use. The rules are *not* to be envisaged as characteristic of the object of investigation. Rather,

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<sup>249</sup> cited Kuusela 2008, 142

<sup>250</sup> Kuusela 2008, 142

<sup>251</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 146

<sup>252</sup> cf. Kuusela, 145

with the turn they are understood as a *form or mode of presentation* and as characterizing the form of logical examination.<sup>253</sup>

What this means for the question of how the aim of putting forward a way of dissolving philosophical problems without making any claims about the essence of language and meaning can be achieved comes out the clearest through Kuusela's criticism of Baker and Hacker's conception of Wittgenstein's turn. As we had seen, Baker and Hacker held that in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein had likened language to a calculus, whereas in the later works, he likened it to a game with explicit rules such as chess. This change was meant, according to Baker and Hacker, to account for the fact that in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein had failed to see that speaking a language is an *activity*. For Kuusela, this characterization of Wittgenstein's turn is mistaken – for it still contains the idea that Wittgenstein's way of dissolving philosophical problems rested on a correct grasp of what language is really like:

If one then demands that the [...] exact rules correspond perfectly to actual language use in order to be useful tools of clarification, one has *not* moved away from dogmatic requirements. This is to fail to follow Wittgenstein's turn and to continue making claims about language use. One is still demanding that language *must* be *this* in order to be presented *thus*, [...].<sup>254</sup>

What Kuusela takes issue with is Baker and Hacker's claim that language use is “governed by” rules of grammar.<sup>255</sup> This is to fail to see that these rules are mere objects of comparison, employed in the activity of philosophical clarification. Rather, Baker and Hacker think that in order to be useful tools of such clarification, rules of grammar must be a characteristic of language use itself. But, according to Kuusela, these rules are characteristic only of Wittgenstein's *approach* to philosophical clarification. Kuusela:

The realization that the *Tractatus* projected a form of presentation on language, therefore, only constitutes the first half of Wittgenstein's turn. Having reached this point, one still faces the problem about the rigor of logic as a discipline. This problem is not solved merely by saying that language is not what the *Tractatus* took it to be. Rather,

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<sup>253</sup> Kuusela 2008, 136

<sup>254</sup> Kuusela 2008, 141

<sup>255</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, ch. 3.3, esp. 119-20

one must move away from the idea that logic assumes or involves any claims about language [...].

This is the point where Baker and Hacker fall short of the turn.<sup>256</sup>

If one holds, as Baker and Hacker do, that Wittgenstein ceases to use the tool of a logical notation because this notation fails to capture language as it really is, one has still committed Wittgenstein to an approach to dissolving philosophical problems which rests on a correct account of what language is really like – because the corollary of this claim is that Wittgenstein’s later tool of describing language-*games* better suits the real nature of language. Rather, Kuusela holds, one must not conceive Wittgenstein’s describing language *in the form of* games with explicit rules as better fitting language how it really is, but as more helpful to dissolving philosophical problems by way of clarifying confusions about our use of language. Only then can one appreciate how the introduction of this approach by the later Wittgenstein was meant to finally achieve his aim of putting forward a way of dissolving philosophical problems that entailed no claims – however implicit – about the essence of language and meaning.<sup>257</sup>

Apart from Wittgenstein’s self-criticism of having projected characteristics of a mode of presentation – namely, propositions as pictures – onto the object of investigation – namely, language – itself, an important topic for Kuusela in his book is how in his later philosophy, Wittgenstein aimed to do away with any *hierarchies* in philosophy. We had seen Kuusela holding that in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein had, by proposing a certain way of philosophical clarification as applicable to *all* philosophical problems, unwittingly saddled himself with a thesis about the essence of the proposition. Kuusela explains how this leads to the construction of philosophical hierarchies:

Given Wittgenstein’s view of the correct method of philosophy as a method of logical analysis, and given that developing such a method [...] seems to require grasping the essence of language, the determination of the essence of language becomes *the* fundamental task. Thus the problem of the essence of a proposition assumes the role of a fundamental problem upon which the solution to all philosophical questions depends insofar as they are to be resolved by logical analysis.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Kuusela 2008, 137

<sup>257</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, ch. 3.7. esp. 146

<sup>258</sup> Kuusela 2008, 101



In other words, the solution of all other philosophical problems depends on the problem “What is the essence of the proposition?” (or “What is the essence of meaningful speech?”) being solved. That way, this one problem assumes the role of a *fundamental* problem – on the solution of which the solution of any other *depends*.<sup>259</sup>

Why now does Wittgenstein’s later philosophy constitute a break with philosophical hierarchies? According to Kuusela, this quote of Wittgenstein’s is crucial in this context:

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. (PI 133)

As Kuusela takes it, the “*single* problem” that Wittgenstein speaks of here is the problem of the essence of language or the proposition. Since – as the *Tractatus* took it – the solution of *any* philosophical problem depends on the solution of *this* problem, doubts as to whether it has been (correctly) solved automatically bring the solution of each other problem into doubt. Now as we saw, Kuusela holds that having realized how his early way of dissolving philosophical problems unwittingly rested on the solution of this *one* problem, Wittgenstein’s reaction was to develop an approach to such a dissolution which merely worked with objects of comparison (such as grammatical rules) – thus refraining from any claims about what language *must* be. What comes out in PI 133 is one crucial corollary of this: Since his new way of philosophical clarification does not rest on a correct answer to the question “How is meaningful speech constituted?”, there is not *one* problem which is privileged over the other problems. Instead, each philosophical problem is on the same level, on a par with any other.<sup>260</sup>

Now spelling out the implications of this fundamental change in Wittgenstein’s philosophy is a major point of focus of Kuusela’s book. What does it mean in detail that none of the philosophical problems which Wittgenstein discusses in the *Investigations* and *On Certainty* is meant to be fundamental to the dissolution of any other philosophical problem? In his subchapter 6.1, Kuusela deals with a specific misunderstanding which, in his view, reintroduces philosophical hierarchies into Wittgenstein’s later philosophy through the back door. The idea he discusses there is the following: *In order to justify his way of philosophical clari-*

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<sup>259</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 26-7, ch. 1.5 (esp. 47-8), 101-2

*fication as the investigation of rules of language-games, Wittgenstein needs to establish the fact that language is indeed a rule-governed activity. This he does by way of investigating the concepts of “language”, “meaning”, and “rule”: an investigation of the grammar of these concepts reveals the rule-governedness of language.*<sup>261</sup> In Kuusela’s eyes, this reasoning – apart from once more saddling him with theses about how language *must* be – does indeed saddle later Wittgenstein with the idea of there being philosophical hierarchies: although this idea professes to accept the fact that in later Wittgenstein, there is nothing more fundamental than investigations of the grammar of *particular* concepts, the very role of the investigation of the concepts of “language”, “meaning”, and “rule” as establishing a justification for Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification makes them into *fundamental* investigations. Once more, Kuusela holds, a philosophical hierarchy is established in that, according to this idea, the investigation of the concept of e.g. “to follow a rule” is prior to the investigation of that of e.g. “to doubt”. In other words, philosophical problems such as that of rule-following are seen as *fundamental* problems in that they are logically prior to other philosophical problems: only once they are dealt with is Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification justified.<sup>262</sup>

Now according to Kuusela, this idea of e.g. the problem of rule-following being fundamental to Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification in that it justifies it by establishing the fact that language is indeed a rule-governed affair is seriously mistaken. First of all, he holds, it goes against Wittgenstein’s recurrent remarks that there are no metalogical concepts or “super-concepts”:

[Wittgenstein] rejects the idea that meaning would be a concept of “more general importance than chairs etc.,” that questions concerning meaning would be “the central questions of philosophy,” and that the word “meaning” would have a “metalogical” status and a “higher place” than other words (AWL 31). Correspondingly, [...] Wittgenstein denies that the concepts of rule and game have the status of metalogical concepts (Ms153a, 159v, 160r).<sup>263</sup>

Other than being out of line with what Wittgenstein says against this idea of “metalogical concepts”, Kuusela argues, the idea of Wittgenstein’s way of clarification being justified through the clarification of the concepts “language”, “meaning”, and “rule” leads into a *re-*

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<sup>260</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, ch. 1.5

<sup>261</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 220-1

<sup>262</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 219, 222

<sup>263</sup> Kuusela 2008, 219

*gress*. He furnishes the following argument: His interlocutor holds that any grammatical description requires as a justification the establishment of the fact that language is a rule-governed affair. And this justification, the interlocutor holds, is achieved through describing the grammar of the concepts “language”, “meaning”, and “rule”. Kuusela then asks: How is the grammatical description of *these* concepts justified? If his interlocutor held that it needed no justification, Kuusela argues, then he would give these grammatical description an inexplicable special status – which would contradict his original assertion that Wittgenstein had intended to treat them just like any other concept. If, on the other hand, his interlocutor would say that they did indeed need such a justification, Kuusela goes on to argue, this would lead into a regress: if the grammar of a concept can be described only after the rule-governedness of language has been established, and this rule-governedness is established through *a description of the grammar of the concept of “language”*, then the rule-governedness of language can never be established.<sup>264</sup> In Kuusela’s view, this problem dissolves when we realize that a grammatical description does not *need* a justification of the kind his interlocutor envisages:

This regress can be halted only through the realization of the emptiness of the requirement of a second-order justification. There is no regress because there is no need for the kind of higher-level justification my interlocutor wants.<sup>265</sup>

Kuusela then goes on to spell out the consequences for the idea of philosophical hierarchies in Wittgenstein’s later philosophy:

We are thus released from philosophical hierarchies and the hierarchical structure of philosophy is dissolved. Now every grammatical description stands or falls “on its own,” including rules used as objects of comparison. A clarificatory rule is required to be actually capable of clarificatory work, but such rules do not need any backing from a thesis or a “grammatical truth” about the necessary rule-governedness of language. [...] This characterization of the concept of language is on the same level as any other characterization. Hence the practice of grammatical description, as conceived by Wittgenstein, is free from any theoretical presuppositions. There are no great once-and-for-

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<sup>264</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 224, 225

<sup>265</sup> Kuusela 2008, 224

all determinations of fundamental concepts or superconcepts constituting the foundation of Wittgenstein's philosophy.<sup>266</sup>

In other words, none of the clarificatory rules (such as those for "rule" or "language") which Wittgenstein employs are meant to establish the foundation for the activity of furnishing clarificatory rules in general.<sup>267</sup> Rather, this activity has no foundation other than its success in dissolving philosophical problems.<sup>268</sup> This entails that philosophical problems such as those involving the concepts of "language" and "following a rule" are just problems like any other, standing in no *foundational* relation to Wittgenstein's way of philosophical clarification as such.<sup>269</sup>

Now in his book, Kuusela, like Conant, also addresses the issue of misreading Wittgenstein's recurrent remarks on a relation between the meaning of expressions and their use as a thesis about what word-meaning *must* be. Like Conant, Kuusela stresses that Wittgenstein, in remarks such as PI 43, merely draws on our actual use of the expression "meaning of a word". Kuusela charges Baker and Hacker for a misreading of remarks such as PI 43: Although they profess to do justice to this very point, in taking Wittgenstein's grammatical remark on "meaning" in PI 43 as the stating of a rule which *governs* language use, they are turning it into a thesis about the essence (of the concept) of meaning.<sup>270</sup> In Kuusela's view, this can be avoided by minding the real role of rules in philosophical clarification:

These problems can be avoided, however, if Wittgenstein's definition of the concept of meaning (as articulated through the rules that he states) is taken as a model to be used as object of comparison [...]. This alternative reading essentially comprehends Wittgenstein's use of the rule "The meaning of a word is its use in the language" in terms of the description of his methodology provided in Chapter 3 [...].<sup>271</sup>

As we had seen, Kuusela argues that the rules which Wittgenstein states in philosophical clarification are to be seen, not as characteristic of language use itself, but merely of his *approach* to clarifying language use in order to dissolve a philosophical confusion. Accordingly,

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<sup>266</sup> Kuusela 2008, 224

<sup>267</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 223

<sup>268</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 226

<sup>269</sup> i.e. to all other instances where the way of philosophical clarification which consists in describing the grammar of concepts is being applied. Cf. Kuusela 2008, 224

<sup>270</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 153-5

Kuusela holds that remarks of Wittgenstein's such as "The meaning of a word is its use in the language" are formulations of rules which are meant as *objects of comparison* – i.e., they are not intended to precisely mirror our actual use of the word "meaning".<sup>272</sup> Taken this way, as Kuusela does, Wittgenstein's remarks on meaning and use are not *theses* about the necessary conditions of word-meaning, but clarificatory tools which are designed to dissolve *particular* philosophical problems involving "meaning".<sup>273</sup>

## 1.8 Summary

In this chapter, I had introduced the idea of a resolute reading of Wittgenstein's later philosophy. At the outset of the chapter (Section 1.1), I had briefly sketched a reading of Wittgenstein as a *philosopher of language*, whose principal aim is to give a maximally general, theoretical answer to the question "How does linguistic meaning come into being?" I had then juxtaposed this reading with some well-known quotes from the *Investigations* concerning method and aim of philosophy – in which Wittgenstein explicitly rejects as his goal that of advancing a *theory* or *theses* about anything, instead stating as his goal "*complete* clarity" in the sense that "the philosophical problems should *completely* disappear" (PI 133). This brought me to formulating the following interpretative challenge for reading Wittgenstein's later work: how do we integrate what Wittgenstein says about language and meaning with his remarks on philosophical method?

In Section 1.2, I had turned to the readings of later Wittgenstein which have been advanced by Robert Brandom and Crispin Wright. I had shown how Brandom takes later Wittgenstein to have formulated arguments which have set criteria of adequacy for any theory of linguistic normativity – while acknowledging that Wittgenstein was opposed to providing just such a theory. I had also shown how Crispin Wright, after coming to realize that his initial reading of the rule-following problem did not work, and could not rightfully be attributed to Wittgenstein, had concluded that Wittgenstein's conception of philosophical method had led him to leave out from his remarks on rule-following any positive answer to the question "How is linguistic normativity constituted?" – an answer, as Wright believes, we need to give. Brandom's and Wright's readings were meant as examples of readings of Wittgenstein who profess to draw on lessons of his for answering the question "How does linguistic meaning

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<sup>271</sup> Kuusela 2008, 155-6

<sup>272</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 155-161

<sup>273</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 157-8

come into being?”, while openly denouncing his remarks on philosophical method as somehow mistaken.

From these authors who actually decline the interpretative challenge of how to integrate what Wittgenstein says about language and meaning with his remarks on philosophical method, I had then turned to the group of commentators of later Wittgenstein who do intend to rise up to it. In Section 1.3, I had introduced the first commentators belonging in this category: Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker. They hold that whatever Wittgenstein says about meaning and language has to be regarded as tied to his project of dissolving philosophical problems. Baker and Hacker view diagnosing *nonsense* as central in dissolving such problem. They take Wittgenstein’s comparison of language use to playing a game according to fixed rules such as chess to mean that everyday language use is *governed* by rules of grammar. An upshot of this conception is that our lapsing into nonsense is the result of our *violating* rules of grammar – in that we utter sentences that are the result of the combining of elements whose combinations is forbidden by the grammatical rules which hold for these expressions. Finally, I had shown how for Baker and Hacker, Wittgenstein’s remarks on rule-following are not concerned, as Brandom and Wright take it, with getting clear about linguistic normativity for its own sake. Rather, they hold that the rule-following remarks are to be understood as having a bearing on Wittgenstein’s project of dissolving philosophical problems as such. As Baker and Hacker see it, Wittgenstein is there concerned with elaborating a detail about the very rules of grammar that figure centrally in the dissolution of philosophical problems – namely, with giving an answer to the question “How are rules of grammar involved in speech activities?”

In Section 1.4, I had begun my introduction to the idea of a resolute reading of later Wittgenstein by giving an overview of the readings of a group of authors who all agree that we need to go further than Baker and Hacker in bringing out that later Wittgenstein aimed at doing away with *discoveries* and *theories* in philosophy. I introduced Cora Diamond’s analysis of how in philosophy, certain *requirements* (ideas how things *must* be) – which make us unable to see the points of our actual practices – emerge through or looking away from the actual circumstances in which our words do their work. I introduced how Stanley Cavell and Hilary Putnam analyze cases of where it seems that we have made a *discovery* in philosophy as based on a “hallucination of meaning” (Cavell) or the confusion of unintelligibility with impossibility (Putnam). I introduced how John McDowell criticizes Donald Davidson for a version of *constructive* philosophy which, rather than dissolving a puzzling dichotomy such as that of Norm and Nature, attempts to reconstruct one side of the dichotomy with means

drawn exclusively from the other side. Finally, I introduced Hans Julius Schneider's criticism of Michael Dummett's idea of a *theory of meaning* for natural languages.

In Section 1.5, I had turned to James Conant's reading of later Wittgenstein, focusing on his criticism of Baker and Hacker. Conant criticizes Baker and Hacker's conception of nonsense as the result of a *violation* of the rules of grammar which *govern* the use of expressions. For Conant, our lapsing into nonsense while uttering a string of words is not the result of an "illegitimate combination" of expressions with a pre-established meaning, but of our *hovering* between – not settling on – one of the many possible ways of using that expression. Conant shows how Baker and Hacker's "substantial" conception of nonsense is instrumental in saddling later Wittgenstein with an account of the conditions of meaningful speech. For Conant, what is at the core of the *substantial* conception of nonsense is the idea that, since nonsense is taken as the result of an illegitimate way of combining expressions whose meaning is taken to be settled beforehand, we can grasp what such an illegitimate combination of words is *trying* to express. Conant labels this idea that of a "senseless sense". For Conant, Baker and Hacker's reading of Wittgenstein's "Private Language Argument" as revealing as one of the essential preconditions of language that *language must be public* thrives on their mistaken account of nonsense. According to them, Wittgenstein's diagnosis that we are ultimately lapsing into *nonsense* when trying to imagine a "language which describes my inner experiences and which only I myself can understand" (PI 256) draws on the incompatibility of the concepts "language" and "private". Conant holds that Baker and Hacker's idea that Wittgenstein, through showing that when trying to go through with working out his such a "private" language, we lapse into *nonsense* reveals the fact that a private language is *impossible* – and that therefore, language *must* be public – thrives on their idea of a "senseless sense": although in the sentence "There cannot be a *private language*", we have a nonsensical term – which should render the whole sentence nonsense – Baker and Hacker's account of nonsense makes it plausible that we, while recognizing this sentence as nonsense, can still have a grasp on the idea of *what* a "private language" is firmly enough so that we can grasp that is *it* which cannot be. Conant argues that once we recognize that Wittgenstein never entertained the idea of "substantial" nonsense, the idea of the private language sections of the *Investigations* revealing a precondition of meaningful speech in the sense Baker and Hacker take it breaks down as well.

As I had also shown in Section 1.5, Conant, in his writing about later Wittgenstein, argues against another kind of saddling Wittgenstein with an account of the conditions of meaningful speech: namely, through misreading his repeated remarks on a relation between

the meaning of words and their use as attempts to furnish a general answer to the question “What does meaning something consist in?” In this case, what he is arguing against, is not seen by Conant as a by-product of the “substantial” conception of nonsense: what Conant criticizes, in the case of remarks such as “the meaning of a word is its use in the language” (PI 43), is not the taking of utterances which are flagged as “nonsense” by Wittgenstein to hint at various conditions of meaningful speech, but the taking of mere *grammatical remarks* on our everyday use of the word “meaning” as a *theory* or *definition* of meaning. In both cases, Conant’s criticism of authors such as Baker and Hacker comes down to the following: In order to fully appreciate later Wittgenstein’s vision of how to dissolve philosophical problems *completely*, we need to be aware that this way of dissolving philosophical problems does not in any way *rest on* an answer to the question “How does linguistic meaning come into being?”

In Section 1.6, I had turned to the reading of Martin Gustafsson. Gustafsson sets out to determine the role that the recourse to *rules* can play in philosophy, and he argues that rules of usage cannot determine beforehand whether a certain utterance makes sense or not. Specifically, he argues against Baker and Hacker’s idea that nonsense is the result of the violation of rules which forbid certain combinations of partial expressions. Against this, Gustafsson furnished his argument from the *primacy of meaningful expression*: Only from the fact that a certain sense is present in certain utterance can be determined which the partial expressions of this utterance *are*. This argument leads Gustafsson to reject the idea that it is the role of philosophy to furnish an explanatory account of meaning, and that rules can play any part in such an account. Gustafsson agrees with Baker and Hacker in that the recourse to rules can be instrumental in the dissolution of philosophical problems. He argues against Baker and Hacker that the role of rules in such a dissolution cannot be that of distinguishing sense from nonsense in philosophy, but merely that of describing different forms of use of expressions. As Gustafsson pointed out, philosophical problems cannot be treated, as Baker and Hacker argue, by diagnosing whether these rules have been “violated” – but rather by our coming to realize that we have unconsciously been vacillating between these different forms of use of expressions, thereby *entangling* ourselves in them.

In Section 1.7, I turned to the reading of Oskari Kuusela. Kuusela criticizes Baker and Hacker for not fully grasping the radical way in which Wittgenstein transformed his philosophy as a lesson from the failure of the *Tractatus*. Kuusela holds that, in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein aimed to put forward a way of dissolving philosophical problems which did not rest on any answer to the question “How does linguistic meaning come into being?” For Kuusela,



Wittgenstein had, in order to achieve this, introduced a *tool* – logical analysis of propositions – which was to bring out any hidden differences in meaning which could cause philosophical confusion. Yet, as Kuusela holds, this attempt of Wittgenstein’s failed because, in claiming that he, by introducing this tool of logical analysis, had solved all philosophical problems “in essentials”, Wittgenstein had saddled himself with an (implicit) *thesis* about the nature of the proposition – i.e., an implicit answer to the question “What constitutes a meaningful expression?” Kuusela argues that, in his later philosophy, Wittgenstein analyzed his mistake as that of turning a useful *comparison* – a proposition as a *picture* of a state of affairs – into a theses about what propositions *must* be. Accordingly, Kuusela charges Baker and Hacker with not realizing that Wittgenstein’s later comparison of language to a game according to fixed rules such as chess was not meant to say that rules actually *govern* our use of language. Kuusela holds that rules are employed by Wittgenstein as mere *objects of comparison*: when we, in a grammatical investigation, describe the use of language, we describe it *in the form of rules* – yet this we do, not because this way of describing language better fits the way language really is, but because it is a useful tool for clarifying the use of words. As I had shown, Baker and Hacker believe that Wittgenstein turns to describing language use in the form of rules of *language games* in order to capture better that speaking a language is an *activity*. Kuusela argues that this idea still ties Wittgenstein’s way of dissolving philosophical problems to a certain conception of what language is *really* like. He argues that in order to appreciate how later Wittgenstein succeeded in fully moving away from his way of dissolving philosophical problems being tied to any answer to the question “What are the conditions of meaningful speech?”, we need to recognize that grammatical descriptions *in the form of rules* are mere *models* – not to be envisaged as characteristic of the object of investigation, but merely of a certain *mode of presentation* – a mode of presentation which is answerable alone to how helpful it is in clearing up conceptual confusions, rather than to the way language really is like.

In Section 1.7, I had also shown how, for Kuusela, an important corollary of this is the absence of *hierarchies* in Wittgenstein’s later philosophy. As Kuusela takes it, the problem with the *Tractatus* was that the dissolution of *any* problem unwittingly depended on the solution of the *one* problem “What is the essence of the proposition?” According to Kuusela, Wittgenstein’s reaction to this problem in his later philosophy was to conceive of the dissolution of each philosophical problem to be on a par with the dissolution of any other. For Kuusela, this means that, in later Wittgenstein, there is no such thing as the investigation of the grammar of *one* concept to be fundamental to the investigation of the grammar of *any* concept. Kuusela charges Baker and Hacker with not clearly appreciating this point: as they take

it, Wittgenstein establishes the fact that language is a rule-governed activity – which, as they take it, results in his describing language in the form of a game according to fixed rules – through an investigation of the concept “rule”. Kuusela rejects this idea as leading into a *regress*: if *any* grammatical investigations rested on the fact being established that language is a rule-governed activity, so would an investigation of the grammar of “rule”. Therefore, the establishing of the fact that language is a rule-governed activity rested on the fact being established that language is a rule-governed activity. Hence, the fact that language is a rule-governed activity could never be established. For Kuusela, this argument highlights the fact that for later Wittgenstein, there are no fundamental concepts or “super-concepts” which constitute the foundation of his philosophy: every grammatical description stands or falls on its own, without needing any backing from any “grammatical truth” established through another grammatical investigation.

What we have in Conant, Gustafsson, and Kuusela are readings which all, in their way, reject the idea that later Wittgenstein had intended to supply an explanatory account of linguistic meaning. Rather, they all insist that Wittgenstein was first and foremost concerned with offering ways of dissolving philosophical problems. Furthermore, they all argue against readings of later Wittgenstein which make it look as if these ways of dissolving philosophical problem *rested on* accounts of the conditions of meaningful speech or on theses about how language *must* be. As we had seen, only Conant employs the label “resolute” for a reading along these lines. However, in this dissertation, I will use this label for all three of these readings, in order to signify their common core.

In this dissertation, I will pursue further Kuusela’s conclusion that such a *resolute* reading of later Wittgenstein entails recognizing the absence of *hierarchies* in his philosophy: i.e., recognizing that there is no such thing as one grammatical investigation being fundamental to *any* such investigation. Kuusela had illustrated this with the case of an investigation of the grammar of “rule”: against Baker and Hacker’s idea that this grammatical investigation was fundamental to *any* grammatical investigation, Kuusela had shown that this idea actually leads into a regress. In this dissertation, I will focus on what it means to take to heart – as Kuusela highlights Wittgenstein saying – that “*meaning*” is not a “super-concept”. My question will be: What exactly is the status of remarks on the grammar of “meaning” such as “the meaning of a word is its use in the language” (PI 43)? In what relation do remarks as this stand to the whole of Wittgenstein’s philosophy? As I intend to show, despite his effort to account for the non-foundational character of these remarks, Kuusela is assuming a connection between an investigation of the grammar of “meaning” and Wittgenstein’s way of dis-

solving philosophical problems in general which does not live up to the standards which he himself has set.

In order to see this, I hold, we need to get very clear about what, in later Wittgenstein, is tied to the dissolution of *specific* philosophical problems, as opposed to what is tied to the dissolution of philosophical problems *in general*. Specifically, we need to get very clear about which of the occasions where Wittgenstein invokes the notions of “use” and “application” have to do with the dissolution of a *specific* problem, and which have to do with the dissolution of philosophical problems *in general*. In the last chapter, I will make use of James Co-  
nant’s very clear distinction of these levels on which “use” and “employment” occur in remarks on meaning and use such as PI 43. Yet this distinction is not confined to those remarks, but applies to many other of the treatments of philosophical problems which we find in Wittgenstein’s later work. As a first step towards a general clarification of this distinction, I will now turn to Wittgenstein’s remarks on rule-following in the *Investigations*. In the next chapter, I will show how, in the course of the dissolution of the rule-following paradox, the notions of *use* and *application* figure on two distinct logical levels – a *general* level, pertaining to the dissolution of *any* philosophical problem, and a *specific* level, pertaining to the dissolution of this specific problem alone.

## 2. The Rule-Following Problem

Without a doubt, the sections of the *Investigations* where Wittgenstein concerns himself with the topic of rule-following count among the most difficult parts of the book. Whereas it is not too difficult to get a first grasp on what the paradox is which Wittgenstein lays out there, it remains much less clear how he thinks the paradox can be *dissolved*. One thing that does appear to come out quite clearly in these passages, though, is that the proposed way of dissolving the paradox has to do with our coming to realize that following a rule is a *practice, custom, or institution* of some kind. It appears that remarks of Wittgenstein's such as "It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which someone followed a rule" (PI 199) – although puzzling in their own right – must contain decisive elements towards a dissolution of the rule-following paradox. Ever since the publication of Saul Kripke's *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (1982), a large-scale debate has been underway concerning the question what the insight that rule-following is a *practice, custom, or institution* amounts to, and in what way it figures in Wittgenstein's proposed dissolution of his paradox.

In this chapter, I will expose my understanding of Wittgenstein's dissolution of the rule-following paradox in the *Investigations* by contrasting it with the accounts of Saul Kripke and Crispin Wright. In my view, Wittgenstein gives the decisive hint towards a dissolution already in PI 190. I will show how Kripke's and Wright's accounts of Wittgenstein's dissolution of the paradox – which center on Wittgenstein's remarks highlighting the *public* character of rule-following, such as PI 199 – fail to account for a crucial element of Wittgenstein's dissolution. I will then proceed to show how a dissolution along the lines of PI 190 points to the fact that notions such as *uses, application* and *practice* figure in the dissolution of the rule-following paradox on two distinct logical levels. These two levels and their distinction I will then explore.

This chapter has five sections. In Section 2.1, I will expose Wittgenstein's rule-following paradox in its initial form – i.e. the example of teacher and pupil in PI 143-150 and PI 185-188 – focusing on how Wittgenstein dissolves the paradox already in PI 190. In Section 2.2, I will turn to the remarks in the *Investigations* that are usually seen as containing the decisive hint towards a dissolution of the paradox: PI 198-202. I will describe the way in which Saul Kripke and Crispin Wright see these remarks as contributing to a dissolution. Af-

ter showing how their reconstructions actually go against the dissolution that Wittgenstein provides already in PI 190, in Section 2.3, I will show how Wittgenstein's reminders of *customs*, *practice*, and *institutions* are to be read so as to fit in with this initial dissolution of the paradox, as I understand it. After having assigned these reminders of *use*, *application*, *practice*, *customs*, and *institutions* their proper role, in Section 2.4, I will explore the two logically distinct levels – contained in PI 190 – on which notions such as *use*, *application*, and *practice* figure in the dissolution of the paradox. Finally, in Section 2.5, I will bring out the general compatibility of my account of Wittgenstein's dissolution of the rule-following paradox with that of John McDowell. I will end the chapter with a summary (Section 2.6).

## 2.1 The Rule-Following Paradox in the *Investigations*

It is central to our everyday notion of a rule that given a certain action, a rule uniquely determines whether that action conforms with it or not. If there still is an argument about whether that action conforms with the rule or not, it can only be because there is a disagreement as to how that rule is *meant*. Once an agreement has been reached about how the rule is meant, there can be no more argument about how it is supposed to be applied in particular cases. This can also be expressed in the following way: How the rule is meant determines uniquely and in advance how it is to be applied in a particular case.

In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein confronts us with a philosophical problem that arises when we are led astray by the grammar of those everyday expressions which I just employed in stating some trivial truths about rules. He there introduces rule-following as an example that is meant to illustrate the following:

The criteria which we accept for 'fitting', 'being able to', 'understanding' are much more complicated than might appear at first sight. That is, the game with these words, their use in the linguistic intercourse that is carried on by their means, is more involved – the role of these words in our language is different from what we are tempted to think.

(This role is what we need to understand in order to resolve philosophical paradoxes. [...]) (PI 182)

Now the manner in which Wittgenstein aims to show us that the role of words is different from what we are tempted to think is that he constructs cases which we are usually not tempted to consider. This also holds of the case of rule-following. He introduces his unusual

case of rule-following in PI 143: A teacher sets out to teach a pupil how to follow the rule “Always write down the next number” – i.e. to write down the series of the natural numbers. The teacher has a specific understanding of the rule “Always write down the next number”, and it is this understanding that he wishes to communicate to the pupil. For the teacher, this understanding manifests itself in his ability to tell for any number what the next number is – even for numbers that he has never before encountered. One way of communicating his understanding would therefore seem to be to make the pupil *memorize* the entire series of the natural numbers – which is of course impossible since this series is an infinite one. But after all, this is not the way we usually learn this series anyhow. What the teacher does instead is this: He sets out to teach the pupil the ten numerals plus the *system* by which numbers are generated out of these numerals. Now for the teacher, this system of generating any number from its predecessor is contained in a rule such as this one:

1. Go to the rightmost position of the number.
2. If, in the current position, you encounter a numeral other than ‘9’, replace it with its successor numeral, and stop.
3. If not, replace it with the numeral ‘0’.
4. If there is a position to the left of the current position, move to it and continue at 2.
5. If not, generate a new position to the left of the current position, fill it with the numeral ‘1’, and stop.

But, of course, the pupil does not yet have an understanding of things such as “position” or “to replace”. Therefore, this system has to be communicated to him in another way. Instead, the teacher does is to teach the system of the natural numbers the way it is usually taught: He first teaches the pupil how to write the ten numerals, and then continues the series of numbers past 9, drawing the pupils attention to the recurrence of the first series in the units, then to its recurrence in the tens. The teacher does it first, the pupil does after him, and then the teacher corrects him – until, after some time, the pupil is able to extend the series on his own. At this point, the teacher releases the pupil.

Until this point, there is nothing unusual about this case. But in PI 185, Wittgenstein has the scenario continue like this:

Now – judged by the usual criteria – the pupil has mastered the series of natural numbers. Next we teach him to write down other series of cardinal numbers and get him to the point of writing down, say, series of the form  $0, n, 2n, 3n$ , etc. at an order of the form “ $+n$ ”; so at the order “ $+1$ ” he writes down the series of natural numbers. – Let’s suppose we have done exercises, and tested his understanding up to 1000.

Then we get the pupil to continue one series (say “ $+2$ ”) beyond 1000 – and he writes 1000, 1004, 1008, 1012.

We say to him: “Look what you’re doing!” – He doesn’t understand. We say: “You should have added *two*: look how you began the series!” – He answers: “Yes, isn’t it right? I thought that was how I *had* to do it.” — Or suppose he pointed to the series and said: “But I did go on in the same way.” – It would now be no use to say: “But can’t you see . . . .?” — and go over the old explanations and examples for him again.

Now at first sight, Wittgenstein’s comment might appear just as unusual as the behavior of the pupil. For one should like to ask: Why would it be of no use to the teacher to go over his explanations and examples once again? After all, they contain his (and our) understanding of the rule “ $+2$ ” – according to which the correct continuation is 1002, 1004, 1008. Does not this case merely show that the teacher can never be absolutely certain that the pupil has understood the system of the series? It is true, we might be inclined to say, that the teacher cannot see inside the pupil’s head. All that the teacher does see is the pupil continuing a part of the series correctly – whereupon he concludes that the pupil, having come this far, will not make any mistakes in the future. But in this way, the problem seems to be, he cannot *exclude* the possibility of the pupil having gotten him wrong all along. A more intuitive case would be this: The pupil has mastered the step from 99 to 100. And now he goes on like this: 110, 120, 130. Asked why, he answers: “I thought I was supposed to always count up the position that is just to the right of the position that last rolled over. Because that is how it was in all the cases I had been given!” In this case, the pupil’s misunderstanding really is not that outlandish: In a certain sense, he “did go on in the same way.” In Wittgenstein’s example from PI 185 the pupil’s behavior is indeed more outlandish, yet still conceivable. So is it Wittgenstein’s intention to cast doubt on the idea that the teacher can ever declare the pupil to have “mastered the system”?

No. What Wittgenstein is driving at is this: When we take the problem to be that the pupil could always continue the series in a different way than that the teacher intended in cases not covered while he was still a pupil, we forget that this series had originally been

communicated *to the teacher* in just the same way that he himself has employed while instructing his pupil. The teacher, too, had displayed his mastery of the series merely by writing down finite segments of this series when *his teachers* declared him to have “mastered the system.” Suppose while teaching him to follow the rule “+2”, the step from 1000 to 1002, 1004, etc. would not have occurred either. Then it would be conceivable that *his teachers* would say to *his pupil* writing 1000, 1004, 1008: “That is just how we meant it!” I.e. they would correct *him*, the teacher, and not his pupil. The point is: How the rule “+2” is meant has been communicated to teacher and pupil by the same kind of instruction. Everything that the teacher could refer to in order to justify *his* way of continuing as the intended one has been taken by the pupil to justify *his* way of continuing by writing 1000, 1004, 1008 as the intended one. In PI 186, Wittgenstein writes:

How is it decided what is the right step to take at any particular point? – “The right step is the one that is in accordance with the order – as it was *meant*.” – So when you gave the order “+2” you meant that he was to write 1002 after 1000 – and did you then also mean that he should write 1868 after 1866, and 100036 after 100034, and so on – an infinite number of such sentences? – “No: what I meant was, that he should write the next but one number after *every* number that he wrote; and from this, stage by stage, all those sentences follow.” – But that is just what is in question: what, at any stage, does follow from that sentence.

The question here is: What does the teacher’s meaning “+2” in just such a way that 1002 comes after 1000 consist in? We are inclined to think that it consists in his knowing a rule-formulation which, when applied to the case of 1000, would uniquely yield 1002 as the correct way of going on. Wittgenstein’s argument against this idea is twofold: 1. What makes this rule-formulation to be meant uniquely in such and such a way is the way it has been taught to the teacher; 2. As the case of the deviant pupil shows, this way of teaching “+2” can equally well be interpreted to contain that after 1000, there comes 1004. The paradox that Wittgenstein has set up for us is this: On the one hand, we would like to say that all along, teacher and pupil have had a different understanding of “+2” – yet on the other hand, nothing that lies *before* the moment when the pupil wrote 1000, 1004, 1008 contains this understanding as uniquely as we had expected. Prior to this moment, teacher and pupil had made identical use of “+2” – and, as Wittgenstein’s reflections show, everything else (including anything mental that they might associate with “+2”) could have been identical, too. How are we then



to escape this paradox? Do we have to give up on our seemingly innocent notion that how a rule is meant determines uniquely and in advance how it is to be applied in a particular case? Or do we need to take a closer look at what distinguishes teacher and pupil *before* the moment when the one wrote 1000, 1004, 1008 – in order to find that mysterious something which contains the teacher’s and pupil’s different meaning of “+2” (which difference, on the other hand, seems to lie so open in view to us)?

But Wittgenstein aims at something else here: we are not supposed to choose any of these alternatives. Instead, he wants to help us to see how this paradox can be made to completely disappear. This involves countering the impression that there is something wrong about our everyday forms of expression (such as “to determine in advance”). The goal here is to escape the illusion of incompatibility that holds us captive: “There *must* be something about teacher and pupil prior to this moment that contains the different meanings of teacher and pupil – yet there *isn’t* anything about them that uniquely contains this difference.” This comes out in Wittgenstein’s answer to the teacher in PI 187:

“But I already knew, at the time when I gave the order, that he should write 1002 after 1000.” – Certainly; and you may even say you *meant* it then; only you shouldn’t let yourself be misled by the grammar of the words “know” and “mean”. For you don’t mean that you thought of the step from 1000 to 1002 at that time – and even if you did think of this step, still you didn’t think of other ones.

What does it mean to be “misled by the grammar of a word”? And what does that have to do with our paradox? Let us go back to the quote from the beginning of this section where Wittgenstein stated that, in order to resolve philosophical paradoxes, we need to understand that the criteria which we accept for the application of certain words are different from what we are tempted to think they are. The kind of illusion that Wittgenstein has in mind there is this: We do apply certain words under certain circumstances of our everyday lives – when certain criteria are fulfilled. Under the pressure of philosophy, we tend to forget about these criteria of the everyday employment of words. We then talk of things like “the Act of Meaning”, asking ourselves what “it” consists in. In such a situation, Wittgenstein gives us this advice: “Think of real circumstances where we ordinarily speak of someone *meaning* this or *having meant* that!” Thus, Wittgenstein’s aim is to remind us of something that we actually know very well, but have temporarily lost sight of. So how can a closer look at the criteria that we *really* accept for “to mean” help dissolve the paradox?

For an answer, let us jump a few paragraphs ahead to PI 190. There, Wittgenstein is concerning himself with the phrase “How the formula is meant determines which steps are to be taken.” Now this phrase suggests the following relation between the criteria for “meaning the formula” and the application of the formula to particular cases: First, the criteria for this *meaning* the formula (in a certain way) are fulfilled, and second comes the application in a particular case – as is determined by this *meaning* the formula. And this is of course just analogous to the idea that got us into the rule-following paradox: The sentence “At the time when I gave the order, I meant that he should write 1002 after 1000” suggests that the criteria for the application of “to mean” are to be found in a moment *prior to* the application of the formula “+2” to the case of 1000. And our problem was that we were unable to locate *any* decisive difference between teacher and pupil *prior to* their different application of “+2” after 1000. Now let us take a look at what Wittgenstein has to say about “How the formula is meant determines which steps are to be taken”:

One may then say: “How the formula is meant determines which steps are to be taken”. What is the criterion for how the formula is meant? It is, for example, the kind of way we always use it, were taught to use it.

We say, for instance, to someone who uses a sign unknown to us: “If by ‘ $x!2$ ’ you mean  $x^2$ , then you get *this* value for  $y$ , if you mean  $2x$ , *that* one.” – Now ask yourself: How does one do it — *mean* the one thing or the other by “ $x!2$ ”?

In *this* way, then, meaning something can determine the steps in advance. (PI 190)

In the first paragraph, Wittgenstein says that the criterion for “meaning the formula” in such-and-such a way is “the kind of way we always use it, were taught to use it.” At first glance, this reminder of *use* as the criterion for “to mean” may sound promising in itself since, as we had seen, the formula “+2” itself, as well as rule-formulations of “+2” (however elaborate) could not really figure as criteria for distinguishing the difference in meaning “+2” between teacher and pupil. (And an “act of meaning” that consisted of thinking of *all* the steps to be taken at once appeared inconceivable.) But, after considering what we have already looked at, we still have to ask here: How can the reminder of *use* being the criterion for “to mean” really help us out of the paradox? After all, teacher and pupil had been making the exact same use of “+2” prior to 1000! In order to see why PI 190 really does contain the material for a resolution of our paradox, we need to take a closer look at Wittgenstein’s example here – especially at how we would answer the question that Wittgenstein wants us to ask ourselves here: “How

does one do it — *mean* the one thing or the other by ‘ $x!2$ ’?” Let us rephrase this question in this Wittgensteinian way: When would we say of this person that he means “ $x!2$ ” in the one way, and when in the other? Obviously, the answer would be this: When this person writes “ $3!2 = 9$ ”, we would say “By  $x!2$  he *means*  $x^2$ .” And when he writes “ $3!2 = 6$ ”, we would say “By  $x!2$  he *means*  $2x$ .” In other words: the application that he makes of “ $x!2$ ” *in this moment* is the criterion that makes us say “By  $x!2$  he *means* ...” That is the way he “does it” — *mean* the one thing or the other by “ $x!2$ ”: by *applying* “ $x!2$ ” in the one way or the other.

Now how does this bear on our paradox? The paradox surrounding the phrase “How the formula is meant determines which steps are to be taken” was this: This phrase suggests that the criteria for “meaning the formula” must be fulfilled *before* the formula (as it is *meant*) is applied to specific cases (i.e. specific steps are taken) — yet in the case of teacher and pupil, we seemed unable to pin down their meaning “+2” differently *before* the one wrote 1000, 1004, 1008 and the other 1000, 1002, 1004 to *anything* about them *before* the step form 1000 onwards. Now it is at this point that Wittgenstein asks the question: Given that how the formula is meant determines which steps are to be taken — what is the *criterion* for how the formula is meant? He then gives an example where the application of a formula (“ $x!2$ ”) *at this moment* is the criterion for how that formula is meant. Now to resolve our paradox, we just need to put these two examples together: The first (teacher and pupil) was a case where we were strongly inclined to say that two people “had *meant* ‘+2’ differently all along” — yet it seemed that the one clearly observable difference about them — i.e. their different way of applying “+2” *after 1000* — was somehow not enough to ascribe “they had *meant* ‘+2’ differently all along” (i.e. a different “that’s how he has *meant* it all along!”) to them. And the second example was a case where just such an application of a formula *now* was *the* criterion that made us ascribe “By  $x!2$  he *means* ...” to a person. Now the decisive insight for the resolution of the paradox that *meaning* something could never determine the steps to be taken in advance (which Wittgenstein indicates to have supplied in the last sentence of PI 190) then is obviously this: The very application that *meaning* the formula “+2” in such-and such a way seemed not to be able to determine in advance is just the *criterion* that makes us say that “+2” is *meant* in a certain way — i.e. meant in such a way that it determines either 1000, 1002, 1004 or 1000, 1004, 1008 as steps to be taken.

Just as in the case of “ $x!2$ ”, in the case of “+2” the application that the pupil makes of “+2” *at the moment he writes 1000, 1004, 1008* is the criterion that makes us (and the teacher) say “he has *meant* ‘+2’ differently all along!” And the teacher’s application of “+2” *at the moment he corrects the pupil by writing 1000, 1002, 1004* is the criterion for our (and the pu-

pil's) saying "that is how he has meant '+2' all along!" The expression "having meant X in such-and-such a way all along" is being applied *now* – because now, its criteria are fulfilled. But this not to say that it is not (or not "really") a statement about the past. Wittgenstein's way of resolving the paradox is not built on any insight of the form "Actually, meaning is *not* a relation between present and future." He does not want us to give up the talk of a formula determining in advance which steps to take, but merely to become clear of the criteria that we ordinarily accept for this way of talking. The grammar of "I had meant all along that after 1000 comes 1002" had misled us to look for the criteria of its application in the *past* – when we should have looked for them in the *present*.<sup>274</sup>

The paradox dissolves when we realize that it is not a real problem that "everything about teacher and pupil could have been identical"<sup>275</sup> *before* their application of "+2" in the case of 1000. Because it is precisely *this* application that is the criterion for our everyday application of "that's how N has meant X all along." The illusion of incompatibility that lay at the base of our paradox was the result only of our having believed that this criterion was something other than this application *at this moment*. As we can see now, there is in fact no incompatibility at all here: Neither do we have to concede that teacher and pupil did *not* mean "+2" differently all along, nor do we have to give up our speaking of meaning determining a course of action *in advance*. The only casualty here is a certain *idea* of meaning – an idea, as we should now have come to see, that is far remote from what we *really* mean when we speak of "meaning something" in ordinary circumstances. Our ordinary talk of meaning something does in no way imply a mysterious relationship between past and present via an "act of meaning" that somehow contained every application of "+2".

## 2.2 Saul Kripke's and Crispin Wright's Solutions

Let us now compare this to the way Saul Kripke and Crispin Wright have described Wittgenstein's way of resolving the rule-following paradox. As they see it, the resolution of

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<sup>274</sup> To see more clearly why this does in no way license the conclusion that the teacher's meaning "+2" in such a way that 1002 comes after 1000 was not *really* there before the moment when the pupil wrote 1000, 1004, 1008, we need to consider this: In trying to express this "conclusion" by saying something like "*actually*, that is not how the teacher had meant '+2' all along, but only how he means it *at this moment*", we would employ an everyday expression ("that's how he means it *now!*") which has its very own criteria of application – criteria which are yet different from those for "that is how he has meant '+2' all along", since it *means* something different. Thus, rather than expose the "true meaning" of "that's how he had meant it all along!" by stating that it "actually" means the same as "that's how he means it *now!*", we would actually say something *false* about these criteria.

<sup>275</sup> As we were inclined to put things before realizing that one crucial thing is indeed *not* identical about them: The way they had *meant* "+2" all along.

the paradox revolves around Wittgenstein's reminders that rule-following is a *communal practice* – i.e. remarks such as these:

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)

That's why 'following a rule' is a practice. And to *think* one is following a rule is not to follow a rule. And that's why it is not possible to follow a rule 'privately': otherwise thinking one was following a rule would be the same thing as following it. (PI 202)

As Kripke and Wright read these remarks, Wittgenstein introduces the idea of a communal practice as something within which individuals reactions to expressions of rules (such as signposts) can be compared with one another – thereby supplying a standard of correctness the lack of which was the cause of the paradox, as they understand it.

In his *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (1982), Kripke illustrates Wittgenstein example with teacher and pupil in the following form: He introduces a "skeptic" who is doubting that the teacher has anything at hand which would prove that, if he intends to make of "+" the same use he has made of it in the past, he should write  $1000 + 2 = 1002$ . Since, as the skeptic's challenge goes, his past use of "plus" could be interpreted in such a way that he had all along meant "quus" – an arithmetic function which yields the result 5 for numbers of this magnitude.<sup>276</sup> Now for Kripke, Wittgenstein's answer to this skeptic is to point to the fact that we have to regard teacher and pupil as being embedded in a community in which their reactions to "1000+2" can be checked for agreement with those of other speakers. Kripke:

If our consideration are correct, the answer is that, if one person is considered in isolation, the notion of a rule as guiding the person who adopts it can have *no* substantive content. [...] The situation is very different if we widen our gaze from consideration of the rule follower alone and allow ourselves to consider him as interacting with a wider community. Others will then have justification conditions for attributing correct or in-

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<sup>276</sup> cf. Kripke 1982, 7-17

correct rule following to the subject, and these will *not* be simply that the subject's own authority is unconditionally to be accepted.<sup>277</sup>

In particular, for the conditionals of type (ii) [“if an individual follows such-and-such a rule, he must do so-and-so on a given occasion”] to make sense, the community must be able to judge whether an individual is indeed following a given rule in particular applications, i.e. whether his responses agree with their own.<sup>278</sup>

A deviant individual whose responses do not accord with those of the community in enough cases will not be judged, by the community, to be following its rules; [...]<sup>279</sup>

Likewise, Wright, in his *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics* (1980), holds that Wittgenstein's view is that *communal assessment* – the evaluation of the individual's actions through other members of the community – can supply the standard that definitions, pictures and examples failed to provide. Wright:

None of us unilaterally can make sense of the idea of correct employment of language save by reference to the authority of securable communal assent on the matter.<sup>280</sup>

[I] cannot legitimately credit myself with the capacity to recognise that *I* am here applying an expression in the same way as *I* have used it before, if this capacity is to be indifferent to whether I can persuade others of as much or whether that is the way in which the community in general uses the expression.<sup>281</sup>

[T]he verdict of my fellows can alone supply a standard whereby it can meaningfully be enquired whether I am using words in the same way on successive occasions [...]<sup>282</sup>

Wright and Kripke see it as an integral part of the solution of the rule-following problem that when the pupil objects to the teacher in PI 185 that he has been going on “in the same way”, the teacher can point to the *community* in order to prove the pupil wrong. He can say to the

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<sup>277</sup> Kripke 1982, 89

<sup>278</sup> Kripke 1982, 109

<sup>279</sup> Kripke 1982, 93

<sup>280</sup> Wright 1980, 220

<sup>281</sup> Wright 1980, 218

<sup>282</sup> Wright 1980, 38

pupil: “See, ‘+2’ is not meant that way, since everybody else writes 1000, 1002, 1004 – just as I do!”

What are we to make of this reading? Suppose the teacher had, after the pupil had responded to the order “1000+2” by writing 1000, 1004, 1008, asked himself: Am I really following the rule “+2” by writing *1000, 1002, 1004* – or am I just *thinking* that I am following it? In this case, his fellow teachers could have told him: No, you really *are* following the rule – since we all agree with your continuation of the series. Here, at first glance, the recourse to the verdict of the others seems a plausible means to settle the question if a given rule has really been followed (as opposed to merely be *thought* to be followed). But suppose now that *the pupil* were to ask himself: Am I just *thinking* I am following the rule “+2” – as I have understood it – by writing 1000, 1004, 1008? Am I just *thinking* that I had an understanding of this rule to which only the continuation 1000, 1004, 1008 conforms? Of what use could the question of agreement within a community be *here*? Of course, the others would say that the pupil was *not* following the rule “+2”. But that would only mean that he is not following the rule *as understood by everybody else*. I.e., it would only mean that his understanding of “+2” deviates from everybody else’s understanding. It would not mean that he had *no* understanding of “+2”. He has been following the rule “+2” according to how *he* understood it all along. And for this very personal understanding of “+2”, the comparison with the others seems not to matter at all. How would it help him to answer the question whether he was just *thinking* he followed the rule “+2” the way he meant it?

Of course, the way the community applies a rule is the criterion for how the rule is meant – i.e. it is the criterion for how *one means* “+2”. In this sense the verdict of the community – the agreement with everybody else’s responses to “+2” – is indeed a standard of correctness. But that is not what Wittgenstein has in mind in PI 185/6. He is not concerned with an illusion regarding what it consists in that “+2” is meant by everybody in the way the teacher means it. Rather, Wittgenstein is concerned with an illusion what it consists in that the teacher had meant “+2” in such a way that 1002 comes after 1000, and what it consists in that the pupil had meant “+2” differently – namely, in such a way that *1004* comes after 1000. That is, with an illusion regarding what it consists in that the teacher had meant “+2” as *everybody else* – and not in the way the pupil had meant it.

We need to keep the following two questions apart here: (1) What does the teacher have at hand in order to demonstrate that *everybody* means “+2” in such a way that after 1000 comes *1002*? (2) What does the teacher have at hand to demonstrate to the pupil (or Kripke’s

skeptic) that he personally had meant “+2” *in the way that everybody means it* – and not in the way the pupil had meant it? Regarding the first question, the recourse to agreement with the responses of the others seems natural. And regarding the second question? There, it seems, the teacher is in the exact same position as the pupil (whose response does not agree with anyone else’s). Like the teacher, the pupil does have an understanding of “+2” – which comes out when he writes 1000, 1004. What we have here then are two primary understandings of “+2” (the teacher’s and the pupil’s) – and then a secondary understanding: that of the community. And it is only those primary understandings that Wittgenstein is concerned with in his paradox. In order to make this point clear, we should therefore not ask: What does Wittgenstein do to save the idea that *the teacher* had meant “+2” the way he did? – but rather: What does Wittgenstein do in order to save the idea that *the pupil* had meant “+2” the way he did?

When looking at Kripke’s solution to the paradox under this aspect, it comes out that he cannot make any room for this. In effect, his answers only concern the question what it consists in that someone means a rule just like everybody else. Although Kripke sets out to resolve a threat to the idea that a person can at all act in accord with a rule that he himself had followed in the past,<sup>283</sup> all his examples are examples of how a person acts in accord with a rule the way *everybody* follows it. In Kripke, the crucial distinction between following a rule and *thinking* to follow a rule is reduced to the distinction between following the rule in the way everybody does and following it a way different from everybody’s. This makes it look as if the pupil were already an example of private rule-following. But, as we have seen, in PI 190 Wittgenstein easily accommodates a case of “personal” meaning – which, as I have shown, is also the way to accommodate the pupil’s deviant meaning of “+2”. If in PI 202, when he says that “it is not possible to follow a rule ‘privately’”, Wittgenstein had meant that an individual could never have an understanding of a rule apart from the understanding that a community has of this same rule, he would go against what he himself says in PI 190. Contrast Kripke, whose “solution” can save the teacher’s meaning of “+2” only by sacrificing the *pupil’s* meaning of “+2” altogether. As such, it is not a faithful reconstruction of Wittgenstein’s resolution to the paradox of PI 185.

Now with Wright, things are different. Often, like Kripke, he does not keep our two questions (1. What does *the teacher’s* meaning “+2” the way everybody consist in? 2. What does *the pupil’s* meaning “+2” in his personal way consist in?) properly apart. Thus, when it

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<sup>283</sup> cf. Kripke 1982, 88/9



comes to his two example sentences “How the formula is meant determines which steps are to be taken” and “This use of the expression accords with the rule”, it remains unclear if they are meant in a general or personal way – it remains unclear whether they are about how *one* means the formula or how e.g. the pupil means the formula. But indeed, Wright gives an extensive account of deviant meaning, attempting to fit it in with his general account of rule-following which centers on the idea of communal assessment.

What account is this? First of all, in many places Wright gives the impression that Wittgenstein had indeed shown that an individual simply cannot have an understanding of a word that would deviate from the community’s understanding of it:

[But] I cannot legitimately credit myself with the capacity to recognise that *I* am here applying an expression in the same way as *I* have used it before, if this capacity is to be indifferent to whether I can persuade others of as much or whether that is the way in which the community in general uses the expression.<sup>284</sup>

Suppose one of us finds himself incorrigibly out of line concerning the description of a new case. We have just seen that he cannot single-handed, as it were, give sense to the idea that he is at least being faithful to his *own* pattern; that is, that he recognises how he must describe the new case if he is to remain faithful to his own understanding of the relevant expression.<sup>285</sup>

This gives the impression as Wright wanted to say that there are only these two alternatives: either someone means a word in the way everybody else does, or he has *no* understanding of the word<sup>286</sup> – i.e. not a *differently* understanding, but no understanding at all. But that is not so. Actually, Wright sets out to accommodate the case deviant understanding into his account.

In section 7 of his chapter XI Wright elucidates how he intends to help the individual out of Wittgenstein’s dilemma, as he understands it. He begins with a case of teaching which differs from that of PI 185 in that the pupil does not yet have a vocabulary in which to communicate his understanding (Wright: his “hypothesis” about the correct employment) of

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<sup>284</sup> Wright 1980, 218

<sup>285</sup> Wright 1980, 218

<sup>286</sup> cf. Wright 1980, 218

“+2”.<sup>287</sup> Now for this scenario, Wright does not yet allow the possibility of a personal deviant meaning of “+2” by the pupil:

*We* cannot tell whether he implements his hypothesis correctly, that is, whether his expectations here really are consonant with the interpretation he has put on our treatment of, say, the samples which we gave him; and *he* cannot provide any basis for a distinction between their being so and its merely seeming to him that they are.<sup>288</sup>

But everything changes, according to Wright, as soon as the pupil is able to *communicate* his understanding of “+2” (or of “square”, as in Wright’s example). Because then, the pupil would no longer be vulnerable to the problem that everything that he has at hand (such as examples given to him) is open to *interpretation*. As soon as he had publicly announced his understanding of “+2”, he would provide himself with a standard that goes beyond the things that are merely given to *him*:

It would make all the difference if he could tell us what his hypothesis was; then there could be a communal assessment of the situation.<sup>289</sup>

The only circumstance in which it makes sense to think of someone as correctly applying a non-standard understanding of, for example, ‘square’ is where there is a community of assent about how, given that *that* is what he means, he ought to characterise this object.<sup>290</sup>

Now how is this supposed to work in practice? As it appears, what Wright has in mind is something along these lines: This someone has publicly announced that from now on, his understanding of “square” is that of a figure with three angles. Later then, when the community is confronted with a new case that makes everybody respond “triangle”, yet this someone responds “square”, then he can be assured that he makes the right use of this word *according to his own understanding of it*, when the others agree with him that, given his deviant understanding of “square”, it was rightly used here. Thus, according to Wright, the way that this someone’s understanding of “square” uniquely determines in advance how he ought to char-

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<sup>287</sup> cf. Wright 1980, 216/7

<sup>288</sup> Wright 1980, 217

<sup>289</sup> Wright 1980, 217

<sup>290</sup> Wright 1980, 217

acterize this object is the same in which what *one* means by “triangle” determines in advance for the rest of the community how they ought to characterize this object. But what appears quite natural in case of the understanding of the community seems to be quite contrived in the case of the lonesome, deviant pupil. Does the community really have a say in what *he* – deviating from *them* – means by “square”? It seems that Wright has ventured quite far from what Wittgenstein says in the parts of the *Investigations* we have looked at.

Even if Wright’s reconstruction of deviant meaning were plausible, it remains unclear of what use it could be in the very scenario that Wittgenstein introduces in PI 185. Because even though the pupil is able to clearly articulate his deviant understanding of “+2” after it has become apparent to the teacher, in Wittgenstein’s example, he has, unlike in Wright’s imagined case, not done it *beforehand*. That is, when we want to say that by writing 1000, 1004, 1008, it has come out that the pupil had understood “+2” differently from the teacher *all along*, Wright would have to object here. He would have to say that here, we had no basis for a statement about the past: even if the case of teacher and pupil had taken place before a huge audience, this *community of assent* had nothing with which to compare the pupil’s reaction now in order to tell him whether he now uses “+2” according to his (prior) understanding of this formula. That would be possible only *from now on* – after he had publicly stated his understanding of “+2”. As it comes out, Wright’s “solution” fails with respect to Wittgenstein’s own formulation of the problem.

The case of deviant meaning (within a community) brings out a crucial flaw in the reconstructions of both Kripke and Wright. If one sees the possibility of a correction by others as the central element of Wittgenstein’s resolution of his paradox, there are only two ways of reacting to the case of the deviant meaning of the pupil in PI 185: (1) Denying that it is a case of rule-following (as Kripke does) – thereby turning against Wittgenstein himself, or (2) trying to reduce the case of deviant meaning to other forms of meaning that one takes to be the only ones left after Wittgenstein’s attack on a certain idea of meaning – thereby failing to accommodate the very case of deviant meaning that gave rise to the question. Yet as we have seen, Wittgenstein’s initial way of resolving the paradox of teacher’s and pupil’s meaning “+2” in PI 190 easily accommodates the case of deviant meaning: The very application of “+2” to the case of 1000 that the teacher’s understanding – *as well as the pupil’s* – seemed unable to determine in advance is the criterion that makes us say “That’s how the teacher has meant ‘+2’ all along” – *as well as* “That’s how the pupil has meant ‘+2’ all along.” This means that the quotes from Wittgenstein where he highlights the *public* character of rule-

following cannot at all be meant – as Kripke and Wright must conclude – to make the idea of deviant rule-following look in any way problematic.

### 2.3 The Role of *Customs, Practice, and Institutions*

What then is Wittgenstein up to in remarks such as PI 199 and PI 202, if he is *not* meaning the appeal to customs and institutions as supplying a standard of correctness, as Kripke and Wright took it? Why is it “not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which someone followed a rule”? In order to understand what Wittgenstein means by saying this, it is helpful to turn back to another example from the *Investigations*: suddenly understanding something.

In PI 151, Wittgenstein deals with the expressions “Now I know!” and “Now I understand!” As with “to mean”, it is his concern here to bring out how we can be led away from the criteria that we ordinarily accept for these expressions. To simplify matters, Wittgenstein introduces the following scenario: Person A writes down a series of numbers – such as 1, 5, 11, 19, 29 – and Person B tries to find a law in this series. The question is: What does B’s “suddenly understanding” the system of the series that A writes down consist in? An obvious answer would be: it is that the formula  $a_n = n^2 + n - 1$  occurs to B. Wittgenstein’s first reaction to this answer is to list things that would be equally obvious: That the series of differences – 4, 6, 8, 10 – occurs to him, or that he already knows the series and now recognizes it. Now in order to bring out the danger that lurks in our first answer, in PI 152, Wittgenstein hints at an uncommon case:

“B understands the principle of the series” surely doesn’t mean simply: the formula “ $a_n = \dots$ ” occurs to B. For it is perfectly conceivable that the formula should occur to him and that he should nevertheless not understand. “He understands” must have more in it than: the formula occurs to him. And equally, more than any of those more or less characteristic *accompaniments* or manifestations of understanding.

What would be such a case where the formula occurs to someone, yet he does not understand? It could be the case of a pupil who has memorized from the textbook the beginnings of series together with the formulae – yet does not know how to get arbitrary numbers out of the formula by putting in the right  $n$ . When the teacher writes down 1, 5, 11, 19, 29, the formula “ $a_n = n^2 + n - 1$ ” would occur to him – without enabling to continue the series past 29, since that is how far he had memorized it. Confronted with such an example, we might feel inclined to

take a closer look at the moment when *B* said “Now I understand!” – since he *did* understand, i.e. could continue the series. It seems when looking closer, we *had to* find the crucial difference between the occurring of the formula *with* understanding and the occurring of the formula *without* it. But Wittgenstein’s intention is to get us away from such an enterprise:

But wait – if “Now I understand the principle” does not mean the same as “The formula .... occurs to me” (or “I utter the formula”, “I write it down”, etc.) – does it follow from this that I employ the sentence “Now I understand or “Now I can go on” as a description of a process occurring behind or side by side with that of uttering the formula? (PI 154)

And he goes on:

Try not to think of understanding as a ‘mental process’ at all. For *that* is the way of talking which confuses you. Instead, ask yourself: in what sort of case, in what kind of circumstances, do we say, “Now I know how to go on”? I mean, when the formula has occurred to me? (PI 154)

What Wittgenstein is trying to draw our attention to is that here, too, we have a case where the criteria for the application of an expression *that we really accept* are to be found in another place than where we are initially inclined to look for them. Wittgenstein goes on:

[W]hen he suddenly knew how to go on, when he understood the principle, then possibly he may have had a distinctive experience – and if he is asked: “What was it? What took place when you suddenly grasped the principle?” perhaps he will describe it much as we described it above – but for us it is *the circumstances* under which he had such an experience that justify him in saying in such a case that he understands, that he knows how to go on. (PI 155)

What circumstances are these? In PI 179, Wittgenstein returns to the case:

The words “Now I know how to go on” were correctly used when the formula occurred to him: namely, under certain circumstances. For example, if he had learnt algebra, had used such formulae before. [...] Think how we learn to use the expressions

“Now I know how to go on”, “Now I can go on”, and others; in what family of language-games we learn their use.

The outward form of the expression “Now I understand!” had led us to look for the criteria for its application in the moment and in the person who says of himself that he “now understands”. This had proven to be a dead end. Wittgenstein points to how we *learn* this expression in order to shift our attention to the following: When would we say of someone that “now he can go on”? What are the criteria here? In this case whatever this person has in his mind is not the decisive thing about him that makes us apply this expression to him: As the case of the pupil who had merely memorized bits of series shows, these criteria include a whole history of having learned to use formulae as well as having applied them in sufficient cases. Only when these circumstances apply is the occurring of the formula to the person a case of “Now he understands!” or “Now I understand!” Here we have a case where what Wittgenstein had said in PI 182 really holds: The criteria for our application of “Now he understands!” are more complicated and involved than we were first tempted to think. Because even though the formula occurring to us is what we first take note of when thinking of cases of “Now I understand!”, we now realize that we ordinarily apply this expression only to someone who has been exposed to a certain kind of training and practice. That is, the criteria here include the person’s past as well as his social surroundings. In a certain sense, this case is the opposite of the illusion about teacher’s and pupil’s meaning “+2”: There, the outward form of the expression “having meant X in such-and-such a way all along” had led us to look for the criteria for its application in the past – and here, the words “now” and “I” had led us to look for the criteria in the present state of a single person.

After this excursus into “suddenly understanding”, we are now in a better position to understand what Wittgenstein is up to in remarks such as PI 199 and PI 202. The quote from PI 199 that I had cited above is preceded by this question:

Is what we call “following a rule” something that only *one* man, only *once* in a lifetime, could do? — And this is of course a note on the *grammar* of the expression “to follow a rule”. (PI 199)

The sentence following the question elucidates what the question refers to. The answer is to be found by taking a look at the “grammar” of the expression “following a rule”. In Wittgen-

stein, a “note on the grammar” (or “grammatical remark”) is a remark that reminds us of the criteria that we ordinarily accept for the application of words or expressions. The question that Wittgenstein poses here could therefore also be put like this: Does something which only one man does only once in his lifetime fulfill the criteria that we ordinarily accept for applying the expression “following a rule” to someone? Put differently: Would we say of something that a single person does only once that it is a case of “following a rule”?

Now why does Wittgenstein pose such a question? It helps to remember that “grammatical remarks” – reminders of the criteria that we accept for the application of expressions – are only necessary where we are *mistaken* about these criteria. So, what case of mistaken criteria could give rise to a question such as that in PI 199? Let us go back to the case of “suddenly understanding”. This was a case where we were mistaken about the criteria that we ordinarily accept for “to understand”. We were inclined to believe that the occurring of a formula to someone was the criterion for the application of expressions such as “Now I understand” or “Now he understands!” But then we had seen that we say of someone that he “understands now” only when certain circumstances apply: that he has learnt algebra, that he has made a regular use of formulae of this kind. Thus, our mistake was that we had believed that these *circumstances* had nothing to do with our application of “to understand”. Now if these circumstances were merely accidental, then we could conceive of cases of “understanding” where these circumstances did not apply at all.

In Part VI of his *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, Wittgenstein invents a series of hypothetical cases that take their departure from the mistaken thought that circumstances did *not* count among the criteria for the application of certain expressions. Here is an example that is closely related to our discussion of “suddenly understanding”:

But couldn't we imagine that someone without any training should see a sum that was set to do, and straightway find himself in the mental state that in the normal course of things is only produced by training and practice? So that he knew he could calculate although he had never calculated. (One could, then, it seems, say: The training would merely be history, and merely as a matter of empirical fact would it be necessary for the production of knowledge.) (RFM VI 33)

What we had discussed earlier was the case where a formula occurred to someone who did not have sufficient training – a counterexample to our first inclination to say that the occurring of a formula was *the* criterion for “now he understands!” To him, the mere formula itself did

not represent any understanding whatsoever. What is different here is that we are now to imagine not only that the mental state he is in is *similar* to that of someone who really understands (in that the same formula that often occurs to a person who has an episode of “Now I understand the system of the series!” occurs to him) – but that it is “identical”. Would that change anything for our analysis of the criteria for “to understand”? Wittgenstein continues:

But suppose now he is in that state of certainty and he calculates wrong? What is he supposed to say himself? And suppose he then multiplied sometimes right, sometimes again quite wrong.—The training may of course be overlooked as mere history, if he now *always* calculates right. But that he *can* calculate he shows, to himself as well as to others only by this, that he *calculates* correctly.

Now at first glance, this comment of Wittgenstein’s may sound as if in this case, the circumstances *were* indeed accidental: if only he were in a mental state that always resulted in calculating right, our criteria for “to understand” would be fulfilled. But that is not so – Wittgenstein here merely highlights another aspect of circumstances as criteria: what is crucial here is not that he is in that mental state, but that he *calculates correctly*. Now again it might seem here that this “calculating correctly” is something that does not depend on any circumstances: he just does it in the moment when he is in that state, and that’s it. But immediately before his thought experiment, Wittgenstein wrote:

How often must a human being have added, multiplied, divided, before we can say that he has mastered the technique of these kinds of calculation? And by that I don’t mean: how often must he have calculated right in order to convince *others* that he can calculate? No, I mean: in order to prove it to himself. (RFM VI 32)

Just as in our example of “suddenly understanding”, the application that makes us say that “he calculates” is not something momentarily, but something that is expanded in time – just as the training. Again, it comes out that circumstances – here: a whole history of correct application – *are* among the criteria that we accept for an expression. We simply would *not* apply the expression “to understand” to someone who is in that hypothetical “mental state of understanding”, but has no history of correct application.

Let us now take another look at one of the formulations Wittgenstein used to characterize his example. He summed up the upshot of his thought experiment like this: “So that he



knew he could calculate although he had never calculated” (RFM VI 33). We can bring out the connection to PI 199 if we reformulate it like this: “So that he only once in his lifetime knew how to calculate”. Now we can see how the mistaken idea that the criterion for “to understand” or “to know how to calculate” was a mental state and not the circumstances in which such a state is embedded carries in its train the theoretical possibility that it made sense to say that such things could be done by a person just once (in his lifetime). Because it at least conceivable that a person might be in a certain mental state only once in his life – and if this mental state were the criterion for the ascription of an expression X to him, it would make sense to say that “only once in his lifetime he could X”. But with Wittgenstein’s reminder that not such a “mental state”, but the circumstances are the criterion for the application of e.g. “to understand” and “to know”, this seeming possibility dissolves. The criteria of training and regular practice simply are by themselves things that involve things happening more than *once*. Thus, we could say in the style of PI 199 that “it is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which someone knew how to calculate.” And by this, we would mean nothing more than that we ordinarily apply the expression “knowing how to calculate” only to someone who is in the right kind of *circumstances* – who is embedded in the right kind of *surroundings*: namely, that he has been subjected to a certain training and has displayed a regular application of his calculating skills.

Now let us turn to a stretch from *RFM* where Wittgenstein himself makes the transition from a hypothetical example such as the one we have just discussed to a statement such as that in PI 199. The example is this:

Let us consider very simple rules. Let the expression be a figure, say this one:

| - - |

and one follows the rule by drawing a straight sequence of such figures (perhaps as an ornament).

| - - || - - || - - || - - || - - |

Under what circumstances should we say: someone gives a rule by writing down such a figure? Under what circumstances: someone is following this rule when he draws that sequence? It is difficult to describe this.

If one of a pair of chimpanzees once scratched the figure | - - | in the earth and thereupon the other the series | - - || - - | etc., the first would not have given a rule nor

would the other be following it, whatever else went on at the same time in the mind of the two of them. (RFM VI 42)

Now here we are back to rule-following. The case resembles our previous case with the “isolated multiplier” in that Wittgenstein allows here too for the possibility that the chimpanzee who writes | - - || - - || - - | could be in the same mental state as one of us who follows the simple rule “| - - |”. It should be noted, however, that in this case, the focus is not primarily on the mental state but the *act* of writing | - - | *only once* and responding with | - - || - - || - - | *only once*. Now what are Wittgenstein’s reasons for dismissing these two chimpanzees as rule-givers and rule-followers? He continues:

If however there were observed, e.g., the phenomenon of a kind of instruction, of showing how and of imitation, of lucky and misfiring attempts, of reward and punishment and the like; if at length the one who had been so trained put figures which he had never seen before one after another in sequence as in the first example, then we should probably say that the one chimpanzee was writing rules down, and the other was following them. (RFM VI 42)

It is obvious here that Wittgenstein wants us to realize that the criteria for “giving a rule” and “following a rule” involve *surroundings* in the same way as do the criteria for “to understand” and “to know how to calculate”. That is, the reason we would not say of the chimpanzee who scratches | - - || - - || - - | in the earth *only once* that he follows a rule is that doing it *only once* would mean that he is not embedded in the complex social surroundings that, just as in the case of “to understand”, are also the criteria for our attribution of “following a rule” to someone. And that is why everything changes once the chimpanzees *would* indeed be embedded in the right kind of surroundings.

Now at this point Wittgenstein makes the following objection against himself:

But suppose that already the first time the one chimpanzee had *intended* to repeat this procedure? (RFM VI 43)

Have we perhaps been unfair to the chimpanzees? Although the one had given the order “| - - |” *only once* – i.e. he had *acted* only once – could he not have *intended* to do it regularly? So

that he would have repeated the order, and the other one its execution, if only we had displayed more patience and watched the two longer? Wittgenstein's comment:

Only in a particular technique of acting, speaking, thinking, can someone intend something. (This 'can' is the grammatical 'can'.) (RFM VI 43)

What exactly is Wittgenstein's objection to the suggestion about the chimpanzee *intending*? Why *can* he not intend without such a technique? Was he not about to start out on developing the very technique that Wittgenstein now requires of him for even *intending*? The remark in parentheses makes clear that this has once again to do with the criteria that we ordinarily accept for an expression – this time, for “intending”. Thus, “only in ... can he intend” translates to “only the presence of ... fulfills the criteria for our application of ‘to intend’”. When taking a look at the grammar of “to intend”, it comes out that the recourse to the chimpanzee's “intention” changes nothing: Just as with “following a rule”, we say of someone that “he intends” something only if that someone is embedded in a fully fledged social technique or custom. An isolated act, however similar to an act of *our* technique viewed in isolation, simply does not meet these criteria.

What made the idea of the one chimpanzee's “intending to repeat | - |, but not yet having gotten to it” appealing to us was the fact that *within* the right social surroundings (as in the case of our human form of life), such things are indeed possible – i.e. we do indeed speak of such things. In the next remark, Wittgenstein makes this point using this example:

It is possible for me to invent a card-game today, which however never gets played. But it means nothing to say: in the history of mankind just once was a game invented, and that game was never played by anyone. That means nothing. Not because it contradicts psychological laws. Only in a certain surrounding do the words “inventing a game”, “playing a game” make sense. (RFM VI 43)

Let us read this passage from the end: What Wittgenstein must mean here is that the criteria for “inventing a game” and “playing a game” include the presence of a certain surrounding – just like in the case of “following a rule” and “intending”. So the reason why it makes no sense to say that “In the history of mankind just once was a game invented, and that game was never played by anyone” is that, similarly to the case of “knowing how to calculate”, the criteria for “playing a game” involve games being played regularly and by many people. Now the

phrase “Not because it contradicts psychological laws” highlights once more the *grammatical* status of Wittgenstein’s statements: Not because it would for some reason be empirically impossible to play a game only once (and without other players) does it mean nothing to say this, but because we would not *call* this isolated act “playing a game”. Everything is different, though, once this surrounding is present: if Wittgenstein (or any of us) – being embedded in these complex social surroundings –, writes down rules for a card game, it would indeed be called a “game” – even if it would never be played by anyone.

Wittgenstein continues with a remark that leads us directly back to PI 199:

In the same way it cannot be said either that just once in the history of mankind did someone follow a sign-post. [...] And that first impossibility is again not a psychological one. (RFM VI 43)

And he continues:

The words “language”, “proposition”, “order”, “rule”, “calculation”, “experiment”, “following a rule” refer to [*beziehen sich auf*] a technique, a custom. (RFM VI 43)

As should be clear by now, a community of speakers is not crucial for rule-following because it supplies the single person with a *standard of correctness* with which his inclinations to act can be compared for agreement. Rather, it comes in as a *background* in which things that someone does need to be embedded in order to be called “following a rule”. The community of speakers is not something that makes rule-following technically (or psychologically) possible – so that its absence would make it technically (or psychologically) impossible for the single individual to follow a rule. It is not that the chimpanzee in Wittgenstein’s scenario is missing something – e.g. “communal assessment” of his actions – which absence made it *impossible* for him to follow the rule “l - - l”, however hard he tried. Rather, it is *us* who are missing something – the background in which what he does needs to be embedded, if it is to fulfill our ordinary criteria for the ascription of “following a rule” to him. In a nutshell: It is not *he* who stands in need for the community, but *we* – because the community is part of *our* criteria for *our* expression “following a rule”. What Wittgenstein is drawing on in the passages I cited is never the internal preconditions of the social phenomenon of rule-following, but always our criteria for the application of “following a rule”. (Compare RFM VI 21: It is of the *application of the expression* “following a rule” that Wittgenstein says it presupposes a custom, and not of rule-following itself.) Viewing things – as Wittgenstein does – from the

perspective of our criteria for the application of our expressions means to not try to take the chimpanzee's perspective and then make an attempt to find out what must be added to his situation in order to make rule-following technically possible for him (which is Kripke's and Wright's perspective), but rather to ask questions such as this one:

Suppose you came as an explorer into an unknown country with a language quite strange to you. In what circumstances would you say that the people there gave orders, understood them, obeyed them, rebelled against them, and so on? (PI 206)

This is Wittgenstein's answer to a case where some people act on a given rule in a way that there is no *agreement* in their reactions. Contrary to what Kripke and Wright make of "agreement within a community", the missing agreement comes in here as merely one more feature of the background in which actions need to be embedded in order for us to apply expressions such as "to give an order", "to understand", and "to obey an order": however repeated and regular these people's reactions to an "order" had been, we would not call these reactions "obeying the order" if there were no *agreement* among them.

Now the reason why a communal practice did not figure as a criterion for the application of "following a rule" in our example with teacher and pupil is that this is simply a different case from e.g. that of the two chimpanzees. In the latter case, the presence or absence of a communal practice is the criterion if there was at all a rule that had been followed or not. But in the case of teacher and pupil, the issue was *which* rule had been followed all along. The criterion for *that* is the application each makes in a specific moment (embedded in a communal practice, of course). This means Wittgenstein's reminders of "customs" and "practice" in PI 199 etc. do not add anything essential to his resolution of the paradox concerning teacher and pupil that he supplies in PI 190. Wittgenstein's reminders of "customs" and "practice" in PI 199 and PI 202 come in because there, he investigates *further* criteria for "following a rule". This means that "customs", "institutions" and "(communal) practice" are located on the same logical level as "use" in PI 190 – they all come into view as criteria for the application of the expression "following a rule".

## 2.4 Use on Two Logical Levels

In the course of our discussion of Wittgenstein's rule-following paradox, things such as "use", "technique", "practice", "customs", and "institutions" have come into view as the criteria which we ordinarily accept for the application of expressions such as "to follow a

rule”, “to mean”, “to understand”, and “to intend”. In PI 179, a certain *training* and regular *use* comes out as the criterion for our application of “Now he understands!” In PI 190, the *use* that someone makes of “ $x!2$ ” comes out as the criterion for our application of “By  $x!2$ , he means  $2x$ ”. In RFM VI 43, the existence of a *technique* comes out as the criterion for our application of “to follow a rule” (and “to intend”) to the chimpanzee. And in PI 199 and PI 202, the existence of a *custom* (*use, institution*) or a *practice* comes out as the criterion for our application of “following a rule” to someone – in the negative sense that it comes out as the criterion for *not* applying “following a rule” to the person who does something only once in his lifetime.

Now instead of saying something like “The *use* that someone makes of ‘ $x!2$ ’ is the criterion for our application of ‘By  $x!2$ , he means  $2x$ ’”, I could also have said: the *use* that someone makes of “ $x!2$ ” is the criterion for our *use* of “By  $x!2$ , he means  $2x$ ” (and likewise, I could have said that a background of regular *use* is the criterion for our *use* of “Now he understands!”). Or, I could have said that the *application* that someone makes of “ $x!2$ ” is the criterion for our *application* of “By  $x!2$ , he means  $2x$ ” (and likewise, I could have said that a background of regular *application* is the criterion for our *application* of “Now he understands!”). By reformulating these grammatical remarks in this way, I intend to draw attention to the fact that in Wittgenstein, notions such as “use” and “application” figure on two distinct logical levels. In this section, I would like to explore these two levels and their distinction further.

Let us first rehearse how Wittgenstein dissolved the paradox with teacher and pupil, focusing on at what exact points reminders of *use* came in. Now the first crucial step in this dissolution was Wittgenstein’s advice to not focus on “*the Act of Meaning*”, but instead to look at real circumstances of our everyday lives where we ordinarily *use* the word “to mean”. That is, to focus on what we can also call – following PI 182 – “the game with this word”, “the role of this word in our language” and “its *use* in the linguistic intercourse that is carried on by its means.” With the advice to focus on this *use* of words, Wittgenstein introduces his talk of “criteria”. That is, he asks the question “What are the criteria which we accept for ‘to mean something’?” This is the same as asking “What exactly is the role of the word ‘to mean’ in our language?” or “How precisely is the game with the word ‘to mean’ being played?” This leads to the next crucial step in the dissolution of the paradox: Coming to see what these criteria for “to mean” *really are*. Initially, we were tempted to think that these criteria were things that existed *before* the step from 1000 onwards – rule-formulations the teacher knew, thoughts

that teacher and pupil might have had about “+2”, steps they had taken prior to 1000. Yet as came out, the criterion for “to mean” in this case is the use that they make of “+2” *from 1000 onwards*. This, then, is the second time *use* figures in the dissolution of our paradox: By coming to see that the criterion for “to mean” actually is this *use now*, it appears no longer mysterious how at all a rule can determine a course of action *in advance*.

Summing up, Wittgenstein’s way of dissolving the paradox is this: He first asks us to focus on the actual *use* of the word “to mean” in everyday circumstances – i.e. to focus on the criteria that we accept for “to mean”. And second, he shows us that in the case of teacher and pupil, the criterion for their having meant “+2” *all along* in a way that determined either 1000, 1004, 1008 or 1000, 1002, 1004 is the *use* that they make of “+2” after 1000. In a nutshell: The paradox dissolves when we come to see that the criterion for our *application (use)* of “to mean ‘+2’ in such-and-such a way” in the case of teacher and pupil is the *application (use)* that each makes of “+2” after 1000. So here we have the two levels on which the notion of “use” (or “application”) figures in the dissolution of the paradox: First, on the level of a question that Wittgenstein advises us to ask (“How do we ordinarily *use* the word ‘to mean’?” – or more precisely: “What is the criterion for how the formula is meant?”, PI 190) – and second, on the level of an investigation of the criteria we accept for (this *use* of) the word “to mean” (“It [the criterion] is, for example, the kind of way we always use it [the formula], were taught to use it”, PI 190). In a nutshell: the notion of “use” (or “application”) figures in the dissolution of the paradox first in a *question* that we ask – “What are the criteria for our *use* of the expression ‘to mean +2 in such-and such a way’?” – and second, in our *answer* to this question – “In the case of teacher and pupil, the criterion for this use of ‘to mean’ is the *use* that each makes of ‘+2’ after 1000 – i.e. writing 1000, 1002, 1004 or 1000, 1004, 1008”.

Let me now introduce a terminology for designating these two levels. I will call the level of occurrence of “use” or “application” in Wittgenstein’s initial question “How do we ordinarily *use* (or *apply*) this or that expression?” the *methodological* level. *Methodological*, because drawing our attention to the actual *use* of words in everyday circumstances is one of Wittgenstein’s methods for the dissolution of philosophical problems (other such methods are: asking us to think of an inner picture as being replaced by a crafted model, or asking us to imagine a language game where ...). (This entails that I will also call an occurrence of “use” or “application” *methodological* if a report on the actual use of an expression – i.e. an answer to the question “How do we ordinarily *use* (or *apply*) the expression X?” – takes the following explicit form: “The criteria which we accept for the *use* (or the *application*) of the expression X are ...”) In contrast, I will call the level of occurrence of “use” or “application” (and related

notions such as “practice”, “technique” and “custom”) in actual answers to the question “How do we ordinarily *use* (or *apply*) this or that expression?” / “What are the criteria that we ordinarily accept for this or that expression?” the *critical* level. *Critical*, because “use” and “application” (and related notions) here come into view as *criteria* for the application of certain expressions of our language – expressions such as “following a rule”, “meaning”, “understanding”, and “intending”.

Let us now take a look at how this distinction of the two logical levels works out in a case other than that of teacher and pupil. Let us take PI 179 as an example:

The words “Now I know how to go on” were correctly *used* when the formula occurred to him: namely, under certain circumstances. For example, if he had learnt algebra, had *used* such formulae before. [...] Think how we learn to *use* the expressions “Now I know how to go on”, “Now I can go on”, and others; in what family of language-games we learn their *use*. [My emphases]

I have highlighted the four occurrences of “use” in this passage. Let us start with the latter two occurrences. The third occurrence of “use” is within the sentence “Think how we learn to *use* the expressions ...” This is a methodological advice akin to “Focus on the actual *use* of expressions” – so “use” here occurs on the *methodological* level. The same holds for the fourth occurrence of “use” – that in “Think [...] in what family of language-games we learn their *use*.” This is again an occurrence in a methodological advice, i.e. an occurrence of “use” on the *methodological* level. Let us now turn to the first and second occurrence of “use”. In order to assign them their respective levels, it helps so see that the first two sentences of the passage can be reformulated like this: “The words ‘Now I know how to go on’ were correctly *used* when the formula occurred to him: namely, under the circumstances that he had learnt algebra, had *used* such formulae before.” What we have here is a report on the circumstances under which a word is *used* correctly. So, the first occurrence of “use” is on the *methodological* level, since it figures to earmark the sentence as a report on the actual *use* of an expression (i.e., as a grammatical remark). Now investigating those circumstances means nothing else than investigating the *criteria* for the correct use of a word. What are those criteria? “That he had learnt algebra, had *used* such formulae before.” Thus, the second occurrence of “use” is on the *critical* level, since the purpose of the second half of this sentence (i.e. the second



sentence in the quoted passage) is to report that a certain *use* is among the criteria that we accept for the correct *use* of “Now I know how to go on”.

Now for all the expressions whose criteria we have looked at in the course of our discussion, the following held: First, we were tempted to think that the criteria for the application of these expressions did *not* involve things like use, practice, technique – which then got us into a philosophical problem. Then, when taking a closer look at these criteria, it came out that these criteria in fact *do* involve certain kinds of uses, practices, techniques, etc. – and this insight helped dissolve the problem. Now from these examples, it is tempting to conclude that there must hold some kind of internal connection between the occurrence of *use*, *application* and *practice* on both the *methodological* level and the *critical* level. One could get the following idea: Since whenever Wittgenstein asks “Under what circumstances would we say ...?”, these circumstances involve uses, practices, techniques, etc., the methodological question “How do we actually *apply* the expression X?” does in some way necessarily yield that the criteria for the *application* of X always involve the *application* of certain things, or a whole *technique*, or an entire social *institution*.

But this idea is mistaken. In fact, the occurrence of *use* or *application* on the *critical* level is logically independent from its occurrence on the *methodological* level. Once we start taking Wittgenstein’s methodological advice to heart and begin to look at the circumstances of our everyday use of an expression, and at the criteria which we accept for its application, there is no necessity that things like *application*, *practice* or *techniques* reveal themselves as criteria. Once this is fully appreciated, the difference between the two logical levels will come out yet more clearly. In order to get clear about this point, we should now turn to examples in Wittgenstein where an investigation of the criteria that we accept for the application of an expression reveals something other than uses, practices, or the like.

In PI 139, Wittgenstein is dealing with the following problem:

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? [...] 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*?

When I hear a word like “cube”, I instantly know it means – which is to say that I instantly know how this word is *used*. Now the seeming problem here is this: the use of a word is something that is extended in time – whereas whatever we grasp “in a flash” is something that is not extended in time. What we seem to have here are two things (the use of a word and the something being grasped) that stand in some mysterious relation, one that seems to demand further explication.

Now the first approach to this problem that Wittgenstein takes its departure from the observation that, when we hear the word “cube”, what comes to our mind is usually some *picture* of a cube. And does not this picture fit a certain use, whereas it fails to fit others? For example, Wittgenstein goes on, if the drawing of a cube occurs to me, and I point at a triangular prism, and say that it is a cube, this use seems to not fit the picture. In this way now, one might think, the picture of the cube could contain the use of the word “cube” in it. And therefore, the coming to mind of the picture in a flash would be the grasping of the whole use of the word *in a flash*. Yet Wittgenstein has the following to say to this suggestion:

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)

Now the problem with the picture is that it does or does not fit the right use of the word “cube” depending on the method of projection we choose for it. Choosing the method of projection that we initially assumed as the one that was self-evident makes the picture not fit the triangular prism. Yet choosing the method of projection that Wittgenstein had in mind when he suggested this example does make the picture fit the triangular prism. Now this of course means that the picture does not contain a certain use of a word as uniquely as we had hoped. Thus, it seems that our grasping the whole use of the word “cube” in a flash remains mysterious after all.

But Wittgenstein does not want us to give up so easily. In PI 141, he comes up with this suggestion:

Suppose, however, that not merely the picture of the cube, but also the method of projection comes before our mind?—How am I to imagine this?—Perhaps I see before

me a schema showing the method of projection: say a picture of two cubes connected by lines of projection.

Was the problem with the drawing of the cube perhaps merely that it was not the right kind of picture? That is was too ambiguous? True, it did not determine its own method of projection, and therefore failed to be able to contain a determinate use of “cube”. But what if a picture occurred to us that contained the method of projection as well? Then, there should be no more uncertainty as how to apply the picture – and therefore, this new, less ambiguous picture should finally be able to contain the use of the word “cube”. Wittgenstein’s comment on this suggestion:

But does this really get me any further? Can’t I now imagine different applications of this schema too? (PI 141)

What Wittgenstein is driving at here is the following fundamental problem: the drawing of the cube satisfied us as containing our use of “cube” uniquely in it only as long as we were unaware that a method of projection existed that would make cases fit with the picture that we would usually not call “cube”. And now this could also be true of the picture of the two cubes connected by lines of projection: at the present moment, we cannot imagine a situation where someone could get the picture wrong in that he still would think of the triangular prism to fit *this* picture. But may not this be due only to our lack of imagination? Have we ruled out in principle that this schema could be interpreted in such a way that, if not the triangular prism, some other object that we thought of as ruled out could still be regarded as *fitting the schema*?

Now at this point, we might lose our patience with Wittgenstein’s exploiting of our imagination or lack of it, and of the possibility of arcane misunderstandings that seem completely far-fetched. Wittgenstein feels this, and has his interlocutor protest:

Well, yes, but then can’t an *application come before my mind*? (PI 141)

After all, as we might want to join in this protest, how to apply something, pictures and other things, is something that comes before our mind all the time! Does Wittgenstein really want to make something so ordinary look all of a sudden dubitable and mysterious? Indeed not. Wittgenstein’s answer to the interlocutor:

It can: only we need to get clearer about our application of *this* expression. Suppose I explain various methods of projection to someone so that he may go on to apply them; let us ask ourselves when we should say that *the* method that I intend comes before his mind. (PI 141)

Now at this point, Wittgenstein makes his characteristic move, asking us to “get clearer about our application of *this* expression”. This of course is the same as asking us to get clear about under what circumstances of our everyday lives this expression – i.e. the expression “an application comes before my mind” (or “an application comes before his mind”) – is actually used. In other words, Wittgenstein wants us to get clear about the criteria that we accept for our ordinary use (application) of “an application comes before N’s mind”. Once again, Wittgenstein’s diagnosis is not that there is something wrong with the coming of an application to someone’s mind itself, but merely with a certain *idea* we have about what “an application comes before N’s mind” *must* consist in. In other words, we are mistaken about the criteria that we really accept for “an application comes before N’s mind”, and only therefore it appears as something dubitable and mysterious.

Now the example for the general case of “an application comes before N’s mind” that Wittgenstein chooses here is “the method of projection that I intend comes before his mind”. The relationship of these two is that a method of projection is just a specification of a certain *application* of our initial drawing. That is, instead of “a method of projection comes to N’s mind”, we could say “an application of the drawing comes before N’s mind”. What, then, *are* the criteria that we would accept for “the method of projection that I intend comes before his mind”? Wittgenstein:

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. (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)

Let us first focus on the second criterion that Wittgenstein mentions here: “the application which—in the course of time—he makes of what he imagines”. Let us simplify Wittgenstein’s example in this way: What we explain to this person are just the two methods of pro-

jection we had discussed – the one that makes our initial drawing fit a cube, and the other that makes this drawing fit a triangular prism. Let us further assume that in the course of our explaining these two methods of projection, two schemas which graphically embody them are used: the one which we already had discussed, i.e. the picture with the two cubes connected by lines of projection, and another with two triangular prisms connected by lines of projection (which is to say that in both these schemas, the picture on the left looks identical). Now suppose we show the initial drawing to that person and ask him to apply the *first* method of projection to it (i.e., “cube”). Now if, in this moment, the picture of the two cubes connected by lines of projection occurred to him, and he also said that, according to this method of projection, it is the cube that fits the drawing, then we would indeed say that *the* method that we intended *had* come before his mind. Yet if, in this moment, the same picture occurs to him, but he then points to the triangular prism and says that, according to this method of projection, *it* fits the drawing, then we would indeed say that the method that we intended has *not* come before his mind, but rather the *other* method we explained to him. Thus, the dilemma that the picture of the two cubes connected by lines of projection could not uniquely determine its own application dissolves when we realize that, just like in the case of teacher and pupil, this very *application* of a picture which it itself seemed unable to determine is the criterion that we ordinarily accept for “an application (of the picture) comes before N’s mind” – and not the picture taken by itself.

Now until this point, this case strongly resembles the cases we have discussed before: The question “What are the criteria we accept for the application of X?” reveals that among those criteria is an *application* of some sort. Let us, then, turn to the other criterion for “the method of projection that I intend comes before his mind” that Wittgenstein mentions: “the picture (of whatever kind) that at some time or other comes before his mind”. Now of this picture Wittgenstein said 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”. Now suppose, after our having asked that person to apply the *first* method of projection (i.e., “cube”) to the drawing, he turns to the page in the textbook where we find the picture with the two cubes connected by lines of projection, and looks at it. Now in this case also, we would ordinarily say that “the method of projection that we intended has come before his mind”. And if he turns to the page in the book where we find the picture of the two triangular prisms connected by lines of projection, and looks at *that*, we would *not* say that “the method of projection that we intended has come before his mind”. That is, in these cases it is a picture taken by itself (which either N imagines, has physically before him, or

might construct as a model) that we accept as the criterion for our application of “an application comes before N’s mind”.

Now of course at this point one might want to object that this only holds as long as he goes on to make a certain *application* of that schema – and, as we have seen, if he were to look at the textbook picture that we would describe as “two *cubes* connected by lines of projection”, yet points to a triangular prism and says that *that* fits the drawing we gave him, we would not say any more that “the method of projection that we intended has come before his mind”. Now the point is that this is no real objection to what Wittgenstein has said so far. In PI 141, he goes on to say:

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*.

I want to say: we have here a *normal* case, and abnormal cases.

Here, Wittgenstein openly admits that the two criteria for “an application comes before N’s mind” – the use on the one hand, the picture on the other – can come into conflict – but he also says that that is *normally* not the case.

Now in PI 142, he goes on to say this:

[I]f 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.

From this, we might infer the following relation between the two criteria for “an application comes before N’s mind”: Only *because* people normally make a certain application of a picture (such as the schema of the two cubes connected by lines of projection) can this picture sometimes serve as a criterion by itself – namely, in those cases where momentarily, there is no application. But if people stopped making this application of the picture altogether, it *could* not serve as a criterion any more. In this account then, the application would be taken as the primary thing, and the picture as something secondary which only served as a criterion because it normally yields in a certain application.

I had announced this example as an example showing that there is no necessity that the methodological question “How do we actually *apply* the expression X?” yields that the criteria for the *application* of X themselves involve the *application* of certain things. Now even if we grant the reading that a certain picture (or model) is the criterion for “an application comes before N’s mind” only because we normally *apply* this picture in a certain way, the fact remains that in PI 141 Wittgenstein describes certain circumstances where N’s having (or creating) this picture *is* the sole criterion for our application of “an application comes before N’s mind”. Actually, this fact comes out even clearer through it being *contrasted* by Wittgenstein with the fact that in other cases, an application is the criterion for our application of this expression. In PI 141, the picture and the application are presented to us as “twofold criteria” – that is, as things that are on a par with each other, and not as reducible to the other. Thus, the fact remains that in PI 141, Wittgenstein gives an example where the methodological question “How do we actually *apply* the expression X?” reveals that the criterion for our *application* of X is something distinctively different from an *application*. This, then, indicates that the occurrence of “application” (or “use”) on the *critical* level is indeed independent of its occurrence on the *methodological* level: there is no necessity that when we ask for the criteria for the *use* of an expression, these criteria must involve a *use* of some kind.

In order to make this point yet clearer, let us turn to an example where Wittgenstein contrasts the presence of a *use* as a criterion in one case with its absence as a criterion in another even more clearly. In the course of our discussion of the example of the two chimpanzees, I had quoted these bits from *RFM*:

In the same way it cannot be said either that just once in the history of mankind did someone follow a sign-post. [...] And that first impossibility is again not a psychological one.

The words “language”, “proposition”, “order”, “rule”, “calculation”, “experiment”, “following a rule” refer to a technique, a custom. (RFM VI 43)

And I had explained the fact that it does not make sense to say “just once in the history of mankind did someone follow a sign-post” as following solely from the fact that “following a sign-post”, just like “following a rule”, *designates* a custom – and it is central to our notion of

a “custom” that things be done regularly and by many people. Now when I initially cited the first quote, I had omitted a sentence. The full quote reads like this:

In the same way it cannot be said either that just once in the history of mankind did someone follow a sign-post. Whereas it can be said that just once in the history of mankind did someone walk parallel with a board. And that first impossibility is again not a psychological one. (RFM VI 43)

Now why *does* it make sense to say “just once in the history of mankind did someone walk parallel with a board”? In this context, there can only be one reason why Wittgenstein might say this: that “walking parallel with a board” does *not* refer to a custom or practice. In other words: Unlike “following a sign-post”, the criteria for “walking parallel with a board” do not involve a practice or custom. This means: In the case of “walking parallel with a board”, what a person does need not be embedded in a background of an existing use, technique, or custom in order to be called that. Unlike in the cases of “following a rule”, “intending”, “meaning”, and “understanding”, we *would* call an act “walking parallel with a board”, however isolated it is: whereas in the case of “following a rule”, it did not suffice for the chimpanzee to once scribble | - - || - - || - - | in the sand, in the case of “walking parallel with a board”, Wittgenstein is saying here, it would suffice for him to just once *walk parallel with the board* in order to be ascribed “he just walked parallel with the board” by us.

What we have here, then, is an example where Wittgenstein contrasts the presence of a technique and custom as a criterion in one case (“following a sign-post”) with its absence as a criterion in another case (“walking parallel with a board”). This once more highlights the fact that even though in both cases, we do look at something which we might not only call the *application* or *use* of an expression, but the *practice, technique, or custom* in which this expression is embedded, there is no necessity that *within* that practice, technique, or custom, something like a “practice”, “technique” or “custom” must play any role as criterion. In other words: That the criteria for “understanding”, “meaning”, “intending” and “following a rule” involve uses, practices, customs, and institutions is something that we *discover* – i.e., discover *after* applying Wittgenstein’s methodological advice “Look at circumstances where an expression is really used!” to these expressions – and not something that this advice somehow brings with it. As the case of “walking parallel with a board” shows, these criteria might turn out to not involve uses, practices, customs, or institutions at all.



## 2.5 John McDowell's Dissolution of the Rule-Following Paradox

Let me close this chapter by bringing out the general compatibility of my view with the account of Wittgenstein's dissolution of the rule-following paradox as given by John McDowell. Let me first rehearse my account of this dissolution, bringing in some of Wittgenstein's famous remarks in PI 198-202. The general problem is that certain things such as formulae, signposts, or pictures appear to be unable to contain unambiguously a certain *application* because it is possible to *interpret* them in such a way that any application can be brought in accord with them (PI 198, PI 202). Now as I had shown, the reason why this is a pseudo-problem is that this *application* itself counts among the criteria which we accept for our application of "to mean", "to understand" and "to follow a rule". This is the "way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation* but which is exhibited in what we call 'following the rule' and 'going against it' in actual cases" (PI 202) – namely, exhibited in the criteria which we ordinarily accept for the application of "following a rule". According to these criteria, "following a rule" is a practice (PI 202). This is the *one* role which reminders of a practice play on the dissolution of the paradox: the criteria which we accept for our application of "to mean", "to understand" and "to follow a rule" involve an application or practice. (This role I had labeled "*criteria*".) Yet *behind* these reminders is another type of reminder of a practice: namely, the one that expressions such as "to mean", "to follow a rule", etc. have a use in everyday language for which we accept certain criteria. Wittgenstein's reminders of *criteria* as such are reminders of a practice in this more general sense (which I had labeled "*methodological*"). Only reminders of *this* practice bring us to at all mind the criteria for the *application* of specific expressions such as "to mean" or "to follow a rule". Thus, reminders of the fact that an expression such as "following a rule" has a *practical application* in our everyday speech are as essential in bringing out that *interpreting* a rule-formulation does not count as following the rule as are reminders that a criterion which we accept for this practical application of "following a rule" is the *practical application* of the rule.

Now as I take it, this account is in agreement with the account put forth by McDowell in his papers "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule" (1984) and "Meaning and Intentionality in Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy" (1993). In these papers, McDowell charges Kripke and Wright with assigning Wittgenstein's reminders of rule-following being a *practice* the wrong role in the dissolution of the paradox. In their view, the paradox is something inescapable – it is caused by a false picture of language, and Wittgenstein's remarks on the role of practice and customs are seen as insights which we need to incorporate into our account of linguistic normativity. Yet according to McDowell, Wittgenstein's dissolution works in such a way that

it intends to expose the paradox as based on a *misunderstanding*. In “Meaning and Intentionality in Wittgenstein’s Later Philosophy”, he comments on PI 201:

This looks like the proposal, not for a “sceptical solution” to a “sceptical paradox”, locked into place by an irrefutable argument, as in Kripke’s reading, but for a “straight solution”: a solution that works by finding fault with the reasoning that leads to the paradox. The paradox Wittgenstein mentions at the beginning of this passage is not something we have to accept and find a way to live with, but something we can expose as based on a “misunderstanding”.<sup>291</sup>

McDowell summarizes the upshot of viewing the paradox as based on a *misunderstanding* for questions such as “How is meaning possible?” as follows:

A more Wittgensteinian lesson to learn from this manipulation of the regress of interpretations is that we need a diagnosis why we are inclined to fall into the peculiar assumption [...] that makes such questions look pressing. Given a satisfying diagnosis, the inclination should evaporate, and the questions should simply fall away.<sup>292</sup>

According to McDowell then, Wittgenstein’s reminders of a practice are meant, not to correct our idea of what rule-following really involves, but to make us step back and take a look at the route which at all led us into a paradox which seemingly called for such a correction.<sup>293</sup> If we do this, McDowell holds, we are in a position to see how the paradox was based on a misunderstanding – and how it can “simply fall away” once this misunderstanding has been cleared up. As I had shown, the practice in question is the practice of our everyday use of the expression “following a rule”. Wittgenstein does not want us to realize that rule-following involves a practice in an unheard-of way, but that, according to our everyday practice of applying “to follow a rule”, the criterion for the application of this expression is not something independent of a certain practice (such as the continuation of a numerical series) which needs to be *interpreted* in order to determine this practice – but rather the practice (application) itself is the criterion for how the rule is *meant*. In other words, the reason why we hit on the idea of rule-following as involving an *interpretation* – which leads us into the paradox – is that we have lost sight of the everyday application of the expression “following a rule” in the first

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<sup>291</sup> McDowell 1993, 267

<sup>292</sup> McDowell 1993, 272

<sup>293</sup> cf. McDowell 1984, section 14

place. Only then do we become blinded to the fact that such interpreting does not count among the criteria which we ordinarily accept for “following a rule”. Having found our way back to this everyday use of “following a rule”, we can see the emptiness of the paradox. In a nutshell: we first need to find back to the criteria which we really accept for our *practical application* of the expression “following a rule” in order to see that these criteria do not involve an *interpreting* of the signpost, etc. – but its *practical application* (cases of acting upon it). Wright and Kripke fail to clearly see the importance of this first step, leaving them unable to grasp the true role of the second step: the second step is not meant to supply us with materials for a constructive answer to the question “How is meaning possible?”, but to – in conjunction with the first step – expose it as a pseudo-question which does not call for an answer at all.<sup>294</sup>

## 2.6 Summary

In this chapter, I had turned to Wittgenstein’s rule-following paradox in the *Investigations*. In Section 2.1, I gave an introduction into how Wittgenstein formulates the paradox using the example of teacher and pupil, and what I take his decisive hint at how to dissolve it to be. I had formulated the paradox like this: On the one hand, we would like to say that all along, teacher and pupil had *meant* “+2” differently – yet on the other hand, nothing that lies *before* the moment when the pupil wrote 1000, 1004, 1008 contains these respective understandings of “+2” as uniquely as we had initially expected. For a dissolution of this seeming paradox, I then turned to what Wittgenstein says in PI 190 – namely, that the *application* that someone makes of “x!2” *in this moment* is the criterion that makes us say “By x!2 he means ...”. I then showed how the paradox dissolves when we follow Wittgenstein in PI 190 and attack the question “How can the way something is *meant* uniquely determine its application?” by asking “How is it determined how something is *meant*?”. Doing so, we can come to see that the very application that *meaning* the formula “+2” in such-and such a way seemed not to be able to determine in advance is just the *criterion* that makes us say that “+2” is *meant* in a certain way – i.e. meant in such a way that it determines either 1000, 1002, 1004 or 1000, 1004, 1008 as steps to be taken. The paradox dissolves when we realize that it is not a real problem that “nothing that lies *before* the moment when the pupil wrote 1000, 1004, 1008 contains this understanding as uniquely as we had initially expected”: because it is precisely

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<sup>294</sup> cf. McDowell 1993, 272. My reading also has a close affinity to Cora Diamond’s views exposed in her criticisms of Kripke in her “Rules: Looking in the Right Place” (1989) and of Wright and Kripke in the chapters “Wright’s Wittgenstein” and “Realism and the Realistic Spirit” of *The Realistic Spirit* (1991). My reading is also congenial to Edward Minar’s of Wittgenstein on rule-following as presented in his “Wittgenstein and the ‘Con-

*this application now* which is the criterion for our everyday application of “that’s how N has meant X all along.”

In Section 2.2, I had turned to the solutions to the rule-following problem suggested by Saul Kripke and Crispin Wright. Both think that Wittgenstein’s remarks where he states that following a rule is a *custom* – i.e., something that takes place repeatedly and is shared by a *community* of speakers – are the key to dissolving the paradox. Both take it that the paradox emerges because we have been focusing on the teacher (and the pupil) *in isolation* from this community. Both hold that the paradox dissolves when we realize that such a *community* supplies a standard of correctness which pictures, definitions and examples could not provide. This means that they think it crucial that in Wittgenstein’s imagined case of teacher and pupil, this community can judge the teacher’s way of continuing to *agree* with their own responses, while judging the pupil to fail to agree with these responses. After presenting these views of Kripke’s and Wright’s, I had attempted to show how this way of dissolving the paradox is not Wittgenstein’s. I had charged Kripke and Wright with conflating the following two questions: (1) What does the teacher have at hand in order to demonstrate that *everybody* means “+2” in such a way that after 1000 comes 1002? (2) What does the teacher have at hand to demonstrate to the pupil (or Kripke’s skeptic) that he *personally* had meant “+2” in the way that everybody means it – and not in the way the pupil had meant it? I then said that the idea of *communal assent* appears to at all matter only with regard to the first question, while with regard to the second question, the teacher is in the exact same position as the pupil. I then insisted that Wittgenstein is interested only in the second question: his paradox concerns this *personal* understanding of teacher (and pupil). I then showed that Kripke does not make any room for the idea of a personal understanding – i.e. an understanding which deviates from the understanding of the community – at all. For him, the pupil is already a case of a “private” rule-follower – i.e., he does not follow any rule at all. I also showed how Wright makes an attempt to accommodate this case of deviant understanding, yet fails by trying to tie it to *communal* understanding. I then stated that Kripke and Wright, in doing so, go against the dissolution of the paradox which Wittgenstein provides in PI 190 – where he describes just such a case of *personal* understanding of “x!2”. In so making the pupil look like a “private” rule-follower – who, after all, in writing 1000, 1004, 1008, expresses an understanding of “+2” which he has come to acquire within a community of speakers –, Kripke’s and Wright’s reconstructions cannot be counted as faithful to the text of the *Investigations*. I concluded by stating that with

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tingency’ of Community” (1991) and “Paradox and Privacy: On §§201-202 of Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations*” (1994).

regard to PI 190, Wittgenstein's remarks on the *public* character of rule-following must be meant differently from how Kripke and Wright take them.

In Section 2.3, I considered the question what it is that Wittgenstein is up to when stating things such as “It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which someone followed a rule” (PI 199). How does the demand for publicity come in, if not in the role of providing a standard of correctness, as Kripke and Wright held? Via a discussion of the case of “suddenly understanding” in the *Investigations* and examples from Part VI of Wittgenstein's *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, I brought out that Wittgenstein's perspective is not that of what an “isolated” rule-follower might be missing in order for rule-following to be *technically* possible – namely, a standard of correctness – but rather that of what a speaker of *our* language is missing when looking (from the outside, as it were) at a case such as that of the chimpanzee who once scribbles | - | in the earth. From this perspective, a community of speakers comes out, not as crucial for rule-following because it supplied the single person with a *standard of correctness* with which his inclinations to act can be compared for agreement, but as crucial in that it is a *background* in which someone's actions need to be *embedded* in order to be called “following a rule”. What Wittgenstein wants to say in remarks such as PI 199 is that we would not call something “following a rule” if it were not embedded into such a background of a custom or institution. As I argued, remarks such as PI 199 do not add anything essential to a dissolution of the paradox along the lines of PI 190: “customs”, “institutions” and “(communal) practice” are located on the same logical level as “use” in PI 190 – they all come into view as (further) *criteria* for the application of the expression “following a rule”. In the case of the chimpanzee, the presence or absence of a communal practice is the criterion if there was at all a rule that had been followed or not. In the case of teacher and pupil, the issue was *which* rule had been followed all along. The criterion for *that* is the application each makes in a specific moment (embedded in a communal practice, of course).

In Section 2.4, I turned to an analysis of how notions such as “use” or “application” figure in the dissolution of the rule-following paradox on two distinct logical levels. Taking PI 190 as a model, I showed how Wittgenstein's dissolution involves two steps: (1) Directing our attention to the *criteria* which we accept for the application of “to mean” in everyday circumstances, (2) coming to see what these criteria in the case of “to mean” *really are*. This corresponds to the fact that the notion of “use” figures in Wittgenstein's dissolution of the rule-following paradox first on the level of a *question*, and second on the level of the *answer* to this question: Wittgenstein first asks us to focus on the actual *use* of the word “to mean” in

everyday circumstances – i.e. to focus on the criteria that we accept for “to mean”. And second, Wittgenstein shows us that in the case of teacher and pupil, the criterion for their having meant “+2” *all along* in a way that determined either 1000, 1004, 1008 or 1000, 1002, 1004 is the *use* that they make of “+2” after 1000. In a nutshell: The paradox dissolves when we come to see that the criterion for our *application (use)* of “to mean ‘+2’ in such-and-such a way” in the case of teacher and pupil is the *application (use)* that each makes of “+2” after 1000. I had then introduced a terminology for these two levels on which *use* figures here: I had called the level of the question the *methodological* level – since it is one of Wittgenstein’s methods of dissolving philosophical problems to ask the question “How would you *use* this expression in everyday circumstances?” And I had called the level of the answer to such a question the *critical* level – since here, *use* comes in as one of our *criteria* for our application (use) of “to mean”.

In the same section, I had then turned to show how the occurrences of “use” (as also that of “application”) on these two logical levels are *logically independent* from one another. This I did by dealing with the following idea: Because in the case of expressions such as “to follow a rule”, “to mean”, “to intend”, etc., the question “What are the criteria for our *use (application)* of these expressions?” reveal that things such as certain *uses, applications, practices, customs, and institutions* figure among these criteria, the methodological question “How do we actually *apply* the expression X?” does in some way necessarily yield that the criteria for the *application* of X always involve the *application* of certain things, or a whole *technique (or practice) of application*. Against this idea, I cited two cases in Wittgenstein where he explicitly contrasts the presence of an application, or a technique and custom as a criterion in one case with its absence as a criterion in another case. These cases highlight the fact that through applying Wittgenstein’s methodological advice “Look at circumstances where an expression is really used!” to the expressions “understanding”, “meaning”, “intending” and “following a rule”, we indeed *discover* that these criteria involve uses, practices, customs, and institutions. This is not something that this advice somehow brings with it. As Wittgenstein’s other examples show, the criteria for our use of expressions might turn out to not involve uses, practices, customs, or institutions at all.

Finally, in Section 2.5, I tried to bring out the parallels between my understanding of Wittgenstein’s dissolution of the rule-following paradox and that of John McDowell. McDowell stresses against Kripke and Wright that Wittgenstein’s way of getting us to see that the paradox is not a real one is to get us to see how it is based on a *misunderstanding*: what we need is a diagnosis of why we have come to believe that understanding always involves

*interpretation* – which then leads us into the paradox of the seemingly unstoppable regress of interpretations. Once we are provided with such a diagnosis, any need for an account of what rule-following *really* is – what real role of *practices* and *institutions* it reveals to us – should evaporate. In the end, McDowell holds, we can thus come to realize that we do not need to give any constructive answer to the question “How is rule-following constituted?”, as Kripke and Wright do. As I had shown, this idea corresponds to my reconstruction in that it stresses the importance of the *first* step in dissolving the paradox: The reason why we hit on the idea of rule-following as involving an *interpretation* is that we have lost sight of the everyday application of the expression “following a rule” in the first place. Only then do we become blinded to the fact that such interpreting does not count among the criteria which we ordinarily accept for “following a rule”. Wright and Kripke fail to clearly see the importance of this first step, leaving them unable to grasp the true role of the second step (namely, coming to see that certain *practices*, *customs*, and *institutions* are among the criteria for “following a rule”): the second step is not meant to supply us with materials for a constructive answer to the question “How is meaning possible?” – because the first step has already exposed this question as based on a *misunderstanding*.

The aim of this chapter was to bring out how the notion of “use” (and “application”) figure on two distinct logical levels in Wittgenstein’s dissolution of the rule-following problem. On the one hand, it figures in the question “How would you *use* the word ‘to mean’ in everyday circumstances?” The occurrence of “use” on this level (which I had labeled “methodological”) does not have anything to do with the fact that it is the *specific* problem of rule-following which is dissolved here. For, Wittgenstein asks the question “How would you *use* the expression X in everyday circumstances?” in the context of attempts at dissolving many problems other than that of rule-following. On the other hand, the occurrence of “use” in the *answer* to the question “How would you *use* the word ‘to mean’ in everyday circumstances?” – namely, “The criteria which we accept for our everyday use of ‘to mean’ involve a certain *use* of formulae etc.” – does have to do with the fact that it is the *specific* problem of rule-following which is dissolved here: *use* here comes in as a criterion for the application (use) of this *specific* word – “to mean”. Its occurrence is therefore tied directly to the investigation of the grammar of this particular concept.

In the next chapter, I will concern myself with what happens if this distinction of levels in which “use” occurs is not carefully observed. I will deal with Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker’s account of the role of Wittgenstein’s remarks on rule-following for the whole of his

project of dissolving philosophical problems. Their idea is that Wittgenstein's remarks on the significance of *use*, *application*, and *practice* for rule-following have a bearing on the *methodological* level – the level of the dissolution of *arbitrary* philosophical problems. As I will show, this idea leads into a regress.



### 3. Baker and Hacker on the Significance of the Rule-Following Remarks for the Dissolution of Any Philosophical Problem

The reading of Wittgenstein's later philosophy which has been put forward jointly by Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker in their *Analytical Commentary on the 'Philosophical Investigations'* has been a major point of criticism for resolute readers of later Wittgenstein. There, Baker and Hacker offer a reading of Wittgenstein's program for the dissolution of philosophical problems which puts the major focus on *rules of grammar*. Taking their departure from Wittgenstein's comparison of language use to playing a game according to fixed rules such as chess, they hold that our everyday speech is "governed" by these rules of grammar, and that philosophical problems emerge through our "violating" these rules. Resolute readers of later Wittgenstein have contested both these claims. Against Baker and Hacker, they have insisted that Wittgenstein's *comparing* language use to games such as chess means that he *refrains* from any claim about what language *must* be. Also, they have insisted that philosophical problems emerge, not from a *violation* of rules for the use of words, but through our hovering between different forms of use of words without settling on any *one* of them.

In this chapter, I will concern myself with a different kind of charge against Baker and Hacker's reading of later Wittgenstein. I will deal with the role that they assign Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following for the whole of his program for the dissolution of philosophical problems. Baker and Hacker hold that Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following in PI 185-242 have a special significance for his project of dissolving philosophical problems as such. They take it that Wittgenstein's comparing language to a game according to fixed rules was meant to do justice to the fact that speaking a language is an *activity* – and that the rule-following remarks have the role of providing an answer to the question "In what manner are rules of grammar involved in speech activities?" This means that according to Baker and Hacker, the rule-following remarks stand in the service of answering a question pertaining to the very rules of grammar which we draw on when dissolving *arbitrary* philosophical problems. As I will show, this way of tying the rule-following remarks to the dissolution of *any* philosophical problem rests on a confusion of the occurrence of "use" and "practice" on the *criteria* and the *methodological* level in Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following. I will present an argument to the effect that Baker and Hacker's idea is actually incompatible with their insisting on the status of the rule-following remarks being that of "grammatical remarks clarifying the concept of following a rule".

This chapter has five sections. In Section 3.1, I will turn to passages in *Rules, Grammar and Necessity* in which Baker and Hacker appear to voice agreement with what I had said about how in Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following, uses and practice are situated on the *critical* level. In Sections 3.2 and 3.3, I will expose the two steps in which they nonetheless aim to establish a connection of the uses and practice Wittgenstein speaks of in PI 185-242 to the *methodological* level as well. In Section 3.2, I will explore the first of these steps: Baker and Hacker's claim that rules of grammar are something that *govern* or *inform* speech. In Section 3.3, I will explore the second of these steps: Baker and Hacker's claim that the rule-following remarks are concerned with answering the question "How exactly do rules of grammar govern speech activities?" In Section 3.4, I will present an argument to the effect that this latter claim that the rule-following remarks stood in the service of answering a vital question about the (rules of) grammar of *arbitrary* expressions implicitly contradicts their claim (as exposed in Section 3.1) that the rule-following remarks are themselves grammatical remarks. In Section 3.5, I will explore the reason for this contradiction, and give an alternative account of what the role of the rule-following remarks in Wittgenstein's philosophy is. The chapter ends with a summary (Section 3.6).

### 3.1 Baker and Hacker on Rule-Following and Practice

What do Baker and Hacker say about the connection between "following a rule" and a practice? We find the answer in their chapter "Following Rules, Mastery of Techniques and Practices". There, they write:

Wittgenstein emphasized the conceptual connection between following a rule and both techniques and practices. The possibility of following a rule presupposes the existence of an established use or custom (PI §198). Following a given rule requires mastery of a technique (§199), hence following a rule is a practice (§202), custom, use or institution (§199). These are not causal hypotheses about rule-following or empirical observations, but grammatical remarks clarifying the concept of following a rule (§199).<sup>295</sup>

Here, they appear to make the same point that I made earlier in Chapter 2: the existence of an established use or custom is not an *empirical* presupposition of rule-following – i.e. it is not

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<sup>295</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 161

something that is needed to make rule-following technically possible (e.g. for the chimpanzee) – but a *conceptual* presupposition: it is needed *for us* in order to ascribe “following a rule” (e.g. to the chimpanzee), because it is a criterion for *our* application of *our* expression “following a rule”. This first impression is strengthened because at first glance, it even appears as if Baker and Hacker conceived of the import of practice as a criterion in much the same way as I had. At least we could get this idea from what they write in an interpretation of a remark of Wittgenstein’s from his *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* that I had cited. There, Wittgenstein had written:

What, in a complicated surroundings, we call ‘following a rule’, we should certainly not call that if it stood in isolation.<sup>296</sup>

Baker and Hacker’s comment:

It is only against a certain complex background that acting in accord with a rule counts as following a rule. So if we were still to say that there is something *more* to following a rule than merely acting in accord with it, then this would be the circumstances of someone’s actions that entitle us to say that he has followed the rule (cf. PI §§154f.)

It appears that, just like I had earlier, in taking Wittgenstein’s discussion of “suddenly understanding” in PI 154f. as the blueprint to understanding cases like that of the chimpanzees in RFM, they would arrive at a very similar account of the role of a *practice*: a practice comes in as a *background* in which a person needs to be embedded in order for us to ascribe “following a rule” to her. The chimpanzee, in scribbling | - - || - - || - - | in the earth, might be said to act in *accord* with a rule (or to *conform* to a rule) by doing something *regular* (just like “an ant, a dog or a calculating machine”<sup>297</sup>) – but he will only *count as* (by which they appear to mean what I meant by “fulfill the criteria for”) “following a rule” if he were embedded in a fully-fledged social practice. The impression that Baker and Hacker conceive of the role of practice as a criterion for “following a rule” in a way very similar to mine could be further strengthened by the explanation they give of why rule-following is not something that a single person could do only once in his life (cf. PI 199):

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<sup>296</sup> RFM VI 33

<sup>297</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 159

A person can be said to follow a given rule only if his behaviour is sufficiently complex and regular to make it intelligible to describe his actions as manifesting understanding of the rule and the intention to act in conformity with it. This in turn makes sense only against a background of his mastery of a distinctive range of techniques, skills or customary practices, since otherwise he cannot exhibit any of the abilities essential to the possibility of his following a rule. Consequently it seems natural to characterise following a rule, *unlike* acting in conformity with it, as a practice, use or institution.<sup>298</sup>

and:

Mastery of a technique is manifest *in practice*, in doing certain things. But, of course, a single act in accord with a rule is not (save in complex settings) an exhibition of mastery of a technique. [...] Someone does, indeed, manifest his mastery of a technique of following a rule in a particular act of applying it, but only against a complex background of behaviour exhibiting his abilities and comprising *a practice*, a custom or regularity of applying it (or other rules).<sup>299</sup>

Someone doing something only once simply does not amount to a “complex setting” – therefore, by *our* lights, it does not *count as* “following a rule”. This appears quite similar to the account I gave. And what Baker and Hacker mention in the last sentence is something that appears reminiscent of my discussion of Wittgenstein’s example of teacher and pupil: There, a particular act was the criterion for our application of “to mean” – but that act was of course embedded in the complex social practice of teaching and applying arithmetical rules and calculations. Baker and Hacker seem to agree with me here, then, that *practice, customs and technique* come in on the same level as the particular act of application – as *criteria* which we accept for our application of the expression “following a rule”.

The picture we might get from these passages drawn from their chapter “Following Rules, Mastery of Techniques and Practices” is then this: In stating that the rule-following remarks are “grammatical remarks clarifying the concept of following a rule”<sup>300</sup>, Baker and Hacker appear to agree with me that uses, practices, and customs come into view for Wittgen-

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<sup>298</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 160

<sup>299</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 161

<sup>300</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 161

stein as *criteria for the application* of one particular expression of our language, “following a rule”. Taken by themselves, these passages then seem to license the conclusion that they would agree with me that Wittgenstein’s reminders of the role of practice and customs in PI 185-242 are logically situated on the *critical* level – i.e. that the occurrence of “uses” and “practice” in them is clearly removed from the occurrence of such notions on the *methodological* level. But as we shall see, the opposite is the case. Indeed, Baker and Hacker hold that Wittgenstein’s remarks about the significance of “uses” and “practice” for rule-following in PI 185-242 have a bearing on his conception of *grammar* as such – and therefore, a bearing on his conception of what a grammatical remark is. In other words, they hold that Wittgenstein’s discussion of “uses” and “practice” in PI 185-242 has a special significance for the *methodological* level.

### 3.2 Baker and Hacker on the Role of Rules in Dissolving Philosophical Problems

Now how do Baker and Hacker establish such a connection between the remarks on rule-following in PI 185-242 and grammatical remarks as such? Let us first take a look at these quotes from *Rules, Grammar and Necessity*:

The task of philosophy is to clarify the *rules* for the use of expressions, especially to remove philosophical misunderstandings by rendering these *rules* surveyable.<sup>301</sup>

Philosophy, Wittgenstein claimed, is a grammatical investigation (PI §90) in which philosophical problems are resolved and misunderstandings eliminated by describing our use of words, clarifying the grammar of expressions and tabulating *rules* (WWK 184).<sup>302</sup>

Philosophy is concerned with *rules* of grammar, *rules* for the use of expressions, only insofar as they shed light upon particular philosophical problems (...).<sup>303</sup>

Grammar consists of *rules* for the use of symbols (words, phrases, sentences, formulae) of natural languages (cf. PI §108).<sup>304</sup> [My emphases]

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<sup>301</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 154

<sup>302</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 52

<sup>303</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 54

Now, taken in isolation, these quotes might suggest that Baker and Hacker have a view of what it means to dissolve a philosophical problem through reminding us of the criteria for the use of particular that we accept in ordinary circumstances which is similar to the one I had exposed in Chapter 2, with the only difference being that they speak of “*rules of grammar*” of an expressions where I spoke of the “grammar” of an expression, and that they speak of “*rules for the use of expressions*” where I spoke of “the use of expressions” (and of “the criteria for the use of expressions”). And this speaking of “rules” would of course be licensed by the text of the *Investigations*, where Wittgenstein indeed does speak of “rules of grammar” on a few occasions, and on one occasion compares the description of language to the description of the rules of the game of chess (to which Baker and Hacker allude here in their reference to PI 108).

But in fact, underlying Baker and Hacker’s talk of “rules of grammar” is a quite different idea of what grammar and grammatical remarks are from what I had introduced earlier as “(reminders of) the criteria for the use of expressions”. To see which, let us take a look at this remark of theirs now:

Fundamental to Wittgenstein’s conception of philosophy is the comparison of speaking a language with playing a game in accord with definite rules. He initially likened a language with a calculus and speech with carrying out calculations. Incurring less risk of confusion, he later compared speaking with playing chess, words with chess pieces, explanations of words with rules of chess, and the meanings of words with the powers of chess pieces. This picture is built into his employment of the term ‘language-game’. Making use of expressions is engaging in some language-game whose structure is given by a set of rules (especially by explanations of meaning).<sup>305</sup>

Here, Baker and Hacker make the step from Wittgenstein’s *comparing* speaking with playing chess to a *picture* of language as a game of chess being “built into” his employment of the term “language game”. What do they mean by saying that this picture of language as a game of chess is built into Wittgenstein’s idea what a language game is? It means that whatever can be described as a language game has a “structure” – a structure which is “given by a set of rules”. Now what does it mean for a language game to have such a “structure”? Baker and Hacker continue:

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<sup>304</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 40

Not only do rules define calculi or games, but they also [...] *inform* actions within those rule-governed practices. [...] It is precisely these aspects of making calculations and playing games that give point to Wittgenstein's analogy. Explanations of meaning inform speech; they are put to use in giving descriptions, asking questions, giving orders, etc., and they are transparent to language-users.<sup>306</sup>

For a language game to have a "structure" that is given by (or "defined") by rules means that these rules "inform" the actions that are part of this language game – a point which Baker and Hacker also express in other parts of the book by saying that the practice of language games is "governed" by these rules.<sup>307</sup> (Let us also note that Baker and Hacker take the analogy of language to chess so far as to claim that there is an equivalent to the explicit rules of chess in the case of language – namely, verbal "explanations of meaning".)

Now what is the upshot of Baker and Hacker's claim that speaking is "governed by" rules of grammar? The difference with the account of the role of grammar and grammatical remarks that I gave in Chapter 2 comes out the clearest in these quotes:

Grammar, as Wittgenstein understood the term, is the account book of language (PG 87). Its rules determine the limits of sense, and by carefully scrutinizing them the philosopher may determine at what point he has drawn an overdraft on Reason, violated the rules for the use of an expression and so, in subtle and not readily identifiable ways, traversed the bounds of sense.<sup>308</sup>

Philosophical questions concern the bounds of sense, and these are determined by the rules for the use of words, by what it makes sense to say in a language. *This* is the source of philosophy's concern with grammatical rules. For by their clarification and arrangement philosophical questions can be resolved and typical philosophical confusions and paradoxes dissolved.<sup>309</sup>

Philosophy is purely descriptive. It clarifies the grammar of our language, the rules for the construction of significant utterances whose violation yields nonsense.<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 154

<sup>306</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 154

<sup>307</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1985, 39

<sup>308</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 55

<sup>309</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 54

<sup>310</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 22

According to Baker and Hacker, one of the main ways to resolve a philosophical paradox by clarifying the grammar of expressions is to identify cases where we are speaking *nonsense*. As we see here, they describe this as cases where the rules for the use of expressions have been “violated”. Before we take a closer look at what exactly such a *violation* of “the rules for the construction of significant utterances” consists in, let us recall the case of nonsense that we had encountered in Chapter 2. There, we had seen that Wittgenstein had said that it *means nothing to say* that “in the history of mankind just once was a game invented, and that game was never played by anyone” (RFM VI 43). And we had also seen that he said that “[i]n the same way it cannot be said either that just once in the history of mankind did someone follow a sign-post” (ibid.). Now similar to the way Baker and Hacker describe it, in my explanation of why it would be nonsense for us to say this here, I had drawn on something that could be called “grammatical rules” – namely, the *criteria* for the use of expressions. I had introduced this case as a case where we are inclined to think that the criteria which we accept for “following a rule/signpost” and “playing a game” are less complex than they actually are. That is, as a case where we are inclined to think that the criteria for the application of these expressions are simple, but in fact the criteria that we *do* accept for the ordinary use of these expressions are quite complex. In particular, we were inclined to think that these criteria did not involve a practice or custom, when in fact they do. What did these reminders of the criteria for “following a rule/signpost” have to do with our utterance of the words “Just once in the history of mankind did someone follow a sign-post” being nonsense? As I had explained it, this utterance was motivated by our idea that the criteria for “following a sign-post” did not involve a *custom* – something that involves things being done regularly and by many people. This idea was behind our utterance of these words. So, the reminder that the criteria for – or, as Wittgenstein may also have put it, the *rules of grammar* of – “following a sign-post” (as well as “following a rule” and “playing a game”) in fact do involve the presence of a custom are indeed instrumental in helping us to see that by uttering the words “Just once in the history of mankind did someone follow a sign-post”, we have said *nothing*.

To see the contrast between this account of the relation of rules of grammar to the exposition of nonsense and Baker and Hacker’s, let us take a look at a quote from the chapter “The Nature of Philosophy” from their *Understanding and Meaning*. It comments, among others, on some examples of nonsensical utterances that they have drawn from the *Investigations* (“I cannot feel your pains”, “I know that I am in pain” and “I cannot know how you feel”):



They look like well-formed meaningful sentences, being constructed on analogy with legitimate sentences, but in subtle ways they violate the rules of language. Where such sentences appear pregnant with philosophical implications, e.g.[...], it is the task of philosophy to reveal why such combinations of words are illegitimate in our language.<sup>311</sup>

Let us assume that what they say here also applies to our example “Just once in the history of mankind did someone follow a sign-post”. Let us first note that Baker and Hacker do not speak here of *utterances* being nonsense, but *sentences*. It is *sentences* that “violate the rules of language”. Now what is wrong with a sentence that so “violates” these rules? It contains “combinations of words [that] are illegitimate in our language”. What now in this account of the nonsensicality of our saying something like “I cannot feel your pains” is different from the one I just rehearsed? It is that the reminders of the rules of grammar for certain expressions are not dealing with what is *behind* our uttering this string of words, but with the string of words itself. Rather than getting at our confusion about the grammar of e.g. “my/your pain” (or “following a sign-post”) that makes us want to utter these words as a statement, in Baker and Hacker’s view, these reminders are directed at these words themselves – namely, at the combination in which we use them.

This view is directly reflected in the way Baker and Hacker describe specific examples of the dissolution of a philosophical problem. Here is what they have to say regarding the dissolution of a puzzle about sensations:

If someone claims that colours are sensations in the mind, the philosopher must point out that this person is misusing the words “sensation” and “colour”. Sensations in the brain, he should remind his interlocutor, are called ‘headaches’, and colours are not headaches; one can have (i.e. it makes sense to speak of) sensations in the knee or in the back, but not in the mind.<sup>312</sup>

And about dissolving problems about perception and our knowledge of the world:

He [the philosopher] will point out that it makes sense to say ‘I see better, more distinctly, than you’, but not ‘I feel pain better, more distinctly, than you’; it makes sense

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<sup>311</sup> Baker/Hacker 1980, 480

to say ‘I think I can see a house in the distance, but I’m not sure; let’s go closer’, but not ‘I think I feel pain in my knee, but I’m not sure’.<sup>313</sup>

These statements about what makes sense to say and what does not are not brought forward as the conclusion of the exposition of our confusion about the criteria (rules) that we accept for the use of expressions, which may be at the root of wanting to utter strings of words such as “I have a sensation in my mind”. Rather, Baker and Hacker go no further in their exposition of these examples than to just *state* things like “it makes no sense to say ‘I feel pain better, more distinctly, than you’”. This they conclude from the sentence alone, without regard to the situation of its utterance, i.e. a possible confusion about the criteria for the use of words we might be in. The result is that with their looking at one *sentence* we might utter and their conclusion that it is nonsense, for Baker and Hacker, the essential step in the dissolution of a philosophical problem seems to be achieved.

So this, then, is what Baker and Hacker make of Wittgenstein’s comparison of describing language to describing the rules of the game of chess (and of his employment of the term “rules of grammar”): in their view, this licenses the conclusion that language games have a “structure” which is given by a set of rules, that rules of grammar “inform” speech, that speech activities are “governed by” rules of grammar – the upshot of which being the idea that sentences themselves can be in “violation” of these rules of grammar, because they contain combinations of words that are “illegitimate in our language”. The resulting view of *grammatical remarks* is that they are reminders of those rules which are directed at individual *sentences* rather than at the *whole situation* of a philosophical confusion which makes us utter these sentences.

### 3.3 Baker and Hacker on the Role of the Rule-Following Remarks

Now Baker and Hacker’s idea of what rules of grammar are, especially their view that these rules “govern” speech activities and that philosophy is to diagnose their “violation”, has been subject to criticism. James Conant, for instance, has insisted against Baker and Hacker that our speaking nonsense when in the grip of a philosophical confusion is not to be traced to our having put together “illegitimate combinations” of words, but rather to our not having settled on one of the many possible ways in which we *can* mean something using the words we utter. In his view of Wittgenstein’s later philosophy, the point of describing the (rules of)

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<sup>312</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 52/53

<sup>313</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 55

grammar of expressions is not to show us that what we are inclined to say is something that cannot be said in our language because it is forbidden by these rules, but rather – as exemplified in Wittgenstein’s treatment of skepticism (and anti-skepticism) – to lay out to us the many possible ways in which our words (such as “I know that that’s a tree!”) *can* be moves in a language game – with the intention of showing us that we have not yet settled on *one* of those ways of making sense.<sup>314</sup>

While I agree with Conant’s criticism of Baker and Hacker’s conception of “rules of grammar”, especially with the criticism of the resulting conception of nonsense, in the remainder of this chapter, I would now like to point to a different problem in Baker and Hacker’s overall account of the *Investigations*, as exposed in *Rules, Grammar and Necessity*. As I had already mentioned in the first section of this chapter, I take it that there is a problem with the purpose which they assign to Wittgenstein’s remarks on rule-following in PI 185-242. In the next section, I will put forward an argument to the effect that *even if* everything that Baker and Hacker believe about rules of grammar were true, the rule-following remarks could not (for purely internal reasons) perform the function that they assign them to perform. The intended upshot of this argument will of course remain unclear as long as I have not said anything about *what* function Baker and Hacker are assigning to PI 185-242. To this I will turn now.

So let us now turn to Baker and Hacker’s second step in connecting the rule-following remarks in PI 185-242 to the *methodological* level, i.e. to the description of the ordinary use of expressions with the aim of dissolving philosophical problems. Their first step had been to read Wittgenstein’s comparison of speaking a language to games such as chess to license the conclusion that any such use is “governed by” rules of grammar, and that, therefore, any description of the grammar of an expression involves the description of the *rules* for the use of that expression. So one element of the resulting picture is that on the methodological level, we are always dealing with *rules*. Now how, according to Baker and Hacker, do Wittgenstein’s remarks on rule-following in PI 185-242 fit in with this account of what *grammatical remarks* are? This is a main topic in *Rules, Grammar and Necessity*.

Before we can evaluate the relevant remarks of Baker and Hacker’s, we need to take a closer look at how they think this conception of rules of grammar breaks with things that they take Wittgenstein to hold in the *Tractatus*. This is summed up in the following quote:

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<sup>314</sup> cf. Conant 1998, 249/50

[...] Wittgenstein gradually moved away from the idea that beneath meaningful discourse lies *a system of rules of a calculus* towards recognition of the fact that speaking a language is a many-faceted rule-governed *activity* or set of activities. [...] He thus displayed a movement away from focusing on *forms* of expressions and their patterns of relationships towards concentrating on *uses* – away from viewing discourse as patterned arrays of symbols towards seeing speech as part of the web of human life, interwoven in a multitude of acts, activities, reactions and responses.<sup>315</sup>

As Baker and Hacker see it, the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* held a “calculus view” of language – a view that focused solely on *formal* aspects of language, instead of its *uses*. This view of what language is like they take to underlie the way of dissolving philosophical problems that he had put forward in that early work. What Baker and Hacker take Wittgenstein to want to bring out by later comparing language to a game such as chess – which, as we had seen, they take to be embodied in his employment of the term “language game” – is the recognition of the fact that speaking a language is an *activity*. This, as they see it, is a fact that the vision of language that Wittgenstein had developed in the *Tractatus* had not only failed to bring into view, but actually could not at all accommodate:

The idea of a calculus *obstructs* our vision of the rules that govern languages. It obstructs the motley of rules, the diversity of their forms and character, and the manner in which they are involved in linguistic activity.<sup>316</sup>

According to Baker and Hacker, then, the comparison of language to a game is not meant to bring out in what respect speaking a language can be called “rule-governed” at all (by bringing out dissimilarities as well as similarities to cases such as chess), but rather as opening the way to providing detailed answers to question such as “What precisely *are* the forms and character of the rules that govern languages?” and “In what precise manner *are* those rules involved in linguistic activity?”

We are now in a position to address the question of what role, according to Baker and Hacker, Wittgenstein’s remarks on rule-following in PI 185-242 are supposed to be playing in their account of what *rules of grammar* are. Here is a very general answer to this question that Baker and Hacker give in one of the introductory essays of *Rules, Grammar and Necessity*:

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<sup>315</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 38-9

Wittgenstein had, in the *Tractatus*, seen that philosophical or conceptual investigation moves in the domain of rules. An important point of continuity was the insight that philosophy is not concerned with what is true or false, but rather with what makes sense and what traverses the bounds of sense. But his misconception of the normative character of language had led him to erect a mythology of symbolism. Hence his later reflections on rules play a pivotal role in the whole of his mature philosophy.<sup>317</sup>

What is the “misconception of the normative character of language” that Baker and Hacker speak of here? We have just seen that they took the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* to hold a “calculus view” of language – a view that focused solely on *formal* aspects of language, instead of its *uses*. And we had seen that they took one achievement of later Wittgenstein to recognize that speaking a language is a (rule-governed) *activity*. Also, we had seen that Baker and Hacker held that this “calculus view” of language keeps us from getting clear about how rules *are* involved in this activity. Taking all this into account, the “hence” in this quote gives us a first clue as to what Baker and Hacker think the role of Wittgenstein’s “later reflections on rules” – by which they mean his remarks on rule-following in PI 185-242 – to be: that they have something to do with getting clear about the relation of linguistic rules and linguistic activity.

That this is indeed the case comes out clearly when we now turn to the beginning of their chapter “Following Rules, Mastery of Techniques and Practices” – the place in *Rules, Grammar and Necessity* from which I had drawn the quotes about the relation of rule-following and a practice that I had cited in the first section of this chapter. I had already cited this passage, with which that chapter starts out:

Fundamental to Wittgenstein’s conception of philosophy is the comparison of speaking a language with playing a game in accord with definite rules. He initially likened a language with a calculus and speech with carrying out calculations. Incurring less risk of confusion, he later compared speaking with playing chess, words with chess pieces, explanations of words with rules of chess, and the meanings of words with the powers of chess pieces. This picture is built into his employment of the term ‘language-game’.

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<sup>316</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 39

<sup>317</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 39

[...] The task of philosophy is to clarify the rules for the use of expressions, especially to remove philosophical misunderstandings by rendering these rules surveyable.<sup>318</sup>

Thus, they begin their discussion of the rule-following remarks in PI 185-242 by reminding the reader of (1) the fact that speaking a language is a rule-governed activity like chess and (2) the fact that the clarification of rules for the use of expressions is the way to dissolve philosophical problems. That is, using the terminology I introduced in Chapter 2, they remind the reader that, on the methodological level, we are always dealing with *rules*. Now how exactly, according to Baker and Hacker, are the rule-following remarks connected to this? I had already cited the beginning of the following passage. Let us now focus on how it continues:

Not only do rules define calculi or games, but they also [...] *inform* actions within those rule-governed practices. [...] It is precisely these aspects of making calculations and playing games that give point to Wittgenstein's [language – game] analogy. [...] Consequently it is vital to have a correct conception of how rules enter into making calculations and playing games.<sup>319</sup>

And right after this passage, Baker and Hacker begin with their actual interpretation of PI 189-202 – which is the place where we find the quotes cited at the outset of this chapter – by saying:

It is first necessary to elucidate how rules of grammar make contact with the motley of speech activities.<sup>320</sup>

Now “How do rules enter into making calculations and playing games?” and “How do rules of grammar make contact with the motley of speech activities?” are just other ways of putting the question “How are rules of grammar involved in linguistic activities?” As this introduction makes clear, the place where Baker and Hacker take Wittgenstein to be answering this question is just the rule-following remarks in PI 185-242.

So here we have the second step in Baker and Hacker's connecting the rule-following remarks in PI 185-242 to the *methodological* level, i.e. to the making of *grammatical remarks*

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<sup>318</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 154

<sup>319</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 154

<sup>320</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 154

about certain expressions with the aim of dissolving philosophical problems. As we had seen, their first step had been to read Wittgenstein's comparison of speaking a language to games such as chess in such a way as to license the conclusion that any such use is "governed by" rules of grammar, and that, therefore, any description of the grammar of an expression involves the description of the *rules* for the use of that expression. As we had also seen, Baker and Hacker held that the comparison of language to a game was directed against the "calculus view" of language, a view that not only ignored the fact that speaking a language is an *activity*, but obstructs "our vision of how rules govern languages"<sup>321</sup>, i.e. "obstructs the manner in which they are involved in linguistic activity"<sup>322</sup>. And now their second step is to say that the remarks on rule-following in PI 185-242 provide the detailed *answer* to this question. The resulting connection between the rule-following remarks and grammatical remarks as such is then this: The rule-following remarks stand in the service of answering a question about rules of grammar as such – i.e. the very rules which we draw upon when clarifying the grammar of an expression in a "grammatical remark" –, namely, the question in what manner these rules of grammar are involved in speech activities. In other words, Baker and Hacker establish a direct connection between the uses and practices that are a criterion for "following a rule" and the uses of *any* expression that we might describe in order to dissolve a philosophical problem.

Now the upshot of assigning the rule-following remarks this very role is this: what in the *Investigation* originally takes – in a few isolated remarks such as PI 108 – the form of a *comparison* of describing the use of expressions to supplying "game rules" for chess pieces has now turned into a whole *vision of language* – elaborated in whole sections of the *Investigations*. Our idea what a grammatical remark is now shaped not only by one useful *comparison*, but laden with an elaborate account of how grammatical rules "govern" the use of expressions in our language (since the question that Baker and Hacker take PI 185-242 to answer, "How precisely are rules of grammar involved in linguistic activities?", is just another way of asking "How precisely do rules of grammar govern linguistic activities?"). Now since, according to Baker and Hacker, such an account is built into our understanding of what a "grammatical remark" is, it seems that it is presupposed in any dissolution of a philosophical problem by way of asking the question "How do we ordinarily use this expression?" Thus, it may seem now that the main purpose of the *Investigations* is not to illustrate various methods designed to dissolve philosophical problems (such as asking this question), but rather to flesh

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<sup>321</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 39

out and defend a vision of how language works on which such attempts at a dissolution can then be based.

### 3.4 The Inconsistency Within Baker and Hacker's Account

In the remainder of this chapter, I would like to show that assigning the rule-following remarks in PI 185-242 this *fundamental* status – the status of forming part of a general vision of language that is built into our understanding of what *grammatical remarks* are (by answering the question “In what manner are rules of grammar involved in speech activities?”) – rests on a conflation of the *methodological* level and the *critical* level (as I had distinguished them in Chapter 2). I would like to show that what Baker and Hacker are saying about this *fundamental* status of PI 185-242 (which I would now like to call their view of the *architectural* status of PI 185-242) is actually incompatible with what they say about the status of the rule-following remarks in the part of the book that we looked at in the beginning of the first section of this chapter – namely, that the rule-following remarks have the status of “grammatical remarks clarifying the concept of following a rule”<sup>323</sup> (which I would now like to call their account of the *technical* status of PI 185-242). This results in an internal inconsistency of their overall account of the status of the rule-following remarks.

A first step in seeing this inconsistency is to take a look at what Baker and Hacker are saying about things like “grammatical remarks” and “clarifying concepts” in places where they are concerned with cases other than that of “following a rule”. I had already quoted this remark from the beginning of *Rules, Grammar and Necessity*:

Wittgenstein's ‘grammatical remarks’ fall roughly in two categories. The first are evident truisms concerning our use of expressions and undisputed rules for their usage, e.g. that it makes *sense* to say ‘I know you have toothache’, (...) <sup>324</sup>

Here they say quite generally that making a “grammatical remark” about a specific expression <sup>325</sup> consists in specifying (undisputed) rules for the usage of that expression. Now what

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<sup>322</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 39

<sup>323</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 161

<sup>324</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 23

<sup>325</sup> which is the only kind of grammatical remark that matters here – what Baker and Hacker count as the “second category” of grammatical remarks are remarks of Wittgenstein's such as “inner processes stand in need of outward criteria” – remarks not about the use of specific expressions, but not philosophical theses either. (cf. Baker/Hacker 1985, 23)



are Baker and Hacker saying about “clarifying concepts”? Interestingly, they do not use this exact phrase outside the context of commentating on the rule-following remarks – but they are employing very similar phrases throughout the book. For example, here is what they have to say about “investigating concepts”:

[T]o investigate [these] concepts is to investigate the use of [these and cognate] expressions in language.<sup>326</sup>

Here they say that investigating a concept simply means investigating the use of an expression – i.e. the use of a word or a phrase. Now since “clarifying a concept” should not be too different from investigating it, we have reason to conclude that for Baker and Hacker, “clarifying a concept” should come down to something like “clarifying the use of the cognate expression in language” – which should be the same as “clarifying the use of a word (or phrase)”. And “clarifying the use of words” is a phrase that occurs in *Rules, Grammar and Necessity* a lot – like in this representative quote:

The philosopher can dissolve conceptual puzzles and resolve confusions about perception and our knowledge of the world, for example, by clarifying, arranging and contrasting the different rules for the use of sensation- and perception-words.<sup>327</sup>

Here, they speak of “clarifying *the rules* for the use of words”. This is of course due to their conviction that the use of words (as that of any linguistic expression) is governed by rules. Summing up, what we can say about the phrase “clarifying a concept” is that for Baker and Hacker, this comes down to “clarifying the rules for the use of an expression”.

Let us assume for the moment that we had read *Rules, Grammar and Necessity* only up to the parts which I have just quoted – i.e. we had not yet read Baker and Hacker’s exegesis of PI 185-242. Let us further assume we would now read the remark on the status of PI 185-242 that they make there in isolation:

These are not causal hypotheses about rule-following or empirical observations, but grammatical remarks clarifying the concept of following a rule.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 52-3

<sup>327</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 55

<sup>328</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 161

Now let us ask ourselves: What would we, after reading the remarks from the beginning of the book just quoted, expect when we hear that in PI 185-242 we find “grammatical remarks clarifying the concept of following a rule”? Would we not, after considering what Baker and Hacker meant by “grammatical remark” and “clarifying concepts”, actually expect them to mean the following: *remarks clarifying the rules for the use of the expression “following a rule”*?

Now as intuitive as this expectation may be – in the entirety of *Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, Baker and Hacker never speak of “the rules for the use of ‘following a rule’” a single time (or of “the rules for the use of ‘rule’”). In that book, we do find the phrase “the rules for the use of X” in conjunction with all kinds of words or expressions – but never in conjunction with “rule” or “following a rule”. In conjunction with “rule” or “following a rule”, what we find instead is at most something like “clarification of the concept of following a rule”. But what, according to Baker and Hacker’s own account, can this “clarification of the concept of following a rule” be *other than* the “clarification of the rules for the use of the expression ‘following a rule’”? (Why should there be – and how could there be – an *exception* for the linguistic expressions “rule” and “following a rule”?)

Once we have become clear about the fact that according to the *technical* status that Baker and Hacker have assigned to PI 185-242 – when thought through –, these remarks must in fact stand in the service of clarifying the rules for the use – i.e. the *rules of grammar* – of the expression “following a rule”, we can begin to see the contrast with their view of the *architectural* status of those remarks. According to this view, PI 185-242 stood in the service of answering a question about *rules of grammar* in general, namely in what manner rules of grammar are involved in speech activities. Because now one might feel inclined to wonder: Is there not something strange about the idea that a question about rules of grammar in general – i.e. about the rules of grammar of *any* expression – is to be answered by describing the rules of grammar of one particular expression – i.e. “following a rule”?

In order to bring out that there is indeed something quite strange – in fact, illogical – about this idea, let us consider two principle ways of how this idea can be spelled out. That is, two ways of answering the question of why Wittgenstein’s “later reflections on rules play a *pivotal* role in the whole of his mature philosophy”<sup>329</sup> – or, more precisely, two ways of answering the question of why it is “*vital* to have a correct conception of how rules enter into

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<sup>329</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 39 (my emphasis)

[...] playing [language] games”<sup>330</sup>. First, let us assume that Baker and Hacker wish to understand “vital” in such a way that in order to at all understand what “rules of grammar” *are*, the question “In what manner are rules of grammar involved in speech activities?” needs to be answered. That would mean to say that in order to understand what it means to clarify particular rules of grammar (in order to dissolve particular philosophical problems), we would need to know what rules of grammar *are*, and therefore to know the answer to this question. In a nutshell: Baker and Hacker would hold that the question “In what manner are rules of grammar involved in speech activities?” needed to be answered *before* any clarification of concrete rules of grammar could at all take place – *before* any attempt at dissolving concrete philosophical problems could at all be made. This would mean, for instance, that this question needed to be answered before making an attempt at the dissolution of the problem of skepticism through clarifying the rules of grammar of “to know” and “to doubt”. Now how *is* this question to be answered? According to Baker and Hacker, through clarifying the rules of grammar of the expression “following a rule”. But in this case, the following question would arise: Why should this general question about *rules of grammar*, which admittedly needed to be answered before clarifying the *rules of grammar* of “to know”, not also have to be answered before clarifying the *rules of grammar* of “following a rule”? After all, it is *rules of grammar* that are to be clarified in both these cases. In other words: If this question needed to be answered *before* clarifying the rules of grammar of “to know”, would it not also have to be answered *before* clarifying the rules of grammar of “following a rule”? Yet that would of course raise a problem: For exactly *this* clarification (of the rules of grammar of “following a rule”) was supposed to answer that question. As comes out now, the idea that grammatical remarks clarifying the concept of “following a rule” could provide an answer to the question “In what manner are rules of grammar involved in speech activities?” – understood as a question so vital to our understanding of *rules of grammar* that it needed to be answered *before* clarifying any concrete rules of grammar – yields in a *regress*.

Now at this point Baker and Hacker might object by pointing out that they did not mean to say that the question “In what manner are rules of grammar involved in speech activities?” was *that* “vital” to the clarification of *any* concrete rule of grammar. They might hold that one could have a *basic* understanding of rules of grammar without knowing the answer to this question – e.g. by having seen how the clarification of actual rules of grammar helped dissolve a philosophical problem – and that through reading PI 185-242 – i.e. through

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<sup>330</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 154 (my emphasis)

getting clear about the rules of grammar of the expression “following a rule” –, this question would be answered, thereby providing us with a *deeper* understanding of what rules of grammar are. That way, Baker and Hacker could hold, their idea of the special significance of PI 185-242 for the whole of Wittgenstein’s philosophy would not involve a *regress* any more. This, then, is the second way of spelling out their idea which we are considering. Although it might appear sufficiently different from the first case, it indeed changes nothing: the idea that stating the rules of grammar of “following a rule” could answer a question about rules of grammar in general remains defective. To see why, let us consider the following argument.

Let us assume that the context of the question “In what manner are rules of grammar involved in speech activities?” is the following: We already have a basic understanding of what “rules of grammar” are – e.g. by having seen how the clarification of particular rules of grammar helped dissolve a particular philosophical problem – and now we want to get clearer about how such rules of grammar are involved in speech activities – how they “enter into”<sup>331</sup> their respective language games. Let us take as obvious that elucidating this would entail that we do *more* than just *state* these rules – we would now say something *about* them. Now according to Baker and Hacker, in order to elucidate how such rules of grammar enter into their respective language games, we would point to Wittgenstein’s rule-following remarks where he “clarifies the concept of following a rule” – i.e. states some of the rules of grammar of the expression “following a rule”. There, we would focus especially on the conceptual connection between “following a rule” and practices and customs. Since this is a general claim, one should be allowed to rephrase it thus: In order to elucidate how the rules of grammar of the expression X enter into their respective language game, we would state some of the rules of grammar of the expression “following a rule”. And this does indeed appear rather unobjectionable in a case like “elucidating how the rules of grammar of ‘to know’ enter into their language game”. But let us consider this case now: What would we do in order to answer the question “*How do the rules of grammar of ‘following a rule’ enter into their language game?*” How about our standard answer: State some of the rules of grammar of “following a rule”? While this answer looked promising in the case of “to know”, in this case, it would amount to the mere *restating* of (some of) the rules in question. But we had taken as obvious at the outset that answering the question “How do the rules of grammar of X enter into their language game?” would exceed the mere *stating* of the rules of grammar of X, and instead say something *about* them. This means that the question “How do the rules of grammar of *‘following a rule’* enter into their language game?” cannot be taken to be answered by merely

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<sup>331</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1985, 154

stating some of those rules once over. Rather, more would have to be done. But what more do Baker and Hacker have to offer? They insist that PI 185-242, where this question is to receive a general answer, are *grammatical*, i.e. that all that happens there is the clarification of the rules of grammar of “following a rule”. If they do not want to step down from this general claim, and declare that the question “In what manner are rules of grammar involved in speech activities?” can only be answered in a non-grammatical way, they would have to declare that the case of the rules of grammar of the everyday expression “following a rule” posed an exception, it being the one case for which the general question “In what manner are rules of grammar involved in speech activities?” could not be answered. And that would reveal their account of how this general question is to be answered as *incomplete*.

It seems that Baker and Hacker are in a dilemma here. Their *architectural* view of the status of PI 185-242 states that those remarks furnish us with an answer to a question about rules of grammar in general, namely in what manner those rules are involved in speech activities. According to this view, the rule-following remarks form part of a larger vision of how language works that Wittgenstein elaborates in the *Investigations*. On the other hand, their account of the *technical* status of PI 185-242 as grammatical remarks about the expression “following a rule” – when thought through – commits them to hold that those remarks are *rules of grammar* themselves. But as we have seen now, the idea that questions of detail about rules of grammar in general can at all be answered by furnishing something that itself are mere rules of grammar appears to be somehow defective. Thus, the architectural view and the technical view of the status of the rule-following remarks appear to be actually incompatible.

What could Baker and Hacker do in order to escape this dilemma? Two options immediately present themselves: They could (1) give up the claim that PI 185-242 are *grammatical* remarks, i.e. that Wittgenstein is describing there the rules of grammar of “following a rule”, or (2) they could give up the claim that those remarks are *fundamental* – i.e. that they are related to questions about rules of grammar in general, such as the question “How do rules of grammar govern speech activities?” In choosing (1), they would, of course, run into serious exegetical problems. They would have to explain away Wittgenstein’s concern for clarifying the status of his remarks on rule-following as being grammatical – a status which Baker and Hacker themselves had highlighted in the exegetical parts of *Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, especially the *grammatical* status of Wittgenstein’s remarks on the connection between following a rule and practices, techniques and customs. Thus, it seems that this way of trying to

escape the dilemma would leave this insistence on the part of Wittgenstein as something wholly inexplicable.

This means that Baker and Hacker have no other way but to opt for (2) – i.e. to accept the fact that *because* the rule-following remarks are grammatical, they cannot answer questions about grammatical remarks as such. The immediate upshot of this would be that the part of the *Investigations* where they took the question “How do rules of grammar govern speech activities?” to be addressed would no longer be able to qualify. Whatever Wittgenstein was up to in these remarks, for purely internal reasons, it could not be what Baker and Hacker took it to be. That is, they would have to point to other sections of the book where this question would be addressed in a way coherent with their framework. But as I mentioned earlier, Wittgenstein rarely speaks about “rules” outside of the rule-following remarks in PI 185-242. So it seems that a textual substitute for supplying us with an elaborate account of how rules of grammar work would indeed be hard to find. But if Baker and Hacker fail to identify a place in the *Investigations* where the question “How do rules of grammar govern speech activities?” *is* being answered – what then becomes of their idea that rules of grammar are something that “govern” language games at all? At least they themselves saw it as “vital” that if Wittgenstein put forward such an account of the role of rules of grammar, questions such as “How do rules of grammar enter into language games?” had to be answered in detail. Now with the textual evidence for any interest of Wittgenstein’s in answering such questions about rules of grammar in general shattered, it seems that Baker and Hacker’s whole account of what rules of grammar *are* begins to look questionable.

### 3.5 The Role of the Rule-Following Remarks for Wittgenstein’s Philosophy

What, then, is the role of the remarks on rule-following for Wittgenstein’s philosophy? Let us first focus on the *technical* status of those remarks. We can use a quote from Baker and Hacker to illustrate the confusion that lay at the bottom of their mistake about the true role of the rule-following remarks. As we had seen, at the outset of their chapter devoted to the interpretation these remarks, they had written:

The task of philosophy is to clarify the rules for the use of expressions, especially to remove philosophical misunderstandings by rendering these rules surveyable.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> Baker/Hacker 1985, 154

Now very broadly speaking, Baker and Hacker's mistake had been to overlook the fact that the rule-following remarks are a special case of what they describe in this sentence, rather than being concerned with supplying some kind of background which comes into play in all of the cases that they describe here. In other words, they overlooked that just because Wittgenstein is talking about "rules", there is no automatic connection to the subject of "rules of grammar" as such. Rather, the following relation holds:

One task of philosophy is to clarify the rules for the use of the expression "following a rule", to remove a philosophical misunderstanding by rendering these rules surveyable.

This means to acknowledge that the rule-following remarks are dealing with a regular philosophical misunderstanding – i.e. puzzle – which can be dissolved by one of the regular means – rendering surveyable the rules of grammar of the expressions involved, in this case: "following a rule". In other words, something which is *global* – clarifying the rules for the use of expressions in order to dissolve philosophical puzzles – is applied to the *local* case of a puzzle about "following a rule". Thus technically, this problem is just one other philosophical problem (such as the problem of skepticism), and has no special status for the whole. This entails that whatever means of dissolving philosophical problems the *Investigations* advocate, they must be independent of the dissolution of *this particular* problem.

I said above that Baker and Hacker, in assigning the rule-following remarks a special role relating to grammatical remarks as such, had conflated the two logical levels which I had called the *methodological* and the *critical*. We can now see how. Let us consider these two sentences:

- (1) What are the rules for the *use* of the expression X?
- (2) Following a rule is a practice, custom, *use* or institution.

Now Baker and Hacker concluded that there must be a direct logical connection between the occurrence of *use* in both (1) and (2): When Wittgenstein is speaking about *use* being a criterion for "following a rule" in (2), that just had to be directly linked to his way of dissolving philosophical problems by asking the question (1). And it is true that as long as we formulate (2) in this way, this idea appears somehow compelling. But things start looking differently when we formulate the matter in this way:

- (1) What are the rules for the *use* of the expression X?
- (2) The criterion for our *use* of the expression “following a rule” is a practice, custom, *use* or institution.

By explicitly formulating what Baker and Hacker have (as I had shown) implicitly acknowledged, it becomes obvious that the occurrence of “use” in (1) is related directly to the *first* occurrence of “use” in (2), rather than to the second. What (2) does is that it *answers* the question (1), with “following a rule” being substituted for X. Now in Wittgenstein, the question “What are the *rules* for the use of X?” is equivalent to the question “What are the *criteria* for our application (use) of X?” Thus, by formulating (2) in this way, it becomes clear that the second occurrence of “use” has to do with the specific rules for the specific expression “following a rule”, rather than with the rules of *any* expression (which (1) asks for). In other words: The occurrence of “use” in (1) is on the *methodological* level, whereas the second occurrence of “use” in (2) is on the *critical* level. Only by ignoring this distinction can it seem, as Baker and Hacker hold, that the occurrence of “use” in remarks on the grammar of “following a rule” could be directly linked to the occurrence of “use” in a question such as “What are the rules for the *use* of the expression X?”, and therefore to the dissolution of philosophical problems as such.

Having said this about the *technical* status of the remarks on rule-following, let us now look at how those remarks can indeed be seen as having a special significance for the whole: namely, by treating a paradox that appears to call into doubt linguistic meaning at all. After all, the philosophical puzzle that Wittgenstein deals with in those sections is how at all meaning a rule (or a word) in a certain way can determine a specific *use* of the rule (the word). As long as we are in the grip of the paradox, the idea of words having any kind of *use* at all seems untenable. Thus, the idea of (rules of) grammar itself seems dubitable. In other words, the rule-following paradox is a philosophical problem that may seem to affect the *methodological* level, since it induces into us a general worry about words having a use at all. Now in order to dissolve the paradox, Wittgenstein reminds us of fact that the very use that our meaning the rule (the word) in a specific way appeared not to be able to determine actually is the criterion which we accept for our application of “to mean” and “to follow a rule” in ordinary circumstances. Of course, this occurrence of “use” on the *critical* level is directly linked to our perceived problem about meaning a rule (a word) determining a use – which



appears to us to be a worry reaching out all the way up to the *methodological* level. In this case, then, the occurrence of “use” on the *critical* level does indeed stand in a direct relation to the occurrence of “use” on the *methodological* level, i.e. in a question such as “How do we ordinarily use the expression X?” – for the paradox was calling into doubt *any* use of *any* word. So this is the other role of the remarks on rule-following for Wittgenstein’s philosophy: They are instrumental in dissolving a paradox that might appear to have ramifications for one of the ways in which Wittgenstein dissolves philosophical problems: by describing the (rules for) the use of words. This role we might still call the *architectural* role of the rule-following remarks. Unlike in their *technical* role, in their architectural role, those remarks do in fact have a significance for the whole of Wittgenstein’s philosophy.

Note how different this *architectural* role is from the one which Baker and Hacker assigned the rule-following remarks: In their view, those remarks stood in the service of answering the question “How do rules of grammar govern speech activities?” But on this view, this question is merely the expression of a philosophical puzzlement. Once the puzzle is *dissolved*, this question dissolves with it – and so does, of course, any “answer”. In other words, this lesson of Baker and Hacker’s from *Understanding and Meaning* applies here: that “philosophical” questions are symptoms of philosophical puzzlements, and that they therefore are not to be *answered*, but the puzzlements behind them to be *dissolved* – through supplying an overview of the grammar of the linguistic expressions involved in formulating them.<sup>333</sup> Now with this mind, even Baker and Hacker should not be surprised that it turns out – as in the case of “How do rules of grammar make contact with speech activities?” – that a question cannot be *answered* by means of remarks about the rules of grammar of one of the expressions involved in it. After all, grammatical remarks, as they have been stressing in the context of other philosophical problems, are never meant to *answer* questions at all. This, then, is the crucial difference between their view of the architectural status of the rule-following remarks and the one I have just outlined: That those remarks stand in the service of dissolving a philosophical problem that appears to call one of Wittgenstein’s methods for the dissolution of philosophical problems into doubt – rather than supplying an answer to a general question about language that is at the base of this method of dissolution.

Now *are* Wittgenstein’s reminders of “use” as a criterion for “to mean” and “to follow a rule” directly related to the *methodological* level, or are they not? I said that *technically* they were not – but are they not “*architecturally*”? This may seem contradictory, as long as we

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<sup>333</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1980, 473-4

forget that the architectural perspective is the one of us being still in the grip of an *illusion*, while the technical perspective is that of us having found our way out of this illusion. While in the grip of the rule-following paradox, it appears to us as that with the possibility of meaning determining a use, the whole of language use is called into doubt – and therefore, also a way of dissolving philosophical problems by describing our use of words in ordinary circumstances. In this stage, Wittgenstein’s reminder that the *use* of a rule (a word) is the criterion for “to mean” and “to follow a rule” is directly linked to the worry that our meaning a rule in a specific way could not determine a *use*. That is, the occurrence of “use” on the *critical* level here is directly linked to its occurrence on the *methodological* level. But that is not all: It is essential to this way of dissolving the paradox that we realize that what we had not taken into consideration (while in our philosophical worry about the use of words in general) is another kind of *use*: namely, the *use* of the expressions “to mean” and “to follow a rule”. That is, Wittgenstein counters our general worry about how words can at all have use if our meaning them cannot determine a specific use – which may turn into a worry about how we can at all dissolve philosophical problem by clarifying the *use* of words – by asking: How would you use the word “to mean” in circumstances other than formulations of this general worry? We are to realize that this paradox about the use of *all* words is actually the product of our confusion about the use of one word: “to mean” (or “to follow a rule”). It is the clarification of the (rules of) grammar of this *one* expression that helps dissolve a paradox that appears to cast doubt on *all* (rules of) grammar. And this is how it is always with philosophical problems: While in the grip of them, they appear to us total and all-encompassing – such as in the case of skepticism, where our entire connection to reality seems to be at stake. Yet when we have found our way out of the problem of skepticism, we see that it was the product of an illusion resulting from misunderstandings and misuses of merely a few words – “to know”, “to doubt”, “to be certain”, and some others. It is in this way that the rule-following remarks can be seen to be both about only *one* (or two) linguistic expression and about *all* linguistic expressions at the same time. Yet it is important to keep in mind that what I called the *technical* perspective is the perspective of *reality*: After having found our way out of the *illusion* of a paradox (which had induced an “*architectural*” worry in us), we can see that there is no direct link between the fact that “use” is a *criterion* for our application of the expression “following a rule” and the *methodological* level with its question “How do we ordinarily *use* the expression X?” – instead, we can see that there is a direct link between the *methodological* level with its question “How do we ordinarily *use* the expression X?” and our *use* of the expression “following a rule”.

### 3.6 Summary

In this chapter, I had turned to Baker and Hacker's account of the role of Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following for the whole of his philosophy. First, in Section 3.1, I had turned to Baker and Hacker's discussion of the rule-following section, showing that they state Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following to have the status of "grammatical remarks clarifying the concept of following a rule". I also showed that Baker and Hacker take Wittgenstein's insistence on rule-following being a *practice* to mean that *techniques, customs, and institutions* come in as a *background* in which what someone does needs to be *embedded* in order for us to *count as* "following a rule" rather than "acting in accord with a rule". These pronouncements I took as signs that Baker and Hacker do in fact agree with me that uses, practices, and customs come into view for Wittgenstein as *criteria for the application* of one particular expression of our language, "following a rule", and that they therefore also hold that Wittgenstein's reminders of the role of practice and customs in PI 185-242 are logically situated on the *critical* level – i.e. that the occurrence of "uses" and "practice" in them is clearly removed from the occurrence of such notions on the *methodological* level.

In Section 3.2, I concerned myself with the first of the two steps of how Baker and Hacker nonetheless aim to establish that the occurrence of "use" and "practice" on the *critical* level in the rule-following remarks is linked in a special way to the *methodological* level. As we had seen, Baker and Hacker's reading of Wittgenstein's program for the dissolution of philosophical problems centers on *rules of grammar*. Taking their departure from Wittgenstein's comparison of language use to playing a game according to fixed rules such as chess, Baker and Hacker hold that our everyday speech is "governed" by these rules of grammar, and that therefore, the description of the grammar of an expressions involves stating the *rules* for the use of that expression. Also, they hold that philosophical problems emerge through our "violating" these rules. Accordingly, they take the dissolution of philosophical problems to proceed through a detection of nonsense by clarifying the rules of grammar which hold for the use of the expressions involved. Thus, Baker and Hacker's first step in establishing a connection between the occurrence of "use" and "practice" in the remarks on rule-following is that, on the *methodological* level of the dissolution of philosophical problems in general, we are always dealing with *rules*.

In Section 3.3, I turned to Baker and Hacker's second step in establishing such a connection between the rule-following remarks and the dissolution of *arbitrary* philosophical problems. Baker and Hacker take it that Wittgenstein, in the way of dissolving philosophical

problems which he had advocated in the *Tractatus*, was already concerned with linguistic rules and their violation. But, as Baker and Hacker hold, in that early work, Wittgenstein held a “calculus view of language” – a view of language focusing exclusively on *formal* aspects of language rather than its *uses*. The later comparison of language to a *game* such as chess was meant to correct that view – by opening our eyes to the fact that language is a (rule-governed) *activity*. As Baker and Hacker then take it, the rule-following remarks are instrumental in answering a question which the calculus view of language had obstructed – namely, the question “How are rules (of grammar) involved in speech activities?” As I had then shown, Baker and Hacker take the answer to this question to be “vital” for the dissolution of *any* philosophical problem. This is so, as they present it, because the comparison of speaking a language with playing a game in accord with definite rules is *fundamental* to Wittgenstein’s conception of philosophy in that this picture is “built into” any clarification of the rules of grammar of expressions by describing their language-games. The connection which Baker and Hacker thus establish between Wittgenstein’s remarks on rule-following and the dissolution of *arbitrary* philosophical problems is the following: The rule-following remarks stand in the service of answering a *vital* question about the very type of rules which we draw upon when clarifying the grammar of an expression in order to dissolve a philosophical problem.

In Section 3.4, I presented my argument against Baker and Hacker’s claim regarding this special significance of the rule-following remarks for the dissolution of *arbitrary* problems. I introduced the label “architectural status” to designate their claim regarding the special role of the rule-following remarks as answering a vital question about rules of grammar in general. I also introduced the label “technical status” for Baker and Hacker’s claim that the rule-following remarks have the status of “grammatical remarks clarifying the concept of following a rule”. I then proceeded to show how these claims implicitly contradict one another. The first step of my argument was to bring out that Baker and Hacker, according to what they say about grammatical remarks, cannot but hold that their account of the *technical status* of the rule-following remarks comes down to claiming that these are “remarks clarifying the rules of the use of the expression ‘following a rule’”. In other words, their idea of the *architectural status* of the rule-following remarks combined with their account of the *technical status* of these remarks – when thought through – comes down to the claim that a vital question about rules of grammar in general is to be answered by stating the rules of grammar of one *particular* expression – “following a rule”. The next step of my argument was to consider a *strong* way in which the claim that the rule-following remarks answer a “vital” question about rules of grammar can be spelled out: namely, as the claim that the question “In

what manner are rules of grammar involved in speech activities?” needed to be answered *before* any clarification of concrete rules of grammar could at all take place. I then showed how this idea leads into a regress: Since this question itself is to be answered through a clarification of some rules of grammar – namely, those for “following a rule” – it would, according to this very idea, have to be answered *before* it could be answered by means of this clarification of the rules of grammar of “following a rule”. Consequently, it could never be answered.

The next step of my argument was to consider a *weak* way in which the claim that answering a question such as “How do rules of grammar enter into their language game?” is “vital” for the whole of Wittgenstein’s philosophy can be spelled out: namely, as the claim that this question need *not* be answered *before* any stating of rules of grammar can take place, but merely in that through answering this question, we can *afterwards* arrive at a deeper understanding of what these rules of grammar *are*. Against this, I furnished an argument to the effect that the *general idea* that stating the rules of grammar of “following a rule” could answer a question about rules of grammar in general is defective. At the outset of the argument, I stated it to be obvious that when we answer this question with regard to particular rules of grammar – e.g. when answering the question “How do the rules of grammar of ‘to know’ enter into their language game?” – we would do more than just *state* these rules. I then showed how asking this question about the rules of grammar of “*following a rule*” yields in a contradiction: According to Baker and Hacker, the question “How do the rules of grammar of ‘following a rule’ enter into their language game?” is to be answered by stating (some of the) rules of grammar of “following a rule”. But in this case, doing so would amount to the mere *restating* of the rules of grammar about whose way of entering into their language game we are inquiring. Thus, it is a consequence of Baker and Hacker’s account that the question “How do the rules of grammar of X enter into their language game?” cannot be answered for the case of the everyday expression “following a rule” – revealing its inherent *incompleteness*. Thus, my argument shows that Baker and Hacker’s idea of the *architectural status* of the rule-following remarks is in fact incompatible with their account of the *technical status* of those remarks: the very fact that the rule-following remarks are clarifications of the grammar of the particular expressions “following a rule” excludes the possibility that they could answer a question about rules of grammar as such.

In Section 3.5, I had turned to an analysis of the source of the problems with Baker and Hacker’s account of the status of the rule-following remarks. At the outset of their chapter devoted to a close interpretation of the rule-following sections of the *Investigations*, they had written: “The task of philosophy is to clarify the rules for the use of expressions, especially to

remove philosophical misunderstandings by rendering these rules surveyable”. I had summed up Baker and Hacker’s mistake by stating that they had overlooked the fact that the rule-following remarks are a *special case* of what they describe in this sentence, rather than being concerned with supplying some kind of background which comes into play in *all* of the cases that they describe here. The rule-following problem is *one* of the many problems which can be dissolved by clarifying the rules for the use of the expressions involved. In order to make clearer why this fact *entails* that the rule-following remarks cannot be concerned with the rules of grammar which we invoke in the dissolution of *arbitrary* problems, I had turned to Baker and Hacker’s conflation of the two levels on which the notion of “use” occurs in the rule-following remarks. From the occurrence of “use” in the grammatical remark “Following a rule is a practice, custom, *use* or institution”, they had concluded that there *must* hold a direct connection to the question “What are the rules for the *use* of the expression X?”, which is instrumental in the dissolution of *arbitrary* problems. Yet if we spell out what is involved in this grammatical remark, we get: “The criterion for our *use* of the expression ‘following a rule’ is a practice, custom, *use* or institution”. It then comes out that a direct logical connection holds between, not the *second* occurrence of “use” here and its occurrence in “What are the rules for the *use* of the expression X?”, but rather to its *first* occurrence. The occurrence of “use” in the grammatical remark “Following a rule is a practice, custom, *use* or institution” has got to do with the *specific* rules of grammar for the *specific* expression “following a rule” *only*. Hence it is a conflation of the *critical* and the *methodological* level to think, as Baker and Hacker do, that the occurrence of “use” in remarks such as “Following a rule is a practice, custom, *use* or institution” could be directly linked to Wittgenstein’s way of dissolving philosophical problems of asking for the rules for the *use* of expressions.

In the remainder of Section 3.5, I had considered a way in which the rule-following remarks *can* indeed have a special significance for the whole of Wittgenstein’s philosophy: namely, as long as we are in the grip of the rule-following paradox. For it is in the nature of this paradox that it makes *all* rule-following look dubitable – which of course has an effect of the idea of there being rules of grammar which can be clarified in order to dissolve philosophical problems. Yet as I stressed, this perspective of the rule-following remarks having a bearing on the dissolution of *any* philosophical problem is the perspective of our being subject to an *illusion*: Once we have found our way out of this illusion – after having come to see how the rule-following problem *dissolves* – we are ready to see that there is no direct link between the fact that “use” is a *criterion* for our application of the expression “following a

rule” and the *methodological* level with its question “How do we ordinarily *use* the expression X?”

The aim of this chapter was to show how Baker and Hacker’s idea that the rule-following sections of the *Investigations* are concerned with answering a question of detail pertaining to the dissolution of philosophical in general rests on a conflation of what I had called the *methodological* and the *criterial* level on which the notion of “use” occurs in Wittgenstein’s remarks on rule-following. The very fact that in these remarks, the notions of “use”, “practice”, and “customs” come in as *criteria* for our application of the expression “following a rule” *entails* that this occurrence of these notions cannot be tied to the level of the dissolution of philosophical in general with its characteristic question “How do we ordinarily *use* this expression?”

Another aim of this chapter was to show that one mark of the conflation of the *methodological* level – the level of the dissolution of *arbitrary* problems – and the *criterial* level – the level of the dissolution of a *specific* problem – is the occurrence of a *regress*. As I take it, this reveals the need for keeping properly apart, when it comes to reading later Wittgenstein, the things which are tied to the dissolution of *particular* philosophical problems, and the things that have to do with the dissolution of philosophical problems *in general*. In the next chapter, I will deal with some problems in the readings of Gustafsson and Kuusela concerning this point.

#### 4. Resolute Readings and the Challenge of Avoiding Hierarchies in Philosophy

Resolute readers of Wittgenstein's later work hold that Wittgenstein's main aim there is to introduce ways of dissolving philosophical problems – which involve asking ourselves if the words we utter in formulating such problems really do have the kind of sense which we imagine them to have. Now it is absolutely crucial, in the eyes of resolute readers, that these ways of dissolving philosophical problems are not to be seen as having as their *foundation* any answer to the question “How does linguistic meaning come into being?” According to the resolute reading of later Wittgenstein brought forward by Oskari Kuusela, fully appreciating this point involves seeing how Wittgenstein avoided *hierarchies* in his later philosophy. By this Kuusela means that Wittgenstein was not only striving for a way of dissolving philosophical problems which was not to be based on any general account of linguistic meaning, but that he held that none of the grammatical investigations which he conducted in order to dissolve *particular* problems was to be conceived as fundamental to the dissolution of *any* philosophical problem. In this chapter, I will concern myself with the question whether Gustafsson's and Kuusela's reading of later Wittgenstein do in fact live up to this vision.

In the previous chapter, we had seen how Baker and Hacker took Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following to answer a vital question concerning the rules of grammar which are invoked in the dissolution of *arbitrary* philosophical problems. As I had shown, this idea rested on a lack of awareness as to what, in the *Investigations*, can be related to the dissolution of one *specific* philosophical problem, and what is related to the dissolution of philosophical problems *in general*. In this chapter, I will first concern myself with the role which Gustafsson's version of a resolute reading assigns to lessons which we can draw from the dissolution of the rule-following problem. As I will show, his way of linking the rule-following problem to the dissolution of philosophical problems in general rests on the same conflation of logical levels as Baker and Hacker's. Then, I will turn to Kuusela's reading of later Wittgenstein. As we had seen in Chapter 1, Kuusela had, against another version of Baker and Hacker's idea of the *foundational* status of the rule-following remarks, furnished a regress argument as well. In this chapter, I will turn to Kuusela's discussion of Wittgenstein's remarks on a relation between the meaning of words and their use. I will show that, despite his attempt to explain these remarks as having no foundational role for Wittgenstein's way of



philosophical clarification as such, Kuusela nonetheless, through linking this way of philosophical clarification to Wittgenstein's investigation of our actual use of the word "meaning", implicitly assigns them a special role – a role which, as I will show, has the effect of reintroducing a philosophical hierarchy into later Wittgenstein. I will then proceed to present an alternative account of the status of Wittgenstein's remarks on meaning and use.

This chapter has five sections. In Section 4.1, I will turn to what Martin Gustafsson says about the role that the dissolution of the "problem of meaning and rules" has for a resolute way of dissolving philosophical problems as such. As Gustafsson takes it, the dissolution of philosophical problems in general "relies on" the very *agreement* which – during his dissolution of the rule-following problem – comes out as a presupposition for our talk of "meaning" in terms of rules. I will present an argument to the effect that this idea is based on the same conflation of logical levels as in the case of Baker and Hacker. In the remainder of the chapter, I will turn to the issue of why Wittgenstein's recurrent remarks on a relation between the meaning of words and their use have no *foundational* role for his way of dissolving philosophical problems as such. In Section 4.2, I will turn to Oskari Kuusela's explanation of this non-foundational role of these remarks. I will explore the connection which Kuusela draws between Wittgenstein's remarks on the grammar of "meaning" and his way of philosophical clarification in general. In Section 4.3, I will – drawing on James Conant's discussion of PI 43 – present an argument to the effect that Kuusela's way of connecting Wittgenstein's way of philosophical clarification to his investigation of the actual use of "meaning" leads into a regress. In Section 4.4, I will show that, contrary to the case of rule-following, *some* of Wittgenstein's remarks on meaning and use are indeed intended to be related to his way of philosophical clarification as such. I will then bring out that these *global* remarks on meaning and use cannot be explained, as Kuusela does, as remarks on the grammar of the word "meaning". In Section 4.5, I will show why, although these global remarks on meaning and use are not remarks on the grammar of the word "meaning", they also are not meant to furnish an answer to the question "How does linguistic meaning come into being?" I will end with a summary (Section 4.6).

#### **4.1 Gustafsson on the Significance of the Rule-Following Problem**

In *Entangled Sense*, Gustafsson is also concerned with determining the role which the rule-following problem as raised by Wittgenstein has in the general outlook on how to treat philosophical problems and confusions which Gustafsson had presented. In his chapter 3,

Gustafsson gives a detailed account of what he takes the rule-following problem to be and the place it has in the whole of a resolute (or “austere”) way of conceiving a Wittgensteinian way of treating philosophical problems. The point of departure for his presentation of the general problem which Gustafsson takes Wittgenstein’s remarks on rule-following to connect to is introduced by Gustafsson at the end of his chapter 2 – in which he had introduced his idea of the relation of the meanings of expressions and their *combinatory possibilities*. At the end of this chapter, Gustafsson then introduces the following problem. Returning to his example “Tonight’s concert is 2 hours and 40 minutes long”, he writes:

Now, according to the sort of conception described in the previous section, what this sentence means – what symbols it contains – has to do with the possibilities of using those symbols in other constructions. [...] In other words, it seems as if what I say somehow *transcends* my particular utterance [...]. It is as if my words symbolise because they are somehow pregnant with hitherto unrealised potentialities of employment. [...] In what are these unrealised potentialities supposed to consist? Indeed, how can the symbols exist at all, if their identity is tied to combinatory possibilities yet to be realised? Isn’t this notion of symbols highly mystical and obscure?<sup>334</sup>

Gustafsson then sets aside his treatment of this problem for chapter 3. Now in chapter 3 of *Entangled Sense* – entitled “Meaning and Rule-Following” – Gustafsson puts forth a detailed criticism of the interpretation of Wittgenstein’s remarks on rule-following brought forward by Saul Kripke in his *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (1982). Gustafsson focuses on Kripke’s argument itself rather than on exegetical issues. In his chapter, Gustafsson identifies two “fundamental difficulties”<sup>335</sup> with Kripke’s argument, which, in Gustafsson view, call for a *reformulation* of the problem of meaning and rule-following. For the present discussion, I will leave these points of criticism aside, and turn directly to the problem how it comes up after having been thus reformulated by Gustafsson. At the outset of his section 3.6, Gustafsson lists the following two example utterances – of which we are to imagine that Gustafsson said them *yesterday*:

- (1) The Nile River is 6670 kilometers long.
- (2) Tonight’s concert is 2 hours and 40 minutes long.

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<sup>334</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 88

Drawing on a scenario which he invented earlier, where Pia and Peter are in a video rental store, discussing the length of various films about famous rivers of the world<sup>336</sup>, Gustafsson then adds the following example utterance – of which we are to imagine him saying it *today*:

(3) The Nile River is 2 hours and 40 minutes long.

He then states the following triviality: According to how he *yesterday* meant “The Nile River is ... long” and how he *yesterday* meant “2 hours and 40 minutes” – i.e., according to the *sense* which he had given these expressions *yesterday* – “2 hours and 40 minutes” in *today*’s utterance *cannot* have its normal temporal sense – it *must* mean something different.

Gustafsson then formulates the following problem:

Now, the trouble is these ‘*musts*’ and ‘*cannots*’. [...] How is it possible that what I meant yesterday by those words somehow *determined* future possibilities of combination? After all, when I said ‘The Nile River is 6670 kilometres long’ and ‘Tonight’s concert is 2 hours and 40 minutes long’, I did not think about such possibilities and impossibilities. Indeed, the idea of uttering ‘The Nile River is 2 hours and 40 minutes long’ did not strike me at all. And yet, it is supposed to be somehow settled, already at that time, that such a construction would be incompatible with what I then meant by ‘The Nile River is ... long’ and ‘2 hours and 40 minutes’.<sup>337</sup>

The seeming trouble which Gustafsson intends to discuss is that once we start thinking of meanings of word in terms of combinatory possibilities, it appears unclear how all of the word’s *future* combinatory possibilities can be present *now* – in the instance it which we *mean* something definite by our words when uttering them. After all, we cannot be *thinking* of them all at once. What we have here, then, appears to be a quite mysterious relation between present and future: through meaning a word in a certain way *now*, it appears to be determined with absolute precision which *future* use of the word would conform to this way of meaning it. Yet it appears completely unclear what this relation could consist in.<sup>338</sup>

Now in order to bring out why this apparent problem is not a problem at all, Gustafsson follows Wittgenstein in trying to clarify this issue by turning to the topic of *ex-*

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<sup>335</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 93

<sup>336</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 117

<sup>337</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 118-9

<sup>338</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 118-20

*pectations, wishes, orders and their fulfillment.* Gustafsson starts out his discussion by contrasting the following two statements:

- (1) If you eat a pizza slice, your hunger will be satisfied.
- (2) If you are served a pizza slice, your wish for being served a pizza slice will be satisfied.<sup>339</sup>

In (1), the relation between my current state of hunger and its future satisfaction is *hypothetical*: It is quite probable that, when I eat a pizza slice, my hunger will be satisfied. Yet, of course, it could also be that I am still hungry after having the pizza slice. In other words: I will find out whether eating a pizza slice *satisfies* my hunger only *after* I have eaten the pizza slice.<sup>340</sup> Things, however, are quite different with (2). Here, the relation between my wish to be served a pizza slice and its satisfaction by being served a pizza slice is not *hypothetical*: unlike (1), (2) appears to state something *inevitable* – something *necessarily true*.<sup>341</sup>

Gustafsson then continues:

What is philosophically perplexing about all this? Well, isn't it amazing: If I expect that it will rain tomorrow, it is thereby *determined* (already today!) that my expectation will be fulfilled (tomorrow!) if and only if it rains! How can my expectation *know* that tomorrow's rain will satisfy it, even if that rain has not yet fallen?<sup>342</sup>

Gustafsson then mentions how philosophers have described this relation between wishes (expectations) – “intentional phenomena” – and their satisfaction (fulfillment) as “*intrinsically directed*”. Gustafsson's comment:

However, this talk of ‘directedness’ only adds to the perplexity. How on earth can something be directed towards something else that does not even exist? And how can the connection between the two things be inevitable and non-hypothetical? A picture emerges, in which intentional phenomena are seen as somehow connected with unrealised things or events by means of super-rigid links or mechanisms. Thus, everyday wishing and expecting suddenly seem like quite mysterious phenomena.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 121

<sup>340</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 120-1

<sup>341</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 121

<sup>342</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 121

<sup>343</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 122

Gustafsson then discusses the attempt to avoid the idea of any such mysterious “super-rigid link” made by Bertrand Russell in *The Analysis of Mind* (1921). There, Russell flat-out denied that statements about what satisfies a wish or expectations are any less hypothetical than statements such as “If you eat a pizza slice, your hunger will be satisfied”. He held that, in all these cases, we have a relation akin to that of a “discomfort” and the state which will “bring quiescence” to it. Accordingly, he thought of all these relations as non-hypothetical – “since only experience can show what causes a discomfort to cease”<sup>344</sup>. Gustafsson then turns to Wittgenstein’s famous rejection of Russell’s idea:<sup>345</sup>

The problem that Wittgenstein finds in Russell’s analysis is that even if the content of a wish or an expectation is settled, what would fulfil that wish or expectation remains an open question.<sup>346</sup>

Against this, as Gustafsson highlights, Wittgenstein held that the expectation that it will rain tomorrow *is*, necessarily, the expectation that would be fulfilled by tomorrow’s rain. Yet, like Russell, Wittgenstein rejected the idea of a mysterious, “super-rigid” link between expectation and its fulfillment.<sup>347</sup> According to Gustafsson, Wittgenstein’s way out of the problem consisted in reminding us of the following:

[T]o state the content of an expectation *is* to state what would fulfil that expectation: expressions are individuated by their fulfilment.<sup>348</sup>

According to how we use the words “wish” and “expectation”, saying what would *fulfill* a wish or an expectation is to say *what* wish or expectation it is – i.e., it is to determine the *content* of that wish or expectation. Therefore, once the content of a wish or an expectation is settled, what would fulfill that wish or expectation cannot remain an open question. Now as it turns out, what appeared to be a mysterious link between wish and fulfillment is merely established through a reflection on *the way we talk* – it is merely the expression of a rule of usage of the form “the expectation that p = the expectation that is fulfilled by p”.<sup>349</sup> The differ-

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<sup>344</sup> Russell 1921, 72. Quoted in Gustafsson 2000, 122

<sup>345</sup> cf. Wittgenstein, PR 22. Quoted in Gustafsson 2000, 122

<sup>346</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 122-3

<sup>347</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 122-3

<sup>348</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 123

<sup>349</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 123-4

ence between (1) “If you eat a pizza slice, your hunger will be satisfied” and (2) “If you are served a pizza slice, your wish for being served a pizza slice will be satisfied” comes down to the fact that (2) captures a *rule of usage*, whereas (1) does not. Thus the impression that (2) stated something *inevitable* or *necessarily true*.

This is Gustafsson’s way of bringing out that the seeming problem of the relation of wishes, expectations, orders and their fulfillment – the problem of how the content of my expectation can determine *already today* what will fulfill that expectation in the future – is not a real problem at all: since, according to how we use the word “expectation”, the *content* of an expectation is determined precisely by stating what will fulfill it. After having presented this dissolution of the problem, Gustafsson mentions a worry that one might have with this dissolution:

If all we have is rules of usage such as “the expectation that p = the expectation that is fulfilled by p”, then must we not conclude that *any* particular event could fulfil, say, the expectation that it will rain tomorrow, *as long as we decide to describe that event as ‘Tomorrow’s rain’*? Similarly, could not do the waitress do *whatever she likes* in order to comply with my request for a pizza slice, as long as it is agreed that her particular action is to be described as ‘The waitress serves me a pizza slice’?<sup>350</sup>

This worry draws on the fact that the connection between wishes, expectations, orders and the events that fulfill them is established through a rule of *language*. Since linguistic rules are a matter of *agreement*, it may appear that the link between expectation and the events that fulfills it ultimately comes to rest on the fact that the speakers of a language *agree* to classify certain events as “fulfilling the expectation E”. It appears that what matters for the satisfaction of my wish to served a pizza slice is not that I am *really* being served a pizza slice, but only that everybody *agrees* to describe what the waitress does as “serving me a pizza slice”. Therefore, it appears as if the *rigidity* of this link has not been accounted for at all, since an idea of what event *really* fulfills an expectation has been replaced by the (random) agreement of speakers on what event to classify as “fulfillment” in this case.<sup>351</sup> According to Gustafsson, this worry rests on a mistake:

In fact, the alleged distinction between how particular things and events ‘really’ are, and how we ‘describe’ them as being, cannot be drawn. Identifying and differentiating

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<sup>350</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 124-5

between particular events is *already* a matter of using language. Thus, that the non-hypothetical contact between an expectation and its fulfilment is situated ‘in language’ does not imply that the connection between the expectation and ‘extra-linguistic’ reality is lost.<sup>352</sup>

After having thus made clear that *agreement* between speakers does not *decide* whether a particular event fulfills an expectation or not, Gustafsson conceives a case where he and the waitress *do not* reach agreement whether what he has been served is a “pizza slice” or not.<sup>353</sup>

He then continues:

[I]f such absence of agreement became frequent enough, the very notions of ‘agreement’ and ‘disagreement’ would lose their foothold. The disagreement between the waitress and myself took place against a background of massive agreement in usage. By contrast, if absence of agreement became the rule rather than the exception, then it would no longer be clear what is to be counted as ‘agreement’ and what is to be counted as ‘disagreement’ in particular cases.<sup>354</sup>

What Gustafsson wants to say here is not that if there were no agreement in a particular case such as the one with him and the waitress, the “contact” between a wish and its fulfillment would be “broken” – in that, perhaps, there would suddenly be *nothing* which could fulfill an ordinary wish such as that for a pizza slice. Rather, what Gustafsson wants to say is that in this case, what would happen is that “the everyday institutions of wishing, expecting [...] would gradually wither away”<sup>355</sup>. The role of *agreement* for wishing, expecting, giving orders, etc. which comes out through these considerations, according to Gustafsson, is then this:

So, it *is* important that there actually is agreement, in particular cases, on what we call ‘fulfilling expectation E’, ‘satisfying wish W’, and so on. And the existence of such agreement is in no way guaranteed: it might cease. [...] [T]he very phenomena of expecting, wishing and giving orders presuppose such agreement in practice. If the agreement ceases, what happens is not that the link between my expectations and the

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<sup>351</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 125

<sup>352</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 125

<sup>353</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 126-7

<sup>354</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 127

<sup>355</sup> *ibid.*

events that would fulfil them is broken, but that there would no longer be anything like having expectations.<sup>356</sup>

Summing up: What Gustafsson says is that *agreement* between speakers does not *decide* which particular event fulfills which particular expectation, wish, order, etc. – but that this kind of agreement in particular cases is needed as a *background* for our talk of “wishes”, “expectation”, etc., to at all have a foothold: only against the background of massive agreement of this kind is it clear what can be counted as ‘agreement’ or ‘disagreement’ in particular cases. In *this* sense, agreement in practice is a *presupposition* for wishing, expecting, etc.

Now the reason why Gustafsson had turned to the topic of *expectations, wishes, orders* and their *fulfillment* was that he had started out to discuss the problem of meaning and rule-following, as he conceives it. That problem was: If we conceive of meanings of word in terms of *combinatory possibilities*, it appears unclear how all of the word’s *future* combinatory possibilities can be present *now* – in the instance it which we *mean* something definite by our words – e.g. when saying things like “The Nile River is 6670 kilometers long” or “Tonight’s concert is 2 hours and 40 minutes long”. How can the way we yesterday meant “The Nile River is ... long” and how we yesterday meant “2 hours and 40 minutes“ *determine* that when we say today “The Nile River is 2 hours and 40 minutes long”, these words *cannot* make the same meaningful contribution to the whole utterance as they did to yesterday’s utterances?

Now how can our discussion of wishes and expectation help us out of this problem? The parallel Gustafsson wants us to see has to do how the *content* of a wish or expectation is determined. The seeming problem of how a wish could reach out into the future and determine with absolute precision what event would fulfill it dissolved when we saw that the *content* of a wish is determined precisely by stating what event would *fulfill* it. In other words: Saying what would *fulfill* a wish *is* to say *what* wish it is. In order to see how the problem of meaning and rules can likewise be dissolved, Gustafsson wants us to take another look at what he had said about the relation of the meanings of expressions and their combinatory possibilities: Saying how an expression is combined with others *is* to say *what* is meant by that expression. Gustafsson:

To say that ‘The Nile River is ... long’ and ‘5464 kilometres’, for example, can make the same meaningful contribution to ‘The Nile River is 5464 kilometres long’ as they

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<sup>356</sup> Gustafsson 127-8



do in ‘The Nile River is 6670 kilometres long’ and ‘The Huang-He is 5464 kilometres long’, is to say what these meaningful contributions *are*. Conversely, to say that ‘The Nile River is ... long’ and ‘2 hours and 40 minutes’ cannot both make the same meaningful contribution to ‘The Nile River is 2 hours and 40 minutes long’ as they do in ‘The Nile River is 6670 kilometres long’ and ‘Tonight’s concert is 2 hours and 40 minutes long’, is to say something about what these meaningful contributions are *not*.<sup>357</sup>

The problem was this: Given that how we *yesterday* meant “The Nile River is 6670 kilometers long” and “Tonight’s concert is 2 hours and 40 minutes long”, is was already settled then that in *today’s* utterance of “The Nile River is 2 hours and 40 minutes long”, the expressions “The Nile River is ... long” and “2 hours and 40 minutes” *cannot* make the same meaningful contribution that they made in yesterday’s utterances. It appeared as if this combinatory possibility had been magically excluded by what we meant by those expressions yesterday – although we had not even *thought* about ever uttering “The Nile River is 2 hours and 40 minutes long”. Now the problem dissolves when we realize that *what* we yesterday meant by “The Nile River is ... long” and “2 hours and 40 minutes” is determined precisely by stating what the combinatory possibilities of these expressions are. In other words: by saying “according to how we meant ‘The Nile River is 6670 kilometers long’ and ‘Tonight’s concert is 2 hours and 40 minutes long’, is was settled that in ‘The Nile River is 2 hours and 40 minutes long’, the expressions ‘The Nile River is ... long’ and ‘2 hours and 40 minutes’ *cannot* make the same meaningful contribution”, we – by stating that there is no such combinatory possibility for these expressions as ‘The Nile River is 2 hours and 40 minutes long’ – merely stated *what precisely* was meant by the expressions ‘The Nile River is ... long’ and ‘2 hours and 40 minutes’. That is: rather than, through how they are *meant*, certain combinatory possibilities are magically excluded for expressions, *how* these expressions are meant is determined precisely by stating those combinatory possibilities. Gustafsson:

It is not as if the meanings somehow underlie the expressions and *make* certain combinations possible and others impossible. The order is the reverse: to state the combinatory possibilities is to specify wherein the meaning consists.<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 129

<sup>358</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 130

Once we become clear about this, the problem of meaning and rules, as Gustafsson conceives it, dissolves. Now just as in the case of the problem of wishes, expectations, orders and their fulfillment, Gustafsson, after having shown how the rule-following problem dissolves, turns to bringing out the role of *agreement* for meaning and rule-following. He imagines someone who does not agree with our description of the combinatory possibilities which hold for “The Nile River is ... long” and “2 hours and 40 minutes”. This person holds that these expressions *are* used in exactly the same meaning in “The Nile River is 2 hours and 40 minutes long” as they are in “The Nile River is 6670 kilometers long” and “Tonight’s concert is 2 hours and 40 minutes long”.<sup>359</sup> Now Gustafsson imagines himself going great lengths in order to remove any possible misunderstanding which may prevent this person from seeing what for Gustafsson is a trivial and obvious fact. Yet in the end, as Gustafsson imagines, this person still does not retreat from his claim. Gustafsson imagines him saying, “in a sincere tone of voice”<sup>360</sup>:

I speak of meaning in the same way as you do. And I am fully aware that ‘The Nile River is 6670 kilometers long’ specifies the spatial length of the Nile River and that ‘Tonight’s concert is 2 hours and 40 minutes long’ specifies the temporal length of a certain musical performance. Nonetheless, I take it to be quite possible that ‘The Nile River is ... long’ and ‘2 hours and 40 minutes’ both mean the same thing in ‘The Nile River is 2 hours and 40 minutes long’ as they do in ‘The Nile River is 6670 kilometers long’ and ‘Tonight’s concert is 2 hours and 40 minutes long’.<sup>361</sup>

Gustafsson then imagines that even after he has made clear what is meant by “spatial” and “temporal”, the disagreement with this person continues, “no matter how many explanations we give”<sup>362</sup>. Gustafsson ends his example by imagining that we would simply give up on this dispute. Yet according to Gustafsson, examples such as this reveal the following role that *agreement* plays:

[I]f such absence of agreement became much more common than it actually is, then it [this dispute] could not be dismissed that easily. Indeed, if it became frequent enough, then explanations of what words mean and of how statements are conceptually inter-

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<sup>359</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 130

<sup>360</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 131

<sup>361</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>362</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 131

related would ring more and more hollow. Just as in the case of expectations, wishes and similar phenomena, our practices of explaining what words mean, and of identifying similarities and dissimilarities in meaning, would gradually wither away. In this sense, our talk of meanings and conceptual interconnections does require agreement.<sup>363</sup>

Now as we had seen, for Gustafsson, pointing out “similarities and dissimilarities in meaning” is a crucial step in dissolving philosophical problems. As he had said, “many philosophical problems emerge from what might be called an *entanglement* in rules, in ways of using language. The rules in question may be perfectly alright in themselves, but when they are, as it were, unconsciously *crossed*, the result is a confusion of the typical philosophical kind.”<sup>364</sup> In other words, many philosophical problems emerge because we are unaware of dissimilarities in how we mean the expression we use in formulating our problem – as in Gustafsson’s example of the problem involving “the beginning of time”. Now the example which Gustafsson had used in order to illustrate the rule-following problem – or, as Gustafsson calls it, “the problem of meaning and rules” – as he conceives it, was an example involving such a dissimilarity in meaning: How is it determined that in “The Nile River is 2 hours and 40 minutes long”, the expression “2 hours and 40 minutes” cannot have the same *meaning* as in “Tonight’s concert is 2 hours and 40 minutes long”? Given all this, it is not surprising that, after having brought out the role of *agreement* for our talk about meaning, Gustafsson immediately relates this to the question of the role of agreement *for the dissolution of philosophical problems*. First, Gustafsson stresses that we should not have “a too intellectualistic picture”<sup>365</sup> of the kind of agreement required for our talk of meaning. Gustafsson:

What is required is not agreement in the philosophical seminar room, but agreement in real-life practice – agreement about such things as how to act in accordance with explanations of meanings, draw simple conclusions, and so forth.<sup>366</sup>

Then, Gustafsson looks back at the way he had gone about dissolving another example for a philosophical problem in his book – namely, Moore’s paradox<sup>367</sup>:

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<sup>363</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 131-2

<sup>364</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 35

<sup>365</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 132

<sup>366</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 132

<sup>367</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 40-7

My solution to Moore's paradox relies on humdrum facts about how we would actually react in non-philosophical practice, rather than on the possibility of reaching agreement in theoretical philosophical discussion. And the same is true for practically all conceptual investigations in philosophy.<sup>368</sup>

Here, Gustafsson employs something which came up in the course of his dissolution of the problem of meaning and rules – concerning the role of *agreement* for our talk of “meaning” – in a statement about what “practically all” conceptual investigation – and with it, the solution to philosophical problems and paradoxes – “relies on”: namely, a certain kind of agreement in practice. This thought is regarded by Gustafsson as one of the principal results of his *Inquiry into the Philosophical Significance of Meaning and Rules*. Accordingly, we find the following in the closing statement of *Entangled Sense*:

[I]n chapter 3, I argued that the institution of talking about meanings in terms of rules requires a background of practical, case-to-case agreement as to when words are used in same or in different ways. However, the agreement of which I spoke of was not philosophical agreement, but agreement in non-philosophical practice. A diagnosis of a philosophical problem does not rely on the possibility of reaching consensus in theoretical philosophical discussion, but on massive unanimity in unreflective language use.<sup>369</sup>

Here, Gustafsson makes clear how he sees Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following – against Kripke's interpretation of which Gustafsson had developed his own account of wherein the “problem of meaning and rules” consists – to be connected to the topic of the dissolution of philosophical problems as such: a certain kind of *agreement* which came out – during the dissolution of the rule-following paradox – as required for our talk of “meaning”, is taken as something which the dissolution of *arbitrary* philosophical problems is supposed to “rely on”.

Let me first say that I fully agree with Gustafsson's criticism of Baker and Hacker's pronouncements about the role of *rules* in the dissolution of philosophical problems, as well as with his criticism of Hacker's practice of dissolving philosophical problems such as that of the role of the brain in perception. I fully agree with Gustafsson that the role of rules can only be *descriptive*, and that their role in the dissolution of a philosophical problem is to be that of

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<sup>368</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 133

clearly laying out different forms of use of expressions, in order to determine whether we have been unconsciously vacillating between them. I also agree with what Gustafsson says about the relation of the meanings of expressions and their combinatory possibilities. And I also believe that Gustafsson's way of presenting the rule-following problem captures the essence of what Wittgenstein is up to in his rule-following remarks. Finally, I agree that a background of *agreement* in practice is one of the criteria for our employment of "to mean" and "to follow a rule", about which we need to become clear in order for the rule-following paradox to dissolve. Yet it should not come as a surprise by now that I cannot agree with the way in which Gustafsson links these considerations on meaning and rule-following to the topic of the dissolution of philosophical problems in general. In my mind, there is no structural difference between Baker and Hacker's taking the rule-following remarks to be concerned with furnishing an answer to the question "How do rules of grammar govern speech activities?" – thereby linking these remarks to the dissolution of all philosophical problems which can be dissolved by clarifying the rules of grammar of the expressions involved – and Gustafsson's taking something which figures in his dissolution of the "problem of meaning and rules" (which problem was the outcome of his criticism of Kripke's reading of Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following) – namely, the role of practical agreement for our talk of "meaning" – to have a bearing on the role which *agreement* might play for the dissolution of philosophical problems in general. In both cases, things that are tied to the dissolution of a *specific* philosophical problem are taken to have a bearing on the dissolution of *arbitrary* philosophical problems.

In Chapter 3, I had shown against Baker and Hacker how the occurrence of *use* as a criterion for the employment of the expression "following a rule" is *independent* from the methodological question "How do we *use* the expression X?" (since it is a criterion for the *use* of "following a rule"). And the same independence holds for the fact that *agreement* is a criterion for "to mean" and "to follow a rule" and any *agreement* which may be a requirement for the dissolution of philosophical problems. To see this, consider the following argument. According to Gustafsson, "our talk of meanings and conceptual interconnections does require agreement"<sup>370</sup> (in the sense of a *background*<sup>371</sup>). Also, according to him, "practically all conceptual investigations in philosophy" relies on agreement in non-philosophical practice.<sup>372</sup> Now let us ask: Using which means is the problem of meaning and rules being dissolved? Is it

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<sup>369</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 172

<sup>370</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 132

<sup>371</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 127

<sup>372</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 133

not dissolved by means of a conceptual investigation concerning the expressions “to mean” and “to follow a rule”? That is, through stating *rules of usage* for these expressions (as Gustafsson had explicitly stated to be the case in the dissolution of the problem involving “wishing”, “expecting”, and “giving orders”<sup>373</sup>)? Now how is a certain role of *agreement* disclosed to us in the course of this dissolution of the problem? Is not one way to describe this disclosure as our coming to realize that “agreement” is *conceptually interconnected* with “to mean” and “following a rule”? (Another way of describing it would be that we come to realize that *agreement* figures as an element in the rules of usage for “to mean” and “to follow a rule”) Now as I had just said, according to Gustafsson, conceptual investigations – as well as our talk of conceptual interconnections – does require agreement. But in this case, this must mean that our coming to see that “to mean” and “to follow a rule” are *conceptually interconnected* with “agreement” itself requires a certain kind of *agreement*. In other words: from what Gustafsson says, it follows that the dissolution of the problem of meaning and rules requires a background of agreement in order for the talk of “agreement” being conceptually interconnected with “to mean” and “to follow a rule” to at all make sense. (Just as it follows from Gustafsson’s saying that “the institution of talking about meanings in terms of rules requires a background of practical, case-to-case agreement”<sup>374</sup> that the talk of what we mean by “to mean” and “to follow a rule” in terms of the *rules of usage* for these expressions – which at all reveals to us the role of agreement for our talk of meaning and rules – itself requires a background of agreement.) As we can see now, Gustafsson’s idea has the same regress structure as Baker and Hacker’s account of the role of the rule-following remarks for the whole of Wittgenstein’s philosophy. What this argument makes clear is that the notion of “agreement” figures on *two* distinct logical levels here. The occurrence of “agreement” on each of them is logically independent from one another. That is to say, the *agreement* which comes out as being conceptually interconnected with “to follow a rule” is *independent* from any *agreement* which might be a requirement for this talk of “conceptual interconnection” to make sense. (As is also the *agreement* which is revealed through an investigation of the rules of usage of “to mean” and “to follow a rule” from any *agreement* which might be a requirement for this talk of meanings in terms of rules of usage to make sense.) Therefore, Gustafsson’s idea of a direct link between (1) the *agreement* which – in the course of a dissolution of the problem of meaning and rules – comes out as a criterion for “to mean” and “to follow a rule” – and which disclosure is an important element of this dissolution – and (2) the *agreement* which Gustafsson takes the dissolution of philosophical problems in general to rely on – cannot be

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<sup>373</sup> cf. Gustafsson 2000, 124

right. It would be a conflation of the *methodological* and the *criteria* levels akin to that of Baker and Hacker to think otherwise.

Now there is nothing wrong with Gustafsson's formulating the rule-following paradox in terms which have to do with the dissolution of philosophical problems in general. In Chapter 3 (Section 3.5), I had said that although the rule-following problem cannot be *technically* linked to the dissolution of arbitrary problems (those which can be dissolved by means of clarifying rules of grammar), it can be linked to it *architecturally* – in that this problem, once raised, casts a shadow of doubt on *any* talk of the meanings of expressions in terms of rules, thereby seemingly questioning the method of dissolving philosophical problems by stating rules of usage for expressions as a whole. Yet I also said there that this link between the rule-following remarks and the dissolution of philosophical problems in general is only established through an *illusion* – once the problem is dissolved, this illusion vanishes, and we can recognize that the rule-following problem was merely a *specific* problem – an *instance* of what Wittgenstein (and Gustafsson) say about how such problems emerge through our “entanglement in rules”: just as the seeming paradox of time's beginning emerged from our entanglement in different rules of usage for “time”, the seeming problem of meaning and rules emerges from our entanglement in different rules of usage for “to mean” and “to follow a rule”. What *is* wrong with Gustafsson's view is that he does not stop after having *dissolved* this specific problem, but goes on to draw a *lesson* from it. The result is that his attempt at an “austere” (resolute) reading assigns to Wittgenstein a body of items on which this way of dissolving philosophical problem putatively “relies on” which Wittgenstein did not mean to be thus understood. To be sure, Wittgenstein did concern himself with the role of *agreement* in the treatment of philosophical problems.<sup>375</sup> Yet he never claims, as Gustafsson does, that the dissolution of such problems relies on things like “massive unanimity in unreflective language use”<sup>376</sup>. Like Baker and Hacker, Gustafsson saddles Wittgenstein's way of dissolving philosophical problems with a *foundation* which is not there – through misreading the rule-following remarks as concerned with discussing just such a *foundation*. Only if we come to realize that also a view like Gustafsson's – critical of Baker and Hacker as it is – rests on a conflation of what, in later Wittgenstein, has to do with the dissolution of a *specific* problem and what has to do with the dissolution of *arbitrary* problems can we fully overcome the dis-

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<sup>374</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 172

<sup>375</sup> Famously, Wittgenstein stated that “philosophy only states what everyone admits” (PI 599). The question of how to read remarks of his such as “I won't say anything which anyone can dispute. Or if anyone does dispute it, I will let that point drop and pass on to say something else” (LFM 22) forms the starting point of Gustafsson's “Nonsense and Philosophical Method”.

<sup>376</sup> Gustafsson 2000, 172

torted view of Baker and Hacker and arrive at a truly *resolute* perspective – a perspective which thoroughly questions any alleged concern of Wittgenstein’s with putative *foundations* of his ways of dissolving philosophical problems.

#### 4.2 Kuusela on the Role of the Remarks on Meaning and Use

Let us now turn to a resolute reader of Wittgenstein’s later work who is aware of this: Oskari Kuusela. As we had seen in Chapter 1, Kuusela, in *The Struggle Against Dogmatism*, had highlighted the same point – that the rule-following problem cannot have a bearing on the dissolution of philosophical problems in general – in the regress argument which he there furnished against Baker and Hacker.<sup>377</sup> In the remainder of this chapter, I will concern myself with what Kuusela says about Wittgenstein’s recurrent remarks on a relation between the meaning of words and their use. I will take a close look at the details of his explanation as to why these remarks have no *foundational* role for Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification as such.\* The question will be: Can Kuusela’s explanation live up to what he says is involved in meeting the challenge of avoiding hierarchies in philosophy?

In *The Struggle against Dogmatism*, Kuusela addresses the issue of misreading Wittgenstein’s remarks on a relation between the meaning of words and their use as philosophical *theses* about what meaning *must* be. He begins his discussion of how to read such remarks of Wittgenstein’s by quoting these examples:

I want to say: the place of a word in grammar is its meaning.

But I can also say: the meaning of a word is what the explanation of its meaning explains. [...]

The explanation of the meaning explains the use of the word.

The use of a word in the language is its meaning.

Grammar describes the use of words in the language. (Ms140, 15r)<sup>378</sup>

In order to explain the status and content of Wittgenstein’s remark on a relation between meaning and use (or “place of a word in grammar”) here, Kuusela holds, it is helpful to take a

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<sup>377</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 224

\* In the following, “Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification *as such*” is merely meant as a shorthand for “Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification which consists in describing the use of expressions *as such*” – by which I mean “*all instances* where this way of philosophical clarification is being applied”.

<sup>378</sup> cited Kuusela 2008, 151



closer look at the second of these remarks. He cites this version of this remark from the *Investigations*:

“The meaning of a word is what is explained by the explanation of the meaning.” I.e.: if you want to understand the use of the word “meaning”, see what are called “explanations of meaning”. (PI 560)<sup>379</sup>

What comes out here, as Kuusela highlights, is that Wittgenstein’s suggesting to take a look at “what are called ‘explanations of meaning’” is a certain approach to make us see clearer one aspect of our actual use of the word “meaning”.<sup>380</sup> So what does this approach make clearer? According to Kuusela, remarks of Wittgenstein’s such as this are crucial in this context:

We said that by “meaning” we meant what an explanation of meaning explains. And an explanation of meaning is not an empirical proposition and not a causal explanation, but a rule, a convention. (Ms140, 24)<sup>381</sup>

As Wittgenstein said in the third of his remarks, when we explain the meaning of a word, what we explain is the *use* of that word. And this use, as Wittgenstein says in the remark just quoted, is often given in the form of *rules*. Now what this remark helps make clear, according to Kuusela, is this:

By drawing attention to explanations of meaning, the remark highlights the possibility of talking about meanings in terms of rules. Given this, one may also characterize the meaning of a word as its place in grammar [...]. Grammatical rules that specify the word’s role in a language define a place for a word in grammar. Accordingly, Wittgenstein also talks about meaning as a role of a word in a calculus and in a broader sense as something determined or constituted by grammatical rules.<sup>382</sup>

So what we, according to Kuusela, come to better understand about the use of the word “meaning” by looking at what are called “explanations of meaning”, is the following: (1)

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<sup>379</sup> cited Kuusela 2008, 151

<sup>380</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 151

<sup>381</sup> cited Kuusela 2008, 151

<sup>382</sup> Kuusela 2008, 152

Meaning can be understood as something explainable in term of rules; and (2) we can talk about meaning as something determined or constituted by grammatical rules.

Now according to Kuusela, this has a direct bearing on Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy as such. One paragraph after this, he writes:

These explanations of Wittgenstein's conception of meaning also make plain its connection with his conception of philosophy as the clarification of language use. Following his observation that explanations of meaning are rules, clarification can be understood as an activity of stating rules for the use of expressions. Here the activity of clarification emerges as an entirely linguistic and therefore logical or grammatical affair.<sup>383</sup>

As he states here, Kuusela holds that what Wittgenstein says about "meaning" has a direct bearing on the way he proceeds in order to dissolve philosophical problems. His idea seems to be this: It is a fact that Wittgenstein entertains the concept of philosophy as the clarification of language use – which can assume the form of stating rules for "language-games". And it is a fact that while investigating the use of "meaning", Wittgenstein observes that the meaning of words can be explained in the form of rules. Now these two facts are to be linked in the following way: Since in philosophical clarification, we explain the *meaning* of words, and since, as comes out in the course of Wittgenstein's investigation of the use of "meaning", the *meaning* of a word can be explained in the form of rules for its use, philosophical clarification, for Wittgenstein, assumes the form of stating rules for the use of expressions. That this is indeed the kind of idea that Kuusela entertains comes out very clearly in a footnote to this sentence with which he continues:

Clarification is a concern with language, not with something else that supposedly determines linguistic meanings – for example, objects in the world or mental states [...].<sup>384</sup>

In the footnote, Kuusela writes:

[...] Wittgenstein's conception [of meaning] stands in contrast with mentalism, for instance, according to which understanding the meaning of a sign is a matter of giving it

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<sup>383</sup> Kuusela 2008, 152

an interpretation in the mind, an appropriate mental state allegedly constituting the correct interpretation. From this point of view, clarification would ultimately be an investigation of mental states and processes that give meanings to signs, [...].<sup>385</sup>

In other words: The reason why for Wittgenstein, philosophical clarification is not, say, an investigation of our mental states (e.g. of being in a philosophical confusion) is that Wittgenstein's conception of *meaning* is not that of mentalism. Put differently: Had Wittgenstein's concept of meaning been that of mentalism, it would have followed that philosophical clarification dealt with our mental states. Conversely, the reason why philosophical clarification, for Wittgenstein, is indeed an entirely linguistic, i.e. grammatical, affair – i.e. an affair of stating grammatical rules – is that Wittgenstein (as Kuusela had brought out before) has the conception of meaning as something determined or constituted by grammatical rules.

The upshot of this way of connecting Wittgenstein's way of philosophical clarification to his "conception of meaning" comes out when we take a look at the next stage of Kuusela's discussion of the status of Wittgenstein's remarks on meaning and use:

But even if things seem fairly straightforward up to this point, questions now arise concerning the status of Wittgenstein's explanations or the role of grammatical rules in philosophical clarification. Is the point of his remarks on meaning – for instance, the above set of grammatical rules – to determine what linguistic meaning *must* be? Is Wittgenstein stating that, given our concept of meaning, a word only has meaning if it has a rule-governed use or is parasitic to such uses?<sup>386</sup>

Let us take a look at this passage from the end. There, Kuusela, instead of talking about "Wittgenstein's conception of meaning", talks of "our concept of meaning". And in the sentence before, he calls the remarks on meaning which he cited from manuscript 140 "grammatical rules". Now this is due to the fact that for Kuusela, "Wittgenstein's conception of meaning" is answerable to the actual use that we make of the word "meaning" in our language (as Wittgenstein stated in the remark that Kuusela quoted for help with interpreting the second of the remarks from manuscript 140). Therefore, according to Kuusela, remarks of Wittgenstein's where he speaks about a relation between the meaning of words and their use have the

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<sup>384</sup> Kuusela 2008, 152

<sup>385</sup> Kuusela 2008, 152, footnote 13

<sup>386</sup> Kuusela 2008, 153

status of grammatical rules clarifying the use of the word “meaning”.<sup>387</sup> Now the upshot of Kuusela’s presentation of the link between Wittgenstein’s conception of philosophical clarification and our use of the word “meaning” which comes out of all this is: The form that philosophical clarification assumes for later Wittgenstein is tied to his investigation of our actual use of the word “meaning”.

Given this significance of Wittgenstein’s clarificatory rules for “meaning” – which involve a relation between the meaning of words and their *use* – for his approach to philosophical clarification as such, the question of the status of these remarks naturally becomes pressing in Kuusela’s eyes. He charges Baker and Hacker for a misreading of PI 43 which follows from their belief that “rules of grammar” really *govern* our actual use of language. In PI 43, Wittgenstein wrote:

For a *large* class of cases – though not for *all* – in which we employ the word “meaning” it can be explained thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language. (PI 43)

Now Baker and Hacker hold that in this passage, Wittgenstein wishes to include all cases of word-meaning, excluding only cases such as “Those clouds mean rain”.<sup>388</sup> Thus, they conclude that Wittgenstein here wishes to state *the* rule which governs our actual use of the expression “meaning of a word”. This, in their eyes, then licenses the following statement: “There is no such thing as meaning independently of the *rules* which determine how an expression is to be used”.<sup>389</sup> Now according to Kuusela, this is yet another case of dogmatism:

The problem with this interpretation, however, is that it seems to turn Wittgenstein’s statement about meaning into a philosophical thesis about the concept of meaning (our actual concept) or the essence of meaning. For in stating that a rule-governed use is necessary for word-meaning, a philosopher certainly appears to be making a statement about what cases falling under the concept of meaning *must* be [...].<sup>390</sup>

Although Baker and Hacker concede that Wittgenstein, when making statements about a relation between the meaning of words and their use, is not after the essence of meaning, but merely clarifying our actual use of the word “meaning”, Kuusela holds, they are turning this

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<sup>387</sup> see also Kuusela 2008, 152-3. These rules, as we will see shortly, are conceived by Kuusela as models for presenting the (fluctuating) actual use of the word “meaning” in a perspicuous way (cf. Kuusela 2008, 161).

<sup>388</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1980, 250, 251

<sup>389</sup> cf. Baker/Hacker 1985, 36-7

<sup>390</sup> Kuusela 2008, 154

grammatical statement into a thesis about the essence of our concept of meaning.<sup>391</sup> This happens because they still assume that when Wittgenstein employs rules for the clarification of our actual use of language, he is stating rules that actually *govern* this use.

According to Kuusela, this impression that Wittgenstein's way of philosophical clarification rested on a thesis about the essence of our concept of meaning can be avoided by minding the real role of rules in philosophical clarification:

These problems can be avoided, however, if Wittgenstein's definition of the concept of meaning (as articulated through the rules that he states) is taken as a model to be used as object of comparison [...]. This alternative reading essentially comprehends Wittgenstein's use of the rule "The meaning of a word is its use in the language" in terms of the description of his methodology provided in Chapter 3 [...].<sup>392</sup>

In his Chapter 3, as we had seen, Kuusela argues that the rules Wittgenstein states in philosophical clarification are to be seen not as characteristic of language use itself, but of his *approach* to clarifying language use to us while we are in a philosophical confusion. Accordingly, Kuusela holds that remarks of Wittgenstein's such as "The meaning of a word is its use in the language" are meant as *objects of comparison* which are not intended to precisely mirror our actual use of the word "meaning". In support of this interpretation, Kuusela cites these remarks from Wittgenstein's lectures of 1933-34:

In discussing understanding, meaning etc. our greatest difficulty is with the entirely fluid use of words. I shall not proceed by enumerating different meanings of the words "understanding", "meaning" etc., but instead shall draw ten or twelve pictures that are similar in some way to the actual use of these words. (AWL 48)<sup>393</sup>

To begin with, I have suggested substituting for "meaning of a word," "use of a word," because *use of a word* comprises a large part of what is meant by "the meaning of a word" [...] The use of a word is what is defined by the rules, just as the use of the king of chess is defined by the rules. (AWL 48)<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>391</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 152, also 161

<sup>392</sup> Kuusela 2008, 155-6

<sup>393</sup> cited Kuusela 2008, 158

<sup>394</sup> cited Kuusela 2008, 158-9

The fact that Wittgenstein here presents “the meaning of a word is its (rule-governed) use” as only *one* “picture” which is merely said to be “similar” to the actual use of the word “meaning” is taken by Kuusela to support his view that “the meaning of a word is its (rule-governed) use” is a grammatical rule which describes a *model* of the use of the word “meaning” which is intended to present one *aspect* of this use to us in a perspicuous way.<sup>395</sup> Kuusela concludes his discussion by saying:

The point of Wittgenstein’s conception of meaning as rule-governed use is now clearly delineated. It is intended to bring to view certain aspects of the concept of meaning, but it is not a thesis about the essence of (the concept of) meaning. Accordingly, one might say that the remarks in the first quotation from manuscript 140 [...] are a set of grammatical rules that Wittgenstein uses to articulate or define a certain conception or model of what having a meaning and describing language use comes down to. Crucially, however, he does not claim that this conception or model of meaning captures *the* meaning of “meaning”.<sup>396</sup>

For Kuusela, then, in taking remarks of Wittgenstein’s such as PI 43 as merely describing a *model* with which our actual use of the word “meaning” can be compared, the threat of dogmatism is avoided: Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification – although connected to his having investigated our actual use of “meaning” – cannot be seen as resting on “a thesis about the essence of (the concept of) meaning” any more.

After having seen how he conceives of Wittgenstein’s clarificatory rules for the use of “meaning” as *a model*, let us now try to spell out Kuusela’s idea of the relation between Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification and his investigation of our use of the word “meaning” in more detail. Let us first take a look at this quote again:

But even if things seem fairly straightforward up to this point, questions now arise concerning the status of Wittgenstein’s explanations or the role of grammatical rules in philosophical clarification. Is the point of his remarks on meaning – for instance, the above set of grammatical rules – to determine what linguistic meaning *must* be? Is Wittgenstein stating that, given our concept of meaning, a word only has meaning if it has a rule-governed use or is parasitic to such uses?<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>395</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 159-61

<sup>396</sup> Kuusela 2008, 161

<sup>397</sup> Kuusela 2008, 153

Why, according to Kuusela, does philosophical clarification involve the stating of grammatical rules? Whatever the answer is, as Kuusela makes clear here once more, he takes it to be linked to Wittgenstein's remarks on meaning. Now as we have seen, Kuusela holds that philosophical clarification involves the stating of grammatical rules not simply because, as Baker and Hacker believe, according to our concept of meaning, having a rule-governed use is *necessary* for a word to have a meaning. In other words, because "The meaning of a word is its (rule-governed) use in the language" is *the* rule that *governs* our actual use of the word "meaning". From this, it is easy to construct the idea that for Wittgenstein, philosophical clarification – which is intended to get us clear about what we *mean* by our words –, presents us with *grammatical rules* because, as the investigation of our actual use of the word "meaning" discloses, these grammatical rules determine the meaning of words. Now Kuusela rejects this because it involves a determination what linguistic meaning *must* be. Rather, Kuusela holds, meaning as rule-governed use is a *model* that Wittgenstein conceives in order to make one aspect of our actual use of the word "meaning" easily manageable for us. So what is his idea of the relation between Wittgenstein's way of philosophical clarification and his investigation of our use of the word "meaning"? For an answer, let us take another look at this statement of his:

The point of Wittgenstein's conception of meaning as rule-governed use is now clearly delineated. It is intended to bring to view certain aspects of the concept of meaning, but it is not a thesis about the essence of (the concept of) meaning. Accordingly, one might say that the remarks in the first quotation from manuscript 140 [...] are a set of grammatical rules that Wittgenstein uses to articulate or define a certain conception or model of what having a meaning and describing language use comes down to.<sup>398</sup>

According to Kuusela, when Wittgenstein states something like "The meaning of a word is its (rule-governed) use in the language", he is defining a *model* for the actual use of the word "meaning" – for what "having a meaning comes down to". Let us now note that along with this, Kuusela here also describes this model as a model for what *describing language use* "comes down to". This brings us back to the following statement of Kuusela's:

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<sup>398</sup> Kuusela 2008, 161

These explanations of Wittgenstein's conception of meaning also make plain its connection with his conception of philosophy as the clarification of language use. Following his observation that explanations of meaning are rules, clarification can be understood as an activity of stating rules for the use of expressions. Here the activity of clarification emerges as an entirely linguistic and therefore logical or grammatical affair.<sup>399</sup>

Now what exactly does the connection of "Wittgenstein's conception of meaning" with "his conception of philosophy as the clarification of language use" that Kuusela speaks of here consist in? First of all, we now know that by "Wittgenstein's conception of meaning", Kuusela means a *model* that Wittgenstein develops in order to make one aspect of the fluctuating actual use of the word "meaning" more perspicuous and easily manageable for us. So how is this model tied to the fact for Wittgenstein, "clarification can be understood as an activity of stating rules for the use of expressions"? As Kuusela states here, he takes the link to be "[Wittgenstein's] observation that explanations of meaning are rules". *Following* this "observation", as he says, "the activity of clarification emerges as an entirely linguistic and therefore logical or grammatical affair". So how is Wittgenstein's "observation that explanations of meaning are rules" connected to the model of meaning as use (which he develops to make one aspect of the actual use of "meaning" perspicuous to us)? For an answer, we need to go back to the place in his book where Kuusela quoted from Wittgenstein's lectures in support of his view that "meaning as use" is merely one *picture* that Wittgenstein draws which are merely *similar* to the "entirely fluid use of words"<sup>400</sup>. After having quoted Wittgenstein saying that the first of his pictures is "meaning as use", Kuusela writes:

The second of Wittgenstein's pictures is the characterization of meaning as what is explained by the explanation of meaning. Wittgenstein says [...]: "I also suggest examining the correlate expression 'explanation of meaning.' This will teach us something about the meaning of 'meaning.'" In parallel to the passage from manuscript 140 quoted in the beginning [...], he then connects this with the conception of meaning as use: "The meaning of a word is explained by describing its use" (AWL 48). That is, given that use is something defined by rules, one may describe the use of a word by tabulating rules and in this way explain its meaning. [New paragraph] Clearly, Wittgenstein is spelling out here the same conception of meaning as in manuscript 140,

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<sup>399</sup> Kuusela 2008, 152



although he is more specific about the way he understands the relation between his characterizations and the actual use of words.<sup>401</sup>

Here, Kuusela states that “the characterization of meaning as what is explained by the explanation of meaning” is another *picture* of Wittgenstein’s for the actual use of the word “meaning”. This characterization, Kuusela says, is connected with the “conception of meaning as use” in the following way: “[G]iven that use is something defined by rules, one may describe the use of a word by tabulating rules and in this way explain its meaning”. Going back to Kuusela statement that “Following [Wittgenstein’s] observation that explanations of meaning are rules, clarification can be understood as an activity of stating rules for the use of expressions”<sup>402</sup>, we can now see that this “observation” is actually intended by Kuusela to refer to something which is the result of connecting a picture that Wittgenstein draws and which is similar to one other aspect of the actual use of the word “meaning” (namely, the picture of “meaning as what an explanation of meaning explains”) with “the conception of meaning as rule-governed use” (a model that Wittgenstein introduces in order to make an aspect of the actual use of the word “meaning” perspicuous to us).<sup>403</sup> From this, it seems safe to conclude that for Kuusela, when he talks about a “connection” between “Wittgenstein’s conception of meaning” and “his conception of philosophy as the clarification of language use”<sup>404</sup>, his idea must be the following: “Wittgenstein’s conception of meaning” is a *model* that Wittgenstein introduces in order to make aspects of the actual use of the word “meaning” perspicuous to us – and “explanations of meaning are rules” is an *element*<sup>405</sup> of this model. Now “following” this element of this model, philosophical clarification can then “be understood as an activity of stating rules for the use of expressions”<sup>406</sup>. In other words, Kuusela holds that there is a

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<sup>400</sup> Wittgenstein, AWL 48

<sup>401</sup> Kuusela 2008, 159

<sup>402</sup> Kuusela 2008, 152

<sup>403</sup> As I take it, Kuusela is speaking of an “observation” on p.152 because he has not yet introduced his reading of “Wittgenstein’s conception of meaning” as a *model*. I.e., because Kuusela, at that point of his book, is operating with versions of Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning and use from manuscript 140 which are preliminary in that he later supplants them with versions where “[Wittgenstein] is more specific about the way he understands the relation between his characterizations and the actual use of words” (p.159, as quoted above). Of course, in Kuusela’s reading of Wittgenstein, labeling something as an “observation” would not contradict labeling it as a “model”, since, as Kuusela stresses, these models are not arbitrarily chosen but answerable to the actual use of words which they are designed to make perspicuous or easily manageable for us (cf. p.145, 146-8).

<sup>404</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 152

<sup>405</sup> Being the result of Wittgenstein’s connecting the picture of “meaning as what is explained by the explanation of meaning” with his conception of meaning as rule-governed use.

<sup>406</sup> Kuusela 2008, 152

link from Wittgenstein's investigation of our actual use of the word "meaning" to his way of philosophical clarification as such.\*

Thus, according to Kuusela, Wittgenstein's way of philosophical clarification is linked, not to *the* rule that *governs* our actual use of the word "meaning" (as Baker and Hacker held), but to a *model* which Wittgenstein uses in order to *present* certain aspects of the actual use of "meaning" in a perspicuous fashion. In other words: the fact that for Wittgenstein, philosophical clarification assumes the form of presenting the use of words in the form of "language games" according to explicit rules is linked to the fact that "explanations of meaning are rules" is an element of a *model* of meaning as rule-governed use which Wittgenstein employs in order to make certain aspects of our actual use of the word "meaning" surveyable to us. Put differently: Kuusela holds that it is not an accident that (1) in philosophical clarification, Wittgenstein presents the use of words *in the form of* a game with explicit rules and that (2) Wittgenstein, while investigating the actual use of the word "meaning", employs the model of meaning as rule-governed use in order to make certain aspects of the actual use of "meaning" perspicuous to us.<sup>407</sup>

### 4.3 Kuusela's View Leads into a Regress

In the following, I will argue that Kuusela's idea that there is a link from Wittgenstein's investigation of our actual use of the word "meaning" to his way of philosophical clarification in general\* is as defective as Baker and Hacker's idea that there could be a link from remarks on the grammar of "following a rule" to the dissolution of philosophical problems in general. (Although, as we will see, from the standpoint of determining the precise role of Wittgenstein's remarks on meaning and use, it is much more understandable to try to go the way Kuusela goes than what Baker and Hacker make of Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following. There is no doubt that *some* of the remarks on meaning and use are connected to his way of dissolving philosophical problems in general. I will turn to this issue in the next Section.)

I will now present an argument which will bring out the problem with Kuusela's view. Let us first rehearse some key elements from which Kuusela derives his account of the relation between Wittgenstein's investigation of the actual use of the word "meaning" and his

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\* i.e. to *all* instances where the way of philosophical clarification which consists in investigating the actual use of expressions is being applied.

<sup>407</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 161

\* i.e. to all instances where the specific way of clarification which consists in describing the *use* of words is applied.

approach to philosophical clarification in general. These elements are: (1) Wittgenstein introduces the conception of meaning as something determined by grammatical rules – an element of which is that explanations of meanings are rules for the use of expressions. (2) For Wittgenstein, philosophical clarification is concerned with what we *mean* by our words. (3) For Wittgenstein, a concern with what we mean by our words is a concern with *language* – in that it is a concern with rules for the use of expression, as opposed to a concern with mental states of objects in the world. (4) Wittgenstein introduces his conception of meaning as a *model* which is designed to make certain aspects of the (fluctuating) actual use of the word “meaning” perspicuous to us. Now as we had seen, Kuusela, in the initial version of his account of the connection between Wittgenstein’s conception of meaning and his way of philosophical clarification, combines elements (1) through (3) to the following thought: *In philosophical clarification, Wittgenstein explains the meaning of words. And according to his conception of meaning, explanations of meaning consist in stating rules for the use of expressions. Following that, for Wittgenstein, philosophical clarification consists in stating rules for the use of expressions.*<sup>408</sup> Let us now proceed by introducing element (4) into this reasoning – in a way consonant with what we had seen that Kuusela, a few pages later in his book, says about the status of Wittgenstein’s conception of meaning.<sup>409</sup> Doing that, we arrive at the following thought: *In philosophical clarification, Wittgenstein explains the meaning of words. And according to an element of a conception of meaning which he has designed to make a certain aspect of the actual use of the word “meaning” perspicuous to us, explanations of meaning consist in stating rules for the use of expressions. Following that, for Wittgenstein, philosophical clarification consists in stating rules for the use of expressions.* In order to see what is wrong with this, let us now consider the following argument: The above is intended by Kuusela to explain why for Wittgenstein, philosophical clarification assumes the form of stating rules for the use of expressions.<sup>410</sup> In a nutshell, Kuusela holds that following a model which Wittgenstein employs in order to capture an aspect of our actual *use of the word* “meaning”, philosophical clarification, for him, assumes the form of an activity of stating rules for *the use of words*. Let us now ask: Does this explain why Wittgenstein has set out to capture (an aspect of) the *use of the word* “meaning” in the first place? Kuusela holds that Wittgenstein, in setting out to clarify rules for the use of expressions (with the intent of dissolving philosophical problems) follows his conception of meaning (as rule-governed use) – which conception he introduces in order to capture (an aspect of) the fluctuating actual use of the word “meaning”.

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<sup>408</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 152

<sup>409</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 155, esp. 158-61

<sup>410</sup> understood as *models* or objects of comparison.

Accordingly, philosophical clarification emerges as an entirely linguistic affair, to be concerned only with rules for the use of words, rather than with mental states, objects in the world, or other things which philosophers are prone to believe would give words their meaning. Yet as comes out through our question, Kuusela's Wittgenstein, in investigating the actual *use* of the word "meaning" (rather than, say, a supposed mental state of *meaning*), already makes use of something which is said to *follow* (from) this very investigation. Kuusela's account of a connection between "Wittgenstein's conception of meaning" and "his conception of philosophy as the clarification of language *use*"<sup>411</sup> holds that Wittgenstein, in adopting the latter, "follows" the former. But as comes out now, "Wittgenstein's conception of meaning" is the result of his way of philosophical clarification already being *applied* – since it is intended to capture the actual *use* of the word "meaning" (rather than, e.g., a supposed "mental state of meaning", as one of the philosophical alternatives which Kuusela discusses would have it<sup>412</sup>). Yet if Wittgenstein's conception of meaning is the result of his way of clarification being applied, this way of philosophical clarification cannot at the same time follow (from) this conception. As we can see now, Kuusela's account, instead of furnishing us with an *explanation* of why Wittgenstein adopts a certain way of philosophical clarification, reveals itself as inherently *circular*. What it fails to explain is the fact that of all things, Wittgenstein concerns himself with *the actual use* of the word "meaning". In other words: Kuusela fails to see that in his account of the justification of Wittgenstein's way of philosophical clarification, this fact stands in need of the same kind of justification which his account of a justification – which is based on this fact – purports to supply. The result is, of course, a *regress*.

Now is it that Kuusela were unaware of this fact? Let me now turn to a passage of his from which we may gather a possible answer of his to an argument of the kind I just put forth. A paragraph after introducing the first version of his account of the connection between Wittgenstein's conception of meaning and his way of philosophical clarification, Kuusela writes:

Given Wittgenstein's conception of philosophical clarification as an activity of stating rules, his remarks on meaning from manuscript 140 above are presumably also to be seen as such clarificatory rules. Interpreted in this way, these remarks are examples of the method of clarification by stating rules themselves, and explain their own status reflexively.<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>411</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 152 (my emphasis)

<sup>412</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 152, footnote 13

<sup>413</sup> Kuusela 2008, 152-3

Let us first deal with the “presumably” and the “Interpreted in this way” here. These qualifications appear to indicate reservations on Kuusela’s part whether he should really regard the remarks from manuscript 140 as “clarificatory rules”, or whether he should really take them as “examples of the method of clarification [...] themselves”. But the rest of the book gives no indication whatsoever for any doubts of Kuusela’s regarding this issue. Accordingly, already in the next paragraph, Kuusela – as we had seen – does not hesitate to call these remarks from manuscript 140 “the above set of grammatical rules”<sup>414</sup>. Therefore, it seems that it would be possible to give the following account of what Kuusela means by suggesting that Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning explain their own status “reflexively”: (1) In his later philosophy, Wittgenstein introduces the conception of meaning as (rule-governed) *use*. (2) Following this conception of meaning, philosophical clarification, for him, consists in stating (rules for the) actual *use* of words. (3) Now the question arises: What is the status of the conception of meaning as (rule-governed) *use*? How come Wittgenstein holds it? What is his justification for doing so? The answer: His conception of meaning as (rule-governed) *use* is nothing more than a clarification of the actual use of the word “meaning” in our language: according to (a model designed to capture an aspect of) the actual *use* of the word “meaning”, the meaning of words is their *use* in the language. Thus, the “reflexive” element here is that the status of Wittgenstein’s conception of meaning – which his way of philosophical clarification is taken to follow – is explained as being the result of an application of his way of philosophical clarification to the word “meaning” *itself*. Now on first glance, this “reflexive” way of Wittgenstein to explain the status of his remarks on meaning may appear an elegant way out of the circle which my argument outlined. But, as I will now explain, it actually amounts to nothing but a *restating of the circle*. As we had seen, the problem was that the issue why Wittgenstein is at all taking the crucial first step – i.e., why at all he is asking the question “What is the *actual use* of the word ‘meaning’?” (which then leads him to develop the conception (or *model*) of meaning as the *use* of words) was unresolved. This was a problem for Kuusela’s account since it purported to give an explanation for *just this kind of* step of Wittgenstein’s. And it remains unresolved in this “reflexive” explanation, since Wittgenstein, in adopting his specific way of philosophical clarification as the stating of rules for the use of words, is still held to *follow* his conception of meaning as (rule-governed) *use* – which then, in turn, is held to be the result of his having applied his specific way of philosophical clarification – i.e., stating of rules for the use of words – to the word “meaning”. (Now at this point, Kuusela could reply that in fact, this first step needed *no* explanation – i.e., that it is simply a primitive

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<sup>414</sup> Kuusela 2008, 153

fact about Wittgenstein that he takes interest in the actual use of the word “meaning”. After all, Kuusela could say, stating rules for the use of expressions is a characteristic not of what is investigated, but of our mode of investigation – which the philosopher is able to simply *lay down*. But this would not save his account: For now it would have come out that Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification indeed *needed* no kind of explanation of the form which Kuusela envisages: if *this first* act of investigating the actual use of a word goes “unexplained”, why look for an “explanation” of any other such act?) Thus, rather than supplying Wittgenstein with an elegant way out of a circle, this “reflexive” account would attribute to Wittgenstein – when it comes to explaining the status of his remarks on meaning and use – something like an attempt to pull himself up by his bootstraps.<sup>415</sup>

Now what would be an account of the status of remarks such as Ms140 15r and PI 43 which would not saddle Wittgenstein with this kind of paradoxical thought? How is their relation to Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification to be conceived? In order to see the true status of these remarks more clearly, we need to get clear about how in all remarks of this kind, the notion of *use* figures on two distinct logical levels. We can then see how, like Baker and Hacker, Kuusela ends up with a paradoxical account of the status of these remarks because he conflates these two logical levels. In order to see how the notion of *use* figures on two distinct logical levels in remarks such as PI 43 and Ms140 15r, let us now turn to Conant’s paper “Comment on Diamond’s ‘Unfolding Truth and Reading Wittgenstein’”. As we had seen, Conant’s aim there is to show – by discussing some examples – how remarks of Wittgenstein’s on meaning and use can (and must) be read in a way other than providing an answer to the question “What does meaning something consist in?” In this paper, Conant also

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<sup>415</sup> This same paradoxical thought is also present in Avner Baz’s *When Words are Called For* (forthcoming). There, Baz sets out to make clear how Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification (which Baz prefers to call “Ordinary Language Philosophy”, or “OLP”) does not rest on a theory of meaning, and how Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning and use are misread when taken to embody such a theory. Now in a subchapter entitled “OLP and the Meaning of ‘Meaning’”, Baz makes clear that he sees “the meaning of a word is its use in the language” in PI 43 as directly related to Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification. To him, what Wittgenstein says in PI 43 is on a par with his suggestion to view words as instruments. All this, according to Baz, is tied to OLP’s program of dissolving philosophical problems by asking us whether the words figuring in these puzzles are doing the work that we take them to do. In this subchapter, Baz also furnishes an argument as to why PI 43 is misread if taken as a substantial account of meaning. He writes: “It would be a mistake to take any of this as putting forward a theory of meaning, or an analysis of the meaning of ‘meaning’. If the ordinary language philosopher were to try to provide *that*, she would be guilty of the grossest self-contradiction. To understand the ordinary language philosopher’s ‘meaning’ is, ultimately, to see what work she does with it.” Baz then goes on to stress that in OLP, the philosopher employs the word “meaning” in an everyday sense, and that her way of clarifying the meaning of words makes use of procedures that are already present in everyday clarifications of the meanings of words. Yet still, like Kuusela, Baz, in his effort to explain the status of “the meaning of a word is its use in the language”, makes use of the very principle whose status is in question: Just as, with words in general, the work which we do with the word matters for how to understand it, in the case of OLP’s employment

gives a detailed analysis of the wording of PI 43, to which I now would like to turn. Conant's first issue is the translation. He translates the passage like this:

For a *large* class of cases of the employment of the word “meaning” – though not for *all* cases of its employment – one can explicate the word thus: the meaning of the word is its use in the language. (PI 43)<sup>416</sup>

Here, among other things, Conant has changed the translation of “erklären” from Anscombe's “define” to “explicate”. Why? Conant:

The topic of this quotation is not wherein meaning something consists, but rather how the word “meaning” should be explicated in the light of our employment of it.<sup>417</sup>

This means that Conant, like Kuusela, takes Wittgenstein here to be speaking about how *we*, in everyday situations, employ – i.e. use – the word “meaning”. That is, he takes PI 43 as a remark on the grammar of one particular word of our language, “meaning”. What he takes Wittgenstein to be doing in PI 43 is to ask a *question* – How do we employ the word “meaning”? – and to provide the *answer* to that question. And through this answer, “use” comes in. How? Let us take a look at this paraphrase that Conant gives of PI 43:

The word “meaning” is a word of our language, [...] and if we look and see what *its* use (that is, the use of the word “meaning”) [...] is then we will discover that, for a *large* class of cases of its employment, though not for all, what we mean, when we employ this word in, for example, speaking of “the meaning of a word”, is *the use* of *that* word (whose meaning we are asking after) in the language.<sup>418</sup>

What we are asking for is how we employ – use – the word “meaning”, especially in the expression “the meaning of a word”. This we do because the word “meaning”, like any other word in our language, has a use in everyday circumstances about which we can inquire. Now what is the answer to that question? How *do* we employ – use – the expression “the meaning of a word” in everyday circumstances? What do we mean by “the meaning of a word” there?

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of the word “meaning”, the work which ordinary language philosophers do with this word is said to matter for how to understand it (rather than, say, what it refers to).

<sup>416</sup> Conant's translation (Conant 1999, 2)

<sup>417</sup> Conant 1999, 2

<sup>418</sup> Conant 1999, 2

The answer: What – in a *large* class of cases – we mean by saying “the meaning of a word” is the *use* of that word in the language.

Now what immediately becomes clear when reformulating PI 43 in such a way is that the notion of “use” (or “employment”) figures on two different logical levels. Conant:

The distinct characterizations of the central notions figuring respectively in its question (concerning the *employment* of a particular word, the word “meaning”) and its answer (which directs us to the *use* of a word, any word) signal the two different levels at which the passage operates.<sup>419</sup>

Here Conant states that he takes the fact that in this passage, Wittgenstein applies two different words – “employment” and “use” – as being intended to make obvious to the reader that there are two distinct levels on which “use” (or “employment”) figure in this passage. While this may be so, what matters most is that in Conant’s reading of PI 43, there *are* two different levels at which the passage operates. For it is perfectly compatible with what Conant says here that Wittgenstein could have written PI 43 in this way:

For a *large* class of cases of the use of the word “meaning” – though not for *all* cases of its use – one can explicate the word thus: the meaning of the word is its use in the language.

What is crucial about Conant’s reading is that it does assign “use” (which is interchangeable with “employment” or “application”) two logical roles in PI 43: One that it plays on the level of a *question* – How do we ordinarily employ (use) the word “meaning”? – and one that it plays on the level of the *answer* to that question: By “meaning of a word”, we ordinarily – in a *large* class of cases – mean “the use of the word in our language”. Put together, we get: In a *large* class of cases, we *use* the expression “the meaning of a word” in such a way as to mean the *use* of that word in our language.

Now this is of course analogous to what I had said about the occurrence of “use” on two logical levels in Chapter 2 (Section 2.4). There, I also had distinguished a level of a *question* from a level of an *answer* to that question: I had shown how “use” figures in the dissolution of the rule-following paradox first in a question such as “How do we *use* the expression ‘to mean’?”, and second in the answer to this question: a certain *use* is the criterion for our use

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<sup>419</sup> Conant 1999, 2



of “to mean”. I had then labeled the first of these levels the *methodological* and the second the *critical*. Now the case that Conant describes here differs in one respect from the case I described there: While “use” certainly plays the exact same role in the question “How do we *use* the expression ‘the meaning of a word’?” as in a question such as “How do we *use* the expression ‘to follow a rule’?”, it does not really come in as a *criterion* in the answer to that question. Rather, it comes in as what we – in a large class of cases – *mean* by “the meaning of a word”. Therefore, it appears to be out of place to call this occurrence of “use” *critical*.

I will therefore now introduce a new (and final) terminology to designate the two logical levels on which the notion of *use* occurs, focusing on what is common between the case of PI 43 as read by Conant and my exposition of Wittgenstein’s dissolution of the rule-following paradox (which centers on PI 190). I will henceforth call the occurrence of “use” on the level of the question “How do we use the word (or expression) X?” *global* – and I will call the occurrence of “use” on the level of the respective answers to this question *local*. *Global*, because in his later philosophy, Wittgenstein asks the question “How do we use ...?” of many different words and expressions – in the context of the dissolution of many different problems. *Local*, because the occurrence of “use” as a criterion for “to mean”, “to follow a rule”, “to intend”, and others – *as well as* the occurrence of “use” in Wittgenstein’s remark on our everyday use of “the meaning of a word” – comes in as a feature of our use of a *specific* word of which the question “How do we use ...?” is asked. It comes in as something that is revealed by taking a look at the use of a *particular* expression. The fact that a certain *use* is the criterion for “to follow a rule” – as well as that we mean the *use* of the word by “the meaning of a word” – is something that is tied to our use of these specific expressions – “to follow a rule”, “the meaning of a word”. As I had shown in Chapter 2, it is something that is *revealed* by the question “How do we use the expression X?”, but not in any way *entailed* by it. It is, as Conant had put it in his paraphrase of PI 43, something that – through asking this question – we will “discover”.<sup>420</sup>

We are now in a position to see with greater clarity how at the bottom of Kuusela’s paradoxical account lies the conflation of the *global* and the *local* level on which the notion of “use” occurs in remarks such as PI 43. What Kuusela initially did was consider these two elements:

- (1) Wittgenstein has the conception of meaning as (rule-governed) *use*.

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<sup>420</sup> Conant 1999, 2

- (2) For Wittgenstein, philosophical clarification consists in the stating of rules for the *use* of expressions.

From this, he drew the conclusion that in Wittgenstein's eyes, these two occurrences of "use" must be connected – thus, that Wittgenstein, in holding (2), *follows* (1). Then, Kuusela introduced another element:

- (3) Wittgenstein's conception of meaning is designed to make an aspect of the actual *use* of the word "meaning" perspicuous to us.

Now, when thought through, adding (3) to (1) and (2) results in the following:

- (1) In order to make an aspect of the actual *use* of the word "meaning" perspicuous to us, Wittgenstein introduces the conception of meaning as (rule-governed) *use*.  
 (2) For Wittgenstein, philosophical clarification consists in the stating of rules for the *use* of expressions.

As comes out through Conant's discussion, in (1), the first occurrence of "use" is tied to Wittgenstein's recurring *question* "What is the actual use of the word X?", whereas the second occurrence is tied to an *answer* to this question, with "meaning" substituted for "X". In other words, the first occurrence of "use" is situated on the level which I had labeled *global*, whereas the second occurrence of "use" is situated on the level which I had labeled *local*. Let us now spell this out in a language more akin to Kuusela's: The conception of meaning which Wittgenstein introduces is answerable to the actual use of the word "meaning". Thus, the fact that it is a conception of meaning as (rule-governed) *use* is answerable to the actual *use* of the word "meaning". This means: the task of finding a model for the actual *use* of the word "meaning" is given, and now we have to see which model can do the job. As it turns out, it is the model of meaning as (rule-governed) *use*. Hence, the fact that it is a conception of meaning as (rule-governed) *use* is independent of the fact that it is designed to make perspicuous (an aspect of) the actual *use* of the word "meaning".<sup>421</sup> Now that we have seen that the two occurrences of "use" in (1) are situated on two different logical levels, the question arises: to which of the two "uses" does the "use" in (2) relate? This comes down to the question whether the occurrence of "use" in (2) is situated on the *global* or the *local* level. Since we are

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<sup>421</sup> Against Kuusela 2008, 161, where Kuusela appears to want to merge these two roles of "use" into one.

talking about philosophical clarification *in general* here, the answer is simple: it is the *global* level. Hence, the occurrence of “use” in (2) relates to the *first* occurrence of “use” in (1). Thus, contrary to Kuusela’s view, the *second* occurrence of “use” in (1) can *not* be directly related to that in (2). What *is* directly related here are: the fact that for Wittgenstein, philosophical clarification consists in the stating of rules for the *use* of expressions, and the fact that he is stating some of the rules for the *use* of the expression “meaning (of a word)”. The fact that he then introduces the conception of meaning as (rule-governed) *use* is only *indirectly* related to (separated, as it were, by a joint from) the fact that for Wittgenstein, philosophical clarification consists in the stating of rules for the *use* of expressions – namely, in that it is a second step, which, as I had shown in Chapter 2, is not in any way entailed by the first step of asking for the *use* of expressions. Only by ignoring the difference between the two logical levels on which “use” occurs in remarks such as PI 43 can Kuusela come to believe that there could be a direct relation between “use” figuring in Wittgenstein’s conception of meaning on the one hand and “use” figuring in his way of philosophical clarification on the other. Rather, as I have argued, we must recognize these occurrences of “use” as separated by their distinct logical role. Wittgenstein’s conception of meaning as (rule-governed) use (as expressed in remarks such as PI 43) is an *instance* of his way of philosophical clarification being applied, and *therefore* cannot be directly connected to this way of philosophical clarification *in general*.

In his discussion of the status of Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning and use, Kuusela highlights the fact that a remark such as PI 43 stands in the service of dissolving a *particular* philosophical problem:

As a response to [the] referentialist conception of meaning, Wittgenstein [...] offers the explanation of meaning as use, aiming to eliminate certain problems that arise in the context of referentialism, like the problem of a name becoming meaningless when its bearer ceases to exist. [...] To attribute Wittgenstein a thesis about what word-meaning *must* be on the basis of §43 reads more into the text than it can support. Such a reading fails to take seriously the possibility that the statement is only meant to dissolve *certain particular philosophical problems*.<sup>422</sup>

As I hope to have made clear, the very fact that PI 43 is meant to dissolve “certain particular philosophical problems” *excludes* the possibility of its being related to the dissolution of

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<sup>422</sup> Kuusela 2008, 158-9 (original emphasis)

philosophical problems in general. This also holds for the remarks from manuscript 140 with which Kuusela opened his discussion of the status of Wittgenstein's remarks on meaning (and use). Like PI 43, the remarks from Ms140 15r, labeled "grammatical rules" by Kuusela<sup>423</sup> (and clearly flagged as an attempt to capture the actual use of the word "meaning" by Wittgenstein in the remarks which Kuusela drew on in interpreting them – such as PI 560<sup>424</sup> and AWL 48<sup>425</sup>), stand in the service of dissolving *particular* philosophical problems about "meaning" – and, like PI 43, *for this reason*, cannot stand in any *direct* relation to Wittgenstein's way of philosophical clarification as a whole. Accordingly, the real break with Baker and Hacker must lie, not merely in viewing grammatical remarks on "meaning" such as PI 43 as offering *models* or *objects of comparison* à la Kuusela, but in completely moving away from the idea that *as grammatical remarks*, these remarks (however in detail their answerability to our actual use of the word "meaning" is conceived) could at all be linked – via the occurrence of "use" in them – to Wittgenstein's way of philosophical clarification in general. In reality, the occurrence of "use" in PI 43 (and its corollary in Ms 140 15r) is logically independent from its occurrence in Wittgenstein's clarificatory question "How do we actually *use* this word (or expression)?" Just as in the case of the word "to intend", the fact that *use* was a criterion for its application was logically independent from the fact that what had led us to this observation was the question "How do we actually *use* the word 'to intend'?", in the case of Wittgenstein's remarks on the grammar (use) of "meaning", the fact that by "meaning of a word", we often mean "use of the word", is logically independent from the fact that what *revealed* this fact to us was a way of philosophical clarification for which the question "How do we actually *use* the word ...?" is characteristic. And just as in the case of "to intend", where this logical independence meant that it was entirely conceivable that our investigations had brought out that use was *not* a criterion for the use of "to intend", this, in the case of PI 43, means that it is entirely conceivable that Wittgenstein's question "How do we actually *use* (or *employ*) the expression 'meaning of a word'?" could have brought out that we did *not* mean something like "use of the word" by it. Contrary to what Kuusela suggests,<sup>426</sup> such an outcome would have *no* implication for Wittgenstein's way of philosophical clarification whatsoever – since it would just concern the *local* level, and not touch the *global* level at all.

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<sup>423</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 153

<sup>424</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 151

<sup>425</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 158-9

<sup>426</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 125, footnote 13

#### 4.4 Global Remarks on Meaning and Use

In a parenthetical remark at the outset of the preceding section I had said that Kuusela's way of explaining the status of Wittgenstein's remarks on meaning and use (namely, as linked to his way of dissolving philosophical problems in general) was much more understandable than Baker and Hacker's linking of the rule-following remarks to Wittgenstein's way of dissolving philosophical problems in general – and I had added that there is no doubt that *some* of Wittgenstein's remarks on meaning and use are connected to his way of dissolving philosophical problems in general. What I was thinking of were remarks such as these:

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.

If, for example, someone says that the sentence 'This is here' (saying which he points to an object in front of him) makes sense to him, then he should ask himself in what special circumstances this sentence is actually used. There it does make sense.

(PI 117)

Just as 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. (OC 348)

In PI 117, Wittgenstein in effect states that "The sentence 'This is here' makes sense in the special circumstances in which it is used". And in OC 348, he in effect states that "The words 'I am here' have a meaning only in certain contexts." Moreover, in PI 117, Wittgenstein says that he is taking the sentence "This is here" as an *example*. Therefore, we should be justified in assuming that he could also have stated here something like "A sentence makes sense in the special circumstances in which it is used". (Which would in fact be what we find him saying in OC 10: "Only in use does the sentence have a sense.") Accordingly, we should be justified to conclude that Wittgenstein would not hesitate, in a context such that of OC 348, to state something like "Words have a meaning only in certain contexts."

Now statements such as "Words have a meaning only in certain contexts" and "Only in use does the sentence have a sense" are of course very reminiscent of the kind of remarks which we have already discussed in the context of my criticism of Kuusela's discussion of

“Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning and use” – namely, of remarks such as “The use of a word in the language is its meaning” (Ms140 15r) and “The meaning of a word is its use in the language” (PI 43). There, I had argued that remarks such as these *could not* be directly related to Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification in general, since they stand in the service of dissolving *particular* philosophical problems about the meaning of words. As I will now show, Wittgenstein intended the remarks just quoted (from PI 117 and OC 348) to indeed be directly related to his way of philosophical clarification as such. To see how and why, let us start with PI 117. The context of this remark is this:

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-game which is its original home? What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use.  
(PI 116)

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.  
If, for example, someone says that the sentence ‘This is here’ (saying which he points to an object in front of him) makes sense to him, then he should ask himself in what special circumstances this sentence is actually used. There it does make sense.  
(PI 117)

In PI 116, Wittgenstein lists several words of which we are to ask ourselves: “Is this word ever actually used in this way in the language-game which is its original home?” Then, in the first paragraph of PI 117, he mentions a certain idea about the sense of words: that “the sense were an atmosphere accompanying the word, which it carried with it into every kind of application.” And in the second paragraph of PI 117, he cites the sentence “This is here” as an *example*. All this makes clear that we are here not on the level of a *particular* philosophical problem revolving around a *particular* expression, but on the level of philosophical problems *in general*. The question “How is this word used in the language-game which is its original home?” can be asked of *arbitrary* words or expressions – it can be used in an attempt to dissolve *arbitrary* philosophical problems. And conversely, the “atmosphere” conception of meaning which Wittgenstein criticizes here is a misunderstanding that is obviously meant to

be a source of *many different* philosophical problems (since it generally makes us look away from the everyday *uses* of the words that figure in philosophical puzzles). Therefore, the remark with which Wittgenstein counters this idea – roughly speaking: “A sentence makes sense in the special circumstances in which it is used” – must be seen as being situated on a *global* level, having to do with the dissolution of *arbitrary* philosophical problems. In other words: It is obvious that in PI 116/117, Wittgenstein establishes a direct relation intended between the occurrence of “use” in a question such as “How is this word actually *used* in the language-game which is its original home?” and its occurrence in the statement “A sentence makes sense in the special circumstances in which it is *used*”. So what we find in these two remarks of Wittgenstein’s is a direct connection of the *question* “How do we actually use the expression X?” with a *statement* linking the sense of this expression to the way in which it is actually used. In a nutshell: we find him linking his way of philosophical clarification to a statement about a relation between the meaning of words and their use.

Let us now move to OC 348. In *On Certainty*, it is preceded by this remark:

‘I know that that’s a tree.’ Why does it strike me as if I did not understand the sentence? though it is after all an extremely simple sentence of the most ordinary kind? It is as if I could not focus my mind on any meaning. Simply because I don’t look for the focus where the meaning is. As soon as I think of an everyday use of the sentence instead of a philosophical one, its meaning becomes clear and ordinary. (OC 347)

This remark forms part of Wittgenstein’s treatment of the philosophical problem of skepticism about the external world. Specifically, it forms part of a treatment of a particular way of *arguing against* this kind of skepticism: namely, by pointing to pieces of empirical knowledge that are so flamingly obvious or that they cannot be doubted.<sup>427</sup> As we had seen, in Wittgenstein’s eyes, this sort of *answering* to the challenge of skepticism is still part of the philosophical problem. In order to truly *dissolve* it, he advises us to think of everyday uses of those words with which we are inclined to express those pieces of “indubitable” empirical knowledge – as he does for “I know that that’s a tree” here. He then goes on like this:

Just as 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 be-

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<sup>427</sup> As we had seen, this strategy also consists in other things, such as to point out that certain empirical truths are deeply engrained in our practices.

cause they are superfluous, but because their meaning is not *determined* by the situation, yet stands in need of such determination. (OC 348)

Here, he likens the person uttering the words “I know that that’s a tree” in order to disprove the philosophical skeptic to someone saying the words “I am here” to someone who is “sitting in front of me and sees me clearly.” What matters here for the purpose of our discussion is that here, the *advice* “Think of an everyday use of the sentence ‘I know that that’s a tree’!” is accompanied by the *statement* “The words ‘I am here’ have a meaning only in certain contexts” (implying, of course, that it is also correct to say that the words ‘I know that that’s a tree’ have a meaning only in certain contexts). Thus, we again have a case where Wittgenstein accompanies his clarificatory advice to think of everyday uses of words by a statement which is linking the *meaning* of these words to their context (of use). And, in fact, this is something quite common in Wittgenstein’s later works: when it comes to the dissolution of concrete philosophical problems, the question “How would you use this expression in everyday circumstances?” is often accompanied by a statement of the form “The meaning of this expression is a matter of its use in the language”. (Another example for this being OC 10.) Now as we had just seen, for our discussion, it does not matter much whether Wittgenstein here states something like “The words ‘I am here’ have a meaning only in certain contexts” or “Words have a meaning only in certain contexts”. What matters is that often, in his later works, we find Wittgenstein accompanying his way of philosophical clarification (for which it is characteristic to advise us to look at the actual *use* of words) with statements about a relation between the meaning of words and their *use*. In this role, they are tied to the *global* level of the dissolution of philosophical problems in general. (Statements such as “Only in use does the sentence have a sense” can be regarded like reusable tools which can be employed in the process of the dissolution of arbitrary problems – unlike remarks such as PI 43, which are tied to *one specific* problem.)

Now as I had attempted to show, remarks on the grammar of “meaning” are tied to *particular* problems about “meaning”, and *therefore* cannot be related to Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification in general. Now when it comes to remarks which clearly *are* related to his way of philosophical clarification in general (such as PI 117), the reverse holds: Remarks such as PI 117 *cannot* be grammatical remarks concerned with our actual use of the word “meaning” (or “sense”). To see why, let us explicitly formulate PI 117 as a grammatical remark on “sense”. The result would be something like “According to how we *use* the word



‘sense’, what we mean by ‘the sense of a sentence’ is the actual *use* of this sentence in special circumstances”. Now, it becomes immediately clear that only the *first* occurrence of “use” is directly linked to the “use” in “What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday *use*” in PI 116<sup>428</sup>. Thus, our grammatical remark comes out as merely being one *example*: the word “sense” is being brought back to its everyday use. The *second* occurrence of “use” – the one in “what we mean by ‘the sense of a sentence’ is the actual *use* of this sentence in special circumstances” – is *not* directly related to the “use” in the sentence from PI 116. Thus, in replacing PI 117 with a grammatical remark, we would simply break off the connection of the original “use” in PI 117 with the “use” in PI 116 – a connection which Wittgenstein obviously intends to make. Ergo, PI 117 cannot be a grammatical remark. And the same holds for “Only in use does the sentence have a sense” (OC 10) – and also for “The words ‘I am here’ have a meaning only in certain contexts” (OC 348). Here, Wittgenstein equally cannot be drawing on how we actually use the word “meaning”.<sup>429</sup>

Now what I take all this to point to is this: A coherent reading of later Wittgenstein’s works requires us to say that in them, the remarks on a relation between the *meaning* of expressions and their *use* must be regarded as falling into two categories: Those associated with *specific* philosophical problems revolving around the expression “meaning of a word / name” (such as PI 43), and those associated with the dissolution of *arbitrary* philosophical problems (such as PI 117). In other words: What we have to say is that in Wittgenstein’s later works, there are *local* and *global* remarks on meaning and use. Unlike PI 43, a *global* remark on meaning and use (or sense and use) such as PI 117 is not tied to the dissolution of the specific philosophical problem of PI 39 (or related problems), but to the dissolution of *arbitrary* philosophical problems: wherever the question “How do we actually use the expression X?” can be asked, it can, in Wittgenstein’s later works, potentially be accompanied by something like “Only in the circumstances of such an ordinary use does X make sense.” Unlike PI 43, which is a *local* remark tied to the one expression “meaning of a word”, these other remarks on meaning and use (or sense and use) are *global* in that they are not tied to any specific expression, but can (and do) accompany reports on the grammar of all sorts of expressions.<sup>430</sup>

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<sup>428</sup> second emphasis mine

<sup>429</sup> This distinction comes out most visibly through the fact that in a remark such as OC 348, *meaning* is not put in quotation marks, and, likewise, through the fact that in remarks such as PI 117 and OC 10, *sense* is not put in quotation marks – contrary to remarks such as PI 43, PI 560, and Ms140 24, which all have “*meaning*”.

<sup>430</sup> A corollary of this is that PI 43 cannot stand in the service of arguing against the “atmosphere” conception of meaning (of PI 117): Because *if* we were to point out that this misconception rested on a misuse of the word “meaning”, we would not even touch this misconception, since, as it is *behind* the misuse of *any* expression, it would be *behind* the misuse of the expression “meaning of a word”, too.

Thus, I hold that a coherent reading of Wittgenstein's later works requires that we distinguish *global* remarks on a relation between meaning and use from *local* ones. PI 43 is a prime example of local remark on a relation between the meaning of expressions and their use, while PI 117 is a prime example of a global remark on meaning and use. For each remark on meaning and use in Wittgenstein's later works, its status as *local* or *global* can be determined by scrutinizing whether this remark is an answer to the question "How do we actually use the word 'meaning'?" – or whether it is employed to accompany the question after the use of a word (or expression) other than "meaning". As should be obvious by now, I take these two categories of remarks to be logically independent of one another (namely, as independent from each other as the occurrences of "employment" and "use" in PI 43). In other words: when Wittgenstein says something like "Only in the circumstances of their use do the words X make sense" in the context of the dissolution of a philosophical problem by way of asking "How do we use X in everyday circumstances?", he *can not* be drawing on how we use the words "meaning" or "sense" in everyday circumstances. This means that his philosophical practice must be regarded as wholly independent of an investigation of the actual use of the words "meaning" and "sense". In other words: I am claiming that Wittgenstein would have adopted a way of philosophical clarification which consisted in asking for the actual use of words even if he had never dealt with a puzzle such as that of PI 39, and therefore had never investigated how we actually use the word "meaning".

As I had try to show, Kuusela goes wrong in not clearly seeing that the occurrence of "use" / "employment" in PI 43 is situated on two distinct logical levels (which has implications for the interpretation of *any* remark on the grammar of "meaning"). As a consequence, he does not see clearly that only *one* of the occurrences of "use" / "employment" there can be linked to Wittgenstein's way of clarification in general – not *both* of them. The result is that, although he intends to do justice to the idea that for Wittgenstein, "meaning" is just a word as any other<sup>431</sup>, Kuusela – by postulating a connection between the occurrence of "use" in the grammatical remark "the meaning of a word is its *use* in the language" and its occurrence in a question such as "How do we *use* the expression X in everyday circumstances?" – is reintroducing a philosophical hierarchy into later Wittgenstein: since now, Wittgenstein's investigation of the actual use of "meaning" appears to be somehow privileged over his investigations of the actual uses of *other* expressions. Let me make this clearer by commenting on this passage of Kuusela's (from his subchapter 6.1):

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<sup>431</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 152, but esp. ch. 6.1

Rather than to establish a foundation for his philosophy, the purpose of Wittgenstein's discussion of the constitution of meaning by grammatical rules is just to make more perspicuous the relations between the concepts of rules, meaning, language, and so on. His clarifications of these conceptual relations might be motivated partly by more widely shared philosophical problems relating to these concepts, partly by a desire to lay out clearly his own conception of philosophy as the description of language by tabulating rules. But these clarifications are not motivated by foundational concerns.<sup>432</sup>

Let us take this passage from the end. What does Kuusela mean by saying that Wittgenstein's clarifications of the actual use of the word "meaning" are not motivated by "foundational concerns"? This is of course directed against Baker and Hacker who hold that Wittgenstein establishes the fact that language itself is a rule-governed activity through just this clarification of the actual use of "meaning" – in other words, seeing Wittgenstein as establishing that his way of clarification *fits* language as it really is. Now as we had seen, Kuusela had argued that the idea of Wittgenstein backing his method of clarification by such a fact about language is both confused and unnecessary. In reality, Kuusela holds, each clarification of a concept can stand on its own – proving itself only by the clarification work it can do in helping to dissolve philosophical confusions relating to the concept thus clarified. Now having dispelled the idea that Wittgenstein had intended to establish that his way of clarification *fits* language as it really is, Kuusela sees his main goal achieved: Showing that Wittgenstein's way of philosophical clarification does not rest on any *theses* (however implicit) about the essence of language or meaning. But as I have tried to show, the problem with what Kuusela says about Wittgenstein's remarks on "meaning" is that they still retain a special status: Wittgenstein's way of philosophical clarification is said to "follow"<sup>433</sup> them. That is, even though Wittgenstein's remarks on "meaning" are now conceived as stating rules which are merely objects of comparison – thus not conceived as directly mirroring language as it really is – these rules are conceived as answerable to our actual use of the word "meaning", thus tying Wittgenstein's way of philosophical clarification *indirectly* to our actual use of the *one word* "meaning".<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>432</sup> Kuusela 2008, 224

<sup>433</sup> Kuusela 2008, 152

<sup>434</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 145, where he is concerned with dispelling the impression that his account of clarificatory rules entailed that it would "be impossible to describe the actual uses of language as they really are" (145). His reply is that "after all, philosophical models are supposed to be something 'with the help of which we present how things are,' not something 'by which we falsify reality' (Ms183, 163, 164)" (ibid.). Thus clearly, the philosopher's models employed in clarification are seen by Kuusela as in *some* way answerable to the actual use of the expressions which they are employed to (however perspicuously and aspect-centered) present (see also Kuusela 2008, 125). Yet even if Kuusela held that these models are wholly independent of the actual use of the words (like Wittgenstein's fictional language-games) and the only criterion of adequacy were their success in

As I have argued, this idea is vulnerable to the same sort of regress argument which Kuusela furnishes against Baker and Hacker. Returning to the passage quoted, the outcome of my argument is the following: When Wittgenstein is stating rules for the use of “meaning”, “rule”, and “language”, he is motivated *solely* “by more widely shared philosophical problems relating to these concepts”, and *never* “by a desire to lay out clearly his own conception of philosophy as the description of language by tabulating rules”. Of course, Wittgenstein has the right to use the words “rule”, “language”, and “meaning” in stating his way of philosophical clarification in general and abstract terms.<sup>435</sup> And, of course, his aim is also to treat “rule”, “language”, and “meaning” like any other word.<sup>436</sup> But what it *means* to so treat “meaning” etc. on a par with “to be in pain”, or “to doubt”, etc. is that Wittgenstein is engaged in *one* of the following, but not both: *Either* setting out to dissolve problems relating to “rule”, “language”, and “meaning” by stating rules for their use, *or* “lay[ing] out clearly his own conception of philosophy as the description of language by tabulating rules” (thereby *not* stating rules for the use of *particular* expressions). These two things are related in that these statings of rules are cases of his “conception of philosophy” being *applied* – but, crucially, no reverse relation holds: Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification itself is wholly independent from anything that might be tied to an investigation of the actual use of the word “meaning” (or “language” or “rule”). Only once we see this clearly can we appreciate how grammatical remarks (and with them the dissolution of each philosophical problem) really stand on their own – and thus come to appreciate the true absence of philosophical hierarchies in later Wittgenstein.

#### 4.5 The Non-Foundational Role of the Remarks on Meaning and Use

Now that we have seen that among the many remarks of Wittgenstein’s on a relation between the meaning of words and their use only the *local* ones (such as PI 43) can be rightfully described as “unfold[ing] [...] what we mean by ‘meaning’ by looking to the ways in which we talk about it” (Conant)<sup>437</sup> – or as models which Wittgenstein develops to make an aspect of the actual use of the word meaning perspicuous to us (Kuusela) –, naturally the question arises concerning the status of those remarks on meaning and use which I have la-

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dissolving problems involving these words, my point that Kuusela is reintroducing a philosophical hierarchy would still hold: For the model which he thinks Wittgenstein *follows* in his way of philosophical clarification is still tied to the dissolution of *particular* problems involving “meaning” (such as that of PI 39), since that is where Kuusela takes this model to originate (if not answerable to the actual use of “meaning”, then at least as a successful means helping to dissolve *these specific* problems).

<sup>435</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 218-9

<sup>436</sup> cf. Kuusela 2008, 152, ch. 6.1

beled *global*. The question is: What are they drawing on? Are *they* answers to the question “What does meaning something consist in?”? Are *they* theses about what word-meaning *must* be?

Let me address this issue by taking a look at the *practical role* those remarks play in the dissolution of a philosophical problem. In Chapter 2, I had given an overview of how I take Wittgenstein to proceed in his dissolution of the paradox with teacher and pupil.<sup>438</sup> There, I had distinguished two central elements of such a dissolution: (1) Wittgenstein’s advice to focus on the actual use of the word “to mean” in everyday circumstances, and (2) Wittgenstein’s analysis of what the criteria for this application of this word actually are. Of (1) I had said that it is embodied in Wittgenstein’s asking the question “How do we ordinarily use the word ‘to mean’?” Later, I had said that so drawing our attention to the actual *use* of words in everyday circumstances is one of Wittgenstein’s methods for the dissolution of philosophical problems. Now where do global remarks on meaning and use figure in this dissolution? So far, not at all. But as I have said, the question “How do we ordinarily use the expression X?” is, in Wittgenstein’s later philosophy, often accompanied by something like “Only in the circumstances of its use does X have a meaning” – i.e., by what I had called *global* remarks on meaning and use.

Now the fact that in describing Wittgenstein’s dissolution of the paradox with teacher and pupil, something like “The word ‘to mean’ has a meaning only in certain contexts of use” had not come up at all corresponds to the fact that in his later philosophy, Wittgenstein very often asks the question “How do we ordinarily use the expression X?” *without* saying anything like “This expression has a meaning only in certain contexts”. A prominent example: “Try not to think of understanding as a ‘mental process’ at all. For *that* is the way of talking which confuses you. Instead, ask yourself: in what sort of case, in what kind of circumstances, do we say, ‘Now I know how to go on’? I mean, when the formula has occurred to me?” (PI 153). Here, as in many other places, Wittgenstein does not accompany his advice to ask ourselves “in what sort of case, in what kind of circumstances, do we say ‘Now I know how to go on’?” by saying something like “The words ‘Now I know how to go on’ have a meaning only in such circumstances of use.”

Now the fact that when it comes to the dissolution of a philosophical problem in Wittgenstein’s later philosophy, the question “How do we ordinarily use the expression X?” often stands by itself should give us a first indication as to what the explanatory weight of global

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<sup>437</sup> Conant 1999, 2

remarks on meaning and use is. As I take it, the fact that Wittgenstein does not *always* flank his question “How do we use this expression in everyday circumstances?” by a global remark on meaning and use highlights the crucial fact that this question – this advice – can do all the work needed by itself. That is, Wittgenstein’s way of dissolving philosophical problems by way of asking this question does not *depend* on reminding us of a general truth – however trivially conceived – about the relation of the meaning of words (or sense of sentences) to their *use*. If that is so, what weight can global remarks on meaning and use have? If their role in the dissolution of philosophical problems appears to be that of an optional extra, how much explanatory weight can be attached to them? However we conceive of their content, it must be extremely lightweight.

Let me end by contrasting the role of global remarks on meaning and use with a local remark on meaning and use, PI 43. This local remark plays a crucial role in dissolving the puzzle (involving the name “Excalibur”) in PI 39. As such, it is indispensable once this puzzle has been raised. Contrast global remarks on meaning and use such as PI 117: There is no case where they are indispensable, since in each case of their employment, their role is to accompany the question “What is the use of X?” – which, as we have seen, is essentially able to do the first step in the dissolution of a philosophical problem *by itself*. It follows that, since (as Conant and Kuusela rightly argue) the fact that a remark such as PI 43 is not an answer to the question “What does meaning something consist in?” or “What is the essence of word-meaning?” because it merely *unfolds* what we mean by “meaning” through looking at the ways we talk about it, *global* remarks on meaning and use can be even less regarded as substantial answers to this question, since, as we have just seen, the explanatory weight attached to them is *even less* than that of a grammatical remark on “meaning”. Thus, whatever we take Wittgenstein to draw on in global remarks on meaning and use, it must be something quite trivial. Accordingly, these remarks present no danger for a vision of him as a philosopher who aimed to put forward a way of dissolving philosophical problems that did not *rest on* any answer to the question “How does linguistic meaning come into being?”

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<sup>438</sup> see Chapter 2, Section 2.4 (beginning)

## 4.6 Summary

In this chapter, I tried to bring out that in order to fully appreciate the absence of *hierarchies* in Wittgenstein's later philosophy, we need to correct some aspects of the resolute readings of Gustafsson and Kuusela.

In Section 4.1, I had concerned myself with Gustafsson's account of the significance that the "problem of meaning and rules" has for Wittgenstein's way of dissolving philosophical problems in general. For Gustafsson, a main way of dissolving a philosophical problem is to become aware that we have been unconsciously *vacillating* between different ways of meaning an expression. Also, Gustafsson argues that we need to conceive of the meanings of expressions in terms of their *combinatory possibilities*. Gustafsson then formulates the "problem of meaning and rules" as he conceives it: "How is it possible that what I mean by my words *now* somehow *determines* future possibilities of combination?" He then shows how this problem dissolves if we ask the question "How do we specify *wherein* the meaning of expressions consists?" For then we can come to realize that to specify *what* an expression means simply *is* to specify its combinatory possibilities. One of Gustafsson's concerns is to bring out the role of *agreement* for rule-following. As he states, a *background* of agreement in practical judgments as to whether we "have gone on in the same way" or not is a presupposition for our talk of "meaning" in terms of rules. Gustafsson then relates this outcome of the dissolution of the rule-following problem to the dissolution of *arbitrary* problems in which we diagnose (overlooked) differences in meaning our words. According to Gustafsson, the background of *agreement* which is a presupposition of our talk of "meaning" is also something which "the diagnosis of a philosophical problem [...] relies on". I had then shown how this way of linking the role of practical agreement for our talk of "meaning" to the role which *agreement* might play for the dissolution of philosophical problems rests on a conflation of the two logical levels on which *agreement* (like *use* and *application*) occurs in the dissolution of the rule-following problem. Like *practice* or *customs*, *agreement* comes in as a criterion for our use of "following a rule". I argued that, since the dissolution of the rule-following problem is that of a *particular* problem, everything which Gustafsson's says about the role of *agreement* for the dissolution of *any* problem by means of bringing out "conceptual interconnections" applies here. The result was that "agreement", in the dissolution of the rule-following problem, must occur on two distinct logical levels: First, the *agreement* which comes out as being conceptually interconnected with "to follow a rule", and second, the *agreement* which might be a requirement for this talk of "rule-following" being "conceptually interconnected" with "agreement" to at all make sense. The *first* agreement – which is a crite-

tion for our application of “following a rule” – is not directly related to the level of dissolving philosophical problems in general – only the *second* agreement is: being the agreement which the dissolution of any philosophical problem – and therefore, also the rule-following problem – might “rely on”. Yet this shows that the *first* agreement cannot be directly related to the general level, as Gustafsson takes it.

In Section 4.2, I had turned to Kuusela’s attempt at explaining why Wittgenstein’s remarks on the relation between the meaning of words and their use – such as PI 43 – have no *foundational* role for his way of dissolving philosophical problems as such. Kuusela charges Baker and Hacker with misreading remarks of Wittgenstein’s such as “The meaning of a word is its use in the language” even though they accept the fact that the status of these remarks is that of grammatical statements: in assuming that Wittgenstein here states *the* rule for the use of the word “meaning”, and through their claim that such rules of grammar *govern* our actual use, they are turning this grammatical statement into a *thesis* about what meaning *must* be. In order to avoid this, Kuusela holds, we must come to realize that Wittgenstein, when stating something like “The meaning of a word is its (rule-governed) use”, was merely offering an *object of comparison* in order to make *one aspect* of the fluctuating actual use of the word “meaning” perspicuous to us. That way, any claim that language *must* be rule-governed is avoided. From this, I had then turned to the way Kuusela links this *model* of “meaning as (rule-governed) use” which Wittgenstein employs in perspicuously presenting one aspect of the actual use of the word “meaning” to his way of philosophical clarification through stating rules for the *use* of words. Kuusela states that “Wittgenstein’s conception of meaning” – by which he means the group of models which Wittgenstein employs to present the actual use of “meaning” in a perspicuous fashion – is “connected with” “his conception of philosophy as the clarification of language use”. As I brought out, the “connection” which Kuusela assumes is that Wittgenstein, in adopting his way of dissolving philosophical problems through stating rules for the use of words, *follows* a model which he has developed in the course of an investigation of one *particular* concept – “meaning”.

In Section 4.3, I presented an argument to the effect that Kuusela’s linking of Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification to his investigations of the *particular* concept “meaning” leads into a regress. Kuusela wishes to explain the fact that for Wittgenstein, philosophical clarification assumes the form of stating rules for the *use* of expressions. According to Kuusela, Wittgenstein, in adopting this specific way of approaching philosophical problems – namely, that of stating rules for the *use* of expressions (as opposed to, say, describing the supposed mental states in which we are in when *meaning* our words, etc.) –, *fol-*



lows the model “meaning as (rule-governed) *use*” which has proved helpful in perspicuously presenting the actual use of the word “meaning”. My objection was that this does not explain why Wittgenstein starts out, of all things, by investigating *the actual use* of the word “meaning” – which then yields in his finding the model “meaning as use” – rather than, say, by investigating a supposed mental state of meaning, etc. This shows that Kuusela’s Wittgenstein, in adopting a certain way of philosophical clarification *following* an investigation of the actual use of the word “meaning”, has implicitly already *applied* this very way of philosophical clarification by investigating *the actual use* of the word “meaning”. Accordingly, Kuusela’s account of the special role of the model “meaning as use” for the whole of Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification leads into a *regress*.

In Section 4.4, I tried to bring out as the cause of this regress a conflation of logical levels akin to that of Baker and Hacker’s. As a first step, I turned to Conant’s analysis of PI 43. Conant’s reading assigns the notion of “use” (or “employment”) two logical roles in PI 43: One that it plays on the level of a *question* – How do we ordinarily employ (use) the word “meaning”? – and one that it plays on the level of the *answer* to that question: By “meaning of a word”, we – in a *large* class of cases – mean “the use of the word in our language”. I had then introduced a new terminology to designate these logical levels: *global* for the level of the question “How do we *use* the word ...?” (which level I had earlier labeled *methodological*) – and *local* for the level of the things which come out by our answering this question (which level I had earlier labeled *critical*). The mistake in Kuusela’s way of connecting (1) “In order to make an aspect of the actual *use* of the word ‘meaning’ perspicuous to us, Wittgenstein introduces the conception of meaning as (rule-governed) *use*” and (2) “For Wittgenstein, philosophical clarification consists in the stating of rules for the *use* of expressions” is then this: Kuusela links the occurrence of “use” in (2) to the *second* occurrence of “use” in (1). But these occurrences of “use” are not on the same logical level: what *are* on the same level are the *first* occurrence of “use” in (1) and its occurrence in (2). Only the fact that Wittgenstein attempts to make an aspect of the actual *use* of the word “meaning” perspicuous to us is directly related to his way of philosophical clarification in general – the second step in which he comes to see that the model “meaning as *use*” is helpful in perspicuously presenting this particular use is only indirectly related to it. When we think through what Kuusela says, Wittgenstein’s conception of meaning as (rule-governed) use is an *instance* of his way of philosophical clarification – through stating rules for the use of words – being applied – and *therefore* cannot be directly connected to this way of philosophical clarification *in general*. Accordingly, the real break with Baker and Hacker must lie, not merely in viewing grammati-

cal remarks on “meaning” such as PI 43 as offering *models* or *objects of comparison*, but in completely rejecting the idea that *as grammatical remarks*, these remarks could at all be linked – via the occurrence of “use” in them – to Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification in general.

In Section 4.4, I concerned myself with a crucial difference between the rule-following remarks and the remarks on meaning and use. Whereas in the rule-following sections, what Wittgenstein says about a relation of following a rule and *practices, customs, and institutions* only comes in on the *local* level – namely, as criteria for our application of the expression “following a rule”. Yet in the case of Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning and use, things are more complicated: in *some* of them, the occurrence of “use” evidently *is* intended by Wittgenstein as to be directly tied to his way of dissolving philosophical problems *in general* by way of asking “How is this word actually *used*?” As an example for such remarks, I cited PI 117: “If, for example, someone says that the sentence ‘This is here’ (saying which he points to an object in front of him) makes sense to him, then he should ask himself in what special circumstances this sentence is actually used. There it does make sense”. As I took it, “This is here” is a random example of Wittgenstein’s, concluding that he could also have said “A sentence makes sense in the special circumstances in which it is used”. I then showed how the context of this remark – “What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use” (PI 116) – makes clear that “use” in PI 117 is tied to the dissolution of *arbitrary* problems by way of asking “How is the expression X actually *used*?” I then showed how the fact that remarks on the grammar of “meaning” are tied to *particular* problems about “meaning”, and *therefore* cannot be related to Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification in general, also yields that remarks which clearly *are* related to his way of philosophical clarification in general (such as PI 117) *cannot* be grammatical remarks concerned with our actual use of the word “sense” (or “meaning”). I then drew the conclusion that in later Wittgenstein, there are two types of remarks on meaning and use: *Local* ones (such as PI 43) which are instrumental in dissolving *particular* philosophical problems involving “meaning”, and *global* ones whose role is that of *accompanying* Wittgenstein’s general clarificatory question “How is the expression X actually *used*?” I concluded by stating against Kuusela that only if we come to see that Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification itself is wholly *independent* from anything that might be tied to an investigation of the actual use of the word “meaning” (or “language” or “rule”) can we fully appreciate the absence of *hierarchies* in his philosophy.

In Section 4.5, I investigated the consequences of the failure of Kuusela’s attempt to explain *all* remarks on meaning and use as remarks clarifying the grammar of the word

“meaning” for the question of how Wittgenstein arrived at a way of dissolving philosophical problems that did not rest on any account of what linguistic meaning *must* be. If *global* remarks on meaning and use cannot have a merely *grammatical* status, what are they drawing on? If their role is that of *accompanying* Wittgenstein’s clarificatory question “How is the expression X actually *used*?” – are *they* “substantial” answers to the question “How does linguistic meaning come into being?” on which his way of philosophical clarification after all comes to *rest*? I tackled this question by taking a look at the *practical role* which global remarks on meaning and use play in the dissolution of specific problems. As I brought out, in many cases, Wittgenstein does *not* accompany his clarificatory question “How is the expression X actually *used*?” with any such global remark on meaning and use. I took this to highlight the fact that this question can do all the clarificatory work needed by itself, needing no backing from any kind of truth about any kind of relation of the meaning of words and their use. Given that there is no case where global remarks on meaning and use are indispensable, I concluded that, whatever we take Wittgenstein to draw on in them, it must be something quite trivial. I therefore concluded that these remarks present no danger for a vision of his as a philosopher who aimed to put forward a way of dissolving philosophical problems that did not rest on any answer to the question “How does linguistic meaning come into being?”

The main aim of this chapter was to show that in order to fully appreciate the absence of *hierarchies* in later Wittgenstein, we need to correct some aspects of the resolute readings of Gustafsson and Kuusela. As I argued, we need to reject Gustafsson’s view that the role of *agreement* which is revealed during the dissolution of the rule-following problem has a bearing on the dissolution of philosophical problems in general. Also, I argued that we need to reject Kuusela’s view that Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning and use such as PI 43 have a special significance for his way of dissolving philosophical problems as such. The results of the grammatical investigations of *particular* concepts (aimed at the dissolution of *particular* problems) cannot have any bearing on the dissolution of philosophical problems *in general*. Only if we are completely clear about this can we come to appreciate what is really involved in Wittgenstein’s stating that “meaning” is not a “super-concept” – which means to come to appreciate what is really involved in his striving for a way of dissolving philosophical problems that did not have as its foundation any answer – however implicit – to the question “How is meaning constituted?”

Another aim of this chapter was to show that a certain way how resolute readers explain the non-foundational character of Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning and use – namely,

by highlighting their *grammatical* status – is insufficient. For, as I have attempted to show, not *all* of Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning (sense) and use can be grammatical. Yet since these other remarks on meaning and use have no indispensable function when it comes to dissolving concrete philosophical problems, they cannot at all be substantial answers to the question “How is meaning constituted?” Thus, their existence does not put into question the vision of Wittgenstein as a philosopher who intended his proposed way of dissolving philosophical problems to not *rest on* any account of linguistic meaning.

## Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have concerned myself with an issue related to “resolute” readings of Wittgenstein’s later work. I had focused on the work of James Conant, Martin Gustafsson, and Oskari Kuusela. All these authors, in their own way, reject the idea that later Wittgenstein had intended to supply an explanatory account of linguistic meaning. Rather, they all insist that Wittgenstein was first and foremost concerned with offering ways of *dissolving philosophical problems*. Furthermore, they all argue against readings of later Wittgenstein which make it look as if these ways of dissolving philosophical problem had as their *foundation* an account of the conditions of meaningful speech or theses about how language *must* be.

Accordingly, the main question I dealt with in this dissertation was: How did later Wittgenstein aim to achieve the goal of putting forward a way of dissolving philosophical problems without making any claims about the essence of language and meaning? As my main focus, I chose Kuusela’s conclusion that fully appreciating how Wittgenstein meant to achieve this goal means to see clearly how he aimed to do away with any *hierarchies* in philosophy. According to Kuusela, later Wittgenstein conceived of each philosophical problem to be on a par with any other – no dissolution of any *one* problem was to be fundamental to the dissolution of *any other* problem. Kuusela, in his criticism of Baker and Hacker, insists that for Wittgenstein, there are no fundamental concepts or “super-concepts” which constitute the foundation of his philosophy: every grammatical investigation stands or falls on its own, without needing any backing from any “grammatical truth” established through another grammatical investigation.

The lead question of my dissertation then was: What does it mean to come to see that the investigation of the grammar of *particular* concepts cannot have a bearing on Wittgenstein’s way of dissolving philosophical problems as such? Do resolute readings of later Wittgenstein arrive at fully appreciating this point?

From this vantage point, I concerned myself with two aspects of the readings of Gustafsson and Kuusela. In Gustafsson, I concerned myself with his idea that the dissolution of philosophical problems in general “relies on” the very *agreement* which – during the dissolution of the rule-following problem – comes out as a presupposition for our talk of “meaning” in terms of rules. In Kuusela, I concerned myself with the connection he draws

between Wittgenstein's remarks on the grammar of "meaning" and his way of philosophical clarification in general. As we saw, Kuusela holds that "meaning as use" is a rule which Wittgenstein employs as a *model* in order to perspicuously present an aspect of the actual use of the word "meaning". As I brought out, Kuusela also holds that in adopting his way of philosophical clarification as the stating of rules for the *use* of expressions, Wittgenstein *follows* this model of "meaning as use".

In order to show how these two aspects of Gustafsson's and Kuusela's readings fail to live up to the vision of Wittgenstein as a philosopher who aimed to do away with any *hierarchies* in philosophy, I held that we need to become clearer about what, in later Wittgenstein, is tied to the dissolution of *specific* philosophical problems, as opposed to what is tied to the dissolution of philosophical problems *in general*. Specifically, I held that we need to get very clear about which of the occasions where Wittgenstein invokes the notions of "use" and "application" (as also "agreement") have to do with the dissolution of a *specific* problem only, and which have to do with the dissolution of philosophical problems *in general*.

As a first step to afford this clarification, I turned to a discussion of Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following. I showed how in the dissolution of the rule-following paradox, notions such as "use", "application", and "practice" figure on two distinct logical levels. First, I rehearsed how Wittgenstein dissolves the paradox by attacking the question "How can the way something is *meant* uniquely determine its application?" through asking "How is it determined how something is *meant*?". That way, it comes out the very application that *meaning* the formula "+2" in such-and such a way seemed not to be able to determine in advance is just the *criterion* that makes us say that "+2" is *meant* in a certain way. I then highlighted how the notion of "use" figures in this dissolution of the rule-following paradox first on the level of a *question*, and second on the level of the *answer* to this question. Wittgenstein first asks us to focus on the actual *use* of the word "to mean" in everyday circumstances – i.e. to focus on the criteria that we accept for "to mean". And second, Wittgenstein shows us that in the case of teacher and pupil, the criterion for their having meant "+2" *all along* in a way that determined either 1000, 1004, 1008 or 1000, 1002, 1004 is the *use* that they make of "+2" after 1000. The occurrence of "use" on the level of the question "How would you *use* the word 'to mean' in everyday circumstances?" I had labeled *methodological*. Of *this* occurrence of "use" I had then said that it does not have anything to do with the fact that it is the *specific* problem of rule-following which is dissolved here. For, Wittgenstein asks the question "How would you *use* the expression X in everyday circumstances?" in the context of attempts at dissolving

many problems *other than* that of rule-following. The occurrence of “use” in the *answer* to the question – namely, in “The criteria which we accept for our everyday use of ‘to mean’ involve a certain *use* of formulae etc.” I had labeled *criterial*. Of it, I had said that it *does* have everything to do with the fact that it is the *specific* problem of rule-following which is dissolved here: *use* here comes in as a criterion for the application (use) of this *specific* word – “to mean”. Its occurrence is therefore tied directly to the investigation of the grammar of *this particular* concept. Then, by citing two other examples from Wittgenstein, I had shown how the occurrences of “use” on these two levels are *logically independent* from one another: The question “How would you *use* X in everyday circumstances?” does in no way *entail* that among the criteria for this application (use) of X, *uses* or *applications* of any kind must figure.

In my second step of clarifying the distinction of Wittgenstein’s invoking the notions of “use” and “application” (as also “agreement”) in the dissolution of a *specific* problem – as opposed to his invoking them in the context of dissolving philosophical problems *in general* – I turned to a first example of what happens when these logical levels are not being properly kept apart. This example was Baker and Hacker’s idea that the rule-following remarks have a special significance for his project of dissolving philosophical problems as such. As they take it, the rule-following remarks stand in the service of answering a “vital” question pertaining to the very rules of grammar which we draw on when dissolving *arbitrary* philosophical problems – namely, the question “In what manner are rules of grammar involved in speech activities?” Also, as I brought out, they take it that the rule-following remarks have the status of clarifications of the rules of grammar of the expression “following a rule”. I then furnished an argument to the effect that the idea that the clarification of the rules of grammar of the *particular* expression “following a rule” could answer a *vital* question about rules of grammar rests on a conflation of the two logical levels on which “use” occurs in the rule-following remarks. I showed how, if one assumes a *strong* sense of why it is “vital” to know the answer to the question “In what manner are rules of grammar involved in speech activities?”, Baker and Hacker’s idea leads into a *regress*: Since this question itself is to be answered through a clarification of some rules of grammar it would, according to this *strong* sense, have to be answered *before* it could be answered by means of this clarification of the rules of grammar of “following a rule”. I then showed how assuming a *weak* sense in which this question is taken to be “vital”, it comes out that if this question is, for *all* expressions, to be answered through a clarification of the rules of grammar of “following a rule”, then it cannot be answered for the case of the expression “following a rule” itself. Thus Baker and Hacker’s account reveals itself as inherently *incomplete*. I then analyzed the precise character of Baker and Hacker’s

mistake. From the occurrence of “use” in the grammatical remark “Following a rule is a practice, custom, *use* or institution”, they had concluded that there *must* hold a direct connection to the question “What are the rules for the *use* of the expression X?”, which is instrumental in the dissolution of *arbitrary* problems. Yet as we saw, what is meant by this grammatical remark is actually this: “The criterion for our *use* of the expression ‘following a rule’ is a practice, custom, *use* or institution”. A direct logical connection holds between, not the *second* occurrence of “use” here and its occurrence in “What are the rules for the *use* of the expression X?”, but rather to its *first* occurrence. The occurrence of “use” in the grammatical remark “Following a rule is a practice, custom, *use* or institution” has got to do with the *specific* rules of grammar for the *specific* expression “following a rule” *only*. Hence it is a conflation of the *critical* and the *methodological* level to think, as Baker and Hacker do, that the occurrence of “use” in remarks such as “Following a rule is a practice, custom, *use* or institution” could be directly linked to Wittgenstein’s way of dissolving philosophical problems by way of asking for the rules for the *use* of expressions. *Because* “Following a rule is a practice, custom, use, or institution” is a *grammatical remark* on our *use* of “following a rule”, the occurrences of “practice”, “custom”, “use” or “institution” in it cannot be directly related to the *methodological* level.

After this double excursus – first, into the rule-following sections of the *Investigations* and, second, into Baker and Hacker’s account of their overall significance, I had turned to the readings of Gustafsson and Kuusela. I proceeded to evaluate them in the light of what I had brought out about the notions “use”, “practice”, and “application” figuring in the dissolution of the rule-following problem on both a *methodological* and a *critical* level – the conflation of which leads into a regress.

I first turned to Gustafsson’s reading of the significance of the “problem of meaning and rules” – which he develops out of a criticism of Kripke’s reading of Wittgenstein’s remarks on rule-following. One of Gustafsson’s concerns is to bring out the role of *agreement* for rule-following. He stresses that a *background* of agreement in practical judgments as to whether we “have gone on in the same way” is a presupposition for our talk of “meaning” in terms of rules. Gustafsson then relates this outcome of the dissolution of the *specific* problem of rule-following to the dissolution of *arbitrary* problems. According to Gustafsson, the background of *agreement* which is a presupposition of our talk of “meaning” is something which “the diagnosis of a philosophical problem [...] relies on” – because, as he stresses in his version of a resolute reading, diagnosing overlooked differences in meaning is a main way to



dissolve philosophical problems. I had then shown how this way of linking the role of practical agreement for our talk of “meaning” to the role which *agreement* might play for the dissolution of philosophical problems rests on a conflation of the two logical levels on which *agreement* (like *use* and *application*) occurs in the dissolution of the rule-following problem. Like *practice* or *customs*, *agreement* comes in as a criterion for our use of “following a rule”. I argued that, since the dissolution of the rule-following problem is that of a *particular* problem, everything which Gustafsson’s says about the role of *agreement* for the dissolution of *any* problem by means of bringing out “conceptual interconnections” applies here. The result was that “agreement”, in the dissolution of the rule-following problem, must occur *twice*: First, the as the *agreement* which comes out as being conceptually interconnected with “to follow a rule”, and second, as the *agreement* which is a requirement for this talk of “rule-following” being “conceptually interconnected” with “agreement” to at all make sense. The *first* “agreement” – which is a criterion for our application of “following a rule” – is not directly related to the level of dissolving philosophical problems in general. Only the *second* “agreement” is: namely, the agreement which the dissolution of any philosophical problem – and therefore, also the rule-following problem – is taken to “rely on”. As thus comes out, the *first* agreement cannot be directly related to the general level, as Gustafsson takes it.

I then turned to the way Kuusela links Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning and use to his way of philosophical clarification in general. For Kuusela, Wittgenstein, in remarks such as PI 43 (“The meaning of a word is its use in the language”), is presenting “meaning as use” as a *model* designed to make perspicuous to us one aspect of the actual use of the word “meaning”. This way of conceiving of the status of the remarks on meaning and use, Kuusela holds, will prevent us from seeing Wittgenstein as in any way putting forward theses about what meaning *must* be in these remarks. Now Kuusela also states that “Wittgenstein’s conception of meaning” – by which he means a group of *models* such as “meaning as use” – is “connected with” “his conception of philosophy as the clarification of language use”. As I brought out, the “connection” which Kuusela assumes is that Wittgenstein, in adopting his way of dissolving philosophical problems as stating rules for the use of words, *follows* a model – “meaning as use” – which he has developed in the course of an investigation of one *particular* concept – “meaning”. I then furnished an argument to the effect that this way of explaining the fact that for Wittgenstein, philosophical clarification assumes the form of stating rules for the *use* of expressions, leads into a regress. According to Kuusela, Wittgenstein, in adopting this specific way of approaching philosophical problems – namely, that of stating rules for the *use* of expressions (as opposed to, say, describing the supposed mental states in

which we are in when *meaning* our words, etc.) –, *follows* the model “meaning as *use*” which has proved helpful in perspicuously presenting the actual use of the word “meaning”. My objection was that this does not explain why Wittgenstein starts out, of all things, by investigating *the actual use* of the word “meaning” – which then yields in his finding the model “meaning as *use*” – rather than, say, by investigating a supposed mental state of meaning, etc. This shows that Kuusela’s Wittgenstein, in adopting a certain way of philosophical clarification *following* an investigation of the actual use of the word “meaning”, has implicitly already *applied* this very way of philosophical clarification by investigating *the actual use* of the word “meaning”. Accordingly, Kuusela’s account of the special role of the model “meaning as *use*” for the whole of Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification leads into a *regress*.

Then, I had turned to an analysis of Kuusela’s mistake. For that, I first turned to Conant’s analysis of PI 43. Conant’s reading assigns the notion of “use” (or “employment”) two logical roles in PI 43: One that it plays on the level of a *question* – How do we ordinarily employ (use) the word “meaning”? – and one that it plays on the level of the *answer* to that question: By “meaning of a word”, we – in a *large* class of cases – mean “the use of the word in our language”. Kuusela had been connecting (1) “In order to make an aspect of the actual *use* of the word ‘meaning’ perspicuous to us, Wittgenstein introduces the conception of meaning as (rule-governed) *use*” and (2) “For Wittgenstein, philosophical clarification consists in the stating of rules for the *use* of expressions” by linking the occurrence of “use” in (2) to the *second* occurrence of “use” in (1). But these occurrences of “use” are not on the same logical level: what *are* on the same level are the *first* occurrence of “use” in (1) and its occurrence in (2). Only the fact that Wittgenstein attempts to make an aspect of the actual *use* of the word “meaning” perspicuous to us is directly related to his way of philosophical clarification in general – the second step in which he comes to see that the model “meaning as *use*” is helpful in perspicuously presenting this particular use is only indirectly related to it. I concluded that for a resolute reading, it is not sufficient to view grammatical remarks on “meaning” – such as PI 43 – as offering mere *models*. Instead, we need to see that *because they are grammatical remarks*, the occurrence of “use” in them cannot at all be linked to Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification which involves stating rules for the *use* of expressions. What Kuusela failed to do was to fully apply the lesson from his own regress argument against Baker and Hacker to the case of remarks on the grammar of “meaning”.

I then acknowledged that Kuusela was not as mistaken in linking Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning and use to his way of philosophical clarification in general as had been Baker and Hacker in linking the rule-following remarks to the rules of grammar which we

invoke in such a clarification. I showed how Wittgenstein obviously intended *some* of his remarks on meaning and use to be directly related to his way of dissolving philosophical problems as such. As an example for such a *global* remark on meaning and use, I cited PI 117: “If, for example, someone says that the sentence ‘This is here’ (saying which he points to an object in front of him) makes sense to him, then he should ask himself in what special circumstances this sentence is actually used. There it does make sense”. As I showed, the contexts of this remark makes clear that Wittgenstein is thinking of the dissolution of a philosophical problem by way of asking “In what circumstances is the sentence ‘This is here’ actually used?” This makes clear that in his stating something along the lines of “A sentence makes sense in the special circumstances in which it is *used*”, the occurrence of “use” is indeed directly tied to its occurrence in the question “How is this word / expression / sentence actually *used*?” which is instrumental in dissolving *arbitrary* problems. Consequently, remarks such as PI 117 must be seen as directly related to Wittgenstein’s way of dissolving philosophical problems *as such*. I then brought out that *because* of this direct relation, PI 117 *cannot* be a grammatical remark: If we were to replace PI 117 with a grammatical remark on “sense” such as “According to how we *use* the word ‘sense’, what we mean by ‘the sense of a sentence’ is the actual *use* of this sentence in special circumstances”, we would simply break off the connection of the second “use” here with the “use” in “What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday *use*” (PI 116) – a connection which Wittgenstein obviously intends to make. From this, I then concluded that Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning and use must be regarded as falling into two categories: *Local* ones (such as PI 43) – instrumental in dissolving *particular* philosophical problems involving “meaning” – and *global* ones (such as PI 117) – whose role is that of *accompanying* Wittgenstein’s general clarificatory question “How is the expression X actually *used*?”

Finally, I investigated the consequences of the failure of Kuusela’s attempt to explain *all* remarks on meaning and use as remarks clarifying the grammar of the word “meaning” for the question of how Wittgenstein arrived at a way of dissolving philosophical problems that did not rest on any account of what linguistic meaning *must* be. The question was: Are remarks such as PI 117 – since they cannot be *grammatical* – meant as claims about the essence of meaning? I approached this question by taking a look at the *practical role* which global remarks on meaning and use play in the dissolution of specific problems. As I brought out, in many cases, Wittgenstein does *not* accompany his clarificatory question “How is the expression X actually *used*?” with any such global remark on meaning and use. I took this to highlight the fact that this question can do all the clarificatory work needed by itself, needing no

backing from any truth about a relation of the meaning of words and their use. Given thus that there is no case where global remarks on meaning and use are indispensable, I concluded that, whatever we take Wittgenstein to draw on in them, it must be something trivial. Thus, they present no danger for a vision of Wittgenstein as a philosopher who aimed to put forward a way of dissolving philosophical problems that did not rest on any claims about the essence of meaning or language.

Let me wrap up what was behind my arguments against Baker and Hacker, Gustafsson, and Kuusela. In all these arguments, I essentially drew on three things. First, I drew on the fact that *grammatical remarks* such as “Rule-following is a practice, custom, or institution” or “The meaning of a word is its use in the language” – when fully spelled out – mean something like “The criteria which we accept for our *application* of ‘following a rule’ involve *practices*, customs, or institutions” or “For a large class of cases of the *employment* of the word “meaning” – though not for all cases of its employment – one can explicate the word thus: the meaning of a word is its *use* in the language”. In other words: in remarks such as these, the notion of “use” (“employment”), “application”, or “practice” figures *twice*.

The second thing I drew on in my arguments was that these two occurrences of “use”, “application”, or “practice” in these remarks are *logically independent* from one another – i.e., that the *first* occurrence of these notions in no way entails their *second* occurrence (or vice versa). From this I concluded that although each time, it is “use”, “application”, or “practice” that is spoken of, the respective occurrences of these notions play fundamentally different *roles* within the overall framework of Wittgenstein’s philosophy. In other words, these occurrences come in for completely different – and unrelated – *reasons*.

The third thing concerned the relation of these two occurrences of “use”, “application”, or “practice” in such grammatical remarks to the occurrence of “use” or “application” in the question “How would you actually *use / apply* the expression X?” – which is characteristic for Wittgenstein’s approach to dissolving philosophical problems as such. What I drew on in my arguments was that, *because* the two occurrences of “use”, “application”, or “practice” in such grammatical remarks are unrelated to each other, we need to make a choice as to *which* of them we claim to be directly related to the occurrence of “use” or “application” in Wittgenstein’s question “How would you actually *use / apply* the expression X?” In each of my arguments, I then showed how, out of the two possible ways of linking the occurrences of “use”, “application”, or “practice” in such grammatical remarks to this question, the *wrong* one had been chosen. For instance, I showed against Kuusela how he had falsely linked the

occurrence of “use” in “For a large class of cases of the *employment* of the word “meaning” – though not for all cases of its employment – one can explicate the word thus: the meaning of a word is its *use* in the language” to this question, when he should have linked the occurrence of “employment” to it. Because it is “employment” here which has the same *role* – comes in for the same *reason* – as “use” in Wittgenstein’s question “How would you actually *use* the expression X?” And this *entails* that the occurrence of “use” in “... the meaning of a word is its *use* in the language” is *unrelated* to this question.

The result of each of my arguments was this: Although it may appear as if there *must* be a connection between occurrences of “use” in remarks such as “The meaning of a word is its *use* in the language” and Wittgenstein’s way of philosophical clarification in general – which, after all, involves his asking for the actual *use* of words – this first impression is mistaken. As comes out, occurrences of “use”, “application”, or “practice” such as these are in fact wholly *unrelated* to Wittgenstein’s way of dissolving philosophical problems as such.

As I brought out in this dissertation, in order to fully appreciate how later Wittgenstein aimed to do away with any *hierarchies* in philosophy, we need to acknowledge two things: First, that the rule-following problem is just a *specific* problem whose dissolution can have no special significance for the dissolution of philosophical problems in general. Second, that remarks on the grammar of “meaning” such as “The meaning of a word is its use in the language” (PI 43) cannot stand – via the occurrence of “use” in them – in any special relation to Wittgenstein’s way of dissolving philosophical problems by way of asking “How would we actually *use* this expression?” This means: In order to fully appreciate that “meaning” is not a “super-concept”, we need to acknowledge that philosophical problems involving “meaning” are just *specific* problems, and that remarks instrumental in their dissolution – such as PI 43 – cannot be related to the dissolution of philosophical problems as such.

A corollary of this is that not *all* of Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning and use can be accounted for as *grammatical remarks* on “meaning” (or “sense”). This conclusion may strike us as quite unintuitive – yet I deem it to be absolutely unavoidable if we want give an account of the status of the remarks on meaning and use which avoids the kind of problems which we find in Kuusela. As I tried to bring out, Wittgenstein, in these other remarks on meaning and use, must be taken to draw on something quite trivial – since, contrary to grammatical remarks on meaning and use, there is no case where these other remarks on meaning and use are

*indispensable*. Accordingly, I concluded that their existence does not have any effect on the idea of Wittgenstein as aiming to do away with any *hierarchies* in philosophy.

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## *Deutsche Zusammenfassung*

Diese Dissertation befaßt sich mit einer Frage im Zusammenhang mit der sogenannten „strengen“ Lesart des Werkes von Ludwig Wittgenstein. Die Bezeichnung „strenge Lesart“ („resolute reading“) hat sich eingebürgert als Oberbegriff für die Lesarten von Wittgensteins Philosophie, die von Cora Diamond, James Conant, Michael Kremer, Thomas Ricketts und anderen vorgelegt wurden. Ein Hauptmerkmal dieser Lesarten ist, daß für sie Wittgensteins Hauptziel – des frühen wie des späten – darin besteht, Wege zur *Auflösung philosophischer Probleme* zu präsentieren. Ein ein bestimmtes Thema betreffendes philosophisches Problem wird hierbei aufgefaßt als ein scheinbarer Widerspruch zwischen dem, wie die Dinge (dieses Thema betreffend) scheinbar sein *müssen* und dem, was wir als das wahrnehmen, wie die Dinge tatsächlich *sind*. Ein solches Problem kann aufgelöst werden, indem wir erkennen, daß dieser Widerspruch bloß ein *scheinbarer* ist. Dazu gehört zu erkennen, daß sich unsere Auffassung davon, wie die Dinge sein *müssen*, auf einer Illusion gegründet hatte – eine Illusion, die durch ein Mißverständnis der sprachlichen Ausdrucksformen hervorgerufen wird, mit deren Hilfe wir unseren scheinbaren Widerspruch formuliert hatten. Die Vertreter der strengen Lesart sehen es so, daß wenn ein solcher Widerspruch sich als auf eine derartige Illusion gegründet herausgestellt hat, das Problem verschwindet – womit die Aufgabe der Philosophie erfüllt ist. Diesen Aspekt von Wittgensteins Philosophie zu betonen bedeutet für Vertreter der strengen Lesart, sich gegen Lesarten zu wenden, die die Betonung auf angebliche Erkenntnisse Wittgensteins im Bereich der *Sprachphilosophie* legen – Erkenntnisse zu Themen wie „Wie sind Sprache und Wirklichkeit miteinander verbunden?“ oder „Was sind die Bedingungen der Möglichkeit von sprachlichem Handeln?“ Vertretern der strengen Lesart zufolge befaßt sich Wittgenstein mit *Sprache* und *Bedeutung* nicht deshalb, weil er eine allgemeine Antwort auf die Frage „Wie kommt sprachliche Bedeutung zustande?“ geben will, sondern weil zu den von ihm vorgestellten Wegen zur Auflösung philosophischer Probleme gehört, daß wir uns fragen, ob wir die *sprachlichen* Ausdrucksformen, mit deren Hilfe wir unsere philosophischen Probleme formuliert haben, wirklich in der *Bedeutung* verwenden, von der wir glauben, daß wir sie ihnen gegeben haben. Mit diesem Merkmal strenger Lesarten ist ein weiteres Merkmal verbunden: Nicht nur wenden sich diese Lesarten gegen die Idee, daß es Wittgenstein um eine Beantwortung der Frage „Wie kommt sprachliche Bedeutung zustande?“ gegangen wäre – darüberhinaus behaupten diese Lesarten, daß auch die von Wittgenstein vorgestellten Wege zur Auflösung philosophischer Probleme selbst nicht so aufgefaßt werden



dürfen, als ob sie auf einer Antwort auf diese Frage in irgendeiner Weise *aufbauen* würden. Vertretern der strengen Lesart zufolge war das Hauptziel, das sich Wittgenstein während seiner gesamten Laufbahn als Philosoph gestellt hat, das folgende: Eine Art und Weise der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme zu entwickeln, die daran ansetzt, was wir mit unseren Worten *meinen*, ohne jedoch irgendwelche Thesen über *Sprache* und *Bedeutung* mit sich zu ziehen.

Die Diskussion über strenge Lesarten hat sich hauptsächlich auf Wittgensteins *Tractatus* konzentriert, bzw. darauf, wie die Beziehung zwischen dem *Tractatus* und Wittgensteins Spätwerk zu verstehen ist. Einige Vertreter einer strengen Lesart allerdings haben die Hauptfrage – Wie sieht eine Art und Weise der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme aus, die keine Thesen über Sprache und Bedeutung nach sich zieht? – mit hauptsächlichem Bezug auf den *späten* Wittgenstein diskutiert. Ein Hauptgegenstand der Kritik strenger Lesarten ist hierbei die Lektüre des späten Wittgenstein, wie sie von Gordon Baker und Peter Hacker vorgelegt wurde. In dieser Dissertation befaße ich mich mit zwei Vertretern einer strengen Lesart, die sich durch eine detaillierte Kritik von Baker und Hacker hervorgetan haben: Martin Gustafsson und Oskari Kuusela.

In *Entangled Sense: An Inquiry into the Philosophical Significance of Meaning and Rules* (2000) geht es Gustafsson darum, die Rolle zu bestimmen, die der Rekurs auf *Regeln* in der Philosophie spielen kann. Gustafsson wendet sich gegen die Auffassung, daß es die Aufgabe der Philosophie sei, zu erklären, wie sprachliche Bedeutung zustande kommt – insbesondere gegen die Idee, daß der Rekurs auf Regeln Teil einer solchen Erklärung sein könnte. Stattdessen stimmt er Baker und Hacker darin zu, daß der Rekurs auf Regeln ein Mittel sein kann, philosophische Probleme aufzulösen. In *Entangled Sense*, wie auch in “Nonsense and Philosophical Method” (2006), zeigt Gustafsson dann gegen Baker und Hacker, daß die Rolle von Regeln im Rahmen einer solchen Auflösung nicht darin bestehen kann, Sinn und Unsinn zu unterscheiden, sondern bloß darin, unterschiedliche Arten des Gebrauchs von Ausdrücken zu *beschreiben*. Wie Gustafsson herausarbeitet, kann eine Behandlung philosophischer Probleme nicht darin bestehen, daß ein „Verstoß“ gegen diese Regeln diagnostiziert wird (wie Baker und Hacker es tun) – sondern nur darin, daß wir zu der Einsicht gelangen, daß wir unbewußt zwischen verschiedenen Arten des Gebrauchs von Ausdrücken geschwankt haben, und uns so in diesen Arten des Gebrauchs *verfangen* haben.

In *The Struggle against Dogmatism* (2008) kritisiert Kuusela Baker und Hacker für ihr unvollständiges Verständnis der radikalen Umwandlung, der Wittgenstein seine Philosophie

als Reaktion auf die Versäumnisse des *Tractatus* unterzog. Kuusela betont, daß es Wittgenstein schon im *Tractatus* darum gegangen sei, eine Art und Weise der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme vorzustellen, die nicht auf eine bestimmte Antwort auf die Frage „Wie kommt sprachlicher Sinn zustande?“ gegründet war. Dieses Ziel habe Wittgenstein dadurch erreichen wollen, daß er ein bloßes *Werkzeug* zur begrifflichen Klärung einführte: die logische Analyse von Sätzen. Allerdings hatte sich Wittgenstein, so Kuusela, durch seine Behauptung, er habe durch die Einführung dieses Werkzeuges die philosophischen Probleme „im Wesentlichen“ gelöst, an eine (implizite) *These* über das Wesen des Satzes gebunden. Später habe Wittgenstein dies als fundamentalen Fehler gesehen – ein Fehler, der in seinen Augen seinen ersten Versuch einer Art und Weise der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme, die auf keinerlei Thesen über Sprache und Bedeutung fußt, zum Scheitern gebracht hatte. Wittgensteins späterer Analyse dieses Fehlers, so Kuusela, bestand darin, daß er im *Tractatus* einen nützlichen *Vergleich* – nämlich Sätze als *Bilder* von Sachverhalten – in eine These darüber verwandelt hatte, was Sätze sein *müssen*. Was Kuusela an Baker und Hacker kritisiert, ist, daß sie die radikale Konsequenz für die Auflösung philosophischer Probleme übersehen, die Wittgenstein aus diesem Fehler zog. Baker und Hacker sehen es so, daß Wittgensteins Vergleich von Sprache mit einem Spiel nach festen Regeln (wie z.B. Schach) den Schluß zulasse, daß unserer alltäglicher Sprachgebrauch tatsächlich von solchen Regeln *geleitet* wird. Darüberhinaus glauben sie, Wittgenstein habe diesen Vergleich eingeführt, um der Tatsache Rechnung zu tragen, daß Sprechen immer auch *Handeln* ist. Kuusela stimmt Baker und Hacker darin zu, daß es bei der Auflösung eines philosophischen Problems hilfreich sein kann, den Gebrauch von Wörtern *in der Form von Regeln* zu beschreiben. Jedoch wendet Kuusela gegen Baker und Hacker ein, daß Wittgenstein Regeln immer nur als *Vergleichsobjekte* einsetzt. Kuusela zufolge war Wittgensteins Grund dafür, den Gebrauch von Wörtern in der Form von Regeln zu beschreiben nicht der, daß eine solche Art der Beschreibung den tatsächlichen Verhältnissen angemessener wäre (weil etwa Sprache tatsächlich regelgeleitet wäre) – sondern der, daß diese Art der Beschreibung von Nutzen sei, wenn es um die *Klärung* des Gebrauchs von Wörtern ginge. Kuusela kritisiert an Baker und Hackers Darstellung, daß sie Wittgensteins Art und Weise der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme an eine bestimmte Auffassung davon binde, wie Sprache *wirklich ist*. Wenn wir uns darüber klarwerden wollen, was es für den späten Wittgenstein hieß, vollkommen von einer Art und Weise der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme abzurücken, die in irgendeiner Weise an eine Antwort auf die Frage „Was sind die Bedingungen sinnvollen Sprechens?“ gebunden war, müssen wir, so Kuusela, einsehen, daß es sich bei Beschreibungen der Grammatik von Ausdrücken *in der Form von Regeln* um bloße *Modelle*

handelt. Diese Modelle spiegeln keine Eigenschaften des Untersuchungsgegenstandes wieder, sondern sind bloße Eigenschaften einer bestimmten *Darstellungsweise* – eine Darstellungsweise, die sich nicht auf einer bestimmten Idee davon gründet, wie Sprache sein *muß*, sondern allein auf ihren *Nutzen* bei der Auflösung begrifflicher Verwirrungen.

Eine wichtige Folge davon ist für Kuusela die Abwesenheit von *Hierarchien* in Wittgensteins Spätphilosophie. Im *Tractatus*, so Kuusela, hing die Auflösung *jedes* Problems (von Wittgenstein zunächst unbemerkt) an der Lösung des *einen* Problems „Was ist das Wesen des Satzes?“ In seiner Spätphilosophie, so Kuusela, reagierte Wittgenstein auf dieses Versäumnis, indem er die Auflösung eines jeden philosophischen Problems als gleichrangig ansah: die Auflösung irgendeines *einzelnen* Problems sollte nicht mehr als Grundlage der Auflösung *jedes anderen* Problems aufgefaßt werden. In diesem Zusammenhang kritisiert Kuusela die folgende Auffassung Baker und Hackers: Wittgenstein begründe die Tatsache, daß Sprechen ein Handeln nach Regeln sei, durch eine Klärung der Grammatik des Begriffs „Regel“ – und als Ergebnis dieser Klärung würde die Klärung der Grammatik von Ausdrücken bei ihm die Form einer Beschreibung eines (Sprach-)Spiels nach festen Regeln annehmen. Wie Kuusela zeigt, führt diese Idee in einen Regreß: wenn *jede* Klärung der Grammatik eines Ausdrucks auf der Tatsache aufbaut, daß Sprechen ein Handeln nach Regeln ist, dann müsse dies auf für die Klärung der Grammatik des Begriffs „Regel“ gelten. Das aber hieße, daß die Begründung dieser Tatsache (durch eben diese Klärung) voraussetze, daß diese Tatsache schon begründet ist. Also könne diese Tatsache niemals begründet werden. Kuusela nimmt dies als Bestätigung seiner Auffassung, daß im Rahmen von Wittgensteins Spätphilosophie die Untersuchung der Grammatik eines bestimmten *einzelnen* Ausdrucks niemals als Grundlage der Untersuchung der Grammatik *jedes* Ausdrucks fungieren kann. Für Wittgenstein, so Kuusela, gäbe es keine Grundbegriffe oder „Über-Begriffe“, deren Klärung das Fundament seiner Art und Weise der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme bildeten: jede einzelne Klärung der Grammatik eines Begriffs kann und muß für sich allein stehen, ohne sich auf das Ergebnis einer anderen Klärung dieser Art zu stützen.

In dieser Dissertation nehme ich Kuuselas Gedanken auf, daß ein volles Verständnis davon, wie Wittgenstein sein Ziel erreichen wollte, eine Art und Weise der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme zu entwickeln, die daran ansetzt, was wir mit unseren Worten *meinen*, ohne jedoch irgendwelche Thesen über *Sprache* und *Bedeutung* mit sich zu ziehen, erfordert, ein klares Bewußtsein davon zu entwickeln, wie Wittgenstein jegliche *Hierarchien* in seiner Philosophie zu vermeiden suchte. Meine Hauptfrage ist daher: Was bedeutet es einzusehen,

daß die Klärung der Grammatik *bestimmter* Begriffe von keinerlei Bedeutung für Wittgensteins Art und Weise der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme *an sich* sein kann? Werden Gustafssons und Kuuselas eigene Lesart dieser Einsicht vollkommen gerecht?

Unter diesem Blickwinkel befaße ich mich mit zwei Aspekten der Lesarten von Gustafsson und Kuusela. Bei Gustafsson befaße ich mich mit seiner Auffassung, die Auflösung philosophischer Probleme *an sich* „beruhe auf“ genau der Art von *Übereinstimmung*, die sich – im Zuge der Auflösung des Regelfolgen-Problems – als eine Voraussetzung für unsere Rede von „meinen“ und „bedeuten“ herausstellt. Bei Kuusela befaße ich mich mit der Verbindung, die er zwischen Wittgensteins Bemerkung zur Grammatik des Wortes „Bedeutung“ und seiner Art und Weise der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme im Allgemeinen zieht. Laut Kuusela ist „Bedeutung als Gebrauch“ eine Regel, die Wittgenstein als *Modell* einsetzt, um einen Aspekt des tatsächlichen Gebrauchs des Wortes „Bedeutung“ übersichtlich darzustellen. Außerdem sagt Kuusela, daß Wittgenstein, mit seiner Art und Weise der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme, welche Regeln für den *Gebrauch* von Ausdrücken angibt, diesem Modell von „Bedeutung als *Gebrauch*“ „folgt“.

In der vorliegenden Dissertation versuche ich zu zeigen, warum diese beiden Aspekte der Lesarten von Gustafsson und Kuusela noch zurückfallen hinter die Vision von Wittgenstein als einem Philosophen, dem es darum geht, (in Kuusela Sinne) *Hierarchien* zu vermeiden. Um diesen Punkt klar herauszubringen, wende ich mich in dieser Arbeit einer detaillierten Ausarbeitung des Unterschiedes zwischen dem zu, was im späten Wittgenstein mit der Auflösung *bestimmter* philosophischer Einzelprobleme zu tun hat, und dem, was mit der Auflösung solcher Probleme *im Allgemeinen* zu tun hat. Diese Unterscheidung verdeutliche ich am Beispiel der Begriffe „Gebrauch“, „Verwendung“ und „Anwendung“ (sowie „Übereinstimmung“): Wie ich zeige, läßt sich das Auftreten dieser Begriffe in Wittgensteins Spätphilosophie unterteilen in Fälle, wo es im Zusammenhang steht mit der Auflösung *bestimmter* Einzelprobleme, und Fälle, in denen es im Zusammenhang steht mit Auflösung philosophischer Probleme *im Allgemeinen*.

Als ersten Schritt zur Verdeutlichung dieses Unterschiedes wende ich mich Wittgensteins Bemerkungen zum Regelfolgen in den *Philosophischen Untersuchungen* zu. Ich zeige, wie in der Auflösung des Regelparadoxes Begriffe wie „Gebrauch“, „Verwendung“, „Anwendung“ auf zwei unterschiedlichen logischen Ebenen auftreten. Zunächst fasse ich zusammen, wie Wittgenstein das Paradox auflöst, indem er die Frage „Wie kann die Art und Weise, wie etwas *gemeint* ist, eindeutig eine bestimmte Anwendung bestimmen?“ dadurch angreift,

daß er fragt: „Wie wird denn bestimmt, wie etwas *gemeint* ist?“ So löst sich das scheinbare Problem auf, daß dadurch, daß wir beispielsweise „+2“ in einer ganz bestimmten Weise *meinen*, die weitere Anwendung von „+2“ nicht eindeutig bestimmt zu sein scheint: Denn wie sich herausstellt, ist gerade diese Anwendung das *Kriterium* dafür, daß wir sagen, daß „+2“ in einer bestimmten Weise „gemeint“ sei. Dann stelle ich heraus, wie der Begriff des „Gebrauchs“ in dieser Auflösung des Regelparadoxes erstens auf der Ebene einer *Frage* auftritt, und zweitens auf der Ebene der *Antwort* auf diese Frage. Als erstes fordert uns Wittgenstein auf, auf den tatsächlichen *Gebrauch* des Wortes „meinen“ zu achten – d.h., uns die Kriterien zu vergegenwärtigen, die wir gewöhnlich für „meinen“ gelten lassen. Als zweites zeigt uns Wittgenstein dann, daß im Beispiel von Lehrer und Schüler das Kriterium dafür, daß sie „+2“ jeweils *die ganze Zeit* so gemeint haben, daß daraus entweder 1000, 1002, 1004 oder 1000, 1004, 1008 folgt, in ihrem jeweiligen *Gebrauch* von „+2“ *nach 1000* besteht. Das Auftreten von „Gebrauch“ auf der Ebene der Frage „Wie *gebrauchen* wir gewöhnlich das Wort »meinen«?“ bezeichne ich hier als „Auftreten auf der Ebene der *Methode*“ („occurrence on the *methodological level*“). Von *diesem* Auftreten des Wortes „Gebrauch“ stelle ich fest, daß es nichts damit zu tun hat, daß hier das bestimmte Einzelproblem des Regelfolgens aufgelöst wird – denn Wittgenstein stellt uns die Frage „Wie *gebrauchen* wir gewöhnlich den Ausdruck X?“ auch bei der Auflösung *anderer* Probleme als dem des Regelfolgens. Diese Frage zu stellen ist eine seiner Methoden zur Auflösung philosophischer Probleme. Dagegen bezeichne ich das Auftreten des Wortes „Gebrauch“ in der *Antwort* auf diese Frage – beispielsweise in „Zu den Kriterien, die wir für unseren gewöhnlichen Gebrauch von »meinen« gelten lassen, gehört ein bestimmter *Gebrauch* von Formeln, Wörtern etc.“ – hier als „Auftreten auf der Ebene der *Kriterien*“ („occurrence on the *critical level*“). Von *diesem* Auftreten von „Gebrauch“ stelle ich fest, daß es ausschließlich damit zu tun hat, daß hier das bestimmte Einzelproblem des Regelfolgens aufgelöst wird: *Gebrauch* kommt hier als Kriterium für die Anwendung (Gebrauch) eines bestimmten einzelnen Wortes hinein: „meinen“. Dieses Auftreten von „Gebrauch“ ist daher an die Klärung dieses bestimmten Begriffs gebunden. Anschließend zeige ich, anhand von zwei von Wittgensteins eigenen Beispielen, daß diese beiden Ebenen, auf denen „Gebrauch“ auftritt, *logisch unabhängig* voneinander sind: Durch die Frage „Wie *gebrauchen* wir gewöhnlich den Ausdruck X?“ ist ein keiner Weise im Voraus bestimmt, daß zu den Kriterien, die wir gewöhnlich für die Anwendung (Gebrauch) von X gelten lassen, irgendeine Art des *Gebrauchs* oder der *Anwendung* gehören. Daß das im Falle von „meinen“ der Fall ist, ist bloßer Zufall.

Als zweiten Schritt zur Verdeutlichung des Unterschiedes zwischen diesen beiden Ebenen wende ich mich einem ersten Beispiel dafür zu, was geschieht, wenn diese Ebenen miteinander vermengt werden: Baker und Hackers Auffassung, Wittgensteins Bemerkungen zum Regelfolgen hätten eine besondere Bedeutung für sein Projekt der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme *an sich*. Baker und Hacker sehen es so, daß die Auflösung philosophischer Probleme auf das Angeben von Regeln der Grammatik hinausläuft, mit dem Ziel, „Verstöße“ gegen diese Regeln zu diagnostizieren. Ihnen zufolge haben Wittgensteins Bemerkungen zum Regelfolgen den Zweck, eine „entscheidende“ Frage bezüglich eben dieser Regeln zu beantworten, die der Philosoph bei der Auflösung *beliebiger* Probleme in Anschlag bringt – nämlich: „Wie genau wird sprachliches *Handeln* von Regeln der Grammatik bestimmt?“ Zum Status der Regelfolgen-Bemerkungen sagen sie, daß es sich dabei um Bemerkungen handelt, die die Regeln der Grammatik des Ausdrucks „einer Regel folgen“ klären. Gegen Baker und Hacker lege ich ein Argument dafür vor, daß die Idee, die Klärung der Regeln der Grammatik des *bestimmten einzelnen* Ausdrucks „einer Regel folgen“ könne eine *entscheidende* Frage über Regeln der Grammatik im Allgemeinen beantworten, auf einer Vermengung der beiden Ebenen basiert, auf denen der Begriff „Gebrauch“ in den Regelfolgen-Bemerkungen vorkommt. Dieses Argument wendet sich gegen einen starken und einen schwachen Sinn, warum es von „entscheidender“ Bedeutung für Wittgensteins Projekt der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme sein soll, die Antwort auf die Frage „Wie genau wird sprachliches Handeln von Regeln der Grammatik bestimmt?“ zu kennen. In einem starken Sinne „entscheidend“ wäre diese Frage, wenn die Antwort auf sie gegeben sein muß, damit überhaupt irgendeine Klärung der Regeln der Grammatik irgendeines Ausdrucks stattfinden kann. Wenn man von diesem *starken* Sinn ausgeht, führt Baker und Hackers Auffassung in einen *Regreß*: Da diese Frage selbst durch die Klärung von *Regeln der Grammatik* beantwortet werden soll, müßte sie beantwortet werden, *bevor* sie überhaupt durch eine Klärung der Regeln der Grammatik von „einer Regel folgen“ beantwortet werden könnte. Also könnte sie niemals beantwortet werden. In einem schwachen Sinne „entscheidend“ wäre die Frage „Wie genau wird sprachliches Handeln von Regeln der Grammatik bestimmt?“, wenn das Projekt der Klärung der Grammatik von Ausdrücken zwecks Auflösung philosophischer Probleme stattfinden könnte, ohne daß wir uns je einer Beantwortung dieser Frage zugewandt hätten – wir jedoch, durch Beantwortung dieser Frage, unser Verständnis der Regeln der Grammatik *beliebiger* Ausdrücke vertiefen könnten. Wenn man von diesem *schwachen* Sinn ausgeht, stellt sich Baker und Hackers Auffassung als inhärent *unvollständig* heraus: Falls die Frage „Wie genau bestimmen die Regeln der Grammatik des Ausdrucks X das Handeln in dem Sprachspiel mit X?“ für *alle*

Ausdrücke durch eine Klärung der Regeln der Grammatik des Ausdrucks „einer Regel folgen“ beantwortet werden soll, kann diese Frage für den Ausdruck „einer Regel folgen“ selbst *nicht* beantwortet werden. Baker und Hackers Fehler ist, das Auftreten von „Gebrauch“ in einer Bemerkung zur Grammatik von „einer Regel folgen“ wie „Regelfolgen setzt eine Praxis des *Gebrauchs* voraus“ in direkten Zusammenhang zu setzen mit dem Auftreten von „Gebrauch“ in der Frage „Was sind die Regeln für den *Gebrauch* von X?“ – welche in der Auflösung *beliebiger* philosophischer Probleme zum Einsatz kommt. So stellen sie eine direkte Verbindung zwischen Wittgensteins Bemerkungen zum Regelfolgen und seinem Projekt der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme an sich her. Wie sich aber gezeigt hatte, meint Wittgenstein mit einer Bemerkung zur Grammatik von „einer Regel folgen“ wie dieser in Wirklichkeit folgendes: „Zu den Kriterien für unseren *Gebrauch* des Ausdrucks »einer Regel folgen« gehört ein bestimmter *Gebrauch*“. „Gebrauch“ kommt hier also doppelt vor – nämlich einmal auf der Ebene der Kriterien und einmal auf der Ebene der Methode. Und da beide Vorkommen von „Gebrauch“ logisch unabhängig voneinander sind, kann nur *eines* von ihnen in direktem logischen Zusammenhang stehen zu der Frage „Was sind die Regeln für den *Gebrauch* von X?“ Was in einer solchen direkten Verbindung zu dem „Gebrauch“ in dieser Frage steht, ist nun aber nicht das *zweite* Auftreten von „Gebrauch“ in „Zu den Kriterien für unseren *Gebrauch* des Ausdrucks »einer Regel folgen« gehört ein bestimmter *Gebrauch*“, sondern das *erste*. Das zweite Auftreten von „Gebrauch“ in dieser grammatischen Bemerkung hat nichts mit der allgemeinen Frage nach den Regeln für den *Gebrauch* von Ausdrücken zu tun – sondern allein mit den *bestimmten* Regeln für den Gebrauch des *bestimmten* Ausdrucks „einer Regel folgen“. Also ist es eine Vermengung der Ebene der Kriterien mit der Ebene der Methode zu glauben – wie Baker und Hacker es tun –, daß das Auftreten von „Gebrauch“ in einer Bemerkungen wie „Regelfolgen setzt eine Praxis des *Gebrauch* voraus“ in direktem Zusammenhang mit Wittgensteins Art und Weise der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme stehen kann, in der nach den Regeln für den *Gebrauch* von Ausdrücken gefragt wird. *Eben weil* „Regelfolgen setzt eine Praxis des *Gebrauch* voraus“ eine Bemerkung über unseren *Gebrauch* von „einer Regel folgen“ ist, kann das Auftreten von „Gebrauch“ in ihr in keinem direkten Zusammenhang zur *Ebene der Methode* stehen.

Nachdem ich die zwei Ebenen unterschieden habe, auf denen „Gebrauch“, „Verwendung“ und „Anwendung“ bei der Auflösung des Regelparadoxes auftreten – nämlich erstens in der Frage „Wie *gebrauchen* wir gewöhnlich die Wörter »meinen« und »einer Regel folgen«?“ – d.h. in der Frage nach dem *Gebrauch* von Wörtern, die charakteristisch für Wittgen-

steins Art und Weise der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme *im Allgemeinen* ist – und zweitens in der Antwort auf diese Frage: „Zu den Kriterien, die wir für diesen gewöhnlichen Gebrauch von »meinen« und »einer Regel folgen« gelten lassen, gehört ein bestimmter *Gebrauch* von Formeln, Wörtern etc.“ – wo das Auftreten von „Gebrauch“ an die Auflösung des bestimmten Einzelproblems des Regelfolgens gebunden ist – wende ich mich Gustafsson und Kuusela zu.

Als erstes befaße ich mich mit Gustafssons Auffassung von der Bedeutung des Regelfolgen-Problems. Ein zentrales Anliegen Gustafssons ist es, die Rolle herauszubringen, die *Übereinstimmung* für Regelfolgen spielt. Wie Gustafsson hervorhebt, ist die Übereinstimmung der Sprecher in praktischen Urteilen darüber, ob „auf dieselbe Weise fortgefahren“ wurde, in dem Sinne eine Voraussetzung von Regelfolgen, in dem es den *Hintergrund* abgibt, vor dem die Rede von „meinen“ und „bedeuten“ allererst ihren Sinn erhält. Dieses grammatische Tatsache, die im Rahmen der Auflösung des *bestimmten* Einzelproblems des Regelfolgens herauskommt, wird nun von Gustafsson in Zusammenhang mit der Auflösung *beliebiger* Probleme gebracht. Gustafsson zufolge ist jener Hintergrund an *Übereinstimmung*, der eine Voraussetzung von unserer Rede von „meinen“ und „bedeuten“ ist, etwas, auf dem „die Diagnose eines philosophischen Problems [...] beruht“ – denn, so seine Version einer strengen Lesart, das Aufspüren von verdeckten Unterschieden zwischen den Arten, wie wir unsere Wörter meinen, ist eine wichtige Art der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme. Wie ich zeige, beruht diese Art der Verknüpfung der Rolle, die Übereinstimmung in der Praxis für unsere Rede von „meinen“ und „bedeuten“ spielt, mit der Rolle, die eine bestimmte Art der *Übereinstimmung* für die Auflösung philosophischer Probleme spielen mag, auf einer Verwechslung der logischen Ebene, auf der „Übereinstimmung“ in der Auflösung des Regelfolgen-Problems auftritt. Genau wie „Praxis“ oder „Gepflogenheit“, ist „Übereinstimmung“ eines der *Kriterien* für unseren Gebrauch von „meinen“ und „einer Regel folgen“. Gegen Gustafsson bringe ich dann das folgende Argument vor: Da die Auflösung des Regelfolgen-Problems die Auflösung eines *bestimmten* philosophischen Problems ist, trifft alles, was Gustafsson über die Rolle von *Übereinstimmung* für die Auflösung *beliebiger* Probleme durch Aufzeigen von „Verbindungen zwischen Begriffen“ sagt, auch auf dieses Problem zu. Dann aber müßte „Übereinstimmung“ in der Auflösung des Regelfolgen-Problems doppelt vorkommen: Erstens, als die *Übereinstimmung*, die sich als begrifflich mit „einer Regel folgen“ verbunden herausstellt – und zweitens, als die *Übereinstimmung*, die (als Hintergrund) die Voraussetzung dafür ist, daß unsere Rede davon, daß „einer Regel folgen“ mit „Übereinstimmung“ „*begrifflich verbunden*“ ist, überhaupt einen Sinn hat. So kommt heraus, daß die *erste* „Übereinstimmung“ –



die ein Kriterium für unsere Anwendung von „meinen“ (und „einer Regel folgen“) ist – in keinem direkten Zusammenhang zu der Ebene der Auflösung *beliebiger* philosophischer Probleme stehen kann – denn das gilt ja für die *zweite* „Übereinstimmung“ hier. Auf *ihr* müßte die Auflösung eben auch des Regelfolgen-Problems „beruhen“. Das zeigt, daß die *erste* Übereinstimmung – jene, deren Rolle im Zuge der Auflösung des Regelfolgen-Problems herauskommt – in keinem direkten Zusammenhang zur Ebene der Methode stehen kann, wie Gustafsson behauptet.

Als zweites befaße ich mich mit der Art der Verknüpfung, die Kuusela herstellt zwischen Wittgensteins Bemerkungen über einen Zusammenhang zwischen der Bedeutung von Wörtern und ihrem Gebrauch einerseits und seiner Art und Weise der philosophischen Klärung andererseits. In Bemerkungen wie PU 43 („Die Bedeutung eines Wortes ist sein Gebrauch in der Sprache“), so Kuusela, führt Wittgenstein „Bedeutung als Gebrauch“ als ein *Modell* ein, um einen Aspekt der tatsächlichen Verwendung des Wortes „Bedeutung“ übersichtlich darzustellen. Wenn wir den Status von Wittgensteins Bemerkungen über Bedeutung und Gebrauch auf diese Weise auffassen, so Kuusela, wird klar, daß Wittgenstein hier keine Thesen darüber aufstellt, was Bedeutung sein *muß*. Unter anderem sagt Kuusela auch, daß „Wittgensteins Auffassung von Bedeutung“ – womit er eine Gruppe von *Modellen* wie „Bedeutung als Gebrauch“ meint – mit „seiner Auffassung von Philosophie als die Klärung des Gebrauchs von Sprache“ „verbunden ist“. Wie ich herausbringe, läuft die „Verbindung“, von der Kuusela hier ausgeht, auf folgendes hinaus: Indem Wittgenstein eine Art der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme übernimmt, die in der Angabe von Regeln für den Gebrauch von Wörtern besteht, *folgt* er einem Modell – „Bedeutung als Gebrauch“ –, das er im Zuge der Untersuchung eines *bestimmten* Begriffs entwickelt hat: „Bedeutung“. Gegen Kuusela bringe ich ein Argument vor, das zeigt, daß diese Art der Erklärung, warum für Wittgenstein philosophische Klärung die Form der Angabe von Regeln für den *Gebrauch* von Wörtern annimmt, in einen Regreß führt. Kuusela zufolge *folgt* Wittgenstein, wenn er philosophische Probleme dadurch angeht, daß er Regeln für den *Gebrauch* der Wörter angibt (statt etwa mentale Zustände zu beschreiben, in denen wir uns befinden mögen) dem Modell „Bedeutung als *Gebrauch*“, welches sich als hilfreich erwiesen hat bei der übersichtlichen Darstellung der tatsächlichen Verwendung des Wortes „Bedeutung“. Mit anderen Worten: Laut Kuusela zieht Wittgenstein daraus, wie wir gewöhnlich das Wort „Bedeutung“ verwenden, eine Lehre für die Auflösung philosophischer Probleme im Allgemeinen: sie sollen mit Hilfe der Frage nach dem *gewöhnlichen Gebrauch* von Wörtern aufgelöst werden. Gegen diese Auffassung wende ich ein, daß hier nicht erklärt wird, warum Wittgenstein sich allererst mit dem *gewöhnlichen*

*Gebrauch* des Wortes „Bedeutung“ befaßt (statt etwa mit dem mentalen Zustand des Meinen) – aus dem er dann die Lehre zieht, sich mit dem *gewöhnlichen Gebrauch* von Wörtern zu befassen. Das zeigt, daß Kuuselas Wittgenstein, indem er zur Auflösung philosophischer Probleme nach dem *gewöhnlichen Gebrauch* von Wörtern fragt, nicht einem Modell folgen kann, daß er im Laufe der Untersuchung des *gewöhnlichen Gebrauchs* des *bestimmten* Wortes „Bedeutung“ entwickelt: denn dadurch, daß er überhaupt nach dem *gewöhnlichen Gebrauch* des Wortes „Bedeutung“ gefragt hat, hat er von jener Lehre, die er doch aus dieser Untersuchung erst ziehen soll, bereits *Gebrauch gemacht*. Kuuselas Auffassung von der Rolle grammatischer Bemerkungen über „Bedeutung“ (und mit ihr der des Modells „Bedeutung als Gebrauch“) führt daher in einen Regreß.

In meiner Analyse von Kuuselas Versäumnis stütze ich mich auf die Analyse des Wortlauts von PU 43, die von Conant in “Comment on Diamond’s ‘Unfolding Truth and Reading Wittgenstein’” (1999) vorgelegt wird. Dort weist Conant dem Begriff „Gebrauch“ (bzw. „Benützung“) in PU 43 zwei logische Rollen zu: Eine, die er auf der Ebene einer *Frage* spielt – Was ist der *gewöhnliche Gebrauch* (*Benützung*) des Wortes „Bedeutung“? – und eine, die er auf der Ebene der *Antwort* auf diese Frage spielt: Mit „Bedeutung eines Wortes“ meinen wir – in einer *großen* Klasse von Fällen – seinen *Gebrauch* in der Sprache. Es ist dieser logische Unterschied zwischen dem beiden Vorkommen von „Gebrauch“ / „Benützung“ in PU 43, die Kuusela nicht klar sieht. Kuusela stellt eine Verbindung her zwischen (1) „Um einen Aspekt des tatsächlichen *Gebrauchs* des Wortes »Bedeutung« übersichtlich darzustellen, führt Wittgenstein das Modell »Bedeutung als *Gebrauch*« ein“ und (2) „Für Wittgenstein nimmt philosophische Klärung die Form der Angabe von Regeln für den *Gebrauch* von Wörtern an“, indem er eine direkte Verbindung zieht zwischen dem *zweiten* Auftreten von „Gebrauch“ in (1) und seinem Auftreten in (2). Aber diese beiden Auftreten von „Gebrauch“ befinden sich überhaupt nicht auf derselben logischen Ebene – was sich stattdessen auf derselben Ebene befindet, ist das *erste* Auftreten von „Gebrauch“ in (1) und sein Auftreten in (2). Nur die Tatsache, daß Wittgenstein versucht, den tatsächlichen *Gebrauch* des Wortes „Bedeutung“ übersichtlich darzustellen, steht in direkter Verbindung zu seiner Art der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme im Allgemeinen – der zweite Schritt, bei dem sich das Modell „Bedeutung als Gebrauch“ als hilfreich bei einer solchen übersichtlichen Darstellung herausstellt, steht höchstens in indirekter Verbindung dazu. Aus diesem Versäumnis Kuuselas ziehe ich den Schluß, daß es für eine strenge Lesart des späten Wittgenstein nicht ausreicht, grammatische Bemerkungen über „Bedeutung“ wie PU 43 als das Vorbringen bloßer *Modelle* zu betrachten. Stattdessen müssen wir uns darüber klarwerden, daß *eben weil sie grammatische*

*Bemerkungen sind*, das Auftreten des Wortes „Gebrauch“ in einer Bemerkung wie „Die Bedeutung eines Wortes ist sein *Gebrauch* in der Sprache“ in keiner direkten Beziehung zu Wittgensteins Art der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme stehen kann, die ja am tatsächlichen *Gebrauch* von Wörtern ansetzt. Kuuselas Versäumnis besteht darin, daß er die Lehre aus seinem eigenen Regreßargument gegen Baker und Hacker bezüglich der Signifikanz grammatischer Bemerkungen über das Wort „Regel“ nicht konsequent auf den Fall grammatischer Bemerkungen über das Wort „Bedeutung“ anwendet.

Als Unterschied zwischen Kuuselas Versäumnis und dem von Baker und Hacker bringe ich dann heraus, daß Wittgenstein *einige* seiner Bemerkung über Bedeutung und Gebrauch (bzw. Sinn und Verwendung) tatsächlich als direkt auf seine Art der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme (über die Frage nach dem Gebrauch bzw. der Verwendung von Wörtern) bezogen gemeint hat. Als ein Beispiel für eine solche *globale* Bemerkung über Bedeutung und Gebrauch gebe ich PU 117: „Wenn z.B. Einer sagt, der Satz »Dies ist hier« (wobei er vor sich hin auf einen Gegenstand zeigt) habe für ihn Sinn, so möge er sich fragen, unter welchen besonderen Umständen man diesen Satz tatsächlich verwendet. In diesen hat er dann Sinn.“ Hier wird durch den Kontext (insbesondere PU 116) klar, daß Wittgenstein, wenn er hier etwas sagt wie „Ein Satz hat Sinn in den besonderen Umständen, in denen man ihn tatsächlich *verwendet*“, er das Auftreten von „Verwendung“ hier als direkt verbunden sieht mit dessen Auftreten in der Frage „Wie *verwenden* wir gewöhnlich den Ausdruck X?“, die ja bei der Auflösung *beliebiger* Probleme zum Einsatz kommt. Ich schließe daraus, daß Bemerkungen wie PU 117 daher als direkt mit Wittgensteins Art der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme *an sich* verbunden aufgefaßt werden müssen. Wie ich zeige, kann nun aber, eben *weil* diese direkte Verbindung besteht, PU 117 *keine* grammatische Bemerkung sein: Denn wenn wir sie durch eine grammatische Bemerkung über „Sinn“ nach dem Muster von PU 43 ersetzen würden (etwa durch „Gemäß dem, wie wir das Wort »Sinn« gewöhnlich *verwenden*, meinen wir mit »der Sinn eines Satzes« die tatsächliche *Verwendung* des Satzes in besonderen Umständen“), würden wir bloß die direkte Verbindung zwischen der zweiten „Verwendung“ hier und der in „Wir führen die Wörter von ihrer metaphysischen, wieder auf ihre alltägliche Verwendung zurück“ (PU 116) unterbrechen (da sie auf die *erste* „Verwendung“ übergehen würde) – eine Verbindung, die Wittgenstein aber offenbar ziehen will. Aus alledem ziehe ich dann den Schluß, daß Wittgensteins Bemerkungen über Bedeutung und Gebrauch in zwei Kategorien eingeteilt werden müssen: *Lokale* (wie PU 43), die im Dienst der Auflösung *bestimmter* Einzelprobleme um „Bedeutung“ stehen – und *globale* (wie PU 117), deren Rolle es ist, Wittgensteins allgemeine Frage „Wie verwenden wir gewöhnlich den Ausdruck X?“ zu *begleiten*.

Zum Schluß untersuche ich die Auswirkung, die das Scheitern von Kuuselas Versuch, *alle* Bemerkungen Wittgensteins über Bedeutung und Gebrauch als Bemerkungen zur Grammatik des Wortes „Bedeutung“ zu erklären, für die Frage hat, wie Wittgenstein sein Ziel zu erreichen suchte, eine Art der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme zu entwickeln, die an keine *Thesen* über Sprache und Bedeutung gebunden ist. Die Frage, die sich stellt, ist: Sind Bemerkungen wie PU 117 – da sie nicht *grammatischer* Natur sein können – Aussagen über das Wesen der Bedeutung o.ä.? Ich gehe diese Frage dadurch an, daß ich die *praktische Funktion* untersuche, die globale Bemerkungen über Bedeutung und Gebrauch bei der Auflösung bestimmter Einzelprobleme spielen. Wie ich zeige, wird Wittgensteins wiederkehrende Frage „Wie wird dieser Ausdruck gewöhnlich *verwendet*?“ in vielen Fällen *nicht* von einer globalen Bemerkung über Bedeutung und Gebrauch wie PU 117 begleitet. Dies nehme ich als Bestätigung der Tatsache, daß diese Frage die für die Auflösung eines philosophischen Problems erforderliche Klärung für sich allein bewerkstelligen kann, ohne durch irgendeine Wahrheit über einen Zusammenhang zwischen der Bedeutung von Ausdrücken und ihrem *Gebrauch* gestützt werden zu müssen. Da es keinen Fall gibt, in dem solche *globalen* Bemerkung über Bedeutung und Gebrauch für die Auflösung eines philosophischen Problems unabdingbar sind, ziehe ich den Schluß, daß, worauf auch immer Wittgenstein sich in Bemerkungen wie PU 117 bezieht, es nur etwas sehr Triviales sein kann. Daher, so mein Schluß, stellen die globalen Bemerkung über Bedeutung und Gebrauch in seinem Spätwerk keine Gefahr dar für das Bild Wittgensteins als eines Philosophen, der eine Art der Auflösung philosophischer Probleme entwickelt hat, die an keine *Thesen* über Sprache und Bedeutung gebunden ist.

## **Eidesstattliche Erklärung**

Hiermit versichere ich an Eides statt, daß ich die vorliegende Dissertation ohne fremde Hilfe angefertigt und keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt habe. Alle Teile, die wörtlich oder sinngemäß einer Veröffentlichung entstammen, sind als solche kenntlich gemacht.

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