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Hrsg.

Realismus – Relativismus – Konstruktivismus  
Realism – Relativism – Constructivism

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Contributions

38. Internationales Wittgenstein Symposium

38<sup>th</sup> International Wittgenstein Symposium

Kirchberg am Wechsel

9. – 15. August 2015

# **Realismus – Relativismus – Konstruktivismus**

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# The Essential in a Proposition: Reading that which is Common to *Tractatus* 3.341-3.344

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## Abstract

In *Tractatus* 3.34 Wittgenstein asserted the difference between essential and accidental features possessed by a proposition. He developed this difference on 3.341, 3.342, 3.343 and 3.344, a group of propositions characterized by a range of formal and textual assonances. In this article I show how we cannot understand the coherent and harmonic development of these sentences if we will read proposition 3.34 and succeeding by asserting them as single pieces of evidence. This issue arises only if we look at 3.341-3.344 not in the sequence showed by the published editions of the *Tractatus*, but as a level of detail in a hypertext, according to Luciano Bazzocchi's hermeneutical tree-like reading.

To the core of the *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus* (Wittgenstein 1961), while he was probing in deeper identity between logical picture of facts and thought, Wittgenstein itemized the implications of the perceptible expression of the thought through propositional sign. Among these implications, proposition 3.3 shows an unequivocal semicolon to convey different representational tasks performed by proposition and name: only the first one has a sense, by representing a manifold portion of the world, instead names are involved within the proposition like links in a chain and denote objects. In other words Wittgenstein means proposition as a complex formed by sections denoting something: it allowed to the proposition itself to project its sense on the world. This relationship shows up from the perceptible disguise, written or sound, by means the propositional sign express its sense (3.32) and produce philosophical misunderstandings and misapprehension (3.324) due to the fact that different symbols - i.e. propositions representing distinct states of affairs - may share the same propositional sign (3.321). As Wittgenstein lapidary says in 3.322 "the sign is arbitrary" (willkürlich).

Nevertheless we could avoid or eventually reduce chances of misunderstanding employing a relevant symbolism, such as Fregean Begriffsschrift, a symbolism which obey to the rules of logical syntax (3.325). In order to get this elucidating target we could be able to discern within the proposition what is the accidental appearance from what arise in its logical analysis and as result represents its immanent essential features (McGinn 2006, 172). As Brian McGuinness wrote, Wittgenstein "wants to bring out in the *Tractatus* that philosophy and logic have to do not with a special realm of objects but with the necessary features of language – that is to say of any language whatsoever" (McGuinness 2002, 86).

We cannot understand this coherent development if we will read proposition 3.34 and succeeding by asserting single proposition as single pieces of evidence; this issue arise only if we look at 3.341-3.344 as a level of detail in a hypertext. On this way proposition 3.34 stand for the fourth comment to the link 3.3, in turn linked with the cardinal proposition 3. A hermeneutical approach hypertext-based is claimed in Luciano Bazzocchi's tree-like edition of the *Tractatus* (Wittgenstein 2014). On this hermeneutical way Wittgenstein's masterpiece must be read following the numbering system appointed by the lonely asterisked note to proposition 1:

The decimal numbers assigned to the individual propositions indicate the logical importance [Gewicht] of the

propositions – the stress laid on them in my exposition. The propositions n.1, n.2, n.3, etc. are comments on propositions no. n; the propositions n.m1, n.m2, etc. are comments on propositions no. n.m; and so on. (Wittgenstein 1961, 7).

This reading order should reflect composition of previous and manifold thoughts on logic, nature of language, world, ethic and philosophy, that Wittgenstein remarked in his notebooks since 1913 (Sullivan and Potter, 2013; Kang, 2005). Otherwise, Bazzocchi says that tree-like development of the work is attested by the numerical progression attendant Nachlass manuscript known as Ms104, partly published as *Prototractatus* (Wittgenstein 1971), that was the result, and the testimony, of an accurate work of refining and tuning, carried on from spring 1915 until summer 1918. This is to say that *Tractatus* is not a traditional sequential book but a hierarchical object composed following a top-down strategy (Bazzocchi 2015). Starting from page 28 of Ms104 Wittgenstein collected many notes while he was realising the perspicuous tree-like version of the *Tractatus* manuscript in a "summary on scattered sheets" (Wittgenstein 1974, 64; Bazzocchi 2006). Thereafter, the reader must look at text following this logical-tree in order to grasp its systematic model and its consistency, sliding from the seven cardinal sentences to their limbs, recognizing their importance or as Wittgenstein says their "logical importance" by means of the numbering system. As Peter Hacker put the question:

The *Tractatus* is not the presentation of a logical system, but of a logico-philosophical treatise (*Abhandlung*) concerned above all with the essence of representation in general and with the essential nature of the proposition in particular, with logic, its nature and its metaphysical presuppositions and implications, and with the limits of language (Hacker 2015).

Hence, the limb 3.341-3.344, concerning the essential features in a proposition, must be situated within the frame of the remarks on 3.3 - i.e. sentences 3.31-3.35 – whereby which Wittgenstein probes the dissimilarity passing among the representative task of the propositional sign and the denoting one of the names. However, if we read the limb 3.341-3.344 in the sequential order of the published text, we should break the limb by reading in its core two sentences: 3.3411, concerning the "real name", as the name that all symbols have in common to signify an object and 3.3421, a remark about how possibility is philosophically important for a method of symbolizing. In one of the last accounts about the philosophical frame of the *Tractatus*,

Matthew Ostrow supports a sort of sequential reading of that kind (Ostrow 2004, 72): sentences 3.341-3.3411 are treated like “the culmination of the discussion of the 3s”. From their sequential reading Ostrow elicits, in a very anti-realist hermeneutical approach, that “the “essential” in a symbol or expression is just another way of speaking of its *Bedeutung*”, then names - linked each other within the proposition – will not signify objects “in an ordinary sense of the term but an internal feature of our own language”. Reading 3.341-3.3411 as a sequence, Ostrow is led to link “the essential” of the first sentence with the remark on the “real name” in the second, misleading on this way what Wittgenstein really means.

On the contrary we should read 3.341 as the first sentence of a limb flowing in 3.344 that concerns a deeper study about what Wittgenstein means with essential features in a proposition. Only in this case we can appreciate the overall harmonic impression:

3.341 The essential in a proposition is therefore that which is common to all propositions which can express the same sense.

And in the same way in general the essential in a symbol is that which all symbols which can fulfil the same purpose have in common.

3.342 In our notations there is indeed something arbitrary, but this is not arbitrary, namely that if we have determined anything arbitrarily, then something else must be the case. (This results from the essence of the notation.)

3.343 Definitions are rules for the translation of one language into another. Every correct symbolism must be translatable into every other according to such rules. It is this which all have in common.

3.344 What signifies in the symbol is what is common to all those symbols by which it can be replaced according to the rules of logical syntax.

Reading 3.341-3.344 as an unitary limb disclose us a range of formal correspondences which shows the co-gency of an overall reading, in which the single elements concur to model the sense and the shape of the whole sequence. On the upper limb, 3.31-3.35, Wittgenstein has defined symbol or expression every element that identify the sense of the proposition, this is to say proposition itself in its entirety. Now, on lower limb 3.341-3.344, he opens and closes itemizing “that which is in common to all propositions” (3.341) or “what is in common to all those symbols” (3.344), as expression of “the essential” (*das Wesentliche*) in a proposition. So, what is common to all propositions, their essential, is something (this, that occurs in 3.342-3.343) which allows to translate a proposition from a symbolism to another. As the use of the italic emphasizes in 3.342-3.343, “this” denotes what within the symbolism is not arbitrary: the rules of translation from a symbolism to another, definitions by means we can recognize the sense of a proposition independently from its accidental features, in other words what is the essence of the symbolism.

Hence “what is in common to all those symbols” (3.344) is what allows them to “fulfill the same purpose have in common” (3.341), this is to say the rules of the logical analysis. In a strictly argumentative sequence Wittgenstein is going to identify the essential features of proposition from what is in common to those all symbols which have the same expressive purpose (3.341), to what in a symbolism is not arbitrary (3.342). Therefore allows translate a symbol from a kind of symbolism to another without dis-

guising its sense (3.343). Finally concludes that the rules of translation of all those symbols which have in common the same sense independently from the symbolism by means we are expressing their sense are the rules of the logical syntax (3.344). In order to get completeness and an organic model Wittgenstein opens and closes the limb discussing what is in common to all those symbols sharing the same purpose, first checking this point on the level of the internal relations between symbols within the same kind of symbolism and then spreading this check to all possible kind of symbolism. He gets this purpose through a textual formal game grounded on repeats (“which is in common to all propositions/what is in common to all those symbols”), mirroring (“rules of translation/rules of logical syntax”), emphatic use of the italic (“this/this, essence”).

If we take back the sequential reading we should read after proposition 3.342 3.3421, misleading the intentional mirroring between the italic of “this” in 3.342 e that one in 3.343. On this way we should read the “thousandth” note linked to the limb 3.341-3.344 not as a stoppage on the devious route of the page, but as a deeper and inclusive point of view about 3.341-3.344 themes. Accordingly to this 3.3411 moves deeper its point of view on the essential features in a proposition passing from the thematic level of the proposition to that of the “real name”, instead 3.3421 spreads the sight again as it concerns the philosophical significance of possibility for a method of symbolizing. By breaking 3.341-3.344 limb with these two sentences, the sequential reading enables us to catch the sophisticated formal plot by means of which Wittgenstein shows “the essential” in the proposition.

Moreover, the chronology and the location of the limb 3.341-3.344 in the proceeding of the Wittgenstein's composition work confirm the overall reading showed above (Bazzocchi 2010, 91ff). 3.341 is wrote for the first time on page 25 of the Ms104, previously that Wittgenstein had started to arrange the sentences according to numbering order. It was “broke” in two different sentences: the first one from “The essential in a proposition” to “have in common” was marked with number 3.24, the second from “And in the same way” to the end was instead marked with 3.241. Reading Ms104 over and over we can find at page 44 the sentence that on the *Tractatus* has the code 3.342 but here is recovered from a note dictated to Moore in April 1914 and has the code 3.242. At page 50 lies a sentence marked with 3.25, that on Ms104 ends 3.2s limb: it will become proposition 3.343. Finally, at page 55 we reach to 3.251, the last proposition on our limb, that is to say 3.344 of the *Tractatus*.

Therefore, all these remarks are elements of a system that originally, maybe starting from spring 1915, was marked in Ms104 with 3.2s codes. Distance and apparently chaos by means of Wittgenstein noted these sentences on Ms104 indicate the proceeding of a composition in fieri and its great author's compositional work. Wittgenstein could not stray and at the same time get the overall harmonic result arising from 3.341-3.344 only if arranging its masterpiece had with him a tree-like text in which putting its numbering marked remarks.

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# „Die Furcht vor dem Tode ist das beste Zeichen eines falschen, d.h. schlechten Lebens.“ – Ludwig Wittgensteins Suche nach dem Sinn des Lebens inmitten des Ersten Weltkriegs

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## Abstract

Ludwig Wittgenstein gezielt in den Kontext des großen Kriegs von 1914-1918 zu stellen, der sich seit dem letzten Jahr nun zum hundertsten Male jährt, ist äußerst reizvoll: Denn Wittgensteins Erleben dieses Kriegs, den wir heute den Ersten Weltkrieg nennen, ist derart maßgeblich für dessen Philosophie, dass insbesondere der *Tractatus* als Frühwerk kaum ohne das einschlägige Ereignis denkbar ist.

Im Frühsommer 1914 lassen weder Wittgensteins Tagebuch noch seine Briefe erahnen, dass er sich wenige Wochen später als Soldat an der Front wiederfinden wird. Von der aufkommenden Kriegsgefahr ist in den Einträgen ebenso wenig wie von einer Kriegseuphorie zu spüren. Im Juni 1914 wohnt er auf der Hochreith, dem Landhaus der großbürgerlichen Familie in Niederösterreich, wo er den Frühsommer verbringen will. Erst im Spätsommer ist ein Urlaub mit seinem Freund David Pinsent angedacht. Im Herbst plant er nach Norwegen zu reisen, um das selbst entworfene neu gebaute Holzhaus zu beziehen und seine in Cambridge bei Bertrand Russell begonnenen Studien fertig zu stellen. Selbst nach dem Attentat auf den österreichischen Thronfolger und seine Gattin sowie nach den ersten Truppenmobilisierungen beschäftigen sich Wittgenstein und Pinsent in ihrer Korrespondenz vornehmlich mit ihren Reiseplänen (vgl. Monk 1992, 123). Nur beiläufig erwähnt Pinsent am 29.7.14 in einem Brief, indem er den Treffpunkt am 24. August in London bestätigt, dass sie vielleicht „in Anbetracht des europäischen Säbelrasseln“ nicht nach Andorra fahren sollten, da die Rückkehr Schwierigkeiten bereiten könnte (vgl. Pinsent 1994, 164f).

## Der Einbruch des Weltkriegs in Wittgensteins Alltag

Offensichtlich waren sowohl Ludwig Wittgenstein als auch sein Umfeld bei Kriegsbeginn davon ausgegangen, dass dieser in überschaubarer Zeit, einem Intermezzo gleich, beendet wäre. Dafür spricht die Unbekümmertheit mit der die Urlaubspläne forciert wurden. Die nachfolgenden Briefe und Tagebucheinträge bestätigen dies ebenso. Die Grüße in den Schreiben sind anfänglich meist mit der Hoffnung auf baldiges Wiedersehen verbunden, etwas, was mit zunehmender Kriegsdauer zugunsten des abstrakteren Wunsches auf ein Wiedersehen verschwindet. *En passant* teilt Wittgenstein Ludwig von Ficker seinen Kriegseintritt am 14.8.14 in einem Nebensatz mit: „Ich möchte Ihnen nur mitteilen, daß ich freiwillig auf Kriegsdauer zum Militär gegangen bin und daß meine Adresse für eventuelle Mitteilungen jetzt ist: Festungsartillerie Regiment Nr. 2, 2. Kader, *Krakau*.“ (CLF 1969, 14)

Kritischere Töne werden erst von Pinsent im Dezember 1914 angeschlagen: „Ich finde es *großartig* von Dir, daß Du freiwillig eingerückt bist – aber schrecklich tragisch, daß so etwas überhaupt nötig ist.“ (Pinsent 1994, 166) Im März 1915 wird letzterem langsam die verfahrenere Lage bewusst: „Ich bete zu Gott, daß diese schreckliche Tragö-

die bald zu Ende ist und sehne mich danach, Dich wiederzusehen.“ (ebd., 169) Im Mai 1916 erreicht der Kriegshorror endgültig den Briefwechsel der beiden Freunde, denn Pinsents Bruder war gefallen. Auch Wittgenstein erlebte die Grausamkeit des Kriegs hautnah, wie ein Kommentar Pinsents verdeutlicht: „[E]s tut mir so schrecklich leid für Dich, wenn ich von Dir vernehme, daß Du kürzlich schwere Zeiten durchzumachen gehabt hast.“ (ebd., 174) Zugleich sieht Pinsent sich bemüßigt, Wittgenstein zu versichern, dass der Krieg ihrer Vaterländer nicht ihre Beziehung tangiere: „Der Krieg kann unsere persönlichen Verbindungen nicht ändern, eigentlich hat er gar nichts mit persönlichen Verbindungen zu tun.“ (ebd., 174)

Die Wucht, mit der der Weltkrieg verspätet, aber dann massiv und unmittelbar in das Leben Ludwig Wittgensteins, seiner Familie und Freunde eingriff, zeigt deren Defizit an politischem Interesse im Vorfeld. Nach dem Tod des Vaters war Politik im Hause Wittgenstein kein Thema mehr. Während der Geschäftsmann Karl Wittgenstein ein Sensorium für Umwälzungen besaß, wie der Transfer eines Großteils seines Vermögens nach dem Rückzug aus dem Geschäftsleben in die Vereinigten Staaten bewies, wodurch er es vor den kriegsbedingten Vermögensverlusten sowie der Inflation rettete, wurde nach dessen Tod 1913 die künstlerisch orientierte Familie unverhofft von den politischen Ereignissen getroffen (vgl. Vossenkühl 1995, 20).

Vom Vater, einem Eisen- und Stahlmagnat, erbte Ludwig ein beträchtliches Vermögen. Am 14.7.14 schreibt der junge Großerbe an Ludwig von Ficker, Herausgeber der Innsbrucker Zeitschrift *Der Brenner*, und bietet an, etwa ein Drittel seines Erbes zur Verfügung zu stellen, wenn dieser die Summe an unbemittelte Künstler nach seinem Gutdünken verteile. (Wuchterl/Hübner 1998, 21; 51) An dem Wochenende, als sich Wittgenstein mit von Ficker über die Zuteilung der Spende beriet, entschied sich die Zukunft Österreich-Ungarns: Am 23. Juli wurde Serbien ein Ultimatum bis zum 25. Juli gestellt. Am 28. Juli erklärte Österreich-Ungarn Serbien den Krieg. Bevor Wittgenstein für sein Vaterland einrückte, soll er versucht haben, dieses – vermutlich in Richtung Norwegen oder England – zu verlassen. Als ihm die Ausreise verwehrt wurde, meldete er sich kurzerhand freiwillig zur Armee (vgl. Monk 1992, 124; 128f). Dies zeigt, dass Wittgenstein weder kriegsbegeistert zur Landesverteidigung eilte, noch als Kriegsgegner sich diesem entziehen wollte. Der Krieg war für ihn wohl eine Art schicksalhafte Vorsehung.

Wittgenstein war am 7.8.14 als Soldat eingezogen und einem Artillerieregiment nahe Krakau zugeteilt worden, wo er bereits zwei Tage später stationiert war (vgl. McGuinness 1988, 210f; vgl. Iven 2002, 107). Im Verlauf des Kriegs wurde er hoch dekoriert, erhielt diverse Tapferkeitsmedaillen und überstand diesen körperlich unverehrt. 1916 wurde er zum Offizier ernannt. Zuerst an der Ostfront eingesetzt, wurde er im März 1918 an die italienische Front verlegt, wo er Anfang November in Kriegsgefangenschaft geriet. Während des Kriegs schrieb er an den Studien weiter, die er 1911/12 in Cambridge unter Russell in Angriff genommen hatte und die als *Tractatus* Weltruhm erlangen sollten. Noch an der Front beendete er im August 1918 sein einziges zu Lebzeiten veröffentlichtes Buch (vgl. Wright, 84; 97).

## Die Suche nach Heilung durch den Krieg

Wittgensteins Credo im Krieg lässt sich seinem Tagebuch vom 8.7.16 entnehmen: „Wer glücklich ist, der darf keine Furcht haben. Auch nicht vor dem Tode.“ (TB 8.7.16.) Die Todesangst ist der Indikator für eine moralisch falsche Lebensführung, denn „[d]ie Furcht vor dem Tode ist das beste Zeichen eines falschen, d.h. schlechten Lebens.“ (ebd.) Dieses falsch geführte Leben begründet sich darin, dass derjenige, der „den Zweck des Daseins“ erfüllt, „keinen Zweck außer dem Leben mehr braucht.“ (TB 6.7.16.) Hierin folgt Wittgenstein Dostojewski, der betont, „daß der, welcher glücklich ist, den Zweck des Daseins erfüllt.“ (ebd.)

Dieses Leitmotiv, welches Wittgenstein im Kriegsverlauf zwischen Todessehnsucht und -verachtung oszillieren ließ, war die Grundlage seines Kriegsvoluntarismus. Er war weder kriegsbegeistert noch bewunderte er militärische Herrlichkeit. Es war auch kein Hurra-Patriotismus, der ihn zum Militärdienst bewegte. Vielmehr war es der Wunsch nach Selbstprüfung, ob er angesichts des Todes um sein Leben fürchten würde und demnach ein „falsches Leben“ führte. Ihm ging es um Selbstreinigung im christlichen Sinne der Buße, des Opfers und der reinigenden Vergebung. Die *Geheimen Tagebücher* belegen dies.

Hierin unterscheidet sich Wittgenstein von vielen intellektuellen Zeitgenossen, die aufgrund des gefühlten Niedergangs von Zivilisation und Kultur den Krieg als „reinigendes Gewitter“ herbeisehnten, aus der eine neue Gesellschaft hervorgehen sollte, die die überkommenen gesellschaftlichen Zwänge und Normen beseitigen, neue gesellschaftliche Kräfte wecken und sozialen Ausgleich ermöglichen sollte (vgl. Dogramaci/Weimar 2014). Er erhoffte sich vom Krieg keine Veränderung der bestehenden Verhältnisse. Ihm ging es ausschließlich um „eine Feuerprobe des Charakters eben darum, weil so viel Kraft dazu gehört, die gute Stimmung + die Energie nicht zu verlieren.“ (GT 1992, 14)

Wittgenstein wollte moralischen Rigorismus in christlicher Tradition in sich vereinen, um den richtigen Weg im Leben zu finden. Es waren persönliche Motive, die Wittgenstein in den Krieg ziehen ließen, nicht um Österreich zu dienen, sondern um ein gutes Leben zu führen und sich selbst zu läutern (vgl. GT 1992, 74). Gemein mit vielen Intellektuellen ist ihm, dass sie auf den Schlachtfeldern physische und psychische Grenzsituationen erleben wollten, die sie als Erfahrung bereichern sowie neue Erkenntnisse stiften sollten.

Für Wittgenstein war dem Sinn des Lebens weder mit rationalen noch mit kognitiven Mitteln beizukommen. Erst der Krieg gab seiner Existenz die Intensität, die die Klärung

der Lebensfrage erforderte. Insofern betrachtete er diesen als Chance: „Jetzt wäre mir Gelegenheit gegeben, ein anständiger Mensch zu sein, denn ich stehe vor dem Tod Aug in Auge. Möge der Geist mich erleuchten.“ (GT 1992, 22) Die Angst um das eigene Leben stand wie z.B. am 24.7.16 selten im Vordergrund: „Werden beschossen. Und bei jedem Schuss zuckt meine Seele zusammen. Ich möchte so gerne noch weiter leben!“ (GT 1992, 73) Noch nachdrücklicher wenige Tage später am 29.7.:

Wurde gestern beschossen. War verzagt. Ich hatte Angst vor dem Tode. Solch einen Wunsch habe ich jetzt, zu leben! Und es ist schwer, auf das Leben zu verzichten, wenn man es / einmal gern hat. Das ist eben „Sünde“, unvernünftiges Leben, falsche Lebensauffassung. (GT 1992, 74)

Todesangst wird hierbei mit Schuld gleichgesetzt, zugleich wird das nackte Grauen und die Todesnähe als existenzielle Grenzerfahrung nüchtern emotionslos abgehandelt, gewissermaßen sublimiert: „Wittgenstein hat sich dem Krieg mit einer bis ins Autistische gesteigerten Emotionslosigkeit genähert, dem Primat des Abstrakten, der strengen Objektivierung, des mathematisch-logischen Kalküls folgend. Er schien somit die Tugenden und Fähigkeiten eines neuen ‚intellektuellen‘ Kämpfers entwickelt zu haben, so wie sie Wucht und Destruktionsgewalt des technologiebestimmten, modernen, anonymisierten Maschinenkrieges gleichsam aus sich heraus erforderten.“ (Maderthaler/Hochedlinger 2013, 21f)

Die von Wittgenstein bis zum Lebensende angestrebte Selbstreinigung hatte geradezu pathologische Züge. Selbst aus dem Gefangenenlager schreibt er seiner Schwester Hermine am 25.6.19: „Ich arbeite nicht und denke immer daran, ob ich einmal ein anständiger Mensch sein werde und wie ich es anstellen soll.“ (McGuinness et al. 1996, 61) Am 18.7.19 antwortet sie: „Dass Du Dich abärgerst und abstrapazierst ein anständiger Mensch zu sein, freut und kränkt mich gleichzeitig; denn ich weiss, dass das bei Dir zur fixen Idee wird, dass nur die Leute mit fixen Ideen etwas aussergewöhnliches Zustande bringen, dass aber so ein Mensch mit einer fixen Idee, der er natürlich nie genügen kann, meistens unglücklich und für seine Umgebung – sofern sie nicht in seiner Richtung sich bewegt – verloren ist.“ (ebd., 62)

Zweifelsohne war es Wittgensteins fixe Idee, ein bedeutendes philosophisches Werk zu hinterlassen. Der Krieg legte einerseits von außen einen von ihm begrüßten Selbstdisziplinierungszwang auf, andererseits war es sein eiserner Kampf um geistiges Arbeiten im Kriegsgeschehen, der ihm half, die volle Strecke des Weltkriegs zu überstehen. Letztlich war die philosophische Arbeit die grundlegende Bedingung für ihn, um das Leben an den als galizische Todesgruben bezeichneten Frontabschnitten überhaupt ertragen zu können. Zugleich diente der Krieg als ultimative Inspirationsquelle, um „ein anderer Mensch zu werden, eine religiöse Erfahrung zu machen, die sein Leben unwiderruflich verändern würde.“ (Monk 1992, 130)

## Der Krieg als „Gärungsstoff für's Arbeiten“

Bereits in der ersten Kriegstagebucheintragung vom 9.8.14 heißt es: „Werde ich jetzt arbeiten können?? Bin gespannt auf mein kommendes Leben.“ (GT 1992, 14) Geradezu besessen wird der Krieg Wittgenstein zum Mittel, um zum Wesen der Welt vorzudringen. Anfänglich wird jede freie Minute in die Arbeit am Manuskript gesteckt: „Ich kann in einer Stunde sterben, ich kann in zwei Stunden sterben, ich kann in einem Monat sterben oder erst in ein



paar Jahren. Ich kann es nicht wissen und nichts dafür oder dagegen tun: *So ist dieses Leben*. Wie muß ich also leben, um in jedem Augenblick zu bestehen?“ (GT 1992, 28)

Trotz des Festhaltens an der Arbeit als Suche nach dem Lebenssinn war Wittgenstein während des Kriegs selbstmordgefährdet, wie die *Geheimen Tagebücher* dokumentieren. Wie er Ficker am 24.7.15 verriet, rettete ihn Tolstois Werk *Kurze Erläuterung des Evangeliums*, das er im ersten Kriegsmonat in einem galizischen Buchladen entdeckt hatte: „Dieses Buch hat mich seinerzeit geradezu am Leben erhalten.“ (CLF 1969, 28)

Wittgensteins Trieb ständig ans Äußerste zu gehen, die Gefahr des Abgleitens in Depressionen war seiner Schwester Hermine bekannt, die am 1.3.17 besorgt fragt: „Wie ist es denn mit Deiner Arbeit? Dass Du besser und gescheiter sein willst deutet nur darauf hin dass Du mit Dir nicht zufrieden bist, aber hoffentlich nicht bis zu einer wirklichen Depression sondern nur so weit als es als Gärungstoff für's Arbeiten nötig ist?“ (McGuinness et al. 1996, 32) Genau hier, an der Frontlinie zwischen Arbeitswahn und Absturz, zwischen Todessehnsucht und –verachtung, zwischen Angst und Übermut im Gefecht, zwischen Feuerprobe des Charakters und „guter Stimmung + Energie“ verlief der innere Kampf, den Wittgenstein mitten im Krieg mit sich selbst führte.

Seine Kriegserfahrungen veränderten sein als logische Abhandlung intendiertes Werk dahingehend, dass ethische Aspekte hinzutraten: Überlegungen zur Angst vor dem Tod, zur Seele, zur Tragweite des menschlichen Willens, zum richtigen Weg im Leben und dessen Sinn geraten ins Augenmerk. Auch der den *Tractatus* prägende Mystizismus, der bekanntlich in einem ethischen Schweigen endet, hat hier seinen Ursprung. Der berühmte letzte Satz „Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muß man schweigen“ (T 7) erfasst „sowohl eine logisch-philosophische Wahrheit als auch ein ethisches Gebot.“ (Monk 1992, 174) Nicht von ungefähr kann Wittgenstein behaupten, „daß selbst, wenn alle möglichen wissenschaftlichen Fragen beantwortet sind, unsere Lebensprobleme noch gar nicht berührt sind.“ (T 6.52)

Ein glückliches Leben ist nur das gute und ethische Leben, das den Zweck des Daseins erfüllt. Der Kampf, diesem ethischen Anspruch gerecht zu werden, ist es, der Wittgenstein in Phasen der Depression stürzte, zu Gewissenskonflikten und verschriftlichten Selbstzweifeln führte, die man als eine Art Beichte verstehen kann (vgl. McGuinness 1988, 216). Zugleich liegt dieser ständigen „Unruhe und Ratlosigkeit“ (Somavilla 2012, 206) eine „Zerrissenheit zwischen philosophischer Skepsis und Ringen um den Glauben“ (ebd.) zugrunde, die Wittgenstein ein Leben lang umtrieb.

Der Krieg lähmte nicht Wittgensteins Schaffensdrang, der sein logisch-philosophisches Problem „belagerte“, als ob er sich mit diesem auch im Krieg befände: „Belagere noch immer mein Problem, was schon viele Forts genommen.“ (GT 1992, 36) Merkwürdigerweise war er in den Phasen besonders produktiv, in denen er „verzweifelt, unglücklich und enttäuscht war“ (Monk 1992, 146f). Russell übertreibt allerdings in seiner Autobiographie maßlos: „Er

[Wittgenstein] war ein Mann, der nie etwas so Belangloses wie explodierende Granaten bemerkt haben würde, wenn er über Logik nachdachte.“ (1970, 140) Richtig ist wohl, dass der Krieg ihm „die *Intensität* [gab], die für ihn nach den ersten Kriegserlebnissen so typisch war.“ (Janik/Methlagl 1994, 191) Dies unterstreichen Aussagen von Wittgensteins Familie, die „immer betonte, der radikalste Wandel in Wittgensteins Persönlichkeit habe während des Krieges stattgefunden“ (ebd., 190).

Wittgenstein rang dem Krieg einen produktiven Impetus ab. Für die meisten Menschen dürften Krieg und existenzielle Krisenerfahrungen für ihre Produktivität hinderlich sein. Für Wittgensteins Werk, indem die Abgründe des Krieges, die in ihm erkannten mystischen, ethischen, religiösen wie logischen Einsichten manifest sind, galt dies erstaunlicherweise nicht. Ihm gelang es, seinen späteren *Tractatus* durch die kriegsbedingte existentielle Zuspitzung reifen zu lassen.

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# Another Reading of the *Tractatus*: A Comparisons' Path

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## Abstract

Here my aim is that of touching on possible connections between Hegel and Wittgenstein's philosophy. Accordingly to that, it must be noticed that this comparison is just possible and that the content of this paper is not intended to be exhaustive: in order to do that, it should be demonstrated that the relationship between Hegel and Wittgenstein's thought is not just possible, but rather necessary. In other words, we need to prove that Wittgenstein, who lived in another century and as far as we know did not read Hegel (we just possess a brief remark made to M. Drury), has been influenced by him. I will be taking into consideration the connection between *The Phenomenology of Spirit* with *the Science of Logic* on one side and the *Tractatus* on the other side, focusing on a few aspects: in particular, starting from the difference between the two, we will see how language and logic emerge in Hegel and Wittgenstein's perspective.

## 1. The speculative proposition and the logical propositions

The speculative proposition is mentioned only in the Preface of *the Phenomenology of Spirit*, as what destroys the general form of judgement, which is understood as the distinction between subject and predicate, considered also as the general structure of an ordinary sentence. It is worth noticing that Hegel does not furnish examples about the speculative proposition, because it is not an instance of language, like an ordinary sentence can be determined, but rather it can be seen as the final leg of the path of consciousness, which one already places at a different level, compared to that of the previous moments: although, on one side, the term *proposition* keeps it in the contest of language, on the other side, the term *speculative* introduces us towards another dimension.

Logic has in common with the above mentioned proposition the word speculative: Their movement, [of the moments] which organizes itself in this element into a whole, is Logic or speculative philosophy (Hegel 1977, 22).

The fact that Logic and proposition are both speculative shows not only that there is a connection between the two, but that Logic destroys the structure subject-predicate, i.e. the form of the judgement, determining as in Logic every difference vanishes into the whole and as Logic is not language: this is important in understanding that language cannot overcome that limit which it has reached with the speculative proposition. Besides, since speculative also has a link with movement and organization of the moments into a unity, the proposition can be similarly considered as what gathers into a unity the totality of the propositions, demolishing the distinction between subject and predicate.

This demolition can also be seen as content of judgement which has been completely externalised: in fact, the content being completely expressed, the proposition has nothing more to say and language has therefore come to its limit. The above mentioned proposition can be considered as what is left from language, which give us no information, but rather it functions as a hint to the reader of the *Phenomenology* for the forthcoming Logic.

The limit of language and its connection with Logic are elements that we find in Wittgenstein too: he begins to consider this in the fourth section of the *Tractatus*, talking about logical propositions, referring to tautologies and contradictions.

The truth-conditions of proposition determine the space in Logic that a proposition occupies, but they also determine the range which is left outside the proposition, that is the range left open to the facts. Tautology leaves open to them the whole – the infinite whole – of logical space: in this sense it doesn't determine reality (TLP Prop. 4.463) because nothing can be decided, inasmuch two facts are just pulled together and neither of them is actually determined. In fact, being always true, its conditions are absolute and in this respect the truth attributed to the tautology loses its sense.

As a proposition, the tautology keeps the properties which are peculiar to language; as something that is logical instead, it indicates and discloses the way to Logic.

Wittgenstein uses the term *Grenze* (instead of *Schranke*), the idea behind which, is that this border cannot be overcome; language, in fact, is not just like an asymptote, because it doesn't have a tendency towards Logic. As Wittgenstein will say later, Logic and language are two separate dimensions connected by a law of projection.

Tautologies and contradictions are the limiting cases, - the disintegration - of the combination of signs, (TLP Prop. 4.466) so that the structure of the ordinary proposition, which is for Wittgenstein articulate, is not more given. They have lost their conditions, in the important respect that they are sinnlos and not unsinnig: the term *los* (loss) indicates, indeed, a process of deprivation of the conditions of the signs, which shows how tautologies and contradictions are the end-points which language has reached.

They don't communicate anything except the fact itself that they say nothing which, in other words means that the content of these propositions can be directly elicited from the form.

Furthermore, Tautology is the unsubstantial point at their centre (5.143): through an internal path, propositions have come to their limit. On one side, tautology is what all the propositions have in common, on the other side, the contradiction is the external limit that vanishes, regarded as that nothing that all the propositions have in common.

Since the speculative and the logical propositions seem to have the same function concerning the limit of language, which it reaches from an internal point of view, we might be tempted to assimilate the two; nevertheless it is important to make some considerations about that.

Indeed, an objection might be raised starting from the fact that the dialectical process goes on through the contradiction in the Phenomenology; therefore it has nothing to do with logical propositions.

Yet, Wittgenstein defines the contradiction as the external limit which vanishes in all propositions (TLP, Prop. 5.473): is not something similar happening in the Phenomenology? In fact, the passage between two moments is determined by the overcoming of the contradiction which disappears in the next moment and it is important to underline that the verb that both philosophers use referring to contradiction is *verschwinden*.

This brings us to some important consequences: if, on one side, we can draw a similarity between the speculative proposition and the logical propositions and, on the other, a similarity between the Hegelian and Wittgensteinian contradiction, this would put also in contact both Hegelian speculative proposition and contradiction as well, which would legitimate us to interpret the end of the path of consciousness as the extreme and unsolved contradiction, this being determined as the external limit of the last moment of consciousness. This topic cannot in any case be considered here and this is why it must remain at the level of interpretation.

Furthermore, it is also important to stress that neither Hegel nor Wittgenstein give examples of speculative proposition and logical propositions respectively: their failure to use examples is sufficient to not legitimate us to appeal to them. In fact, using examples to explain the two would mean encountering a reduction in the sense that we would just use an instance for these propositions, which do not belong to language in a certain sense, i.e. they are not parts but limits of it.

Eventually, due to the destruction of the proposition what is left to us is nothing we are left with.

## 2. The Logic

In Logic, possibilities coincide with facts:

(A logical entity cannot be merely possible. Logic treats of every possibility, and all possibilities are its facts.)  
[TLP, Prop.2.0121]

In this proposition, Wittgenstein explains that Logic is not just the realm of possibilities or the model to which language is directed, as something in which possibilities have to become facts; rather, they are its facts, something that happens (TLP, Prop.1) *which nevertheless remain to the level of the possibility*.

*The "experience" that we need in order to understand logic is not that something or other is the state of things, but that something is: that however is not an experience. Logic is prior to every experience – that something is so. It is prior to the question "How?", not prior to the question "What?"* [TLP Prop. 5.552].

This sentence can be applied to Phenomenology where consciousness answers the question *How?* through the moments of its experience. On the other hand, since Logic comes before the question *how?* annuls the experience that consciousness has had: the end coincides with the beginning in which we lack every determination of the object so that it can be just said that it *is*.

We need an experience which at the same time is not an experience: this paradoxical claim is made by Wittgenstein to make the reader understand that Logic cannot be un-

derstood. Back to tautologies and contradictions, which disclose the way to Logic, it is worth remembering that their loss of sense does not prevent the reader to understand the propositions. In fact, for Wittgenstein truth and falsehood are not determining to understand the proposition, but it is the sufficient to comprehend the sense, without that having been explained to us.

The logical propositions can be understood because they still have a sense, although lost, but the same cannot be said about Logic which is rather considered *unsinnig*, absolutely senseless.

The fact that also Hegelian Logic can be considered as autonomous from Phenomenology, shows that Logic can annul the experience of consciousness. That something simply *is*, and not that *is so and so*, is the first dimension that Logic discloses to the reader, as we can infer from the fact that there is not any determination (the formula *so and so* indicates that something is determined).

Indeed, it is worth noticing that in the Introduction of *the Science of Logic*, Hegel says that we do not know in which world we are, when one speaks about the Concept, the simplicity of which resides in the fact that the Concept can be defined with itself. The fact that we do not know the quality of this world, means that the only thing we can say about it, is that it simply *is*.

It is also worth remembering that consciousness, which is the subject of the Phenomenology, recognizes the object before it as *itself*, so that the deepest difference vanishes and reveals itself rather as the deepest identity. This identity corresponds to the Absolute Knowing that in the Preface of PhG is defined as  $A=A$ .

Wittgenstein defines *expressions like  $a=a$ , and those derived from them are neither elementary propositions nor is there any other way in which they have sense* [TLP Prop. 4.243].

This proposition is one of the comments to the proposition 4.2 which, to summarize, says that the sense of a proposition depends on the correspondence or not-correspondence with the facts that it describes.

So Wittgenstein would define the Hegelian Absolute in the same way, indicating no conditions – as the word itself indicates – and inasmuch it doesn't have sense.

Therefore, the similarity with the logical propositions seems to be valid for the Absolute too (even if this must not us infer an identity between Absolute and speculative proposition): in fact, as the logical propositions show that they say nothing, that is *the fact* of saying anything at all, the Hegelian Absolute shows that it has no reference to anything else because it contains all the previous moments, permitting them to maintain their particularity and overcoming them at the same time.

As we said before, the speculative proposition is like an hint for Logic: since the Science of Logic begins where the Phenomenology ends – the Absolute – this proposition can be considered as the internal definition of the Absolute, whereas the  $A=A$  is the positive definition of it.

This means that we are talking about Phenomenology or Science of Logic, depending on which side of the equals sign one switches. This shows that Phenomenology cannot be reduced to an introduction to the whole Hegelian system, but rather that it is an autonomous work.

Furthermore, it is important here to think about the nature of this relationship: in accordance with what has just

been said, it would be coherent to say that between Phenomenology and Science of Logic there is an identity. The problem arises when Hegel himself talks about a correspondence: the relationship between elements of the former and elements of the latter are the same.

The quotation is as follows:

*The moment does not appear as this movement of passing back and forth, from consciousness or picture-thinking into self-consciousness and conversely: on the contrary, its pure shape, freed from its appearance in consciousness, the pure Notion\* and its onward movement, depends solely on its pure determinateness.*

*Conversely, to each abstract moment of Science corresponds a shape of manifest Spirit as such* (Hegel 1977, 491).

Here the equals sign is unhinged and one has to pay attention to the fact that the relationship between the two A's is something posited and, therefore, differentiated, so that Phenomenology and Science of Logic are equal and different at the same time with any problem of coherence.

The last quotation is also important compared again to the Proposition 5.552, where we can see that for Hegel, that experience is nothing else than the path of the consciousness through her moments, which loses its determinateness coming to the Concept.

This path can be considered as the passage from representation which loses its determinateness to the Concept: picture-thinking, in fact, is also a synonym for the consciousness which is the subject of Phenomenology and is put here in comparison with the Concept.

## Conclusions

It is clear now that for both Hegel and Wittgenstein, Logic is infinite and that language has its own limit which cannot be overcome. What is interesting is that for both authors this limit is in reality infinite.

Indeed, Phenomenology ends, so to speak, with the Absolute Knowing which is said to be infinite, and since we have said before that consciousness is the level of representation which can be said the level of the language too, we see how this limit is *verschwinden* in the infinite. It is important to underline that Language and Logic stay separate dimensions, differentiated by the equals sign which, at the same time, posits an identity.

On Wittgenstein's side, the limits of the world, which is not different from language, are the limits of Logic, which is said to be infinite. Indeed, the logical propositions are the external and internal limit of language, but they are also absolute: they have lost sense, that is their condition. If this is not sufficient, it is worth remembering that the tautology and contradiction are those which disclose to the totality of Logic, which is said to be infinite.

It is important to underline that for both Hegel and Wittgenstein, language and Logic keep their own autonomy, in comparison with each other: the first proceeds along the line of the latter.

Saying that language has no end means also that whoever has this skill, that is, human kind, has no end as well.

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# Wittgenstein's Notion of 'Form of Life' and the Source of Incommensurability in Cultural Relativism

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## Abstract

Many works of Wittgenstein's later philosophy have influenced the development of contemporary relativism. This paper focuses on the notion of 'form of life', which is one of the essential notions in Wittgenstein's later philosophy and has a close relationship with relativism. This paper aims to find out whether this notion can be regarded as the source of incommensurability which is the key notion in the discussion of cultural relativism. Four steps are taken to achieve this aim. Firstly, clarify Wittgenstein's real intention of putting forward the notion of 'form of life'. Secondly, reveal two implications of this notion. Thirdly, introduce two forms of incommensurability involved in cultural relativism which clarifies the scope of our discussion. Lastly, show that this notion is the source of incommensurability both on semantic and epistemic level.

The later Wittgenstein's works are often viewed as the contemporary source of relativism. A variety of notions in his later philosophy, such as language-game, family resemblance, form of life, rule-following, etc., have influenced many kinds of relativism.

Among these notions, it is worthwhile to point out here that the notion of 'form of life' plays an important role in debates about relativism. But such a relationship is far from clear. In this paper, I want to elucidate the relationship between the this notion and an interesting topic involved in cultural relativism, i.e. the incommensurability, and argue that Wittgenstein's notion can be regarded as the source of incommensurability both on semantic and epistemic level. In order to achieve this aim, two questions should be focused on. First: what is the real sense of the notion of 'form of life' which equips itself with the right to be related to relativism? Second: how can such a notion be the source of incommensurability? I will deal with them step by step.

## 1. Form of Life as the Foundation of Language

In his later philosophy, Wittgenstein turns his views of language and meaning from the idea expressed in *Tractatus* that language has a unique discoverable essence, a single underlying logic, which can be explained by means of a structure-revealing analysis of language and the world, as well as the picturing relation between them, to the so-called use theory of meaning which denies the ideas above, and claims that the meaning of an expression involves its use across the variety of language-games in which it occurs, and knowing its use is having an ability to follow the rules for its use in different language-games. This kind of ability is not a mysterious inner process, but an adaptive and learning act embedded in the customs and agreements of a community.

Accordingly, Wittgenstein puts forward the notion of 'form of life'. A 'form of life' is the underlying consensus of linguistic and nonlinguistic behavior, assumptions, practices, traditions, and natural propensities which humans, as social beings, share with one another, and which is therefore presupposed in the language they use; language is woven into that pattern of human activity and character, and meaning is conferred on its expressions by the shared outlook and nature of its users (cf. Wittgenstein 1967 I §19, 23, II 241, 174-226). Therefore, a form of life consists

in the community's concordance of natural and linguistic responses, which issue in agreement in definitions, judgments and thus behavior. Now, form of life becomes the so-called foundation of the practices that language-use consists in, which contrasts with the 'old' foundation (in *Tractatus*) provided by 'unanalysable' sempiternal objects whose essences- combinatorial possibilities- are supposed to determine, in an ineffable way, the logical space of possible situations and thereby set unalterable limits to what it makes sense to say (Glock 1996, 125).

With such a change of foundation of language, Wittgenstein claims that questions about the ultimate explanation or justification of concepts embodied in our thought and talk will very soon come to an end. It means that it is the shared form of life underlying the usages of language that justifies them. As Wittgenstein points out, "if I have exhausted the justification I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say, 'This is simply what I do'" (Wittgenstein 1967 I §217); "What has to be accepted, the given is –so one could say, form of life" (Wittgenstein 1967 II, 226).

In a word, form of life, as the 'new' foundation of language, is the frame of reference and bedrock settled behind the language someone handles, which makes us understand what other people say and communicate successfully through training in the language of our community. Learning that language is thus learning the outlook, assumption and practices with which that language is inseparably bound and from which its expression get their meaning.

## 2. Two Implications of the Notion of "Form of Life"

Based on the above discussion about the notion of 'form of life' as the foundation of language, two implications of such a notion can be derived. They are the rule-governed character of linguistic activities and the social character of thought.

As Wittgenstein has claimed in his use theory of meaning, knowing an expression's use is having the ability to follow the rules for its use in different language-games. Rules indeed guide and provide standards of correct using of the rules, but they do so only because they are based on agreement. To follow a rule correctly is to conform to the established practices of the community. We acquire

the ability to use expressions and to follow the rules for their use, from our training as members of that community. In this sense, what Wittgenstein stresses here is that speaking is a rule-governed activities and our language-games are 'interwoven' with non-linguistic activities, and must be understood within this context. Just as fictitious language-games can only be properly assessed if one tells a story about how they fit in with the overall practice of the fictitious community. 'To imagine a language means to imagine a form of life' (Wittgenstein 1967 I §7, 19). In *Blue and Brown Books* 134, to imagine a language is equated with imagining a 'culture'. Accordingly, a form of life is a cultural or social formation, the totality of communal activities in which language-games are embedded.

Thus, the second implication is that our thoughts have social character. In Wittgenstein's sense, it is the language, which provides the building block for describing reality and communication that determines what can be thought. Additionally, as we have already mentioned above, the foundation of the practices which language-use consists in is the form of life into which that language is woven. It is some commonly-shared customs and agreements that give speakers involved in such a form of life the allowance to make a legitimate sentence and understand what other people mean correctly. So, if we accept 'form of life' as the foundation of language, then there is a natural implication that our language is inevitably related with social community and thus thought is not something private, but has some shared social character.

### 3. Incommensurability in Cultural Relativism

Now, we turn to the second question: how can the notion of 'form of life' be the source of incommensurability? This question should be divided into two sub-questions. First: which kind of incommensurability are we interested in? Second: what is the reason for the 'form of life' notion to be the source of incommensurability? In this section, we deal with the first question.

Due to Kuhn (1970) and Feyerabend (1962), incommensurability- the impossibility of comparison by a common measure- has become popular in current philosophical usage and has been linked with relativism. According to the general distinction, there are two forms of incommensurability, semantic and epistemic, in philosophy of science (Baghramian 2004, 193). Semantic incommensurability claims that two scientific theories are incommensurable if they are not inter-translatable due to a lack of semantic continuity, while epistemic incommensurability maintains that there is diversity between different styles of reasoning and methods of justification, which prevents us from making a neutral judgment about them.

Certainly, we have more forms of incommensurability when our discussion is settled in another area. However, for the sake of argumentation, I restrict my discussion to semantic and epistemic incommensurability, and extend them to cultural relativism. In this context, incommensurability means that it is impossible to compare two different cultures by a common measure. Precisely speaking, on semantic level, incommensurability means that there exists communication breakdown between two different cultures because of the radical disparity of semantic structure employed by each culture. On epistemic level, incommensurability means that there are different ways of perceiving and thinking about the world among cultures, and such ways are so different that members of one culture

cannot grasp what it is like to be a member of another culture.

### 4. Form of Life as the Source of Incommensurability

As we have argued in section one, the notion of 'form of life', when Wittgenstein endows it with the important role in his later philosophy, serves as the foundation of language. This notion is the background from which all concepts and linguistic behaviors take their meaning and significance, which determines what we can be said and thought. Based on this interpretation, it is natural to link this notion to culture. And because there are different forms of life, just as we have different culture, it is impossible for us to make a comparison among these forms of life if they are alien to us, which makes room for cultural relativism. Since the connection between incommensurability and relativism is usually simply assumed rather than argued for, in this section, I intend to show that the notion can be taken further as the source of incommensurability both on semantic and epistemic level.

On semantic level, incommensurability is the phenomenon that members belonging to different cultures encounter a communication breakdown because of the radical disparity of semantic structure. This kind of disparity can be shown as the impossibility for inter-translation (Kuhn 1970, 126f) between the languages employed by each culture. But the question is how such a communication breakdown takes place. Now, as far as the source is concerned, the notion of 'form of life' can give an answer. When two people belonging to two cultures intend to talk together, the precondition needed to meet is that one can understand what the other is talking about. According to the so-called use theory of meaning, to understand a language is to know its use which requires an ability to follow the rule. It is the form of life that establishes the rules, shapes the outlook of language and then determines its use. So, if the form of life in which someone live is so alien to the other, which means that the gap between these forms of life cannot be bridged, then people belonging to each culture could not have the ability to follow such rules and will encounter a communication breakdown. At this moment, semantic incommensurability occurs.

On epistemic level, incommensurability concerns different ways employed by members in different cultures to perceive and think about the world, which means that different paradigms and styles of reasoning could lead to incompatible claims about the world. In this sense, it is not only the failure of translation that creates incommensurability, but also a lack of congruity between epistemic apparatus, such as beliefs and concepts. In addition, the congruity will make our ability to interact limited. This is because what we grasp is not the world itself, but our epistemic scheme which is not established privately but takes its form through social construction embedded in agreement and tradition in a community, a culture, or in the sense of our discussion, a form of life. Consider one situation provided by Wittgenstein, 'if a lion could talk, we could not understand him' (Wittgenstein 1967 II, 223). Here, the gap between lion and us is more than the semantic incommensurability, but the epistemic one. What a lion may say is not something we can understand in our language, even we could never come to learn, because the form of life in which lion engage is quite different from us, or even inaccessible to us. It is possible for us to image one culture that is alien to us as lion. Thus, members belonging to these two cultures will not be able to recognize or under-

stand what the other think and talk about. Then, epistemic incommensurability occurs.

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown that the notion of 'form of life' is the foundation of language in Wittgenstein's sense and can be taken as the source of incommensurability, especially within the scope of cultural relativism. If such an argument could be tenable, then whether it is possible for two different forms of life, to some extent, to have commensurability either on semantic or epistemic level? It is open to debate. The answer depends on how to depict the disparity among different forms of life. Further research is needed.

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# Probleme in der historischen Wittgenstein-Forschung – Wunsch, Wirklichkeit und Russische Philosophie

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## Abstract

Für eine Untersuchung zu der Frage „Was wusste Wittgenstein über Hegels Philosophie?“ zeigte sich die Schwierigkeit einer relativ schwachen Datenlage verbunden mit dem Wunsch aus diesem Wenigen möglichst viel historischen Sinn zu erzeugen. Wo verlaufen hier die methodischen Grenzen? Wenn Wittgenstein anmerkt: „Philosophie dürfte man eigentlich nur dichten“ (VB, 483), hört er im deutschen Wort *dichten* sicherlich neben dem Aspekt des *Poetischen* auch denjenigen des *Kreativen*. Die Frage nach Wunsch und Wirklichkeit in der Wittgenstein-Forschung wird am konkreten Beispiel von Wittgensteins Russlandreise gezeigt und ermöglicht zugleich einen Einblick in Wittgensteins Interesse für russische Philosophie. Diese betont Polyphonie und Dialogizität bezogen auf die ursprüngliche mystische Einheit für die Glaube und Wissen sich nur nachträglich und formell trennen lassen. Wittgenstein begegnet diesem Anspruch indem er die Philosophie als Projekt einer *Synoptischen Übersicht* kennzeichnet und ihre Tätigkeit als das Dringen auf eine *übersichtliche Darstellung* charakterisiert, die zugleich ihre methodischen Grenzen zeigen muss.

Wenn man sich für die Hegel und Wittgenstein interessiert stolpert man irgendwann über eine Bemerkung Wittgensteins gegen Rush Rhees. Dort erwähnt er, dass ihm vor Jahren eine Philosophieprofessorin in Sowjetrußland geraten habe: „Sie sollten mehr Hegel lesen“ Der Satz erzeugt Vorstellungen in denen Wittgenstein und die russische Philosophin angeregt diskutieren. Der Name *Hegel* kommt auf. Wittgenstein kommentiert Hegels Philosophie – was er gelegentlich tat – es zeigt sich eine Differenz in den Interpretationen, und die russische Professorin empfiehlt *mehr Hegel zu lesen*.

Wenn man gerade ein Hegel-Wittgenstein Kapitel schreibt, erscheint es natürlich wünschenswert, wenn es sich zeigen könnte, dass Wittgenstein Hegel wirklich selbst gelesen hat, mit dem russischen Ratschlag: *noch mehr Hegel* zu lesen. Das innere Auge malt sich aus, Wittgenstein am Schreibtisch in seiner Hütte in Skjolden, oder auf dem Liegestuhl in Cambridge wie er die *Wissenschaft der Logik* liest, oder lieber die *Phänomenologie des Geistes*? Auf jeden Fall macht es neugierig darauf, was da in Russland geschehen sein mag. Bei einem ersten Anlauf erfährt man von den Biographen wie Wittgenstein im September 1935 in Moskau Sofia Janowskaja getroffen habe, mit der Idee sich in Russland niederzulassen. Man liest, dass sie ihm einen Lehrstuhl für Philosophie anbietet. Also *mehr Hegel*-Kenntnisse als Bedingung für eine Lehrtätigkeit in Russland? Und wo überhaupt? Russland ist bekanntlich groß.

Ein erster Überblick ergibt drei Lehrstuhlangebote eines für die Universität Kasan, eines für Moskau und eines für Leningrad (St. Petersburg). Die Quellenlage stellt sich aber als wenig belastbar heraus. Das Lehrstuhlangebot für die Universität Kasan geht zurück auf eine Erinnerung von Fania Pascal – Wittgensteins Russischlehrerin in Cambridge. Nach Jahren schreibt sie: Francis Skinner habe sie nach der Russlandreise besucht, um im Auftrag Wittgensteins Bericht zu erstatten. (Nedo 2012, 329) Skinner wiederum habe von dem Lehrstuhlangebot für Kasan berichtet: als der *Universität Tolstois*. Einige Interpreten haben später Kasan mit Kasachstan in Verbindung gebracht. (Sebald, 2001, 58f) Allerdings ist Kasan die Hauptstadt von Tatarstan mit einer alten Universitäts-Tradition Auch Lenin hat hier studiert.

Vielleicht handelt es sich in Bezug auf Kasan auch um eine falsche Erinnerung von Pascal oder ein Missverständnis von Skinner. Zumindest lässt sich aber Wittgensteins Wunsch vorstellen an der *Universität Tolstois* zu unterrichten. Er liest ihn seit dem Ersten Weltkrieg mit Begeisterung und Lew Tolstoi ist einer der Gründe überhaupt nach Russland zu gehen. Einige Autoren haben sich schon vorgestellt, wie Wittgenstein in Kasan die Universität inspiziert, so dass in der Forschung zumindest die Frage nach der technischen Realisierbarkeit dieses Unternehmens auftauchte. Kasan liegt etwas 800 km östlich von Moskau, also etwa gleich entfernt wie Leningrad und ist vergleichbar günstig mit der Bahn zu erreichen. Trotz der begrenzten Zeit scheint es rein rechnerisch keinesfalls ausgeschlossen, dass Wittgenstein den Nachtzug besteigt und für eins zwei Tage Stadt und Universität inspiziert. Die meisten Forscher halten das aus verschiedenen Gründen für unwahrscheinlich, zumindest findet sich aber in Wittgensteins Taschenkalender eine Bleistift-Skizze die den Weg und die Tramverbindung zum Kasaner Bahnhof in Moskau zeigt. (Nedo 2012, 328)

Hier stoßen wir schon auf das methodische Problem, welches auch den historischen Teil des Wittgenstein-Hegel-Projektes betrifft. Nämlich, dass das an sich Unwahrscheinliche doch immer noch möglich bleibt. So vielfältige Gründe sich auch anführen lassen, die eine Kasan-Reise unwahrscheinlich machen, an letzter Gewissheit fehlt es jeweils. Besonders mit der damaligen Situation in Russland vertraute Forscher, wie Tatjana Fedajewa halten die Idee der Lehrstuhlangebote dann auch generell für wirklichkeitsfremd. (Fedajewa 2000, 414) Eingedenk der kritischen Rezeption die Wittgenstein in russischen Publikationen bis dahin erfahren hatte.

Pascals späte Erinnerung ist vorerst die einzige Quelle für das Kasaner Lehrstuhlangebot. Für das zweite Moskauer Angebot lässt sich wiederum auch nur eine Quelle finden, auf die regelmäßig Bezug genommen wird. Sie entstammt dem Aufsatz *Wittgenstein and Russia* für den John Moran 1972 alles Material zusammengetragen hat, was er zu Wittgenstein und der politischen Linken hat finden können. Der Aufsatz ist im Journal *New Left Review* erschienen und bringt Wittgenstein in Verbindung mit Marx und Lenin. Marx-Kenntnisse bei Wittgenstein wären natürlich auch für eine Wittgenstein-Hegel Arbeit interessant



und mindestens ein Autor vergleicht das philosophische Projekt Wittgensteins mit dem Marxens insofern, als beide beanspruchen die Philosophie Hegels „vom Kopf auf die Füße“ zu stellen. (Mácha 2015, 5) Man spürt in Morans Aufsatz sowohl das historische Interesse als auch den Wunsch deutliche Verbindungen bei Wittgenstein zur politischen Linken und nach Sowjetrußland zu finden. Für das Moskauer Lehrstuhlangebot zitiert er Piero Sraffa der sich erinnert, wie Wittgenstein ihm gegenüber von einer Lehranstellung an der Universität Moskau sprach. Sraffa konnte sich aber an keinen Namen mehr erinnern.

Wittgensteins Wunsch in Moskau zu unterrichten dürfte auch gering gewesen sein, da er in einem Brief an Keynes vom 6. Juli 1935 eher sein Interesse für ein Leben in den *neu kolonialisierten Teilen in der Peripherie der USSR* wünscht. Überhaupt suchte er wohl weniger das Russland Lenins und Stalins zu finden als dasjenige was er von Tolstoi und Dostojewski kennt. Falls Wittgenstein wünschte an der Universität Tolstois zu unterrichten hätte er unter Umständen auch Leningrad wählen können. Zumindest Alexander Eliasberg berichtet, dass Tolstoi sein Examen 1848 in St. Petersburg abgelegt hatte (Eliasberg 1964, Kap. 7) und die Leningrader Philosophen könnten ihn darauf hingewiesen haben.

Aber noch mehr spricht für Leningrad: Fjodor Dostojewski hat hier seit 1838 studiert und ist in den vierziger Jahren mit einer Reihe Prosaarbeiten bekannt geworden. Und ein dritter Grund wird in Wittgensteins enger Beziehung zu dem charismatischen und in Cambridge lehrenden Nicolas Bachtin bestehen. Bachtin war der Bruder, des bekannten russischen Literaturwissenschaftlers Michail Bachtin. Wittgenstein lernte ihn Anfang der dreißiger Jahre kennen und pflegte einen regen Austausch über russische Literatur, Philosophie und Religion. Wahrscheinlich auf seinen Einfluss hin lernt Wittgenstein Russisch. Mit Bachtin liest Wittgenstein in Russisch Dostojewski. Pascal erwähnt, dass Wittgenstein in seiner Handausgabe von *Schuld und Sühne* alle Akzente gesetzt hatte, was nur mit Hilfe eines Muttersprachlers möglich sei. Und mit ihm liest er auch seine eigenen Arbeiten. Auf Bachtin geht unter anderem Wittgensteins Wunsch zurück, die *Philosophischen Untersuchungen* in einem Band zusammen mit der *Logisch Philosophischen Abhandlung* zu veröffentlichen. Tatjana Fedajewa arbeitete die intensive philosophische Nähe und die produktive Zusammenarbeit der beiden in Bezug auf russische Philosophie und Religion heraus und untersuchte deren Einfluss auf die *Philosophischen Untersuchungen*.

Die Brüder Bachtin hatten sich nach der Oktoberrevolution nicht mehr gesehen und konnten nur auf geheimem Wege Kontakt halten. Die geistige Übereinstimmung und selbst die Chronologie ihrer Werke legt nahe, dass das gelungen ist. Dieser Kontakt war auch ein Grund der Michail Bachtin in die Verbannung nach Kostanai in Kasachstan führte. Da die Brüder sich nicht direkt schreiben konnten wird verschiedentlich angenommen, dass der Kontakt über die in Leningrad lebende Mutter aufrecht erhalten wurde. Fedajewa vermutete nun Wittgenstein mit seiner Russlandreise auch in der Rolle des geheimen Informanten zwischen den getrennten Brüdern.

Für Fedajewas Forschungsprojekt wäre sicherlich das Ergebnis eines starken historisch ideengeschichtlichen Bezuges Wittgensteins zum Russland Tolstois, Dostojewskis und Bachtins besonders wünschenswert. Wie weit man damit gehen könnte, zeigt Fedajewa andeutungsweise indem sie eine hypothetische Indizienkette bis nach Kasachstan legt, und Wittgenstein im Jahre 1937 dort Michail Bachtin besuchen lässt. Ein Brief an Engelmann

vom 21. Juni 1937 und ein Hinweis von Sofia Jankowskaja sprechen dafür und alle noch fehlenden Indizien lassen sich in der offensichtlichen Notwendigkeit absoluter Geheimhaltung der Operation aufheben. Wenn Wittgenstein gegen Keynes sein Interesse an den neuen Randgebieten von Russland bekundet, dann ist zumindest Kasachstan eine der ersten Adressen und überraschenderweise erhält so selbst die ursprüngliche Kasachstan-These in der Literatur eine gewisse Rehabilitation.

Aber zurück nach Leningrad, wo auf eine besondere Weise alle drei genannten Gründe sich in Russland niederzulassen – Tolstoi, Dostojewski und Bachtin – für Wittgenstein zusammenlaufen. Wie verhält es sich also mit dem dritten Angebot an einer russischen Universität zu unterrichten. Ungefähr am 12. September 1935 besuchte Wittgenstein die Philosophin Tatjana Gornstein in ihrer Privatwohnung im Zentrum Leningrads. Ihre Adresse mag der russischen Botschafter in London Iwan Maiski ihm deshalb gegeben haben, weil sie Wittgenstein 1935 in einem Buch heftig kritisiert hatte. Sie bezeichnet ihn darin neben Rudolf Carnap, Hans Reichenbach und Moritz Schlick als einen Hauptvertreter des Machismus (Gornstein 1935, 158) und wirft ihm „Solipsismus und Mystik“ (ebd., 163) vor. Da sie in diesem Buch auch Wittgensteins *idealistischen Charakter* herausstellt, wäre sie als Ratgeberin „mehr Hegel zu lesen“ eigentlich absolut prädestiniert. Auch ist sie hier besonders interessant, als einzige russische Quelle bei der die Möglichkeit einer philosophischen Lehrtätigkeit Wittgensteins zumindest zur Sprache kommt. Ludmila Gornstein, Tatjana Gornsteins Tochter veröffentlicht 2001 in Moskau einen Bericht ihrer Mutter über das Zusammentreffen mit Wittgenstein und geht auch auf die weiteren Umstände ein. (Gornstein 2001, 191f)

Tatjana Gornstein berichtet also ihre Überraschung als Wittgenstein sie kurze Zeit vor seinem Eintreffen in Leningrad anrief. Ihr war bewusst in welche Verlegenheiten sie der Kontakt bringen konnte – Philosophen aus dem Bekanntenkreis waren schon wegen geringerem verhaftet worden – aber den *großen Wittgenstein* wollte sie unbedingt sehen. Sie unterhielt zu der Zeit eine philosophische Vortragsreihe die einen Bildungsauftrag für werktätige Parteimitglieder verfolgte. Von Wittgensteins Erscheinung war sie sehr eingenommen. Sie erzählt wie sich eine leidenschaftliche Debatte zwischen den beiden entspann, über ihre eigene Nähe zu den naturwissenschaftlichen Fächern, und wie Wittgenstein jede seiner Positionen verteidigte. Während der Diskussion kam Wittgenstein die Idee: „Warum sollten wir nicht einen Kursus von parallelen Vorlesungen organisieren in welchen dann jeder seine eigenen Vorstellungen vortragen kann.“ (Ebd., Nedo 2012, 325) Diese Stelle dokumentiert immerhin den ausdrücklichen Wunsch Wittgensteins in Leningrad philosophisch zu lehren. Ein Lehrstuhlangebot oder ähnliches geht damit aus dem Bericht allerdings nicht hervor. Im weiteren Gespräch in ihrem Apartment interessiert sich Gornstein für Wittgensteins Texte und er verspricht ihr eine Abschrift des *Gelben Buches* zu senden. Auch weil dieser Bericht meines Wissens noch nicht außerhalb Russlands publiziert wurde, lohnt es sich noch auf die weiteren Umstände einzugehen.

Kurz nach Erhalt des Buches wurde Tatjana verhaftet und ihr Eigentum beschlagnahmt. Sie kam in die Verbannung nach Magadan (am Ochotskischen Meer), doch die Abschrift des *Gelben Buches* konnte von der Familie gerettet werden. Als sie 1948 zurückkehren durfte, nahm sie die Abschrift mit nach Vladimir, wo sie im Archiv des Zentralkrankenhauses Arbeit fand. Sie begann das Buch zu übersetzen. Ungefähr die Hälfte hatte sie bereits fertigge-

stellt, als eine erneute Verhaftungswelle begann. Vor ihrer eigenen Festnahme gelang es aber noch das Buch mit der Übersetzung im Krankenhausarchiv zu verstecken. Nach einem Hungerstreik – aus Protest gegen die Verschleppung ihrer dreijährigen Tochter ins Waisenhaus – wurde sie bis zum Tode Stalins (1953) nach Krasnojarsk verbannt. Zurück in Leningrad gelangte sie an eine Lehrstelle für Geschichte der Wissenschaft und Technik. Einige ihrer Studenten machten sich später in Vladimir auf die Suche nach dem *Gelben Buch* aber leider vergebens.

Nach der Rückkehr in Cambridge scheint Wittgenstein seine Chancen in Russland nicht unrichtig beurteilt zu haben. Er vergleicht die *Flucht* nach Russland in gewissen Punkten mit seiner freiwilligen Teilnahme am ersten Weltkrieg. Praktisch beschreibt er es als ein Gefängnis in dem es neben gewissen Entlastungen schwer ist sich als denkender Mensch zurecht zu finden.

Die Geschichte der Russlandreise illustriert das methodische Problem der historischen Wittgenstein-Forschung: Was wirklich passiert ist muss nicht wahrscheinlich sein. Ließe sich also auch für die hier zugrunde liegende Frage nach der historischen Verbindung von Hegel zu Wittgenstein „wider den Methodenzwang“ ein sportliches „anything goes“ (Feyerabend 1970, 17f) ausrufen? Die russische Philosophie so wie Wittgenstein sie schätzt geht den Weg nicht eine Entscheidung zwischen Glauben und Wissen, Wunsch und Wirklichkeit zu fordern. (Bachtin, Nicolas, 1991, 133) Sondern sie betont die ursprüngliche Einheit dieser Momente indem sie darauf dringt die Polyphonie und Dialogizität der Lebenszusammenhänge in ihrer Gesamtheit herauszustellen. (Bachtin, Michail, 1971) Wittgenstein begegnet diesem Anspruch indem er die Philosophie auf das Projekt einer *Synoptischen Übersicht* verweist und ihre Tätigkeit als das Dringen auf eine *übersichtliche Darstellung* (BTS, §89) charakterisiert.

Dass die Werke der russischen Autoren wie Dostojewski und Tolstoi als philosophisch gelten, liegt daran, dass die russische Philosophie versucht methodisch eine Darstellungsweise zu entwickeln in der sich zeigt, was sich nicht sagen lässt. Für die Suche nach der Wahrheit wählt Dostojewski mit den *Brüdern Karamasow* die Form einer epischen Kriminalgeschichte. Polyphonie und Dialogizität der Wirklichkeit werden herausgestellt in einer Zusammenschau der relevanten Ebenen. Vergleichbar dem Interesse des Wittgensteinforschers gilt dasjenige des Lesers einer Kriminalgeschichte der Ebene des wirklich Geschehenen: Die Ermordung des Vaters Fjodor Karamasow. Die wirkliche Russlandreise Wittgensteins.

Für ein angemessenes Verständnis sind aber auch die weiteren Ebenen von grundlegender Bedeutung. Die Ebene der Indizien: Zeugen berichten wie Dmitri Karamasow

den Vater tödlich angriff. Quellen dokumentieren verschiedene Stationen in Wittgensteins Russlandreise. Es gibt die Ebene der widersprüchlichen Motive, bei den Karamasows z. B. Eifersucht, Liebe usw. Bei Wittgenstein der Wunsch nach einem Neubeginn, einem einfachen Leben. Es gibt die Ebene der vielfältigen Rollen und Verstrickungen der Akteure. Fjodor als Vater, Rivale, Geliebter. Wittgenstein als Philosoph, Privatperson, Informant. Es gibt den weiteren Zusammenhang verborgener Wünsche die sich materialisieren. Es gibt das Schöffengericht der Bauern. Es gibt die Ebene des Justizirrtums. Es gibt die Anerkennung von Schuld und Sühne und die Flucht vor der Strafe.

In dieser Ebenenvielfalt, geht die historische Wahrheit nicht verloren sondern wird als ein Moment rekontextualisiert in seiner wirklichen Spannung zwischen Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit. Für die historische Wittgensteinforschung zeigt sich dabei, dass sie nicht umhin kommt ihre eigene methodische Entzogenheit und Unabschießbarkeit in ihren Analysen mitzuführen und zu reflektieren.

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# The Entanglement Tractatus-Quantum Mechanics

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## Abstract

The term “entanglement” in the title of this paper doesn't refer to the “quantum entanglement” used to enunciate the Schrödinger's cat paradox in “*Die gegenwärtige Situation in der Quantenmechanik*”, *Naturwissenschaften*, Heft 48, 1935, nor with the “Zen koan” used by Feynman when doing considerations about Heisenberg's uncertainty principle saying: “*if a tree falls in a forest and there is nobody there to hear it, does it make noise?*”. Here, “entanglement” refers to the concepts shared by Tractatus and Quantum Mechanics, resulting of the effort developed by scientific community along the century XIX and through of the first three decades of the century XX. The aim of this paper is to discuss those concepts.

## 1. Introduction

Two terms, *Tatsache* and *Sachverhalte*, used in Tractatus were interpreted differently by several authors, this forced us to choose one of the existing definitions for the use in this paper and the option was based in what Wittgenstein wrote in a letter to Russell:

“Sachverhalt is, what corresponds to an Elementarsatz if it is true. *Tatsache* is what corresponds to the logical product of elementary propositions when this product is true”. (Notebook, 129 Letter to Russell, Cassino 19.8.19.)

It is also important to see that the interpretation of these terms indicates the way the reader will construct his own image of the Tractatus. (See Bezerra, Wittgenstein Notebook, and Iglesias-Rozas.) To call for attention about the divergences among translations, sometimes in a crucial form, we exemplify:

“2.01 Der Sachverhalt ist eine Verbindung von Gegenständen. (Sachen, Dingen.)”

“2.01 An atomic fact is a combination of objects (entities, things).” (German to English) Ogden, 1922.

“2.01 A state of affairs (a state of things) is a combination of objects (things).” (German to English) Pears/McGuinness, 1961.

“2.01 L'état de choses est une connexion d'objets (entités, choses).” (German to French) Éditions Gallimard, Gilles Gaston Grager, 1992.

In this case Pears and Grager followed an etymological line for their translations and Ogden joined the Russell's atomism.

Russell's atomistic point of view is advocated in “*Philosophy of Logical Atomism*”, saying, “When I say that my logic is atomistic, I mean that I share the common-sense belief that there are many separate things; I do not regard the apparent multiplicity of the world as consisting merely in phases and unreal divisions of a single indivisible Reality”, and in his “Introduction” to Tractatus: “A proposition (true or false) asserting an atomic fact is called an atomic proposition. All atomic propositions are logically independent of each other”.

## 2. The last century before Quantum Mechanics

Each one who deals with science and technology know that they walk “hand in hand” in a constant feedback circuit, feeding changes in the human being lifestyle and, if we pick a piece of the History in any instant of the past, we will find the things going on like that.

Let's take a look in the early nineteenth century when a new epoch was being opened for physicists, especially for those who were studying electrical and optical phenomena. It was flourishing the “wave theory of light” and “electromagnetism”.

The first time that a wave theory of light was enunciated occurred in 1690 with the publication of the “*Traité de la lumière*” by Christian Huygens, proposing that light moves in constant speed and in waves, like waves moving in a fluid. However, the scientific community did not absorbed this idea because few years later, in 1704, Sir. Isaac Newton published his “*Opticks: or a Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflections and Colours of Light*”, the so called “Newton's corpuscular theory of light”. It took one century until Thomas Young publishes in 1804 his “*Bakerian Lecture: Experiments and calculations relative to physical optics*” in the “*Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*” 94, 1–16, a new wave theory of light. Young's theory was outdated in 1864, when James Clerk Maxwell published his “*A Dynamical Theory of the Electromagnetic Field*” in which he showed that light is an electromagnetic phenomenon. Look at this snippet of text of the paper:

There is always, however, enough of matter left to receive and transmit the undulations of light and heat, and it is because the transmission of these radiations is not greatly altered when transparent bodies of measurable density are substituted for the so-called vacuum...

In 1887: Heinrich Hertz observes the photoelectric effect which was later explained by Einstein in 1905, that also used the results of Planck's experiment with a “black body” in thermal equilibrium. Planck considered that electromagnetic energy propagates in energy packets called “quanta”,  $E_q = h\nu$  where  $h$  is a constant and  $\nu$  is the frequency of the electromagnetic wave that carries the energy  $E_q$ .

October 1911: By the first time, Wittgenstein met Bertrand Russell at Trinity College, Cambridge University. See “[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig\\_Wittgenstein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_Wittgenstein)”.

Also in 1911: “Niels Bohr travelled to England. At the time, it was where most of the theoretical work on the

structure of atoms and molecules was being done. He met J. J. Thomson of the Cavendish Laboratory and Trinity College, Cambridge", see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niels\\_Bohr](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niels_Bohr)".

July 1913: Niels Bohr publishes his model of the atom "On the Constitution of Atoms and Molecules" in "Philosophical Magazine" divided in three parts, where in the first is introduced "the theory of the stationary state of the non radiant electron". The text below is a piece of the first part where Bohr briefly explains the contribution of this new concept, "stationary state".

*The preliminary and hypothetical character of the above considerations needs not to be emphasized. The intention, however, has been to show that the sketched generalization of the theory of the stationary states possibly may afford a simple basis of representing a number of experimental facts which cannot be explained by help of the ordinary electrodynamics, and that assumptions used do not seem to be inconsistent with experiments on phenomena for which a satisfactory explanation has been given by the classical dynamics and the wave theory of light.*

In 1913, yet: "Wittgenstein came to feel that he could not get to the heart of his most fundamental questions while surrounded by other academics, and so in 1913 he retreated to the village of Skjolden in Norway, where he rented the second floor of a house for the winter. He later saw this as one of the most productive periods of his life, writing *Logik (Notes on Logic)*, the predecessor of much of the *Tractatus*".

(See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig\\_Wittgenstein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_Wittgenstein))

The atmosphere in Europe at that time was full of new ideas moving through all sciences, generating knowledge to be breathed by all. Something like... "Knowledge is in the air; In the rising of the sun; Knowledge is in the air; When the day is nearly done". The entanglement started...

### 3. The entanglement

When it is read by the first time, it seems to be obvious and almost unnecessary to think about it. But, when we stop to analyze the message it carries, we find the precious concept of *possibility* that points to another concept, *probability*. I'm talking about the aphorism below,

*It is an hypothesis that the sun will rise tomorrow: and this means that we do not know whether it will rise.*  
[TLP 6.36311]

The first concept, *possibility*, raises the doubt if the sun will rise in the next day but, accepting that something will happen. The second concept, *probability*, comes as a tool to assert a value *true (one)* or *false (zero)*, for the doubt associated to possibility.

There is more, consider now a far tomorrow, two billion years from today. Does it make sense to think "...that the sun will rise tomorrow", in that *far tomorrow*?

*...we cannot think what we cannot think; so what we cannot think we cannot say either.* [TLP 6.36311]

This, opens space to the argument of P.A.M. Dirac in "The Relation between Mathematics and Physics", February 6, 1939: One further point in connection with the new cosmology is worthy of note. At the beginning of time the laws of Nature were probably very different from what they are now. Thus we should consider the laws of Nature as continually changing with the epoch, instead of as holding uniformly throughout space-time.

Using the same reasoning, Feynman says:

*... we can only predict the odds! This would mean, if it were true, that physics has given up on the problem of trying to predict exactly what will happen in a definite circumstance. Yes! Physics has given up. We do not know how to predict what would happen in a given circumstance, and we believe now that it is impossible—that the only thing that can be predicted is the probability of different events. It must be recognized that this is a retrenchment in our earlier ideal of understanding nature. It may be a backward step, but no one has seen a way to avoid it.*

And Wittgenstein writes [TLP 5.156]:

*"It is in this way that probability is a generalization; It involves a general description of a propositional form. We use probability only in default of certainty-if our knowledge of a fact is not indeed complete, but we do know something about its form.(A proposition may well be an incomplete picture of a certain situation, but it is always a complete picture of something.) A probability proposition is a sort of excerpt from other propositions."*

As a note: the Standard Dictionary of the English Language, Funk & Wagnalls, explains possibility as "The fact or state of being possible".

It doesn't seem to be a mere coincidence that Wittgenstein had written in *Tractatus*: "The world is the totality of facts, not of things." [TLP 1.1] and Niels Bohr, in his "The Quantum Postulate and the Recent Development of Atomic Theory", said: "According to the quantum postulate any observation regarding the behavior of the electron in the atom will be accompanied by a change in the state of the atom".

The exclusion principle: This is an interesting point of contact *Tractatus* - Quantum Mechanics because, while Quantum Mechanics, uses Pauli's exclusion principle (1925), "In a multielectron atom there can never be more than one electron in the same quantum state". *Tractatus* uses arguments based on "Newton's corpuscular theory of light" (1704), "...for example, the simultaneous presence of two colours at the same place in the visual field is impossible, in fact logically impossible, since it is ruled out by the logical structure of colour." [TLP 6.3751]. But we must remember that the argument used in the *Tractatus* was theoretically invalidated only after Schrödinger to publish the "principle of quantum superposition states" that gave rise to the term "quantum entanglement", in "Die gegenwärtige Situation in der Quantenmechanik", *Naturwissenschaften*, Heft 50.

The uncertainty principle, Feynman: "This is the way Heisenberg stated the uncertainty principle originally: If you make the measurement on any object, and you can determine the x-component of its momentum with an uncertainty  $\Delta p$ , you cannot, at the same time, know its x-position more accurately than  $\Delta x \geq \hbar/2\Delta p$ , where  $\hbar$  is a definite fixed number given by nature. It is called the "reduced Planck constant".

Equation (2.3) [ $\Delta x \Delta p \geq \hbar/2$ ] refers to the predictability of a situation, not remarks about the past. It does no good to say "I knew what the momentum was before it went through the slit, and now I know the position, because now the momentum knowledge is lost."

The uncertainty principle in [TLP 5.1361]: "We cannot infer the events of the future from those of the present. Belief in the causal nexus is superstition".

The structure of the “Quantum World”: Nothing happens until some particle moves.

The structure of the “Tractatus World”: Nothing happens until some “name” changes in an elementary proposition because:

*A logical picture of facts is a thought.* [TLP 3]

*What constitutes a propositional sign is that in it its elements (the words) stand in a determinate relation to one another. A propositional sign is a fact.* [TLP 3.14]

*A proposition is not a blend of words.—(Just as a theme in music is not a blend of notes.) A proposition is articulate.* [TLP 3.141]

*The simple signs employed in propositions are called names.* [TLP 3.202]

*In a proposition a name is the representative of an object.* [TLP 3.22]

*The simplest kind of proposition, an elementary proposition, asserts the existence of a state of affairs (a state of things, Sachverhalte).* [TLP 4.21]

*It is only in the nexus of an elementary proposition that a name occurs in a proposition.* [TLP 4.23]

*The structure of a fact consists of the structures of states of affairs (a state of things, Sachverhalte).* [TLP 2.034]

*States of affairs (a state of things, Sachverhalte) are independent of one another.* [TLP 2.061]

The Schrödinger equation: If we consider what Wittgenstein explains in the letter to Russel, Cassino, 19.8.19; and that Tractatus says “*The propositions of logic are tautologies.*” [TLP 6.1] and more, for example, the list of all possible logical products truth of five elementary propositions,  $L_{pf} = \{pqrst ; qrst, prst, pqst, pqrt, pqrs ; rst, qst, qrt, qrs, pst,$

$pqt, prs, pqt, pqs, pqr ; st, rt, rs, qt, qs, qr, pt, ps, pr, pq ; t, s, r, q, p\}$ , see Bezerra, we conclude that all elements of  $L_{pf}$  are “possible facts”[Tatsachen]. It doesn’t means that they will happen.

The probability of any fact of  $L_{pf}$  happens, is a function of properties of each application, determine these probabilities is like to solve a “Schrödinger equation”.

Finally: What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence. [TLP 7]

Says Feynman: “*Another thing that people have emphasized since quantum mechanics was developed is the idea that we should not speak about those things which we cannot measure. (Actually relativity theory also said this.) Just because we cannot measure position and momentum precisely does not a priori mean that we cannot talk about them. It only means that we need not talk about them.*”

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# From Wheels Turning Idly to Meaning as Use. Pragmatist Tendencies in the “Middle” Wittgenstein

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## Abstract

This paper focuses on the origins of the later Ludwig Wittgenstein's emphasis on meaning as use, which at least partly can be traced back to his reflections on what he called the “*Eingreifen*” (engaging, meshing) of words and beliefs. I argue that one of the roots of this reflection is the pragmatist conception of truth as usefulness, which was most likely debated between Wittgenstein and Frank Ramsey in 1929. After introducing Wittgenstein's (temporary) perspective of a phenomenological language, I will show its shortcomings and the philosopher's need to give account of the working of words in ordinary language. I will then examine Wittgenstein's remarks about the pragmatist conception of truth and more generally about usefulness, and conclude that, although he usually expressed doubts about pragmatism, the “middle” Wittgenstein presented pragmatist tendencies which were pivotal in the development of his thought.

## 1. Phenomenological language

In 1929, Wittgenstein begins to reflect on the perspective and the limits of a language aimed at portraying immediate experience as it is. Mirroring the world of sense data, phenomenological language is not equivalent to ordinary language. Nevertheless, the correlation between the two may perhaps be studied. This seems to be the plan of some thinkers working mainly in the philosophy of science, among whom Frank Ramsey. Ramsey, as well as others, uses the expression “primary world” or “primary system” to refer to the object of phenomenological language (Ramsey 1990, 112ff; cf. Sahlin 1990, 125ff). Wittgenstein uses these expressions too, and it is likely that he absorbed this terminology through the “innumerable conversations” he shared with Ramsey in 1929. In the four notebooks from which the PR are taken, Wittgenstein often writes about this subject, and is ambivalent about it (see PR §11c, 53, 69c, 147b, 216). According to Stern (1995, 137), he actually holds two different ideas of phenomenology, one of which he refutes and the other he espouses, the latter becoming progressively equivalent to his concept of grammar. What seems clear is that there is a development in his thought, and that while at the beginning of this reflection he sometimes seeks a phenomenological language, he eventually refuses this perspective, at least in the strict sense (WVC 45-46).

Why does Wittgenstein change his mind?

He realizes that the description of the structure of immediate experience cannot be achieved by means of any primary language, as it would turn out to be artificial and barely understandable. As Frank Ramsey put it: “The limits of our language are the limits of our world. Our world is therefore a vague one and the precise is a fiction or construction. We cannot use Wittgenstein's notation like ‘.3red.7blue’; what colour is that? I have no idea” (Ramsey 1991a, 55). Wittgenstein is aware of the problem. It is within *our language* that understanding takes place, and it is within *our language* that experience itself must be described. The starting point of the PR makes this clear:

I do not now have phenomenological language, or “primary language” as I used to call it, in mind as my goal. I no longer hold it to be necessary. All that is possible and necessary is to separate what is essential from what is inessential in *our language*.  
[...]

A recognition of what is essential and what inessential in our language if it is to represent, a recognition of which parts of our language are wheels turning idly [*leerlaufende Räder*], amounts to the construction of a phenomenological language (PR §1; Nov. 1929).

The expression *leerlaufende Räder* was not “invented” by Wittgenstein: as Marconi (1983) underlines, the very same words occur in Hertz's introduction to the *Prinzipien der Mechanik*, a text Wittgenstein knew very well and often praised. Wittgenstein's further reflection about what is important in language, maybe partially guided by this metaphor, would also lead him away from the idea of an “essence” to be identified and studied.

## 2. On wheels *not* turning idly: the *Eingreifen* of words

The opposite of an idle wheel is an *engaged* wheel: a gear or a cogwheel which is in mesh, engaged, works. It is in their effective use that words work. This “engagement” is explained by Wittgenstein in remarks which often refer to concepts familiar to the pragmatist tradition, like those of belief, usefulness and consequences. The German expression for engaging is the verb *eingreifen*. Wittgenstein uses this and similar words on a number of occasions.

If we say “A word only has meaning in the context of a proposition”, then that means that it's only in a proposition that it functions as a word, and this is no more something that can be said than that an armchair only serves its purpose when it is in space. Or perhaps better: that a cogwheel only functions as such when engaged with other cogs (PR §12).

If someone says “The nothing noths”, then we can say to this, in the style of our way of considering things: Very well, what are we to do with this proposition? [...] I have nothing against your attaching an idle wheel to the mechanism of our language, but I do want to know whether it is idling or with what other wheels it is engaged (VW 73).

Other related concepts Wittgenstein mentions are those of “commitment”, of language as a “system” and of “being guided” by the system of language.

One point on which he insisted several times [...] was that if a word which I use is to have meaning, I must

"commit myself" by its use [...]. Similarly he said a little later [...], "There is no use in correlating noises to facts, unless we commit ourselves to using the noise in a particular way again – unless the correlation has consequences", and going on to say that it must be possible to be "led by a language". And when he expressively raised, a little later, the question "What is there in this talk of a 'system' to which a symbol must belong", he answered that we are concerned with the phenomenon of "being guided by" (WLM, 52-53).

What we are committed to, when we commit ourselves in this sense, derives from the belonging of a word, expression or proposition, to a system which is governed by rules and which leads somewhere. Once we are inside this system, we *follow rules*. Wittgenstein's fundamental concept of following a rule seems to be rooted in this quite early reflection on the *Eingreifen* of belief, and this is actually something which Wittgenstein will always acknowledge, at least in his constant warning against the misleading effects of the idle wheels of language (see PI, I §101, OC, §117).

As I hinted, the concept of *Eingreifen* and the reflection stemming from it share something with pragmatism. The examination of a remark dated January 1930 confirms this hypothesis.

### 3. Truth as usefulness

In the context of the abandonment of phenomenological language, while reflecting on meaning, belief and expectation, Wittgenstein points out:

When I say "There is a chair over there", this sentence refers to a series of expectations. I believe I could go there, perceive the chair and sit on it, I believe it is made of wood and I expect it to have a certain hardness, inflammability etc. If some of these expectations are mistaken, I will see it as proof for retaining that there was no chair there.

Here one sees the access [*Zugang*] to the pragmatist [*pragmatistischen*] conception of true and false. A sentence is true as long as it proves to be useful. (BEE, MS 107, 247, my emphasis; see Boncompagni (forthcoming) for a wider analysis).

The pragmatist conception of truth, in its Jamesian version equating truth to usefulness which seems envisioned here (for obvious limits of space, I will not linger over the more complex Peircean account), was object to debate in Cambridge during the first decades of the century. G.E. Moore, B. Russell and others criticized it quite harshly. James' approach to truth, although objectionable when expressed as a slogan and out of context, was rooted in a philosophical vision hinging on the need to bring back to the centre of the reflection the concreteness of life and the effective role that any concept, including truth, plays in the individual's dealings with the world. The very concept of correspondence as the matching of ideas and reality is not denied by James, but is reinterpreted in the light of the primacy of action, practices and needs.

To "agree" in the widest sense with a reality, can only mean to be guided either straight up to it or into its surroundings, or to be put into such working touch with it as to handle either it or something connected with it better than if we disagreed.  
[...]

Agreement thus turns out to be essentially an affair of leading – leading that is useful because it is into quar-

ters that contain objects that are important. True ideas lead us into useful verbal and conceptual quarters as well as up to useful sensible termini. They lead to consistency, stability and flowing human intercourse. (James 1975, 102f).

The connection between the pragmatist concept of usefulness and the image of *Eingreifen* is suggested by Wittgenstein himself.

"I mean something by the proposition" is similar in form to "This proposition is useful", or "This proposition engages with my life" (BT, 5).

Although it is uncertain whether Wittgenstein was acquainted with other writings by James except the *Principles of Psychology* and the *Varieties of Religious Experience*, his friend Ramsey clearly was. The notes he wrote in 1929, in preparation for a book on truth, as well as other writings, show both his knowledge of the pragmatist literature (James and Peirce in particular) and vicinity to the almost contemporary reflections being developed by Wittgenstein.

The belief [in a fact] is a disposition to act in any way which is advantageous if such a fact exists and in particular to reassert the sentence or assert other sentences with the same meaning on suitable occasions (Ramsey 1991a, 40).

The essence of pragmatism I take to be this, that the meaning of a sentence is to be defined by reference to the actions to which asserting it would lead [...] (Ramsey 1990, 51; see also *ivi*: 40 and Ramsey 1991b, 45, 91-92, 98-102).

Partly thanks to Ramsey, Wittgenstein probably realized that the notion of usefulness provided him with relevant insights into something that was missing both in his *Tractatus* and in the perspective of phenomenological language: the idea that it is in its instrumental aspect that the effective value and meaning of a true proposition is to be found.

### 4. Meaning as use

Usefulness gives one important feature of true propositions, which the pragmatist approach helps to clarify, namely, the practical value of everyday language, its purposiveness. When Wittgenstein accepts this idea, apparently, this feature amounts for him to "the essence" of language.

It makes no sense to speak of sentences [Sätzen] which have no value as instruments.

The sense of a sentence is its purpose (BEE, MS 107, 249).

In the following months and years, usefulness continues to play a crucial role in characterizing language in Wittgenstein, but some doubts emerge. Usefulness – Wittgenstein comes to think – cannot account for meaning and truth in every context, it cannot explain the sense of language as a whole, nor the sense of human actions and ways of behaving in general.

Why do humans think? Because it has proved its worth?

Does one think because one thinks that it is advantageous to think?

Do humans raise their children because that has proved its worth?

[...]

[...] *Sometimes* one does think because it has proved its worth (BT, 179-180).

Moreover, even when purpose and usefulness are decisive for understanding the sense of a sentence, Wittgenstein is clear in saying that the philosopher's interest must be addressed to their *logical* role, not to their empirical nature.

As a part of a mechanism, one can say, language has a purpose. But grammar isn't concerned with the purpose of language and whether it fulfils it [...] (BT 146; but see the whole section 44).

As Schulte (1999) underlines, Wittgenstein does not share the naturalistic and evolutionary framework of the pragmatists. Although there are similarities between the two approaches, when Wittgenstein invites us to look at the use of words and sentences, his aim – roughly – is not an inquiry into what makes words and beliefs useful to adapt the organism to new exigencies; rather, it is an investigation into the features of our grammar. In other words, it is *use*, and not *usefulness*, that interests him, and the criterion of *Eingreifen* is now applied to the analysis of how words are effectively used in linguistic practices.

## 5. Concluding remarks

One might say that the crucial difference between the pragmatist approach and Wittgenstein lies in the fact that while the former connects *truth* and *usefulness*, the latter connects *meaning* and *use*. Yet, Wittgenstein's 1929 acknowledgement that a pragmatist approach to truth is possible and even natural when a sentence is considered in its hypothetical and practical aspect was one of the key factors that, through his reflection on the *Eingreifen* of words, would lead towards his more mature understanding of the bond between use and meaning.

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# Neither Realism nor Constructivism: The Tractarian Conception of Language

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## Abstract

This paper proposes a disjunctivist interpretation of the relation between Tractarian “symbols” and Tractarian “signs” and suggests that, if such an interpretation is correct, the Tractarian conception of language is neither realist nor constructivist.

## I

My goal, in this paper, is to propose a disjunctivist interpretation of the relation between Tractarian “symbols” and Tractarian “signs” and to suggest that, if such an interpretation is correct, the Tractarian conception of language is neither realist nor constructivist. I will begin, in this section, by pointing out six aspects of the Tractarian distinction between symbols (or “expressions,” 3.31) and signs.

First, a definition of symbol:

- 1) “[Symbols] are everything—essential for the sense of the proposition—that propositions can have in common with one another.” (3.31)

A proposition, for the *Tractatus*, is a sensibly perceptible item (3.1) which represents a possible situation and says, truly or falsely, that such situation obtains (4.021-4.022). Propositions can share with one another parts and features that contribute to determine their sense—namely, parts and features that contribute to determine which possible situations the propositions represent (4.031). These parts and features are symbols, and so are complete propositions (3.31, 3.313).

Second, a definition of sign:

- 2) “The sign is what is sensibly perceptible in the symbol.” (3.32)

A symbol is a sensibly perceptible item (e.g. written or spoken, 3.321), and a sign is what is sensibly perceptible in it (*das sinnlich Wahrnehmbare am Symbol*).

Third, a constraint governing the relation between signs and symbols:

- 3) “Two different symbols can...have the sign...in common...” (3.321)

The same sign can belong, on different occurrences, to different symbols. One of the examples given by the *Tractatus* is the English word “is,” which symbolizes sometimes as the copula, other times as the sign of identity, and yet other times as the sign of existence (3.323).

Fourth, a characterization of the relation between signs, symbols, and use:

- 4) A symbol is a sign in use.

In order to identify the occurrence of a symbol, it is not enough to identify the occurrence of a sign: we must identify, in addition, how the sign is used on that occasion for characterizing the sense of a complete proposition. “In order to recognize the symbol in the sign we must consider the significant use” (3.326; cf. also 3.11, 3.12, 3.5, 4).

Fifth, an idea that, while not explicitly stated in the *Tractatus*, can be plausibly inferred from (3) and (4):

- 5) A sign, on some of its occurrences, may not belong to any symbol.

Just as a sign can be put, on different occasions, to a different significant use, and belong therefore to different symbols, so a sign can be put, on some occasions, to *no* significant use, and belong therefore to *no* symbol, amounting to nothing more than a *mere sign*.

Finally, the order of presentation and definition followed by the *Tractatus*:

- 6) Signs are defined after and in terms of symbols.

The sign/symbol distinction is discussed systematically in the 3.3s. The *Tractatus* defines the symbol in the 3.31s and then goes on to define the sign, in 3.32, as what is sensibly perceptible in the symbol. The same order of presentation and definition appears in an earlier part of the book, the 3.1s, where signs are first mentioned. The *Tractatus* begins by defining the proposition as the sensibly perceptible expression of a thought (3.1) and then goes on to mention “the sensibly perceptible sign (sound of written sign, etc.) of the proposition” (3.11). From the very beginning, the sign is characterized as what belongs to a meaningful proposition.

## II

I am now going to contrast three accounts of the Tractarian construal of the sign/symbol relation.

First, the *Extra-Feature Account*. This holds that the *Tractatus* analyzes the notion of symbol into two independently intelligible conceptual ingredients: the notion of sign and a relevant notion of use. Symbols form a species of the genus comprising all signs, where both the genus and the differentia that singles out the species (i.e. the property of being-in-use) can be specified without any reference to the species to be singled out.<sup>1</sup> Given the set of all sign-occurrences, we can ask which ones are occurrences of symbols, and the answer is given by indicating the extra feature that the occurrence of a sign must possess in order to be the occurrence of a symbol—namely, the property of being put to significant use. Sign-occurrences that lack this extra feature are mere signs. Among all the occurrences of a particular sign, those that receive the same significant use are occurrences of the same symbol, and those that receive a different significant

<sup>1</sup> Here and elsewhere in this section, I am indebted to Anton Ford’s discussion of different forms of genus/species relation (Ford 2011).

use are occurrences of different symbols. This account is consistent with (1)-(5) above, but attributes no philosophical significance to (6).

What would it be to attribute philosophical significance to (6)? One option is to adopt the *No-Distance Account*. This holds that a sign, for the *Tractatus*, is a *conceptually inseparable aspect* of a symbol: we have a sign *only* on those occasions in which we have a symbol, and we have the *same* sign only on those occasions in which we have the same symbol. Such a reading fits well with the Tractarian characterization of a sign as “what is sensibly perceptible in the symbol.” But it is incompatible with (3) and (5): it rules out the possibility of mere signs, and does not allow for the same sign to be common to different symbols.

The No-Distance Account is not the only way of according philosophical significance to the order of presentation and definition followed by the *Tractatus*. It is possible to hold that signs are conceptually dependent on symbols, but in a manner that allows signs to be common to different symbols and leaves room for occurrences of signs that are not occurrences of any symbol. This takes us to the account I want to recommend, which is consistent with (1)-(5) and attributes philosophical significance to (6). I shall refer to it—for reasons that will become evident in a moment—as the *Disjunctivist Account*.

The account runs as follows. The notion of symbol is primitive and irreducible. It can be elucidated: a symbol can be described as a *sign in use* or as a *sensibly perceptible mark of the sense of propositions*; but it cannot be reconstructed from independent conceptual ingredients. In particular, it cannot be reconstructed in terms of a prior and independent notion of sign and a prior and independent notion of use, as maintained by the Extra-Feature Account. Given the notion of symbol, a mere sign is defined as what *merely appears* to be a symbol, and a sign *simpliciter* is defined disjunctively as what is *either* a symbol (i.e. a sign in use) *or* a mere sign. Symbols and mere signs are species of the genus comprising all signs; but such species are not defined in terms of the genus and an independently intelligible differentia. Rather, the genus is defined as the disjunction of the species, and the species of mere signs is conceptually dependent on the species of symbols, since nothing could *merely look like* a symbol if nothing could actually *be* a symbol. The notion of a sign that is common to different symbols is also defined disjunctively in terms of its species. We begin with the conceptually primitive notion of a plurality of symbols which misleadingly appear to be the same symbol; we then define the notion of a mere sign which looks like each of those symbols without being any of them; and finally, we define the notion of a sign which is either one of those symbols or the correspondent mere sign.

According to the Disjunctivist Account, different occurrences of the same sign may be occurrences of different symbols or of no symbol. In this sense, a sign may “be common” or “belong” to different symbols, as well as to mere signs. But this does not mean that a sign may belong to different symbols and to mere signs as an independently intelligible, conceptually separable common factor. The occurrences of different same-looking symbols and of the correspondent mere sign are not occurrences of the same sign *because* they possess some independently specifiable property, such as geometrical shape or acoustic structure. Rather, the sign that is common to different symbols and to mere signs is defined disjunctively in terms of what it is common to. Thus, to use a Tractarian example, the word or sign “is” is common to at least three different symbols: the copula, the sign of identity, and the sign

of existence. But the sign that is common to these different symbols is what, on each of its occurrences, is either an occurrence of one of those misleadingly same-looking symbols, or an item that merely appears to be an occurrence of each of those symbols.

The Disjunctivist Account does not deny that each occurrence of a sign may be described by means of a conceptual apparatus that makes no reference to symbols—say, in terms of purely geometrical or acoustic properties. And it does not deny that, for some or any given sign, there *might* be properties specifiable independently of any symbols (such as the property of exemplifying a certain geometrical shape or sound pattern) which belong to all and only the occurrences of the sign. But the existence of such properties, for the Disjunctivist Account, does not follow *a priori* from the existence of signs. All the occurrences of a sign have the property of appearing (either misleadingly or non-misleadingly) to be occurrences of each of the symbols to which the sign belongs; but this does not entail that there is a set of symbol-independent properties which single out all the occurrences of the same sign.

The Disjunctivist Account, unlike the No-Distance Account, provides a viable alternative to the Extra-Feature Account. It is compatible with (1)-(5), and has the advantage of explaining the order of presentation and definition followed by the *Tractatus*. Moreover, it is supported by the fact that the *Tractatus* never refers to signs as shapes or sounds, or otherwise in terms that can be uncontroversially taken to be intelligible independently of symbols. I do not claim that these are decisive considerations for preferring the Disjunctivist Account to the Extra-Feature Account. I believe that the strongest reason for preferring the Disjunctivist Account is that it ascribes to the *Tractatus* a more promising philosophical view. This is not, however, a claim that I will try to substantiate on this occasion. It is enough, for my present purposes, if I have established that the Disjunctivist Account is a plausible exegetical option. In what follows, I am going to discuss how the Disjunctivist Account bears on the question of whether the Tractarian conception of language should be associated with a form of realism or a form of constructivism.

### III

The terms “realism” and “constructivism” have several different uses in philosophy. Here I shall call an interpretation of the Tractarian conception of language “realist” if it construes Tractarian signs as items fully intelligible without any reference to meaningful signs—say, as geometrical shapes or acoustic patterns—and holds that simple signs acquire a meaning, for the *Tractatus*, when they are correlated, through some sort of ostensive definition or psychological act, to independently specifiable features of reality. By contrast, I shall call an interpretation of the Tractarian conception of language “constructivist” if it adopts the same characterization of Tractarian signs, but holds that simple signs acquire a meaning, for the *Tractatus*, when they are used in accordance with appropriate linguistic rules, where these rules can be fully specified without any invocation of meaningful signs and any appeal to semantic notions such as reference and truth.

Realist readings of the *Tractatus*, in the sense just specified, have in fact been proposed by several influential commentators (such as Peter Hacker, Norman Malcolm, and David Pears). This exegetical tradition has been challenged by so-called “anti-metaphysical” readers of the *Tractatus* (such as Hidé Ishiguro, Warren Goldfarb, Peter Winch, and Brian McGuinness), and the interpretations

proposed by these other commentators, or some of them, may perhaps be taken to be constructivist in the sense I have described. (Whether this is a fair representation of anti-metaphysical readings, or the product of the mistaken assumption that we must choose between realist and constructivist readings, is a question that I will leave open on this occasion.)

My claim here is that, if the Disjunctivist Account of the sign/symbol relation is correct, the Tractarian conception of language is neither realist nor constructivist. Realist and constructivist readings have an important feature in common: they are both committed to the Extra-Feature Account of the relation between signs and symbols, even though they construe very differently the extra feature that must be added to a sign in order to give it a meaning and thus turn it into a symbol. Such readings are therefore equally incompatible with the Disjunctivist Account of the sign/symbol relation, which treats the notion of meaningful sign as fundamental.

The Disjunctivist Account does not entail that a sign, for the *Tractatus*, cannot acquire a meaning (and thus become a symbol) by being correlated with a feature of reality. But the sign, the relevant procedure of correlation, and the relevant feature of reality must be intelligible only in light of the unitary notion of meaningful sign. Similarly, the Disjunctivist Account does not entail that a sign, for the *Tractatus*, cannot acquire a meaning by being used in ac-

cordance with the rules of the language. But the sign, the relevant sort of use, and the relevant linguistic rules must once again be intelligible only in light of the unitary notion of meaningful sign.

By adopting the Disjunctivist Account of the sign/symbol relation, we deny that the *Tractatus* is concerned to explain how language can get on its feet by reconstructing the notion of meaningful sign in terms of a prior and independent notion of sign and some prior and independent extra features, however exactly these extra features are to be construed. We can maintain that the *Tractatus* seeks to elucidate the notion of meaningful sign by appealing to a number of other notions—such as the notion of what is sensibly perceptible in the sign, of significant use, of sign-referent correlation, and of linguistic rule. But each of these other notions must be taken to presuppose the notion that they serve to elucidate.

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# “An ‘anthropological’ way of looking at philosophical problems.” Wittgenstein, Frazer and the Art of Comparison

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## Abstract

Wittgenstein steers clear of relativism, a philosophical thesis he holds to be nonsensical. But conceptual relativity is one major concern of his. A related question is how to assess to what extent conceptual differences subsist. For his ‘ethnological approach’, which shows the alleged necessity to be contingent, alternative possibilities are mere objects of comparison in order to better understand familiar cultural phenomena.

## 1. ‘How do they believe it?’

“If one says that there are various systems of ethics, one is not saying that they are all equally right. That would have no meaning. Just as it would have no meaning to say each was right from its own standpoint. That could only mean that each judges as he does.” (Wittgenstein 2015, 30) “To say: [in the end] we can only adduce such grounds as we hold to be grounds, is to say nothing at all.” (MS 176, 70v-71r.) Not only *moral* relativism is empty. Wittgenstein steers clear of relativism in general, a philosophical thesis he holds to be nonsensical.

But conceptual relativity is one major concern in his frequent dealing with the customs of real or imaginary ‘tribes’. As a late remark shows, it is not always easy to assess if and to what extent conceptual differences subsist:

„We are told that primitive tribes believe they are descended from an animal (e. g. from a snake). We wonder, How can they believe that? – We ought to ask: ‘How do they believe it?’” (MS 116, 283)

Wittgenstein questions the assumption that “the most manifold customs and laws” are “based on this belief” (MS 116, 283; Brusotti 2014, 363ss.). In 1931, when he criticized Frazer’s version of this intellectualistic approach, he often seemed to assume that nobody really believes in such bizarre things as ‘magic’ and that all concord in the evidences and techniques of everyday life; hence, the question of the relativity of worldviews did not even arise. The late Wittgenstein has overcome the principled and unwarranted anti-cognitivism, that even in 1931 was only a strong temptation, but still doesn’t adopt a relativistic stance. He leaves it open if and how ‘they’ may ‘believe’ something we hold as unbelievable and sees, more clearly than in 1931, that such questions simply cannot be answered from the philosopher’s armchair.

Wittgenstein reformulates the initial question: “How can they believe that?” is a mere expression of astonishment, even if it suggests the need for a causal explanation, and instead should be replaced by a real question, how are things like that actually believed?. Wittgenstein is not alone when he thinks that ‘how do they believe...?’ is the right question. His suggestion comes close to a classic methodological reflection of the time: “I have always asked myself ‘How?’ rather than ‘Why?’ Azande do certain things and believe certain notions” (Evans-Pritchard 1937, 5). Wittgenstein’s concern that the intellectualistic search for explanations and causes might keep the researcher from looking at the facts was not entirely foreign to post-Frazerian ethnology.

Wittgenstein sees two relevant issues: “Totemism. It is said that some people believe their fathers are wolves. But how do we know? And in what way?” (PPO, 405; 22/2/1947) “[H]ow do we know” what they believe, how do we ascribe such beliefs to them; “in what way”, *in which sense*, do they believe such things?

Laws and customs are not the ‘effects’ of the belief, but rather the *criteria* for ascribing it to a given community: they ‘show in which measure, in which sense’, a belief subsists. These criteria decide the sense we give to *their* sentence *as well as* to *our* verb ‘believe’. The problem is not only that *their* grammar is unknown to us. We are confused by *ours*; *our* way of expression does not really seem to do justice to their way of thinking and acting.

How one of the ‘tribes’ Wittgenstein has ‘heard of’ really uses the sentence that we translate as ‘we descend from a snake’, is an empirical question only a field researcher could answer. The philosopher only wants to show that the verb ‘believe’ does not necessarily imply something like a theory. Thinking of possible alternative uses, he intends to reduce the apparently necessary and unique to one of many alternatives, an approach Wittgenstein calls “the ethnological way of looking” at things.

## 2. Between Spengler and Sraffa

1940 Wittgenstein intends to use this ethnological view (*Betrachtungsweise*), but without “declaring philosophy to be ethnology” (MS 162b, 67v). To which extent are his remarks on Frazer’s *Golden Bough* of June-July 1931 already an early ‘exercise’ in this ‘ethnological approach’? I have dealt with this subject thoroughly in my book *Wittgenstein, Frazer und die “ethnologische Betrachtungsweise”* [Wittgenstein, Frazer and the “ethnological view”] (Brusotti 2014, cf. 2007). Here I will only briefly recall that these early remarks were not Wittgenstein’s last word neither on Frazer nor about the theoretical problems at issue.

In 1931 Wittgenstein listed the thinkers who successively “influenced” him, the last two being Spengler and Sraffa. In June-July, as he had written his first remarks about the *Golden Bough*, he had already “taken up” (MS 154, 16r) Spengler’s “movement of thought”, but Sraffa’s was still foreign to him.

By 1930 Wittgenstein had gained a new insight in the plurality of cultures from *The Decline of the West* (Brusotti 2001; 2014, 24ss.). But strangely enough, one major limit of his early Frazer-remarks is that the idea of a plurality of cultures is quite absent. Rather than cultural and other par-

ticularities he stresses what human beings universally share. He simply refers to them in general, or following Frazer's parlance to 'savages', without really feeling the need to deal with specific cases. Thus he does not really face historical and cultural variability and the related interpretation problems. Even if he rebukes Frazer for being unable "to conceive of a life different from that of the England of his time" (MS 110, 184), everybody who isn't blinded by today's 'civilization' seems able to understand 'primitive' rituals beyond cultural differences. Hence Wittgenstein's early critique of the *Golden Bough* does not show any relativistic tendencies. "Our Standards and Theirs" do not play any role and the antithesis of universalism and relativism, that will dominate the 'rationality debate', isn't at issue.

In 1931 Wittgenstein proposes a morphological synopsis of the 'choir' of customs described in Frazer's *Golden Bough* and mentions "Spengler" as a model for this "world-view". This Goethean/Spenglerian morphology is not yet an 'anthropological method' in the sense of "imagining 'a tribe among whom it is carried on in this way: ...'" (Rhees 1965, 25) Only later did Wittgenstein learn this "anthropological" way of looking at philosophical problems "from talking to Sraffa" (Monk 1990, 261).

But in 1932 Wittgenstein still opposed a fierce resistance raising against Sraffa the same objections he had already formulated against Frazer (cf. Brusotti 2014, 343ss.). Sraffa pressed Wittgenstein to adopt an empirical, causal stance and identified the status of norms with the role they play in our life. Wittgenstein, who still simply conceived this role as utility, held our peculiar 'way of viewing' norms for decisive and insisted that we do not look at them as merely useful. He did not yet know how to take account of the role of language in our life without transforming philosophy into an empirical discipline (Engelmann 2013b). Wittgenstein had to learn this *against* Sraffa before he could pick up the importance of the role of norms and institutions in our life from him.

### 3. The ethnological way of looking

Wittgenstein's philosophy adopts "the ethnological way of looking" at things when he resists the temptation of the 'causal' view and thereby eschews making philosophy into an empirical investigation.

"What is insidious about the causal approach is that it leads one to say: 'Of course that's how it has to happen'. Whereas one ought to say: It may have happened *like that*, & in many other ways.

If we use the ethnological approach does that mean we are saying philosophy is ethnology? No, it only means we are taking up our position far outside, in order to see *the things more objectively*." (MS 162b, 67r-67v; 1940)

Wittgenstein's 'ethnological view' is the very antithesis of Frazer's evolutionary approach, that clearly instantiates the causal view: Whereas Frazer's (and Renan's) speculative genetic hypotheses lay claim to be without alternative ("that's how it has to happen"), Wittgenstein's 'ethnological view' reduces what seemed to be necessary to something that could have happened otherwise.

Wittgenstein's metaphor could suggest an unconcerned spectator who impartially records data; but this ideal of external objectivity would not do justice to post-Frazerian ethnology; an ethnologist like Malinowski may start from a "position far outside", but aims at leaving it behind as soon as possible, and even if he never becomes an insider, the method of his investigation is *participant* observation. But

Wittgenstein doesn't intend to declare philosophy for ethnology; his concept of objectivity isn't that of the empirical sciences.

In 1931 he marks himself off from Ramsey: this "bourgeois thinker" exclusively takes into account his own society and is solely concerned about the way the given state should be ordered and governed. On the contrary a genuinely philosophical reflection aims at showing that this state is not the only possible one and thereby strives to get at the universal 'essence' of the state (Ms 112, 70v-71r; 1.11.1931). Whereas, for the western scientist, clarity is merely a means for constructing a more and more complex structure (MS 109, 211), for the philosopher 'clarity, transparency', is a goal in itself; then she wants to make 'the foundation of the possible buildings' 'transparent' (MS 109, 207) and intends to understand the world not 'in its multiplicity', but in its 'centre', in 'its essence'.

Here, looking at alternative possibilities should allow one to understand an 'essence' that Wittgenstein still conceives in a rather traditional way; but even after introducing the concept of 'family resemblance' he keeps contrasting two worldviews. In a late discussion he still pleads for a 'contemplative' stance peculiar to philosophy and "foreign" to the modern scientist.

"Compare someone running a bus company in a city. How bus companies look in the universe – that does not interest him. He is interested in the way this bus company should be run here and now. That on the other side of the earth there are – or that at other times there have been – societies in which there were no buses at all, where they lived quite differently, conducted their lives in a different way (that there are other and different ways of social existence) – this is not something that he wants to know." (Wittgenstein 2015, 36; 8/4/1947)

Unlike the scientist, the *philosopher* stresses that there are and have been "other and different ways of social existence" (Wittgenstein 2015, 36). But why should philosophy "compare" a cultural phenomenon like modern science "with other sorts of activity, other ways of doing things, and so on?" (Wittgenstein 2015, 37) And why should philosophy be "concerned with pointing out other possibilities; other ways in which it might be done?" Comparing a given institution with alternative possibilities, the philosopher calls its supposed necessity into question; but thinking of alternative activities, of remote ages and cultures, is simply a tool that enables 'contemplation' to find out the nature of a familiar institution, e. g. to understand "what sort of thing, what sort of activity science is." (Wittgenstein 2015, 36) The aim of the comparison is understanding, not relativism.

Wittgenstein explicitly refers to "Spengler's suggestion that philosophy now is on the threshold of something like Goethe's *Methode der Naturforschung*" (Wittgenstein 2015, 37) in which "causality and measurement" are not "predominant" (Wittgenstein 2015, 38). Wittgenstein denies that "all investigation 'tries to become' causal investigation or is a fumbling attempt in that direction" (Wittgenstein 2015, 39). Here he implicitly contradicts authors like Frazer and Jeans: they maintain that explaining and mastering nature are universal human pursuits, and in Frazer's evolutionary ladder (magic, religion, science) only modern science finally fulfills what already prehistoric magic vainly aspired to (for a similar criticism of Jeans cf. Brusotti 2001, 2014, 57ff). Wittgenstein on the contrary excludes "that science is the fruition of which any other view is an inadequate anticipation (*Vorstufe*)" (Wittgenstein 2015, 38).

Philosophers imagine circumstances and surroundings in which a familiar institution or activity may lose its point. "Considering different possibilities" and thus showing the purported necessity to be contingent may (but needn't) help the philosopher to see how it really is: "No, it does not *have* to be like this. But this is how it *is*." (Wittgenstein 2015, 39) Playing imaginary possibilities against an alleged necessity, philosophy may get at reality. The distance from which the given looks real, but lacks necessity, is the 'standpoint far afield' Wittgenstein wants to take up. This "ethnological view" is not a 'view from nowhere'. We can perhaps see "things *more objectively*" (MS 162b, 67v), but not simply: objectively. The philosopher can take a "Martian point of view" only if this doesn't really mean to look at things "without any preconceived idea", but, "perhaps more correctly", at most to "upset the normal preconceived idea" or rather to "run athwart it" (TS 211, 498) For the philosopher, alternative possibilities are mere objects of comparison in order to better understand a familiar cultural phenomenon. Even when it seems to be necessary and unique the ethnological eye looks at it as something that could have been otherwise.

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# Anarchy is where States Make It – A Critique of Wendt's International Relations Constructivism

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## Abstract

The objective of this paper is to show that the structure of the international system, usually described as anarchy, is a *process independent* cause of states' behavior. The anarchical structure of the international system causes changes in the behavior of states according to its "inner logic," independent of any past or present social interaction. Anarchy is not just an empty vessel filled with social constructs - as Alexander Wendt claims. Due to the very existence of two or more agents in the system, anarchy has its own inherent logic that is independent of friendly or hostile interactions between agents/states.

## 1. Friend or foe? It matters not.

Let us imagine the following scenario. Three friends are put into a windowless room. They have been neighbors their whole lives. In all that time, they never had a serious fight among themselves. In fact, they had a trusting relationship for years, holding each other's spare keys, watering each other's plants during vacations etc. But now, they find themselves in a completely new situation. First of all, they do not know why and how they got into this room. In addition, in the middle of the windowless room, there is a knife.

Now, let us try to imagine how they would react in this situation. What would they think? What would they do? According to Wendt, none of them would reach for the knife because the others are not perceived as a threat, but as friends. A long social interaction made them friends and they internalized rules of friendly behavior - they do not know how to behave differently because "being a friend to their neighbors" is a part of their identity. On the other hand, they can perceive the situation as such as a threat (including the existence of the knife in this room) - it is completely new for them and they are not sure what is going on. Although they have a lot of information about each other, they do not know much about their current circumstances. Would this new situation, and their lack of knowledge about it, change their thoughts about each other? Would they start to think more intensively about their security? Even among friends? Does this new situation make them less amiable, even where their identities largely remaining the same?

In order to protect himself in this new situation (for example, from a serial killer or imaginary enemy who put them in this room), or even to protect them all from that imaginary enemy, one of them reaches for the knife. How would the other two friends perceive that action? As a threat or as a friendly act of collective protection? Ultimately, what stops any of them from believing that one or both of the neighbors is in fact their diabolical captor?

This is an example where the transition from being a friend to being an enemy can happen very fast due to the circumstances in which the agents have found themselves, even if there is nobody (such as the serial killer in the horror film "Saw") to tell them what to do in order to survive.

With this story, we are suggesting that where the agents are unable to know each other's intentions, and the rules of the game are unknown, the situation itself is perceived as a threat; this is enough to ignite the security dilemma. What is enough to make us fear others? The fact that an

agent (the state) has enough power to harm us and that we can never tell what the agent's intentions really are or what they will be in the future, is enough to make us fear others. No past friendly social interaction can fully alleviate the threatening aspect of the situation itself. In addition, one is never really sure whether or not the other agent is trying to deceive him. If that is the case, then we could say that anarchy (absence of centralized authority), even among friends, can change the friendly behavior, due to uncertainty about the intentions of other agents. Friendship is something that can be created. It is a process dependent variable. Anarchy is not. Its basic features cannot be changed by an intensive process that creates friendship. In anarchy, every friend is a potential foe. Hence, security, or how to survive in this (or a future) situation with these potential adversaries, becomes an agent's primary concern in anarchy. This security competition among friends will happen not because they are not good people or because they do not have a tradition of friendship - it will happen because of the new anarchical situation in which they have found themselves.

If this is correct, then the identities of agents involved in this story do not shape all of their interests and concerns, because interest and concern about security are always present. However, these concerns are not always visible - they only surface in particular kinds of situations. If the shift from a known hierarchical system to an unknown anarchical system is enough to make security issues more pressing, then it is not important whether the agents are friends or enemies. A friend among friends in anarchy necessarily thinks about his own survival - even if he does not say it out loud. Anarchy is not chaotic. But if there is no guarantee that one will survive, even among friends, and if there are "knives" in the hands of the others (a metaphor for states' military capabilities or potential to do harm), and if they do not know what is going on in their minds (their present and future intentions), then the situation of international anarchy is similar enough to the situation in this windowless room.

No matter how intensive past social interactions, or how the identities of agents are shaped, the very fact that there are active agents (states) with guns and unknowable intentions is enough for friendly agents (states) to worry about their security issues. If this is true, then anarchy has a kind of "inner" logic that compels agents/states to behave in certain way, regardless of their being status quo or revisionist states, friends or foes. Anarchy is here to stay even among friends, and there is nothing they can do about it. However, we do not argue that the security dilemma in which the agents find themselves will be resolved in this or

that particular way; there is no need to subscribe to any particular rationalist theory of IR. We are merely saying that, in anarchy, agents/states find themselves in this dilemma, and that is the inner logic of anarchy -- non-reducible to state behavior or identities.

## 2. What makes an anarchy?

What are minimal conditions for an anarchy to emerge? Anarchy is a kind of system with at least two agents who are related to one other in a non-specified way. Namely, in anarchy the relationship between agents is not regulated "from above" by any kind of rule. There is no ruler responsible for making and enforcing the rules of agents' behavior. In other words, there is no centralized political authority within an anarchical system. That is the most common definition of anarchy in international relations: it is a state system without centralized political authority.

Wendt accepts this definition of anarchy and uses it throughout his work. He also accepts that the main agents in international relations are states. But he claims that anarchy is a social construct and that there is no "inner logic" or that there are no rules inherent to anarchy: "Anarchy is what states make of it" (Wendt 1992). He argues that "[...] self-help and power politics do not follow either logically or causally from anarchy and that if today we find ourselves in a self-help world, this is due to process, not structure" (Wendt 1992, 394). So, according to Wendt, anarchies are not *necessarily* "self-help" systems.

Structural realists like Waltz (1979) describe anarchy as a "self-help" system in which the elements (states) of the system have to follow the logic of self-help or they endanger their survival. States have to adapt to the system (by learning or by behavioral adaptation) in order to survive in it. Contrary to that, Wendt claims: "Self help and power politics are institutions, not essential features of anarchy" (1992, 395). So, Wendt claims that anarchy does not dictate the behavior of states. States behave as they do in anarchy because they have learned (through the process of social interaction) to behave that way, because they believe that this is the proper way to behave, and because they have internalized certain norms and beliefs that have become a part of their identities. These beliefs, including the belief in anarchy, can be changed through the process of interaction between states. An anarchy is not a given - it is a social construct.

We disagree with Wendt's "process dependent" concept of anarchy. We believe that there is only one concept of anarchy with its own inner logic. States in an anarchical environment inevitably conform their behavior to the inner logic of anarchy. We believe that agents cannot be certain of other agents' intentions, thus enabling them to perceive everyone else as a potential foe. This in itself is enough to start a power competition.

States behave as they do in anarchy because there *are* agents in the interaction -- not because they are status quo or revisionist states. The only fundamental aspect of states is their ability to actively participate in the process of changing their identity and interests. It is important that states are agents. If this is true (and we believe that Wendt agrees with this fundamental feature of the state), then no state can be sure about the future interests of other states. No state can ever be sure of other states' intentions. A state's identity is not only the result of social interaction among states, but also the result of social interactions *within* the state. So, changes in state identity and state

interests cannot only be a result of social interaction among states.

Even if the concept of anarchy (lack of centralized authority) does not include a "self-help" system (one can find some friends there, at least when their interests are in harmony), if states are agents who can choose their wants and actions, then it is difficult to see how security issues would not also be an essential part of any relationship between two states. Without rules, the only limitation to a state's will is the power of others. "Power structures - the relative distribution of material resources - are not generated by social practices", but "by the mere presence of the other, and its potential to do harm in the future" (Copeland 2000, 206). Anarchy is based on the very existence of agents and it correctly describes the necessary kind of relationship between them. It takes two to tango.

In addition to this argument from uncertainty, we believe that anarchies are also inevitably "self-help" systems. Not only because there are agents in the system, but because it is very hard to understand the idea of anarchy without the idea of "self-help". An anarchical system is a system without centralized authority. It is the opposite of a hierarchical system with centralized authority. Inherent in the concept of "centralized authority" is the idea of legitimate authority which can help people to overcome their differences and disputes in a non-violent way. Central to the belief in a centralized authority is the belief that there is a right way for human beings to get help from an impartial judge. Otherwise, there would be no difference between power and authority, coercion and consent. And if we say that anarchy lacks a central authority, then we are actually saying that there is no such help in solving states' disputes in anarchy. And if there is no such help, then we have to rely on ourselves, our own strength and power; we have to help ourselves. We see no way to properly understand anarchy without referring to the self-help system.

Hence, anarchy is a self-help system in which an existing distribution of power and lack of centralized authority compels states to compete for power and see each other as potential enemies.

## 3. States as agents: Limits of agency

Wendt believes that states are agents and that "*structure exists, has effects, and evolves only because of agents and their practices*" (Wendt 1999, 185). Unlike structural realists, Wendt does not believe that anarchy (structure) has any causal powers -- though he believes in the causal powers of process. He does not believe in given and fixed state identities and interests. He does not believe that we can change the behavior of the agents (states) without changing their identities and interests -- even their rationality and self-centered thinking.

Contrary to Wendt's belief about changing state identities and interests, we believe that security interests are basic interests that are a necessary part of states' existence. Security is a given, unavoidable interest of agents - even to creative agents like states. Why? Because states are agents. Anarchy emerges as a result of agents' interaction, but this interaction has an unintended result: it creates a structure with its own "process independent" inner logic. There are necessarily at least two agents in anarchy, and by the very fact that there are two different and separated agents, an anarchical structure is formed. Because they are different and separate agents in interaction, they have no guarantee of survival. Agents have to adapt their behavior to each other and try to control this risky situation



as much as they can. It is this anarchical logic that compels states to take care of themselves and care for their relative power, not their identities.

If states are agents, through acts of social will they can change their identity and interests. But if we want to create our identity, we have to survive first. Without agents' existence, there is no need to ask "Who is the agent?" We cannot give up our security in order to allow other interests created by agents' social interaction. Even if an agent is unselfish.

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# Wittgenstein's Discussion on Rule Following

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## Abstract

The discussion on *rule following* in *PI* (*Philosophical Investigation*) stretches from §134 to §242. Wittgenstein lists a diverse range of examples, from the most familiar ones to those we have seldom thought about. All these examples, however, seem unlikely to be connected with each other in a specific sequence. Nevertheless, this paper believes that Wittgenstein's discussion does have a system. The underlying structure can be clarified by analyzing each case and the logical relationship among them. What's more, Wittgenstein's motivation in writing this part is to offer a method for philosophical research (cf. McGinn, 2007, 15), but not to solve any specific philosophical problem.

## 1. Introduction

Wittgenstein's discussion on *rule following* consists of many specific cases, which outwardly jump from one to another without a logical sequence (cf. Baker, Hacker, 2005, 7 ff). However, as Grayling says in his book *Wittgenstein*, it is Wittgenstein's writing style that does not have a clear structure, but it does not mean that the content or his idea is not systematic structured (cf. Grayling, 1988, v-vi).

In the discussion on *rule following*, Wittgenstein stretches his exposition from the meaning of *proposition*, to *rule following*, to *understanding* and to *reading*, then finally back to the topic *rule following*. The whole discussion continues Wittgenstein's style of therapy and is fulfilled with a series of cases from the usual ones to the queer ones. In this way, he has firstly resolved several philosophical questions. Secondly, and more importantly, he offers us a method to do philosophical research. As a Chinese proverb goes, give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime. Wittgenstein tries to show us a way to resolve all the philosophical problems (cf. Stern, 2004, 4). So, the philosophers are not only cured in the problem of *rule following*, but also in other philosophical confusions.

## 2. The philosophical problem to be resolved

Before we cast light on the structure of this discussion, we need to get a clear picture of the content, which could not be discussed in detail in this paper because of length limitations. Even though we should, first of all, clarify the philosophical problem, which is dealt with in this part, namely what is *rule following*.

Why does Wittgenstein make such a thorough exposition on this topic? The reasons could be as follows: Firstly, this pattern of question is quite typical for philosophers. They always raise philosophical problems in "what is ...?" And try to summarize it into a simple pattern of answers like A is B (cf. McDowell, 1984, 327). Wittgenstein takes it as a misuse of language, as the meaning of something is related to certain circumstances. Therefore, the meaning cannot be defined in such a general way. Secondly, Wittgenstein considers that in order to resolve philosophical problems which start from the inappropriate use of language, we need to figure out the proper way to do it. Hence, there should be a rule indicating the right trace and we need to follow the rule in the language game. The use of language is regarded as grammar in the field of Wittgenstein's philosophy. Obviously, this grammar is different

from the grammar that we learned in the class. The meaning of Wittgenstein's grammar is broader and is embedded in every single case when we use a word, or we can say, when dealing with every single philosophical problem.

## 3. The way to resolve the problem

Wittgenstein regards the process of resolving problems as a therapy to "cure" the philosophers. So, the "cure" has to go through a long and progressive process, in which the patient obtains the "antibody" gradually and is totally cured unconsciously.

It is clear that, from §134 to §242, Wittgenstein illustrates with a great amount of examples, but barely comes up with a conclusion directly by himself. These examples are organized in a logical sequence, from the familiar ones, which are usual in our daily life to those we have seldom thought about. Those examples are listed and analyzed with a therapeutic purpose. Through this therapeutic procedure, he aims at diagnosing the philosopher's errors, curing the philosophical "illness" and at last resolving philosophical problems.

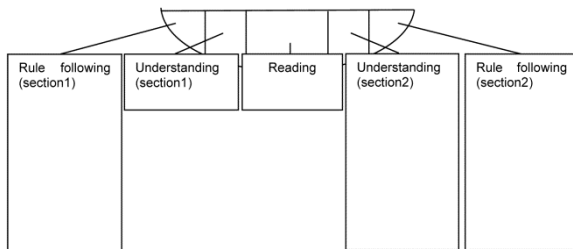
It is worth noting that some examples are given as analogy. Analogical argumentation makes people grasping the point easier. And it enables the philosophers to be cured, to be enlightened by themselves, instead of explaining directly in an explicit way.

### Structure of the discussion

According to Wittgenstein, philosophical problems arise out of misuse of language. In order to resolve them, we need to use the grammar properly, which corresponds to the rule of our language game. In this way, we come to the first question: what is *rule following*. To answer this question, Wittgenstein begins with some normal cases and leads the discussion to go deeper and deeper by transferring the topic from *rule following* to *understanding*, and to *reading*. As the discussion goes down to *reading*, it reveals more and more grammatical facts that philosophers used to overlook.

It is worth noting that the discussion on *rule following* and *understanding* before the *reading* part seems touched in passing. They are only analyzed with several normal cases. Then, the topic changes to the next one, which is related to them. However, the course of treatment seems unfinished, because Wittgenstein's way to resolve the problem starts from the simple cases and gradually moves to the peculiar ones. Here, we just stop shortly after the

brief discussion on these two topics and have barely handled the queer cases. After that, we come to the *reading* part. In this part, Wittgenstein has finished a thorough exposition on *reading* with a great amount of typical-Wittgenstein cases. Then, the discussion goes back to case §151 on *understanding*, and then back to §143 on *rule following* again. So from a macro-standpoint, we can clearly grasp the structure of this whole exposition. *Reading* is interpolated into the part of *understanding*, and *understanding* stays in the middle of *rule following*. This structure indicates as follows: Firstly, this could be evidence that Wittgenstein writes the *reading* part with a convincing purpose. The discussion on *reading* is not isolated from other parts in the book *PI*, but closely connected with them. The discussion on *reading* even plays a significant role in the part of *rule following* and on the way to resolve philosophical problems. Secondly, some people insist that Wittgenstein just writes down whatever comes to his mind and finishes the book *PI* with a state of mess. However, these people probably get lost in the diverse range of cases themselves, which seem like a maze, while Wittgenstein actually stands up high there, enjoying the panoramic view. When you put yourself in a higher place, you will figure out the structure as well as the motive Wittgenstein writes in this way. Because it is the way Wittgenstein does his therapy. The following graphic illustrates the process of going through the muddle.



#### Content of the discussion

And each part of the exposition is fulfilled with different examples, as Wittgenstein resolves philosophical problems by listing grammatical facts that are acceptable for all. In the first section of the discussion, he always makes use of those common cases. Gradually, the discussion will lean to some unusual ones, like in section 2. The more peculiar the case is, the easier philosophers will overlook them. And that would lead to philosophical problems. On the basis of section 1, the understanding on section 2 will be easier and the effect would be strengthened. Thus we come to the conclusion that Wittgenstein's exposition is actually arranged systematically.

#### 4. Whether the problem is solved or not?

We know that the meaning of *rule following* is determined by the application under different circumstances. When we search for something essential hidden behind the expression of a rule and try to poke the various application so as to get the essence, finally, we will get nothing. The only thing that can link all these applications together under an expression is the family resemblance. Any application will share something in common with some other applications, but not with all others. That means, we cannot find out the same thing among all of them, but a prototype.

Two conditions ensure that *rule following* does make sense: regularity and agreement in definition as well as in judgments. As he writes in §18, "Our language can be

seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses (Wittgenstein, 1958, 8, §18)." The use of the language contains its regularity. Only when everybody in a certain circle reaches an agreement, the rule will make sense. Those two conditions correspond to the straight regular streets and uniform houses, while the maze of little streets and squares reflects the varying application under different circumstances and the additions from various periods imply the evolution of language during the development of history.

However, that is not the core motive of Wittgenstein's discussion on *rule following*. From the selection of the topic to the way Wittgenstein carries out his exposition, he tries to show us a way to resolve the philosophical problems. His motivation in writing this is not only to illustrate the specific case of *rule following*. His way of discussion works like the procedure of gaining the antibody. At the end of the therapy, philosophers will be "cured" not only in the understanding of *rule following*, *understanding* and *reading* that he has mentioned in his discussion, but also in that of other concepts. He says in §224, "If I teach anyone the use of the one word, he learns the use of the other with it." (Wittgenstein, 1958, 86, §224).

#### 5. Conclusion

Wittgenstein tries to resolve the problem of *rule following*. After the opening discussion on the topic, he guides the discussion to the concept of *understanding*, but only with a few usual cases. Then he transits the focus from *understanding* to *reading*. The complete exposition of *reading* works as a foundation for the further discussion on *understanding* and ultimately for that on *rule following*. The whole process goes gradually from analyzing the normal cases to dealing with the peculiar ones, which can be easily overlooked by philosophers.

This overlooking of those grammatical facts leads to the confusion that there must be an essence hidden behind. In his discussion on *rule following*, Wittgenstein makes it clear that the meaning of a rule is determined by certain application under different circumstances. To judge whether an application is appropriate or not, we appeal to the regularity and agreement in definition and judgments. So, according to Wittgenstein, if we get a complete picture of the use of language, it is like an ancient city, with its maze of little houses and squares sharing similarities with various applications under different circumstances and its straight streets as the regularity and agreement we reach.

Wittgenstein's exposition on *rule following* offers us a way to do philosophy, to resolve philosophical problems. That is much more important than the conclusion we get in the single case of *rule following*. The therapy's aim is not only to be cured for one occasion, but also to acquire "immunity" for other situations.

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# Moral Reasoning & Moral Context: Between Realism and Relativity

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## Abstract

The aim of this talk is to explore a connection between moral reasoning and moral context – the resources available for talking and thinking about moral matters – and argue that the relation to context explains the interaction between the realistic and relativistic element in moral reasoning. Special attention will be given to the question of whether moral context can distort or even make impossible certain moral insights.

The aim of this talk is to explore the connections between moral reasoning and moral context, that is, the resources available in talking and thinking about ethical matters in a particular context. In the first section we aim to develop the idea that context influences reason. In the following section, we will investigate how moral context can distort certain moral insights, arguing that it may constrain, but does not make certain thoughts impossible.

## Moral Reasoning and Moral Context

In arguing for a connection between moral reasoning and moral context, we can draw on an insight, prominent in virtue ethics, that moral development – the process through which we come to be competent moral individuals, our moral education and the resulting moral virtues – is heavily influenced and shaped by the practices and the culture into which such moral development is meant to initiate us. We find a striking example of this in a story that George Orwell recollects from the time when he was sent to boarding school at the age of 8. As often happens to children in such situations, Orwell starts wetting his bed. He thinks that this is indeed wrong of him, but he has no control over whether it happens or not. First, he is warned by a teacher to stop, but when he does not stop and is completely unable to stop, he is given a severe beating by the headmaster. The question is what the boy Orwell learns from this. He does not learn the lesson about the terrible things that adults do to children, which the man Orwell wants us, his readers, to learn. Quite the contrary. The boy Orwell learns that he cannot trust his initial judgement that he is in some sense excused for wetting his bed because in fact he cannot do anything about it. “[T]his was the great, abiding lesson of my boyhood: that I was in a world where it was *not possible* for me to be good. [...] Life was more terrible, and I was more wicked, than I had imagined” (Orwell 1953, 16). The boy Orwell learns that the world is such that it is impossible for him to be good. Our focus here is, however, not on the development of moral reasoning, but on mature exercises of moral reasoning. Here, there the connection between moral reasoning and context would show itself if we imagine seeing Orwell’s situation from the perspective of a young teacher loyal to the school and its prevailing wisdom. Such a teacher could also find it hard to think the *right* thought, namely that wetting one’s bed cannot be a moral fault, when one cannot help it; his thoughts could be constrained in this way.

We can find support for this idea that our social or moral context can have a fundamental and possibly damaging influence on moral reasoning in a point central to both Wittgensteinian and virtue ethical thinking. This is that moral reasoning takes the form of competent participation

in a normative practice – or rather, a number of normative practices – that offers a framework of inter-subjectively shared ways of relating to, looking at and acting in the world.<sup>1</sup> In order to reason morally, we are initiated into practices that allow us to trace patterns of interest, purposes and even judgements that we come to share and normally do not question. And, accordingly, our exercise of moral reasoning can be distorted or constrained in a moral context shaped by narrow or inflexible norms and possibilities of moral thinking and acting. Some argue that this makes both virtue ethics and Wittgensteinian moral philosophy inherently relativistic.<sup>2</sup> However, proponents of such claims fail to see that moral reasoning is indeed *reasoning*, about our experience of the world. This means that even if practices can make certain features easily available for us, while distorting or even hiding others, they cannot invent such features. Moreover, normative practices are not singular units, closed off from one another, they overlap in ways that make it possible to use the resources from one practice to scrutinise another, just as it is possible to establish and cultivate practices of radical critique. We will therefore see moral reasoning as unfolding in a territory between relativism and moral realism. This means that moral reasoning is seen both as obligated towards our experience of reality and as dependent on a moral context shaped by more or less flexible moral norms and possibilities. The suggestion pursued here is that the context can distort our moral reasoning in different ways. Here we will first look at how external constraints can be imposed on and distort our reasoning, and second, whether this means that thoughts or judgements can become inaccessible for us – a question that will be answered in the negative.

## Restricted and Distorted Thoughts

One way to see how moral context influences moral reasoning is to look at changes in this context; for example cases where particular considerations come to be considered unattractive, illegitimate or even dangerous. We may imagine a case where an authority in a society attempts to change how people think, morally, about reality by trying to change their moral vocabulary, by ruling out certain moral concepts. However, such interferences with the way we talk and reason about moral matters – ranging from manipulation and propaganda to juridical sanctions – do not, at least not initially, seem to shape or change *the possibilities* available to us in reasoning, because we may still be able to reflect and criticise such changes.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. fundamental insights in the writings of Julia Annas, John McDowell, Stanley Cavell and of course the connection between linguistic practice and agreement in judgements, famously emphasised by Wittgenstein, PI §240-2.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. readings of Wittgenstein’s philosophy presented by (Gellner 1992) and (Nyiri 1981). I argue against such readings in (Christensen 2011).

However, such critical abilities may be challenged, if the changes in the moral vocabulary are small, gradual and persistent. A prominent and well-described example of this is the Nazi party's massive influence on the Germans' way of talking and thinking before and during the Second World War. One of the great problems facing the Nazis at the time of the decision to implement the *Endlösung* – a concept that is in itself an effective tool when trying to *make thinkable* the attempt to extinguish a whole people – was the very consciousness and pity of the Germans, the intended perpetrators. According to Hannah Arendt's reflections in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, one, very effective way in which the Third Reich dealt with such 'problems of conscience' was slogans introducing a new meaning to well-established words or forging new connections in language, such as 'My Honor is my Loyalty' (Arendt 1964, 105). Other ways in which the Nazis manipulated moral reasoning were, first, by inverting common and accepted moral ideas, for example by insisting that an exceptional character was required, not in order to do good, but in order to do horrible deeds, or that excellence was required in order to do the very worst, to be able to become 'superhuman inhuman' (Arendt 1964, 105). Second, by language changes such as replacing of the concept of 'murder', with its connotations of moral wickedness and violence, with the phrase "to grant a mercy death' (Arendt 1964, 108). And finally, by reversing basic moral feelings to concern not the victims, but the perpetrators, that is, the Germans themselves (Arendt 1964, 106). This pressure and manipulation in effect meant, Arendt goes on to say, that Nazi Germany became a society, where all fundamental moral concepts and principles were turned upside down, bestowing an appearance of necessity on the moral evil done there.

The German-Jewish philologist Victor Klemperer noted some of these gradual changes of the German language during the Nazi rule. The lesson he draws is that the strongest form of propaganda that the Nazis had at their disposal was indeed this, the successful transformation of the German language to fit to the Nazi ideology.

[D]er Nazismus glitt in Fleisch und Blut der Menge über durch die Einzelworte, die Redewendungen, die Satzformen, die er ihr in millionenfachen Wiederholungen aufzwang und die mechanisch und unbewusst übernommen wurden. [...] Aber Sprache dichtet und denkt nicht nur für mich, sie lenkt auch mein Gefühl, sie steuert mein ganzes seelisches Wesen, je selbstverständlicher, je unbewusster ich mich ihr überlasse. Und wenn nun die gebildete Sprache aus giftigen Elementen gebildet oder zur Trägerin von Giftstoffen gemacht worden ist? Worte können sein wie winzige Arsendosen: sie werden unbemerkt verschluckt, sie scheinen keinen Wirkung zu tun, und nach einiger Zeit ist die Giftwirkung doch da. (Klemperer 1991, 21)

The disquieting claim made by Klemperer is that such changes, even if small and insignificant, can come to penetrate the whole of our language and through that our way of thinking and reasoning. That is, alternative ways of thinking come to recede into the background or become almost unavailable for us.

## Unthinkable Thoughts?

We have seen how external influences on language may lead to effective changes in the resources available to us in moral reasoning. Such changes may however also happen spontaneous, because language users develop new concepts or practices or cease to find others relevant for their moral thinking, such as many in Western countries

will now insist – contrary to bourgeois culture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – that considerations of honour are more or less irrelevant when considering one's family relations. Either way, in these cases there has been a real change in our moral resources; a process of transformation that we may or may not be aware of. The question is how far such changes, and thus moral context, may distort or constrain moral reasoning.

One idea that may suggest itself is that given our particular circumstances and practices there may indeed be judgements we cannot make and thoughts we cannot think. We find something similar to this idea in the writings of Raimond Gaita. In *Good and Evil*, Gaita points out that in slave cultures, the slaves are treated as replaceable, in a way that we now think that they are not. Gaita's main aim is to argue that the slaves are treated in this way, *not* because the slave owners do not understand that the slaves have specific characters in the sense of desires and projects with which they identify, but rather because the slave owners deny that these characters are such as to make the slaves irreplaceable. The concern here is Gaita's insistence that the slave owners' treatment of the slaves as replaceable means that there are indeed thoughts about the slaves that the slave owners cannot think.

If a slave killed himself because he could no longer bear his affliction, his owner *could not think* of the slave's suicide in the same way as he can think of the suicide of a friend who also killed himself in despair. In the case of the friend, thoughts about the terrible nature of suicide, perhaps of a Christian kind, makes sense to the slave owner, but this is not so with the slave. The slave is seen as 'putting himself out of his misery' and this is more or less the end of it. (Gaita 2005, 152f, my emphasis)

According to Gaita, because the slave owner acts towards the slave as replaceable, and because he lives in a society, where this way of acting is considered perfectly intelligible, there is indeed something that the slave owner *cannot think*. The moral context, in which the relation between the slave and the slave owner is embedded, constrains the thoughts of the slave owner making it impossible for him to think the thought that the slave is a human being in the sense that brings with it a claim to dignity and equal respect.

However, Gaita's claim seems rather radical. We can imagine all sorts of things happening here. If the suicide of the slave is followed by that of the slave owner's friend, it may spur him to compare the two and through this become able to see that the suicide of the slave is, in fact, also terrible. Moreover, we can imagine a parallel development with regard to another of Gaita's examples, that of a slave owner raping one of his slaves. In this case, Gaita insists, the slave owner would not be able to understand the harm done to the slave because of his inability to see her as "an intelligible object of anyone's love" (Gaita 2005, 161). However, even if we accept this description, we can still go on to imagine that the slave owner takes the slave woman as his mistress. Then again, many things may happen. Maybe she will come to mean something to him that makes her irreplaceable. Or maybe his wife will come to be jealous of the slave mistress in a way that will open the slave owner's eyes to how the slave is indeed an intelligible object of love and thus an intelligible object of jealousy. Arguably, there are ways in which the slave owner can come to think the unthinkable thought, and this means that it is not – at least not in any strict sense – unthinkable after all.

## Realism and Relativity, Possibility and Relevance

We thus find something right as well as something misguided in Gaita's idea of the unthinkable thought. It seems right to point out that our moral context – as well as the ways we act in and relate to this context – may pose serious constraints on our ethical thinking. However, it seems rather more problematic to claim that such constraints are clear and absolute – setting up limits that make certain thoughts and judgements impossible. Instead, apparently 'inaccessible thoughts' may often be revived if we draw on other resources available to us – even if, in contexts with very few moral resources, such ways of by-passing inhibitions in moral reasoning may be hard to find.

In general, moral context does not make certain moral thoughts completely impossible. This is the realistic element in the view of moral reasoning presented here. The lesson we should draw is indeed a different one. That even if we principally can think any thought in any context, the context greatly influences what thoughts we *have reason* to think and what thoughts *are easily accessible* to us.<sup>3</sup> The main problem with inadequate or outright corrupted moral contexts is not that they make certain thoughts unthinkable. It is rather that they may establish a situation where we *have no reasons* to think certain thoughts – as the slave owner in a great majority of cases has no reason to think that a slave has a claim to dignity and equal respect. This is the challenge inherent in the relativistic element in moral reasoning. That is, moral context cannot make a moral thought unthinkable, but it may hide or marginalise it, make it appear irrelevant or almost unintelligible, and in many cases, this may be almost just as bad.

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<sup>3</sup> Annas argues that it was indeed impossible for the stoics to think the thought that slavery was wrong because they lived in a society that was completely dependent on slavery (Annas 2011, 60).

# Wittgenstein and Conceptual Nominalism

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## Abstract

There is a notorious debate between philosophers about essentialism and nominalism. Classic essentialism dates back to Aristotle and Plato who believed in universals. Nominalists such as Hume, on the other hand, do not believe in universals and instead focus on particulars. This historical debate, regardless of the different opinions, is all about the natural world. This paper, however, tries to shed more light on this discussion by distinguishing between two forms of nominalism: ontological and conceptual nominalism. Conceptual (semantical) nominalists, contrary to ontological nominalist, such as Wittgenstein alter the discussion from natural world to linguistic world. They focus on the concepts with which we use in our daily life. Conceptual nominalists believe that concepts do not have necessarily one essence.

## Introduction

The founders of Analytic philosophical school of thought—who mainly hailed from Cambridge and Oxford—consist of Moore, Russell, Frege and Wittgenstein. They were of the view that the problem that philosophers have to grapple with is that lack of clarity and precision in the use of language, which is the most important tool for communicating meaning and exchanging philosophical teachings. For this group of philosophers, the language of the conventional sciences (i.e., the language that scientists in various empirical fields such as biology, physics, chemistry, etc. use to formulate their data) is an exemplary tool for communicating knowledge, because it is free of ambiguity and can convey meaning with the utmost precision. In the same way, they strove to present a philosophical language that was clear and unequivocal and could be used to express unambiguous philosophical propositions. The distinction Russell drew between propositions' logical form and grammatical form, Wittgenstein's picture theory of meaning and his effort to purge language of ambiguity, and the Vienna Circle's verifiability principle all have to be understood in this light.<sup>1</sup>

However, why did scholars adopt the scientific-empirical view of being? Epistemologically speaking, what are the necessary elements and presuppositions that underpin this view of being? As Kant would put it, what are the necessary conditions for such a view to become possible? What fundamental assumptions may have to change in order for the scientific view of being to become a possibility?

In response to the above-mentioned questions, we can say, with utmost brevity, that the crux of the non-scientific and non-empirical view of being and nature is essentialism, and that the crux of the scientific and empirical view of the world is nominalism and the rejection of essentialism. Hence, it may be useful to begin by noting a few points about these two viewpoints.

## Wittgensteinian Conceptual Nominalism

Essentialism, as a philosophical viewpoint, can be discussed from two perspectives. One perspective relates to conceptual essentialism and, the other, to ontological essentialism. Ontological essentialism means that we can assume that universals exist in the world. But conceptual

essentialism means that words such as “water” or “tree”, which are used in everyday language, denote numerous individual instances in the external world and refer to them. What we are concerned with in this article is ontological essentialism, which was originally advanced by thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle, albeit with different readings. This theory claims that every entity that exists in this world is made up of unchanging attributes and inviolable properties, which can be grasped and enumerated. For example, when a language-user uses the term “human being” and, in so doing, intends to convey a meaning, according to the classic essentialist viewpoint, he is referring to a characteristic or characteristics that all human beings share. It is by bearing in mind these inviolable properties and attributes that the language-user's words convey a meaning. This way of specifying a meaning can be called, definition using genus and species (in the sense that, according to the Aristotelian logic, the human being is defined as a speaking animal, whereby animal is the genus and speaking is its species or distinguishing feature). This point holds true both for natural concepts, such as tree, mountain, forest, water, etc. and for concepts that are social constructs, such as state, war and democracy.

An essentialist philosopher, in the context of ontology, believes that all entities have an essence, with definable components. In the context of epistemology, the essentialist philosopher believes that this essence and inviolable properties are knowable. In other words, essentialist philosophers are of the view that speaking of an entity's essence and properties does not hinge on experience. In effect, referring to the external world and experience is not involved in discovering the properties and characteristics of an entity's essence. Instead, an entity's essence can be defined in an a priori way and prior to any experience. Its properties can be grasped (from the ontological perspective) and it can become known (from the epistemological perspective).

Bearing in mind the above-mentioned explanation, it must also be recalled that, in the second half of the twentieth century, thinkers like Kripke sought to revive essentialism. In *Naming and Necessity*, Kripke speaks of a kind of essentialism, which is, in the first instance and essentially, conceptual. In other words, adhering to conceptual essentialism, as expounded by Kripke, does not entail an acceptance of ontological essentialism. Moreover, at present, there are analytic philosophers, such as Armstrong, who

<sup>1</sup> This article is not devoted to a detailed explanation of the claims made by analytic philosophers. In order to understand analytic philosophy's claim about modern science (whether empirical or non-empirical) and its relationship to philosophy, see Gillies 1993, Carnap 1934, Dummett 1993.



subscribe to the existence of universals in the ontological sense.<sup>2</sup>

Having reviewed the characteristics of the essentialist viewpoint, let us turn to the nominalist viewpoint. There are at least two kinds of nominalism: One is directed at rejecting abstract entities and the other is directed at rejecting universals. The point worth highlighting here is that both these kinds of nominalism are considered to be anti-realist viewpoints, in the sense that nominalism is considered to be the opposite of the Platonic realist perspective.

In much the same way as the essentialist philosophical viewpoint, the nominalist viewpoint has two branches: conceptual nominalism and ontological nominalism. Ontological nominalism conveys the sense that universals do not exist in the external world. In conceptual nominalism, the idea is that the words that we use in language are no more than names. In this way, conceptual nominalism stands opposed to conceptual essentialism, which subscribes to the view that the words that we use in language are universal concepts that denote their instances in the external world.

Ontological nominalism uses different ontological and epistemological tenets and underpinnings from the essentialist viewpoint. An ontological nominalist like Hume or Berkeley<sup>3</sup> does not subscribe to the idea of essence in the Aristotelian sense and to an essentialist view of being, which was described above; an essence, which has properties that can be defined and determined prior to experience (ontological), and which can, on principle, be the object of our knowledge (epistemological). In fact, instead of assuming an inviolable, Aristotelian essence as an ontological presupposition, nominalism speaks of violable, empirical attributes.

In effect, if, in the context of ontology, someone speaks of an essence that can be defined a priori and prior to experience, he has no need to refer to the external world and to experience in order learn about the assumed essence; he can speak about the essence's properties and know about it prior to any experience. But, if, instead of essence, someone takes as his ontological presupposition a list of the properties and attributes of a concept, which, in principle, can increase or decrease, he has, in fact, acknowledged that the list is tentative and that enumerating the properties and attributes must be left to an open-ended empirical process. In other words, assuming such a list of attributes amounts to adopting a minimalist ontological assumption, which forms the basis of efforts towards the acquisition of knowledge. A nominalist takes the view that the concept "tree", for example, can comprise a variety of attributes, which can be discovered gradually in the course of studies that demand recourse to the external world and experience.

Alternatively, a conceptual nominalist like Ludwig Wittgenstein, in his *Philosophical Investigations*, explained the concept of "game" by speaking of the idea of family resemblances. He was of the view that different games reference different characteristics in the external world. This means that, in conceptual terms, "game" has no essence. In fact, there are resemblances between different games which are like the resemblances between the members of a family (resemblances between the eyes, eyelashes, eyebrows or mouth of a mother and father with those of

their children) which can only be discovered by referring to the external world. For example, consider games such as football, snooker, chess, basketball, volleyball, tennis and boxing. A characteristic such as a ball can be seen in football, volleyball, basketball and tennis, whereas no ball is involved in boxing and chess. Or, take the presence of a net as a characteristic. Tennis and volleyball require a net, whereas no net is involved in snooker, cricket and American football. As we can see, there is no attribute that is presented in all the above-mentioned games. Be that as it may, our linguistic intuitions decree that using the word "game" for all the mentioned instances and conveying a meaning in so doing is entirely acceptable. In other words, no language-user would harbour any doubt in applying the word "game" to badminton, snooker, etc.

Someone may say, by way of an objection, that winning and losing is a common characteristic of the above-mentioned games. But imagine the case of a little boy who is swaying back and forth on a playground swing. Our linguistic intuitions view this phenomenon as a kind of game. This is in circumstances in which no ball is involved in this game; nor is there any winning or losing. So, if we want to speak of a common characteristic that exists in all the above-mentioned games, it would appear that there is none. Hence, for Wittgenstein, in his capacity as a conceptual nominalist, seeing the similarities plays an irreplaceable role in explaining the genesis of the meaning of concepts (Fogeline 1996, Luntley 2003, ch. 3-4). In fact, since the genesis of the meaning of concepts cannot be formulated in an a priori, non-empirical way, it is imperative to seek the aid of experience by looking at similarities and dissimilarities in order to arrive at the meaning of terms such as "game".<sup>4</sup>

In short, we can say that ontological nominalism entails a rejection of the assumption that objects and phenomena have essences. Instead, it adopts an empirical-a posteriori approach to discover, bit by bit, the different characteristics of a phenomenon, without ever claiming full knowledge of it (epistemologically-speaking).

## Concluding Remarks

In the West, with the emergence of the Renaissance and the scientific revolution, the nominalist-empirical approach replaced the essentialist-non-empirical approach (see Cassierer 2009 and Dunn 1998). This non-empirical presupposition became the central pillar of the scientific and empiricist view of the world. In a possible world in which the essentialist-non-empirical viewpoint is scholars' metaphysical presupposition, empirical science, in the form that it emerged in the West, cannot come into being. In the West, first, scholars adopted nominalist-empirical presuppositions and, then, they set about uncovering being and producing empirical science.

The essentialist-non-empirical way of thinking considers everything to be determined in advance. So, in this way of viewing being, the assumption that every phenomenon has an essence and a nature has the upper hand. In order to know a phenomenon, it is enough for us to grasp its essence and nature. But in the nominalist-empirical way of thinking, there is no nature and essence. In the realm of knowledge, the constant humble assumption is that, in our investigations, we only acquire some knowledge about a

<sup>2</sup> Thinkers who subscribe to ontological essentialism do not seem to be in the majority among analytic philosophers. For more on conceptual essentialism, see Kripke 1980 and Armstrong 1991, 77-85.

<sup>3</sup> For example, in order to substantiate his rejection of material quiddity, Berkeley used the theory of nominalism, see Berkeley 1710.

<sup>4</sup> It may be said that the critique of essentialism by someone like Wittgenstein is first and foremost directed at conceptual essentialism. At the same time, accepting conceptual nominalism will lead to a critique of ontological essentialism.

phenomenon; not full knowledge. And this process of acquiring knowledge is always open-ended.

Having examined different kinds of nominalism, i.e. conceptual and ontological nominalism, we are inclined to conclude that Wittgenstein should be read as a key figure in advocating conceptual nominalism. Wittgensteinian conceptual nominalism holds that concepts do not have necessarily one and only one essence. Rather, concepts can have plural and constant changing essences (features and components) which have evolved and changed historically.

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# Inside-Out: the Limits of Language

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## Abstract

My paper is concerned with occurrences of inside-outside metaphors of language in the later Wittgenstein and Richard Rorty. Although there are differences in the ways in which the two authors use this inside-outside image, it is not in line with their overall thought in either case. It implies that at the mysterious “outside” of language we can conceivably find something which makes the contrast between an inside and an outside of language interesting. Regardless of this, there must be some value in the metaphors for Rorty and Wittgenstein. I try to identify this value and then suggest a less misleading picture that secures these positive aspects.

The image of boundaries that delineate the space in which human reason can sensibly move has been present in philosophy at least since Kant. My aim is to criticize two linguistified versions of this picture in places where we would not expect them: in the later Wittgenstein and in Richard Rorty. I argue that although they use it in obviously different ways, it serves neither of the two authors well. Nevertheless, the image of language boundaries must have some positive attractive core for them. I will try to bring out this core and suggest that we either settle for a less misleading metaphor or stop understanding language by captivating pictures altogether.

The notion of limits of language is pre-eminent in Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* (prominently in TLP 5.6). In the later Wittgenstein, on the other hand, the image of language as a bounded whole is replaced by an image of loosely joined linguistic practices. There is, however, a place where the limit picture still makes its way:

The results of philosophy are the discovery of some piece of plain nonsense and the bumps that the understanding has got by running up against the limits of language. They – these bumps – make us see the value of that discovery. (PI, 119)

Whereas, in general, the later Wittgenstein seems to have broken free of the Kantian picture of a bounded sphere of understanding, here we find a strong reminiscence of it (for comparison see e.g., CPR A727/B755). Kant and Wittgenstein also share the motive of beneficial harm induced by attempts to transgress those boundaries: in Wittgenstein bumps exposing nonsense, in Kant a mind drifting through a domain without fixed points in order to finally recognize the reasons for its disorientation. In both, we equally find the idea of aiming for the freedom to stop in these boundary-transgressing endeavors (PI 133 and CPR A339/B397).

Richard Rorty takes the later Wittgenstein, and himself, to be part of a neo-pragmatist current characterized by a decline of interest in metaphysical and epistemological questions (see, e.g., Rorty 1991, 64). The idea of language being bounded should be alien to this sort of neo-pragmatist approach. Rorty himself, though, adopts a rhetoric drawing on some such picture, though with differences to the picture we encountered in Wittgenstein. In the latter, we found the notion of a domain of nonsense outside what language games grounded in our form of life allow us to meaningfully say. This nonsense *prima facie* looks to be meaningful because it appears in linguistic guise but has to be unmasked. For Rorty, on the other hand, “anything has a sense if you give it one” (see M.

Williams in his Introduction to Rorty 2009). In fact, he is very dismissive of the notion of limits of language as we encountered it in the quotation from PI (see, e.g., Rorty 1991). In his own use of the inside-outside imagery, Rorty claims that we cannot appeal to anything non-linguistic in justifying claims. As he writes in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* “[...] nothing counts as justification unless by reference to what we already accept, and that there is no way to get outside our beliefs and our language so as to find some test other than coherence” (Rorty 1979, 178).

This emphasis on the impossibility to step outside our language, our practices, “our skins” (Rorty 1982, xix) is also present in his essays from early to late.

Whatever the differences between Rorty’s and Wittgenstein’s use of the inside-outside imagery are, their use of it seems to be unhelpful in both cases as both of them reject the picture of a bounded language which it is based on. Thus, I do not want to ascribe this picture to either of them, but rather say that their use of inside-outside metaphors with respect to language is at odds with what they actually hold or at least seem to hold.

In order to put our finger on what is so misleading about these metaphors, we can start by asking what it could mean to be “inside” language or to be “outside” language (for aesthetic reasons only, I will stop using quotation marks around “inside” and “outside”). How could we possibly recognize on what side of the boundary we find ourselves? In terms of Wittgenstein, I could find myself attempting to get outside language the moment I recognize myself to be talking some kind of nonsense. The paragraph quoted above suggests that there actually is no getting outside of language, but just an unconscious running up against its boundaries. In recognizing myself as having talked nonsense, I will always find myself *inside* language, for it is only on the ground of my form of life that I can expose a piece of nonsense. But if we take this seriously, then being inside language amounts to nothing more than the simple notion of speaking a language.

For Rorty, there is no stepping outside language in order to find justification for our claims. Such justification, he suggests, can itself only be found inside language. But what then does it mean for me to be *inside* language according to Rorty? As in Wittgenstein, this notion seems either devoid of sense or unexciting, as it cannot mean more than pursuing our habitual practices of speaking a language.

Where is our metaphor possibly misleading? Of course, it elicits unfavorable associations of language being a kind of prison. But that is not the crucial point. Rather, the dra-

matic ring of Wittgenstein's and Rorty's contrast between the inside and the outside of language evokes the idea that this contrast is something important or thrilling. However, as we have seen, in Rorty as well as in Wittgenstein the notion of being "inside language" either is empty or means, quite soberly, speaking a language. Thus, it seems that what gives the distinction its purported interesting character has to be found at the outside-half of our image. If we then claim, moreover, that there is no getting to the outside, we create the feeling that at the outside there is something mysterious, inaccessible, something falling out of the ordinary, but still important. Thus, inside-outside metaphors are apt to support the longing to search for "something more" which both Rorty and Wittgenstein actually want to dissolve.

In addition, asserting that it is impossible to step outside language presupposes that we understand what it would mean if we could do so (as if I said that it is impossible to fly to the moon without a spacecraft). Kant addresses the need for at least this "feeling-as-if-we-could" when he introduces the notion of negative concepts. Rorty and Wittgenstein evoke the idea that we have a conception of what it would mean to get to such an outside, but that we have seen these attempts to be doomed (Putnam has criticized this with respect to Rorty, see Putnam 1993, 299).

This, however, suggests ideas about language that Wittgenstein as well as Rorty actually want to dispel. Despite his falling back on inside-outside imagery, Rorty rejects talk about language having boundaries or limits. Thus he says, approvingly, of the later Wittgenstein, that he "dropped the notion of 'seeing to the edge of language'". He also dropped the whole idea of "language" as a bounded whole which had conditions at its outer edges" (Rorty 1991, 55-56).

This is also underwritten by Rorty's adoption of Donald Davidson's approach to language, which dissolves the whole notion of "a language" into countless encounters between speakers successfully communicating with each other (see Davidson 1986). This approach, epitomized in the slogan that "there is no such thing as a language", rejects any picture based on language's being something that could have limits, or an inside and an outside.

As we have seen in the quotation by Rorty, the idea of intrinsic limits of language – be they static or dynamic – seems alien to the later Wittgenstein's approach. It is clear that the picture of language bounded *per se* is not in harmony with what Wittgenstein says on language games, family resemblance and the like. An interesting passage in this respect is PI 499, where Wittgenstein reiterates his talk of language boundaries, but with a crucial qualification:

To say "This combination of words has no sense" excludes it from the sphere of language, and thereby bounds the domain of language. But when one draws a boundary, it may be for various kinds of reason. [...]

This suggests that language may not have any intrinsic limits, but that we establish such boundaries as long as this is needed for a given purpose (say, codification or linguistic inquiry).

But why do we find this repeated use of inside-outside-imagery in Rorty as well as in Wittgenstein? Surely, there must be something that makes it attractive even to authors that we would actually expect to reject it. Both these authors are sensitive to the power that often unconscious background pictures have on the way we think about certain problems. In this respect, it is surprising that they han-

dle the potentially inconvenient picture of languages having insides and outsides in such a careless way.

Thus, the inside-outside imagery supposedly captures some aspects which are dear to the two authors. To Rorty, it offers a forceful way of saying that our specifically human way of knowing the world, i.e., our reflective, critical knowledge, presupposes language. We cannot eliminate this critical and thus potentially uncertain character by appealing to knowledge not expressible in language for justification, because nothing that is not a sentence could be used to justify another sentence.

Inside-outside imagery about language may be a means of expressing this, but at the same time this picture is not needed in order to do so. We are faced here by a case of some social practices and abilities, call them knowledge practices, being dependent on other, wider practices and abilities, i.e., those of speaking a language. Thus, the practice of playing soccer is dependent on less specific practices and abilities such as dribbling, passing, practices establishing what we call teamwork etc. We could express this by saying that soccer is not possible outside these practices, or that soccer cannot be grounded in something outside these wider practices, but the inside-outside picture seems a lot less attractive here than in the case of language.

The same considerations might be helpful in Wittgenstein's picture of the outside of language being just nonsense. What this picture can express on the positive side is that linguistic practices are social practices and as such need to be grounded in something shared. At least, these practices cannot be globally in flux so as to be completely unpredictable. It makes sense to say that, for us, someone whose linguistic behavior does not correspond to our expectations speaks nonsense in the sense that he plays a different game from ours and that we cannot make much of his behavior in the framework of our own game.

Again, using an inside-outside picture of language offers one, but not necessarily the only way of expressing this. In the framework of soccer, exhibiting "baseball behavior" could be understood as nonsensical. But that does not mean that soccer-players could not learn to play baseball or that one could not design a game incorporating baseball as well as soccer behavior. So once more, we have some analogy, but to say that outside soccer there is only nonsense (even if we qualify this by "for soccer players") would strike us as misplaced. What makes this inside-outside talk more attractive in the case of language may be the inherited picture of the *mind* being a bounded entity which was then passed over to language.

On the basis of our soccer analogy, we cannot say that the inside-outside picture of language is itself wrong in a strong sense, rather it is inconvenient. As Wittgenstein says in the passage quoted above, we erect boundaries for a certain purpose and in the right situations they can be useful. But the situation in this case just does not seem to be right. Talk of boundaries, or an inside and outside of language is inconvenient given the purposes that the Rorty and Wittgenstein actually pursue.

Is there an alternative picture of language that might be more suitable than inside-outside metaphors, a picture which captures what these metaphors probably should have expressed in Rorty and Wittgenstein? Davidson seems to have come up with one: In *Seeing through Language* (Davidson 1997) he proposes to conceive of language as a certain kind of organ, in analogy to eyes, ears etc. The analogy preserves what probably made the inside-outside imagery attractive for Rorty and Wittgenstein.

There is no sensible way of wanting to “step outside” our eyes or ears. In fact, we would not even say that it is impossible to step outside our eyes or ears, but that we do not understand what is meant by this phrase (which is what Rorty’s awkward use of the metaphor of “stepping outside” probably should have meant). At the same time, there is a sense in which these organs give us access to socially shared (auditory, visual, etc.) spaces. Thus, the organ-metaphor offers us a sober way of expressing what the limit-metaphor expressed in a too dramatic manner. It dispels the temptation to think of a limit behind which there is something to which we cannot penetrate, or of an outside that we cannot reach.

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# Practical Cognitivism: Knowing-how to Follow a Moral Rule

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## Abstract

In this paper, I argue that Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations reveal an important, yet unexplored, option in contemporary ethics, namely they can help us to identify the main elements of what I call "Practical Cognitivism," a philosophical approach to morality as based on knowing-how. If this approach is cogent, it will show that some present day metaethical debates are misconceived. Thus, I will first examine the kind of knowledge that is necessarily presupposed in following rules, namely knowing-how and, afterwards, I will identify a criterion for distinguishing moral from non-moral rules. Then, I will explore some ethical implications of considering moral knowledge in terms of knowing-how. Finally, I will point out some further developments Practical Cognitivism is subject to, especially the kind of normative ethics that best fits within it.

## 1. Kinds of knowledge

Rule-following considerations play a central role in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (cf. PI §185-243; for an exegetical analysis of the mentioned paragraphs, see: Baker & Hacker 2014.) These remarks have been deeply discussed, especially after Kripke's sceptic paradox and, particularly in ethics, after McDowell's paper, which supports some sort of Cognitivism. Kripke's *interpretation* of Wittgenstein was proved wrong by Baker & Hacker and by McDowell, but it not clear whether McDowell avoids Platonism since values are, supposedly, "out there" (1981). I will not engage in these debates here, but I will instead focus on the kind of knowledge that is presupposed in the ascription to a person of rule-governed behaviour. Since culture, and morality as part of it, is rule-constituted, there are all sorts of rules: rules of games, legal rules, etc. There are indeed moral rules, and morality itself may be seen as a rule-governed practice.

Let me, first of all, point out the scope of this work. I will explore some implications of Wittgenstein's rule-following remarks for ethics, but I will not commit myself to the view that moral life is exclusively composed of rules. A moral system may indeed also include sentiments, traits of character, values etc. Not all these elements need be explained by reference to rules or reduced to them. But moral rules do play a fundamental role in *guiding* a person's behaviour, in discriminating *right from wrong*, in *justifying* or in giving reasons for actions and so on. Thus, they may be a condition for making persons accountable.

Some initial remarks on the concept of 'rule' are also necessary when considering rule-governed practices such as playing chess, punishing wrong-doings etc. Wittgenstein himself was mainly concerned with rules for using words and sentences with the philosophical purpose of distinguishing sense from senselessness (especially in metaphysical statements), but some of his remarks can be brought into morality hopefully without criss-crossing language-games, for instance, without generating categorical mistakes. By forbidding criss-crossing language-games, Wittgenstein remains a non-naturalist in ethics showing that his later work has ethical sense too. Thus, first, it is important to distinguish moral from non-moral rules. Second, rules perform different roles. As Baker and Hacker pointed out (2014, 50f), rules have different aspects in normative activities: institutional, definitory, explanatory, predicative, justificative and evaluative. Some of these functions are clearly performed by *moral* rules, for instance the justificatory role: a *reason* for action can be given by reference to the established relevant moral norms, espe-

cially principles (for an explanation of 'reasons' see: Crisp, 2006, chap.2). An example can be found in Bioethics where the principle of non-maleficence (*first, do no harm*) justifies particular rules such as "do not kill", "do not cause pain or suffering", "do not cause offence" ... (cf. Beauchamp & Childress 2013, 154). Now, all these aspects are worth investigating, but the question I will focus on is this: what cognitive (if any) aspect of rule-following must be presupposed in order to say that a person follows (or violates) a well-constructed moral rule?

I will start to answer this question in a negative way, that is, by describing when a person is *not* following a rule. According to Wittgenstein, we must distinguish between *following* a rule and either (i) merely acting *in accordance* with it or (ii) just *believing* one is doing what is prescribed. The second point seems straightforward, as the famous example given by Wittgenstein illustrates: if a teacher is training a pupil and orders her to add "+2" and she does well up to 1000, but beyond that answers 1004, 1008, ..., she may *believe* she is following the rule, but she is not. Without worrying much about rule-scepticism here, it is possible for a person, *if she understands the rule well*, to recognise whether she has made mistakes by herself, since the relationship between a norm and its application is *internal*. Wittgenstein argues against both rule-Platonism (rules are invisible rails *out there* guiding mechanically our actions) and rule-scepticism (there is no right interpretation/application) showing that following a rule is a practice. That is why to follow a rule is not just to believe: one needs *to understand* what is prescribed, so that one will recognise that there are objective ways of following or going against it. As it becomes clear, the ability to understand is a necessary condition in following a rule.

Let me now clarify the difference between merely acting *in accordance* with a rule and *following* it. At the beginning of §217, Wittgenstein asks himself: "How am I able to follow a rule? –If this is not a question about causes, then it is about the justification for my acting in *this way* in complying with the rule." Consider a child moving by chance a chess piece into the right square. Obviously, she is not playing chess because she is not acting intentionally. In order to follow a rule one must not only understand it, but also *apply* it correctly, that is, her actions must reveal the desire to perform what is prescribed. In order to follow a rule one must go on *doing the same thing*, that is, showing some regularity in acting. This does not need to be a conscious process all the time, but a reason must always be available to the subject *to justify* her behaviour. Thus, intentionality of action (not mere reaction) is another *necessary* condition to follow a rule.

Taking now these two necessary conditions, it is possible to say that P follows a rule  $r_1$  iff:

- P understands  $r_1$ ;
- $r_1$  prescribes x;
- P does x.

Considered together, these conditions are sufficient to ascribe rule-following behaviour to a person.

We are now in a position to answer the question raised above. Once we accept that following a rule requires *understanding* and *intentionality of action*, we can recognize that it presupposes a special kind of knowledge, that is, ability. That this is Wittgenstein's own view can be clearly observed in the following remark:

The grammar of the word "know" is evidently closely related to the grammar of the words "can", "is able to". But also closely related to that of the word "understand". (PI §150)

What Wittgenstein is making clear is that some kinds of knowledge are like abilities, that is, learned skills, talents etc. For instance, if a person says "I know how to ride a bike," she is saying that she can do it, that she is capable of following the constitutive rules for cycling. Thus, to distinguish this kind of knowledge from propositional knowledge I will call it "*practical knowledge*" or knowing-how. The distinction between knowing-how and knowing-that was first introduced by Gilbert Ryle, probably under Wittgenstein's influence, but it has many predecessors. Nowadays, the distinction between *procedural* and *declarative* knowledge is discussed in cognitive sciences (cf. Bengson & Moffett 2012). Without forgetting the family-resemblances between knowing-that and knowing-how, one can stipulate this definition: knowing-how<sub>def</sub> = an acquired ability of following rules.

Considering this definition, it seems clear that knowing-how is *not reducible* to knowing-that, which was traditionally understood in terms of *justified true beliefs*. They are clearly not identical. This can also be realised in a Wittgensteinian manner by looking at the use of these expressions: we do not say "P knows-that to ride a bike," but rather "P knows-how to ride a bike". It is a misuse of "know-that" to refer it to an ability. Moreover, if one says "I know-how to ride a bike, but I cannot do it," she commits a mistake similar to Moore's Paradox.

This is perhaps the best place to put forward an anti-sceptical argument related to the existence of knowing-how. It can be formulated in the following-way:

- P1 – If there was no ability to follow rules, then one could not doubt whether there is knowledge;
- P2 – The sceptic doubts whether there is knowledge;
- C – There is the ability to follow rules (knowing-how).

This argument seems valid and sound. The conclusion reveals that there is knowing-how, that is, rule-following behaviour.

I will present now a clear criterion to distinguish moral rules. For this purpose, I will use the *Tractatus*, the only book Wittgenstein published in his lifetime. He wrote:

When an ethical law of the form, "Thou shalt ...", is laid down, one's first thought is, 'And what if I do not do it?' ... There must be indeed some kind of ethical reward and ethical punishment, but they must reside in the action itself (6.422).

The distinctive feature of a moral law is, then, that it commands an action as good *in itself*. In other words, a moral rule is a categorical not a hypothetical norm.

In his *Lecture of Ethics* (4), Wittgenstein makes the distinction between a *relative* and an *absolute* use of moral words. His example is this: suppose I had told one of you a preposterous lie and he came up to me and said "You're behaving like a beast" and then I were to say "I know I behave badly, but then I don't want to behave any better", could he then say "Ah, then that's all right"? Certainly not; he would say "Well, you ought to want to behave better". (For evidence that this was Wittgenstein's personal attitude to morality, see: Monk 1991.)

Given that Wittgenstein never refused this criterion in his later philosophical work, let me implement it for distinguishing moral rules from non-moral ones. Thus, a moral norm expresses an *intrinsic valuation*, for instance, whether an action is good in itself. Therefore, knowing-how to follow a moral rule implies that one does the right thing *for its own sake*.

## 2. Moral knowledge

I would now like to sketch a web of moral rules surrounding our very concept of ethics. Let me start by using the distinction between *empirical-moral-propositions* and *grammatical-moral-propositions* (see Arrington 2002). If one says "It is wrong for Jack and Jill to have pre-marital sex," this proposition might be true or false depending on particular circumstances. But if one says that "Lying is wrong!" one is just sorting out the meaning of 'lying,' that is, expressing a grammatical proposition.

Let me introduce, recalling Wittgenstein's famous river-bed analogy (*On Certainty* §96-98), a further distinction:

- hinge-grammatical-moral-propositions* and
- non-hinge-grammatical-moral-propositions*.

The second kind sorts out the meaning of particular moral concepts such as truth telling, but the former give us *the grammar of ethics* itself.

If ethics is defined in a Moorean manner as an expanded investigation into what is *good* (in the above explained sense of intrinsic value), then a fundamental *hinge-grammatical-moral-proposition* is "good is to be done and evil avoided." Thus, it is simply *nonsensical* to say that one behaves morally by producing more harms than benefits. The above principle coheres with a set of particular true rules such as "do not cause suffering" etc.

Another *hinge-grammatical-moral-proposition* is "respect persons" given that 'person' can be defined as a rule-following animal. Empirical bioethical propositions such as "respect the privacy of others", "obtain consent for interventions with patients" etc. cohere with this principle. Thus, to disrespect persons is annihilating morality itself; it is simply *unintelligible*.

These two hinge-grammatical-moral-propositions are the river-bed of our moral thoughts and the rules which follow from them are the river-waters of our moral life. A similar claim was made by Wisniewski (2007), who argues that Wittgenstein's clarificatory task of ethics can show that Kant's categorical imperative and Mill's (rule)-utilitarianism are not in principle incompatible. This web of norms shows that there are clear limits to what one may call "ethical". If this is the case, then it urges us to reject most post-modern readings of Wittgenstein's moral philosophy as representing some sort of relativism. Denying a hinge-

grammatical-moral-proposition makes morality unintelligible for our *human* lifeform (*Lebensform*). No reasonable person would do it, but they are no proof of moral realism either.

If the kind of moral epistemology sketched here is sound, then much contemporary metaethical debate seems misplaced. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* has played a role since it tries to show that "there are no propositions in ethics", giving rise to polarized debates between non-cognitivists (Emotivism) and cognitivists (Intuitionism). Wittgenstein himself had an intellectualist prejudice rightly cured by the *Philosophical Investigations*' therapeutic method. Therefore, by denying the common assumption (moral knowledge is propositional or there is not moral knowledge) we can clearly envisage a new way of understanding the cognitive elements in our moral life as is hopefully exhibited by Practical Cognitivism.

### 3. Concluding remark

Nothing was said here on the kind of normative ethics that best fits with Practical Cognitivism. One promising path is, considering the two hinge-grammatical-moral-propositions, to look at caring and respecting as expressing moral *attitudes* which reveal the internalization of these fundamental norms. That is to say, a person knows-how to care if she benefits the cared for *for their own sake*; otherwise, she does not *know-how* to follow the first fundamental moral norm. A similar remark applies to respect for persons: one does not *know-how* to follow this principle if one does not defer to another person's rights because they are *their* rights. Thus, *respectful care* in Bioethics would, according to a practical cognitivist, be a fundamental moral attitude. Exploring further normative and practical implications, however, is beyond the scope of this work.

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# Carnap's Non-Cognitivism as an Alternative to Both Value-Absolutism and Value-Relativism

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## Abstract

Carnap's value-non-cognitivism claims that values do not obtain truth values. While it might be true or false that a certain person holds a certain value-statement, the value-statement in itself does not obtain a truth value at all, for Carnap. In spite of this, a value-absolutist claims her value statements to be strongly true and any diverging value statement to be strongly false, while a value-relativist claims every value statement whatsoever to be weakly true. Thus, absolutism wins against relativism, because the absolutist's truth-predicate logically overrules the relativist's one. However, absolutism is genuinely racist and therefore is nothing that we should adopt (in my opinion, at least). Carnap's conception provides a forceful alternative here; it allows us to hold value statements (depending on our intuitions, strongly or weakly) without forcing us to choose between the pest of absolutism and the cholera of relativism.

For Rudolf Carnap a value statement is *non-cognitive* because unlike "cognitive statements" it is neither based on empirical facts nor on logical reasoning. (Schilpp 1963, 999f) There is no way to *justify* values, either on a factual or a logical basis. Values are irrational, they are chosen for entirely subjective (emotional, intuitive) reasons. This does not mean though that values are identical with emotions (or justified by emotions). Emotions only allow us to identify which values a certain person holds. Non-cognitivism is distinct, in particular, from a *pragmatist* account which takes values to be (emotional) facts. Cognitive statements, in particular, have to obtain a truth value, they are true, false, undecidable, likely, etc. By contrast, fundamental value statements do not obtain truth values at all. They just become stipulated (by a certain person or group). Truth comes into play here at a secondary level only. We might say "is one of Xs values"; we might make claims about the logical compatibility of certain values; and we might make claims about the causal consequences of certain values; in all these cases we will obtain truth values, of course. That is, values (value statements) which do not obtain truth values in themselves might be embedded in several ways into the world of science and therefore into the world of statements that obtain truth values. This implies, in particular, that the fact that is a value of X does not imply that is true for X. Though it is true that is one of Xs values, as soon as X himself is a non-cognitivist (we use the masculine form because we assume X is Carnap) he will not hold to be true in any way (as a value), neither for him nor for any other person or group. Thus to take the value to be true, in whatever form (as a subjective or relative truth, as an absolute truth), is a clear sign of a *cognitivist conception of values*.

The *problem of value disagreement*, understood as a problem of diverging (and often entirely incompatible) moral, political, and aesthetical intuitions, is something that moved Carnap for the whole of his intellectual career. Carnap's very first philosophical contributions were circular letters he sent to his friends in 1918, in order to find a consensus on their attitude towards war (he did not succeed, of course, since a good deal of his friends was not willing to reject war like him) (see „Politische Rundbriefe“, Rudolf Carnap Papers, University of Pittsburgh, Hilman Library (RC 081-14 to -22). "Deutschlands Niederlage: Sinnloses Schicksal oder Schuld" *ibid.* (RC 089-72) and (Mormann 2010)). Next time where Carnap has been confronted brutally with incompatible value systems was the upcoming of

NS, where he had to realize that some of his close friends and even parts of his family supported Hitler (see (Dahms 2015, section 2.2) as well as Carnap's correspondence with his first wife Elisabeth and his daughter Hanneliese (RC 025-33, 025-47, 025-57, 025-59)). Again, after 1945 Carnap faced a similar dilemma, as most of his colleagues committed themselves to the anti-communist hysteria of the McCarthy era (and equally violently and unsuccessfully tried to get him into their camp). (Reisch 2005, 271-281, 382-384) Though the problem of value disagreement seems to have been absolutely crucial for Carnap, after the (failed) project of the circular letters from 1918, he hardly ever turned to it explicitly in his published work. This does not imply, however, that this problem was not important for Carnap's philosophy at all. By contrast, it seems that Carnap's move to decision theory and to probability "as a guide in life" (Carnap 1947) was mainly if not exclusively motivated by that very problem.

Be that as it may. In the case of disagreement with respect to (political, ethical, aesthetical) values Carnap proposes the following solution. Other than our standards for rationality (and apart from them), political, ethical and aesthetical values are significantly diverse. In particular, two perfectly rational persons X and Y may adopt entirely incompatible value systems. X may defend social democracy and Y an elitist policy or the sharia or fascism. Suppose further that Carnap is X. What can he tell us about how to deal with Ys value system? (Note that the whole story may look quite different, if we describe it from the standpoint of Y, taken to be a moral absolutist, and again different, in the case of Ys being a moral relativist, cf. our remarks at the end of this section.)

First of all, X certainly is an advocate of *tolerance*. (Carnap 1950; 2002, §17) But what exactly does this imply? As long as Ys values do not harm anyone, they have to be accepted unconditionally, for X. If Y, for example, likes other kinds of music, this is a question of taste, for X, and X may discuss heatedly with Y on these topics but there is no reason for him not to accept Ys values (even if Y is unwilling to accept Xs values), as long as Y does not start to violently fill X with sounds he hates etc. Xs values imply that we have to accept Ys preferences, even if we are entirely unable to understand why Y thinks all that kitsch and crap being art (at least as long as Ys enjoyment of her preferences does not harm others). Even in case of Ys political and ethical preferences, tolerance is demanded. But here Xs tolerance is certainly more limited. As soon as

Ys political and ethical values inforce her to act in a way that becomes harmful for X or other people; as soon as Ys values lead her to actions being insolvably incompatible with Xs values, tolerance comes to an end. There are several options to deal with situations of conflict that emerge here. X can try to argue against Y and to convince her to change her values; X can try to outvote her in the elections (Y might stick to her incompatible values but X and Y may still be able to coexist peacefully); in the extremity, X might be forced to imprison Y, to fight back or even to start war against her.

Although X accepts diversity (seeing himself not in a position to call everyone who does not share his political and ethical values just crazy or blind), this does not imply that the situation with respect to political and ethical values, for X, is *entirely different* from the situation with respect to rational intuitions. (Carnap 1962, 1968) Rather, it is *an empirical fact* that in the latter case we can build on a certain consensus that seems to cover all human beings, while in the former case such a consensus does not exist. However, it seems at least conceivable that even in the case of standards of rationality the situation might be different. There might be a world where a significant group of people base their decisions on a certain form of reasoning, being entirely incompatible with our standards, e.g., rejects *modus ponens* and inductive reasoning. Such a Graham Priest-Karl Popper world might be conceivable, but as a matter of fact it is not identical with the actual world (we take it for granted that Graham Priest and Sir Karl, in particular, never have been inhabitants of such a world).

At any rate, with respect to political and ethical values we face a situation that is much more of a mess than the world of rational standards. Here, diversity and the existence of incompatible value systems being hold by significant groups is an empirical fact. But for X and probably also for Y this does not imply that intuitions become less conclusive. Though it is certainly an aspect of Xs values that Ys values have to be taken into consideration quite seriously (even in case that Y is not willing to do same with Xs values), and that we should do what we can in order to find consensus with Y or at least to enable her to act according to her values (pretty much in the same way as we would be willing to accept the members of a Graham-Karl-world of non-deductive and non-inductive reasoning to act according to their intuitions, as far as we can) it is clearly not a part of Xs value system that Ys values and her actions as indicated by these values have to be accepted *under all circumstances*.

What we learn from these observations is that there exists a powerful way to deal with values and intuitions which is neither an *absolutism* nor a *relativism*. Moreover, it seems to me rather evident that both absolutism and relativism are devastatingly inferior to Carnap's account.

Absolutism is the idea of having absolute values out there, being accessible to intuition, logic, or scientific reasoning. This idea involves that we (we scientists, we Ys) have access to these absolute values and that everyone who disagrees with us fails to have such an access. Roughly, there are two varieties of absolutism to be found; first, cultural absolutism in a more traditional and more general sense, claiming the intuitions of a certain religious or cultural tradition (or even the intuitions of a charismatic leader) to be absolutely true; second, that specific form of absolutism where the culture approaching the absolute

truth is science. While for the case of traditional scientific questions (i.e., questions of truth of scientific theories in the traditional sense) the latter seems to be a reasonable (though disputable and probably not quite Carnapian) option (called scientific realism), in the case of ethical, political, and aesthetical values it certainly appears to be one of the most toxic and intolerant claims a philosopher can hold. Value-absolutism is genuinely racist. (In spite of this tension, a scientific absolutism that decidedly includes absolutism with respect to moral values has been recently defended by (Boghossian 2006).)

Relativism is the idea that all value systems are equally acceptable. Roughly, the idea is that each culture has its own values and a tolerant person has to accept them unconditionally. Though we frequently find this form of relativism to be apparently defended (during heatedly all night discussions with particularly tolerant and gentle persons) it seems doubtful to me whether anyone being aware of the consequences it involves would ever be able to defend it. While absolutism seems to be equally consistent and widespread, relativism of the sort we specified here seems to be possible as a product of "illogical reasoning" alone. (Since philosophers usually try to be rational it seems to be much more plausible to me that self-proclaimed "relativists" such as Paul Feyerabend and Martin Kusch appear to be defenders of positions more closely related to the Carnapian view as defended in this paper than being relativists in the sense of the somewhat self-contradictory position just described: we hardly may find any philosopher who actually defends relativism in the sense described here.)

The framework of absolutism and relativism necessarily involves that the most intolerant value systems outdo the tolerant ones. Logically insoluble contradictions may only arise between two absolutists Y and Y' who (in a logically consistent way) defend incompatible value systems. (In that case, the fittest may survive.) However, if X' defends a value system that holds as a particular claim the *relative truth* of *all* value systems and Y defends a value system that holds as a particular claim the *absolute falsity* of *all deviant* value systems then it follows that X's value system is absolutely false (though relatively true) and Ys value system is both absolutely and relatively true. Absolute truth and falsity are certainly *stronger* than relative truth and falsity. Therefore, as soon as absolutism appears to be hold by a certain Y, relativism is being refuted.

But there is hope, after all. The very point of non-cognitivism as being defended here is that it does not take part in the battle between absolutism and relativism at all. For a Carnapian non-cognitivist moral statements receive *neither* a weak *nor* a strong truth value but *no truth value at all*. Values have consequences and are logically related in one or another way. Statements about theses consequences and logical relations have truth values, of course. However, the values in themselves or their stipulations do not have truth values at all, for Carnap. They are not held as a matter of *truth* but as a matter of *intuition* alone. Thus, absolutism and relativism, for Carnap, are neither true nor false but pointless.

If absolutism and relativism would be our only options, we would be forced to choose between the pest of racism and the cholera of cultural suicide. We should adopt the Carnapian solution.

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# Constructivism and Realism: How to Take Constructions to Be Real and Reality Not to Be Constructed Yet

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## Abstract

In this paper I shall characterize constructivism as compatible both with (ontological) realism and (epistemological) relativism. As a consequence of distinguishing ontological and epistemological levels in the debate, a traditional opposition between realism and relativism/constructivism can be dissolved. Weakening realism and relativism until they become compatible is perhaps not too challenging. But even though the sort of constructivism introduced may seem to be a sort of middle ground between realism and relativism, I shall formulate it as a way of *radicalising* constructivism, claiming constructions to play a causal role and hence be ontologically real.

## 1. Realism, relativism, constructivism

First, let me define the views in question in the (perhaps) most general form of their potential conflict. Realism (about  $xs$ ) is the view that  $xs$  exist independently of any  $D(x,y)$  dependence-relations (where  $x$  depends on  $y$  typically, though not necessarily, in some epistemological sense that  $y$  observes  $x$ ). Realism does not deny that  $xs$  (epistemologically) relate to  $ys$ ; what it says is that even if they did not relate,  $xs$  would still exist. In contrast, relativism claims that  $xs$  can exist only in terms of their (epistemological) relations to certain  $ys$ ; if no  $ys$  were (epistemically) connected to  $xs$ , no  $xs$  would exist. I.e., for relativism, a dependence-relation  $D(x,y)$  is *constitutive* of  $xs$ . Finally, constructivism argues that the  $xs$  in question are (epistemic) constructions of certain  $ys$ . In other words,  $D(x,y)$  *constructs*  $xs$ . Hence, both relativism and constructivism deny the independence of  $xs$  from some  $ys$ . But whereas relativism takes  $ys$  to be constitutive in  $xs$ , the former being irreducible from an account of the latter, constructivism takes  $ys$  to be constructive of  $xs$ , the former being relevant to the *origin* of the latter only. In short, relativism claims (epistemological) dependence to be a permanent condition of existence, whereas constructivism claims it to be a single condition of creation.

## 2. Two Debates: Ontological and Epistemological

All that has been said was about existence; i.e., ontological forms of the views in question. But in order to relate these views appropriately and find some possible ways of harmonizing them, another level of conflict has to be distinguished, namely, an epistemological conflict between realism on the one hand, and relativism and constructivism on the other. The distinction is important because the ontological difference is often formulated in epistemological terms (and vice versa). Realism is often contrasted to an *ontological* version of relativism, the view that the existence of any  $xs$  depends on some observers ( $os$ ) observing  $xs$ . Hence, the *ontological* claim that  $xs$  exist depend on an *epistemological* presupposition that  $os$  observe  $xs$  in a certain way that makes  $xs$  exist. Realism argues to the contrary. I shall take this debate to be an *ontological* debate, in contrast with a closely related but different *epistemological* one.

While ontological relativism starts with epistemological claims in order to drive at an ontological conclusion, epistemological realism applies ontological claims to episte-

mology. From their ontological claim that  $xs$  exist independently of any  $os$ , they conclude that the outcome of observing  $xs$  is  $xs$  themselves, also independent of the way of observation. Ontological realism is about facts ( $xs$  exist); epistemological realism is about truths ( $o$ 's knowledge of  $xs$  represents the way how  $xs$  are). Epistemological relativism is a denial of the latter (on the ground that  $o$ 's knowledge of  $xs$  is relative to  $os$ ); ontological relativism is a denial of the former (on the ground that insofar as  $xs$  can be identified only in  $o$ 's knowledge schemes, there is no ground for claiming  $xs$  *as such* to exist independently of that identification). Note that while epistemological realism is a popular view, ontological relativism mentioned earlier used to be rejected explicitly by (alleged) relativists as well (see e.g. Rorty 1982).

Now that we have a list of different positions at both levels, let us summarize dependence-relations for each version. In the table below,  $r$  refers to objects of reality,  $o$  refers to observers,  $k$  refers to knowledge items, and  $D(x,y)$  refers to a (typically epistemic) dependence-relation that  $x$  depends on  $y$  in some epistemic way.

	Realism	Relativism/constructivism
Ontological	$-D(r, o)$	$D(r, o)$
Epistemological	$-D(k, o)$	$D(k, o)$

It can be seen that ontological and epistemological forms apply dependence-relations to different sorts of items. For an ontological realism - relativism debate, the question is whether items of *reality* are dependent. For an epistemological realism - relativism debate, the question is whether items of *knowledge* are dependent. Insofar as items of reality are defined as *real* (i.e., their existence is not supposed to hang on epistemological considerations), realist answers to the first question seem to enjoy a *prima facie* advantage. It would be very hard for the relativist to argue that objects defined as real are in fact unreal but dependent on the way how an observer access them. A more promising strategy for the relativist would be arguing that no such entities as  $rs$  exist at all. But this could be done only if the existence of items in question were taken out of consideration; i.e., via shifting the emphasis from ontological to epistemological questions and slipping to the second debate.

Nonetheless, that shift is really preferable for relativists. Insofar as items of knowledge are defined as outcomes of some sort of observation, for that question, relativist answers seem to be favorable. In the epistemological scenario, a realist should argue that the role of an observer is reducible from the creation of knowledge items so that she could deny that knowledge items depend on observers. This does not seem to be as hopeless as the relativist's position in the ontological debate supposing that the observer can be taken as a passive receiver of the observation that has no effect on the outcome. But given that an observation is normally *done* rather than received by observers, their active role is hard to eliminate. Hence, relativist perspectives are more promising in this debate.

Regarding constructivism, an ontological - epistemological distinction can also be drawn between so-called 'trivial' and 'radical' constructivism (von Glasersfeld 2005). Trivial constructivism ('trivial' because acceptable for some non-constructivists as well - see Hacking 1999) is the epistemological claim that knowledge items are (at least partly) actively constructed by the observer. I.e., the way of observation (at least partly) determines the creation of the outcome of observation. Radical constructivism goes further, making an ontological claim that the objects to be observed themselves are also constructed by the observer. While the first is compatible with an ontological (but not an epistemological) realism, the second is certainly harder to accept insofar as objects of knowledge seem to be necessarily prior (both logically and temporally) to a process of getting knowledge about them. I take this 'radical' conclusion to be an unnecessary slip from epistemological to ontological claims. It is fairly acceptable that knowledge items are constructions of observers *even without* claiming that items of reality are therefore also constructions. Knowledge items come to existence via observation, whereas it is at least questionable (and for realists unacceptable) if items of reality do the same.

Once the two debates are distinguished appropriately, none of the opponents need to follow the harder routes. It is possible to be an ontological realist *and* an epistemological relativist/constructivist at the same time, claiming that items of *reality* are independent from any observers and items of *knowledge* nonetheless depend at least partly on observers. Knowledge can be taken to be *about* one and the same reality, whereas also observer-dependent differences can be allowed regarding the *ways* of getting knowledge about that reality. Other than a temptation to draw epistemological conclusions from ontological premises (and vice versa), there is no reason why one should take the same position in two well-distinguished debates.

### 3. Realism about constructions

The main problem with harmonizing ontological realism with epistemological relativism is, however, precisely that once the two debates are distinguished, the views in question refer to entirely different issues. Insofar as a distinction has been made between items of reality and items of knowledge, there is no conflict in claiming that the former is independent but the latter is dependent. There is simply no challenge in "harmonizing" two views that are in no conflict. There *is* some conflict, however, between ontological realism and epistemological constructivism because for the latter, knowledge items *as items of reality* (e.g. mental states, series of neural firings, or notes in a notebook about an observation) are constructed via observation.

Constructivism holds that prior to having a knowledge of *rs*, there was no such thing as a knowledge item *k* about

*rs*. Nonetheless, via getting knowledge of *rs*, a real thing (namely, an item of knowledge *k* about *xs*) is constructed. Hence, in order to set up a constructivist scenario, a distinction between items of reality that are not constructed and items of knowledge that are constructed is to be made. Ontological constructivism denies the existence of the former but epistemological constructivism takes at least some items of reality (namely, *ks* as items of reality) to be constructed. If so, those items of reality depend on observers that directly contradicts ontological realism. In order to dissolve this conflict between ontological realism and epistemological constructivism, a specific strategy of explaining constructions is required that makes a realism-compatible form of constructivism to be more radical than the 'trivial', epistemological one.

The main problem for a realist with relativist/constructivist accounts of knowledge items is that taking a substantive role of observers in having knowledge items into consideration, no unique access of the observer to observation-independent reality is warranted. A way to avoid this problem is taking a reality-observer relation *not* to be an epistemic one: i.e., claiming that a relation between reality and observers is not a(n epistemologically relevant) dependence-relation. Observers and their observations (and hence items of knowledge) can be connected to items of reality in non-epistemic ways; for example, a connection between them can be seen as causal. Causal explanations of knowledge construction are not alien to constructivists following e.g. the Strong Programme of Bloor (1976). Once causality is taken into picture, social and physical causes of knowledge construction can be managed in the same framework in a rather obvious way.

According to causal constructivism, a construction of knowledge items (as ontological entities) can be understood as a causal process in which an observer and some items of reality cause a knowledge item to come into existence. For example, a mental state (of having some beliefs about some item of reality *r*) is partly caused by an observer *o* making an observation of *r* and partly by *r* itself. On the supposition that causality is an ontological relation among items of reality (including observers and knowledge items), constructing knowledge items can therefore be seen as a process explicable in ontological terms. At the level of ontology, they do not differ from any other items of reality; knowledge items as mental states fit into a causal chain just as physical events do. Where they differ is an epistemological level where knowledge items are supposed to have an epistemic relation to observers and items of reality that are objects of observation. Nevertheless, items of reality, in accordance with ontological realism, do not depend on knowledge items but the other way around. They also do not depend on observers; though knowledge items *as epistemological objects* depend on observers. But even their dependence can be explained causally, involving that an independence of items of reality from epistemological factors is warranted at an ontological level.

Note that in this account, nothing has been said about *contents* of knowledge items. They can be exact representations of reality as epistemological realists prefer, or they can be different from observer to observer (or society to society) as relativists do. Whichever the case is, their causes are just as real ontologically as realists would like, and they are just as constructions as constructivists would. As argued above, constructivism, unlike relativism, claims observations to be *constructive* rather than *constitutive* of knowledge items. Hence, for constructivism, observations are relevant for the *origins* of knowledge items rather than the *permanent existence* of theirs, as in the case of relativ-

ism. In a causal account of constructivism, a process of observation causes knowledge items to come into existence. A causal explanation for relativism would imply that a process of observation should cause knowledge items to keep existing. That is why in the case of epistemological relativism, there is no way of isolating knowledge items from observation. But causal constructivism can do the job. Isolating a knowledge item from an observer can be done in the same way as any other causal effect can be isolated from its causes.

#### 4. Conclusion

I take a widely held opposition between realism and relativism to be a matter of confusing two levels of explaining knowledge items: ontological on the one hand, and epistemological on the other hand. Realism seems preferable ontologically, whereas relativism has more to offer in epistemology. Constructivism is an epistemologically loaded view that has nonetheless something to say about ontological matters: namely that items of knowledge constructed via observation, once constructed, do exist independently of the observer.

While a causal version of epistemological constructivism is a sort of middle ground between realism and relativism, it offers a more radical account of knowledge items than trivial constructivism or epistemological relativism (that might be seen as the most moderate forms of the relativist side). The former makes ontological claims, offering room for a potential conflict with ontological realism. But it also dissolves that conflict by adopting a causal story of construction that reverses the dependence-relation supposed by ontological relativism and constructivism between knowledge items and items of reality. Adopting a causal story is not an *ad hoc* solution: it was developed by some

mainstream forms of constructivism like the Strong Programme in the sociology of knowledge on independent grounds.

Causal constructivism allows both realism in ontology and relativism in epistemology at the same time. It takes items of reality to be constructed causally rather than epistemically. As a consequence, it has no commitments regarding contents of knowledge items and their epistemic relation to items of reality. As an extreme, it can be imagined that multiple ways of representations play the same causal role at an ontological level. On these grounds, relativism at the level of knowledge contents does not involve any problem for ontological realism because knowledge items taken to be as ontological entities can well play their causal role, regardless of the epistemic contents they bear.

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# Who is the Authority when All are Masters?

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## Abstract

The following text aims at showing the importance of both the notion of open concept – or with blurred edges – and the notion of rule, in order to understand how the three vertices of the triangle, community, language and subjectivity can be linked. The rules of the community shape subjectivity, but at the same time they suffocate it. Nevertheless, it's exactly thanks to the training received and the abilities to find resemblances (abilities developed inside the system) that the individual can bring out its subjectivity and claim itself as a master. The creation of a new metaphor is the clearest example of this process. It shows us how the notion of family resemblance can become an operational tool that is able to describe our cognitive abilities.

That is the question made by Cavell when, in the first part of his *The Claim of Reason*, he addresses Wittgenstein's linguistic conception.

The topic is certainly one of the most important and complex within the works of the Austrian philosopher.

If one understands who is the authority in a society of masters that claim the language in which they express themselves as if it belonged to them, he will also understand which the relationship between communities, language and subjectivity is.

The following text aims at showing the importance of both the notion of open concept – or with blurred edges – and the notion of rule, in order to understand how the three vertices of the triangle community, language and subjectivity can be linked.

In *Philosophical Investigations* 71, the notion of concept with blurred edges appears for the first time.

Wittgenstein uses this notion as a tool to explain the mode of operation of our language and, above all, the way we use concepts.

We must not, and we cannot, look for something that is common to the whole language. In this field, there is no place for the pursuit of the essence. Instead, the best we can do is to create benchmarks, such as language games, in order to explain, in the most appropriate way, what we mean when we talk.

Within this reasoning, Wittgenstein introduces an extraordinary concept, family resemblances:

Consider for example the proceedings that we call "games". I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all?—Don't say: "There *must* be something common, or they would not be called 'games'."—but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all.—For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don't think, but look!—Look for example at board-games, with their multifarious relationships. Now pass to card-games; here you find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out, and others appear. When we pass next to ballgames, much that is common is retained, but much is lost.—Are they all 'amusing'? Compare chess with noughts and crosses. Or is there always winning and losing, or competition between players? Think of patience. In ball games there is winning and losing; but when a child throws his

ball at the wall and catches it again, this feature has disappeared. Look at the parts played by skill and luck; and at the difference between skill in chess and skill in tennis. Think now of games like ring-a-ring-a-roses; here is the element of amusement, but how many other characteristic features have disappeared! And we can go through the many, many other groups of games in the same way; can see how similarities crop up and disappear. And the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail.(Wittgenstein 1958, §66)

However, if at first the concept of similarity can be considered as something merely negative, useful to break with the philosophical tradition centered on the research of the essence of language, this concept seems to be perfectly in sync with the way we operate within the language or, more generally, with the way we map the world.

Resemblance is a way to comprehend the potentialities of our perceptions, a way to understand how we recognize things, a way – we might say – to see 'differently'.

Similarity is a way of understanding the capabilities of our perceptions, a way to understand how we recognize something - a way, we could say, to see "otherwise". "It is in 'seeing differently an object'" – clarifies Sandra Laugier – "as in the popular example of the 'duck-rabbit', or others Wittgenstein's examples, where suddenly something appears to me, that will emerge this view: I couldn't see then what I had before my eyes" (Laugier 2009, 210; translation mine).

Without thinking of something too complex, for example to a community who does not have the concept of tomorrow, we, as Cavell says, would have obvious difficulties to relate to a culture that does not consider the way we feed cats, lions or dogs alike.

The fact that we use the verb to feed also to indicate the action of paying the parking meter would further increase the gap between us and them (cf. Cavell 1979, 181ff).

What would really surprise us about this community, is that they would find senseless our attempts to project the meaning of a word to a context that is far from the one in which they regularly use it, and therefore to somehow bring to light a sort of originality in our activities. We may add that they would not give our subjectivity a chance to express itself at the height of its capabilities.

Going forward, it has often been said that the problem of the subject in the mature Wittgenstein is only the one of the paragraph 244 of *Philosophical Investigations*:

How do words *refer* to sensations?—There doesn't seem to be any problem here; don't we talk about sensations every day, and give them names? But how is the connection between the name and the thing named set up? This question is the same as: how does a human being learn the meaning of the names of sensations?—of the word "pain" for example. Here is one possibility: words are connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensation and used in their place. A child has hurt himself and he cries; and then adults talk to him and teach him exclamations and, later, sentences. They teach the child new pain-behaviour. "So you are saying that the word 'pain' really means crying?"—On the contrary: the verbal expression of pain replaces crying and does not describe it.

This passage is certainly crucial to understand how the subject fades, as we might say; how it dissolves within our community and within its rules.

The rules train us to speak, to act in a certain way and basically to behave like the others do. Training, as such, is not subject to criticism: we are told how to count, how to call the colors, how to talk about our feelings, pains, hopes, and there is no doubt about this training.

In order to become a fully-fledged member of the adult community, a child must be able to show his knowledge of the community rules, both linguistic and non-linguistic. He must show that the way he carries out an order, the way he deals with an exam at school, his reactions to particular facts, are somehow in agreement with the community's customs. If he does not show these things, the person would automatically become a problem, he should be re-educated. If instead of crying and screaming, the child begins to say that he is sick, or that he is in pain, we are inclined to say that he is following the natural process of growth. This is the moment in which a person learns how to map the world, to distinguish things from each other and, above all, to join a system that gives the ability to find the similarities that can be found in different concepts. So, due to this ability, the person can bring out his own subjectivity in the community.

When someone projects for the first time a word meaning to a context that is different from its usual one, it is then that his subjectivity emerges - though weakly. This is the way the individual tries to detach himself from the training received, by proposing something partially original to the community. I use *weakly* and *partially*, because here the individual is hampered by the rules according to which he or she has been trained. As Cavell points out, not every type of projection is well accepted by the community. The projection, in fact, follows in any case the rules of the speakers.

In the second part of his *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein states that the secondary meaning of a word is not a metaphorical meaning. To give an example, when we say that Tuesday is "fat" or that the vowel 'e' is yellow, we are not using a metaphor yet. The context in which we are has to somehow induce us to the projection. As Cavell would say projection should be a natural process, and in this case natural means that it is part of the training that we have been given.

But there is a moment in which everything fits together and the relationship between subjectivity, language and community becomes more explicit. This is the case of

metaphors. Metaphors, unlike of simple projections, break completely the rules we normally use. Cavell defines this process as unnatural, in that metaphor breaks the regular modalities to project a word meaning. It is the moment in which the individual acts arrogantly towards the other speaker, obliging that to acquiesce to his way to speak, to see a rabbit, whereby the other saw only a duck. It is the moment in which subjectivity declares itself as an antagonist of the rule, therefore as an antagonist of the community itself. With metaphors, subjectivity claims for itself the right to be a master in a world of possible masters.

In Italian, we use a particular expression to wish someone good luck. We also obviously say also *buona fortuna*, that is literally good luck, but we often say *in bocca al lupo*, something comparable to the English expression 'break a leg'. *In bocca al lupo* can be roughly literally translated in "I wish you to end up in a wolf's mouth". The reason for using this expression is not important here; it could depend on the popular belief that the wolf is the incarnation of evil, because of its voracity. It might come from Esopo, from La Fontaine or from Grimm brothers' tale. Let's assume that it derives from Grimm brothers' tale, "Little Red Riding Hood". Saying *in bocca al lupo*, I am wishing someone who is about to face a potentially difficult situation to end up eaten by his or her executioner. It sounds crazy. And this person replies to me *crepi*, which means, "I hope it dies". Think about the reaction of the first person who received this wish. What effort should he or she have made to understand what the other speaker has just said?

Nobody would be surprised if this wish would not have been understood, because what the person who said that for the first time did, was a leap into the unknown, a total rupture with had been learnt from the training. This was a voluntary detachment from his/her community, a detachment that – as Cavell states – brings anguish. The individual changes the rules of the game, imposing as a new rule a tale of Grimm brothers. Luckily for this individual, that arrogance has been somehow understood, and subsequently rewarded, since now we – Italians, of course – all say *in bocca al lupo*. The reward has been to be absolved from detaching from the community rules, and adopted as a general rule-maker and reintegrated in the society in a contributing role.

The opposition subjectivity-community is integrated in our practices and in this case the individual is reabsorbed within the community in this case. That would close the circle... or would delineate the triangle starting from these three vertices: community, language and subjectivity. A bond of logical necessity then connects subjectivity and community. We might think about them, in principle, as logically cogenerated. The subjectivity of the individual is shaped through the training that is provided by the community. On the other hand, subjectivity is also capable to generate other rules, in its possible attempt to break with the ones of the community. The new rules, together with the previous ones, keep the community standing.

Back to the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein shows how the concept of game and that of language-game include some elements that, though they are related, might be totally different. We could think of that as an area-related similarity – area A looks like B, B looks like C (besides A) etc ... but it is very likely that there is no resemblance between A and D.

The community has the responsibility of mapping the world and claims the right to decide which things are related one to another. The same right, as we have ex-



plained, is claimed by the individual who creates a new metaphor, who realizes the possibility of a new similarity.

By this process, the concept of family resemblance, from being a negative concept, satisfies the requirements to become an operative, practical concept. It becomes able to describe in an optimal way our concepts, just in that these are created also relying on a community, which operates and organises consequentially to its ability to find resemblances and differences among things, between physical objects and sensations, between imaginary stories and real life moments; or simply between counting out loud or silently. The concept of family resemblance could hence become a very important tool to understand how our cognitive skills work.

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# Wittgenstein and Conceptual Relativism

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## Abstract

There are reasons to attribute conceptual relativism to Wittgenstein. They are related mainly to his notion of grammar, its posited arbitrariness, theory of language games and forms of life intertwined with them. In his famous article "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme," Donald Davidson rejected conceptual relativism, questioning the very idea that various conceptual schemes exist. In my paper, I would like to consider how Davidson's arguments could be responded to, drawing on some of Wittgenstein's findings.

There are reasons to attribute conceptual relativism to Wittgenstein. They are related mainly to his notion of grammar, its posited arbitrariness, theory of language games and forms of life intertwined with them.

In his famous article "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme," Donald Davidson rejected conceptual relativism, questioning the very idea that various conceptual schemes exist. Side by side with the analytical-synthetic division and the reductionist principle, this dualism is the third dogma of empiricism, which Davidson seeks to repudiate as Quine repudiated the first two.

In this paper, I would like to consider how Davidson's arguments could be responded to, drawing on some of Wittgenstein's findings.

To start with, let us recall that for Davidson having a conceptual scheme entails having a language, which means that where conceptual schemes differ, languages differ as well. Of course, it may well be that users of different languages share the same conceptual scheme provided that these languages are mutually translatable. The disparity between conceptual schemes is bound up with their untranslatability; what is more, untranslatability is a necessary condition for differentiation of conceptual schemes. Davidson analyses two cases, namely, complete and partial untranslatability, only to assert that both cases are hopeless, which means that the dualism of scheme and content is impossible, as is, consequently, the stance of conceptual relativism. Complete untranslatability would take place if no meaningful part of sentences in one language could be translated into another; partial untranslatability, in turn, would be the case if some sentences could indeed be translated. As for the former, according to Davidson, if a form of activity cannot be interpreted in our language, it follows that it cannot be a linguistic behaviour altogether. (The defining criterion of languagehood is, then, translatability into our language.) This, however, is far from obvious. Wittgenstein consistently stressed the interconnectedness of language and our actions, or forms of life, viewing language as a part of human practice. Considering this, we can easily imagine, for example, that we arrive among a tribe whose members produce sounds which, given their tonality, we just cannot sort out into particular words. That notwithstanding, we can identify them as a language because the community members respond to them by taking or abandoning action, listening, answering, etc. Unlike Davidson, but in keeping with Wittgenstein's emphasis on the links between language and action, I believe that translatability into the language we know cannot be the only criterion of identity for language.

The dualism of scheme and content has been formulated in many various ways and species, but its general point is that

something is a language, and associated with a conceptual scheme, whether we can translate it or not, if it stands in a certain relation (predicting, organizing, facing, or fitting) to experience (nature, reality, sensory promptings). The problem is to say what the relation is. (Davidson 1984, 191)

Davidson divides all metaphors into two groups: schemes either *organise* something or *fit* it, *correspond* to it. As for entities which can be organised or which a scheme fits, they may be either reality or experience. Organising one object (the world, nature) is unclear to Davidson, as is organising experience, and it does not provide any other criterion of languagehood but translatability. Thus, he hastens to proceed to the other metaphor, that is, to the idea of fitting. This concerns whole sentences because sentences deal with things and fit reality or our sensory promptings and can be confronted with empirical evidence. According to Davidson, the concept of fitting the totality of experience or facts does not contribute anything comprehensible to the concept of being true, which leads to a simple conclusion that a thing is an accepted scheme or theory if it is true. Davidson claims, however, that the concept of truth cannot be understood if dissociated from the concept of translation. This is the key argument Davidson advances against complete untranslatability, thereby drawing on Tarski's definition of truth. Tarski's Convention T holds that a viable truth theory for language L must entail for every sentence in language L a sentence of the form "s is true if, and only if, p," where s is a name (a structural description) of sentence s, and p is a translation of this sentence into meta-language. If, according to Davidson, Tarski's Convention T embodies our best intuitions about the use of the concept of truth, then it is a futile venture to look for criteria that differ fundamentally from our schemes and assume dissociating the concept of truth from translation. It is, namely, difficult to imagine a language which would be untranslatable into another one and yet true. Concluding, translatability is, thus, the criterion of identity for language.

As already mentioned, Davidson associates a conceptual scheme with language and, upholding Quine's refutation of the analytical-synthetic division, he rejects the notion that theory and language could be separated. As a result, he identifies language with theory, which does not seem right. First of all, language is not a totality of sentences, but a set of syntactic and semantic rules used to produce sentences. Secondly, unlike theory, language does not anticipate anything. Even if we agreed that language, like theory, was a totality of sentences rather than

rules, we would still need to observe that language as such a totality of sentences would necessarily have to include also the negations of these sentences, which a coherent theory cannot possibly comprise (cf. Hacker 1996, 297f; Glock 2008, 31). This difficulty is removed if a conceptual scheme is compared not so much to language (theory) but to a grammar of a language. A language's grammar encompasses the use of expressions of that language and not of non-natural (logical) propositions that hide behind everyday word-use and provide a necessary basis of all possible systems of representation. Grammar rules determine sense and precede the truth or falsity of sentences. At the same time, Wittgenstein stresses that there are various autonomous grammars, and their rules are as arbitrary as the choice of the units of measure. The rules do not speak anything about facts; nor are they true or false. Instead, they define the sense of that speaking. In this context, Hacker aptly notices that it would be more advisable to speak of conceptual schemes or grammars for particular areas, as in fact Wittgenstein did, focusing on, for example, the discourse of colours, space, size, time or truth and falsehood. This is, however, what Davidson refuses to do since he seeks to avoid all distinctions similar to the difference Wittgenstein formulated between "grammatical propositions," which determine sense or meaning, and empirical propositions, which describe the way things are in the world. As an argument against such divisions, Davidson cites Quine's critique of analyticity, which was, however, originally targeted against Carnap first of all.

Let us now turn to partial untranslatability. In this case, understanding the difference between conceptual schemes is made possible by referring to their shared part. Davidson made a prior assumption that a person's speech cannot be interpreted without a knowledge about that person's beliefs (and also desires and intentions) and that identification of beliefs is impossible without understanding the language. In case of "radical interpretation," that is translation from a language entirely unknown to us, we must by necessity assume a basic agreement on beliefs. "We get a first approximation to a finished theory," writes Davidson, "by assigning to sentences of a speaker conditions of truth that actually obtain (in our own opinion) just when the speaker holds those sentences true" (Davidson 1984, 196). Davidson refers to this as the "principle of charity." By attributing maximum sense to words and thoughts of others, assuming that in most cases they are indeed right, we optimise agreement and the area of shared beliefs, thereby accommodating explicable errors and differences of opinion. As a result, Davidson treats differences in conceptual schemes the way he does differences of beliefs: we make those differences more comprehensible by enlarging the basis of shared, that is translatable, language or opinion. "But," as Davidson writes, "when others think differently from us, no general principle, or appeal to evidence, can force us to decide that the difference lies in our beliefs rather than in our concepts" (Davidson 1984, 197). Given this reasoning, we cannot make sense when we assert that two schemes are different as we are unable to assess whether concepts or beliefs radically differ from ours. By the same token, the dogma of dualism of scheme and content collapses, and with it conceptual relativism does as well.

We should also remember that maximization of agreement postulated by the "principle of charity" probably cannot be a theoretical act because if it were, it would be purely declarative and the attribution to others of beliefs resembling ours would not be underpinned by real premises. In §241 of *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein writes: "It is what human beings say that is true and false;

and they agree in the *language* they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life." It is not exclusively, not even primarily, in utterances that shared beliefs are manifested, but rather in action, in sensory and volitional responses to certain stimuli from the environment and in interpersonal relationships. Davidson says that interpretation of an alien language must commence from attributing to statements a person utters in this language truth conditions which indeed obtain when the statement is being uttered. But, as Hacker aptly notices, in what way the observer should identify assertions and separate them from imperatives or interrogations prior to understanding words or sentences is, as a matter of fact, rather puzzling. Davidson explicitly privileges truth over meaning.

However, in Davidson, the key problem as related to conceptual relativism is the claim that there is nothing to suggest that differences between us and natives in holding sentences to be true lie in different beliefs or judgments and not in the difference of concepts. In the language of the Pirahã, there are no numbers, numerals or any forms of counting altogether. They basically use two words denoting more or less "a little" and "a lot," but their use thereof is very peculiar. For example, they refer to two small fish and one medium-sized fish alike as "a little" and distinguish them from a tiger or a big fish. Given this, it is really difficult to accept Davidson's distinction between "disagreement in beliefs" and "disagreement in concepts." In the case of the Pirahã use of "a little" and "a lot," we do not deal with new words, but rather with an anticipation of a different conceptual structure for a given bit of language. It can serve as an example of a partial difference in conceptual scheme, which is a difference between the corresponding segments of the grammar of expressions, for example the grammar of colour expressions or of numbers and counting. And this is not a difference in truth, but a difference in grammar. When the Pirahã say that two small fish means the same as one medium-sized fish – which in our grammar would mean that two equals one – the disagreement between us that is a disagreement about concepts, does not produce a disagreement about truth. What the Pirahã say is true, but their truth is incommensurable with our truth. It does not mean, either, that we are unable to understand their conceptual schemes for colours or numbers though, admittedly, we cannot translate them into ours. Hacker aptly notices that when trying to master the native language, an anthropologist not only engages in translation, as Quine's and Davidson's interpretations would suggest, but also wants to speak that language, that is, to understand the meanings of words. The anthropologist would then seek explanations, ostensive definitions, examples, paraphrases, etc. in the native language. Hacker compared differences in concepts to differences in "measures" while the disagreement in beliefs or judgments to a disagreement in "measurements." Consequently, he asks: "Is it intelligible to claim that we can *never* allocate an apparent difference in judgment to a difference in the measure used, as opposed to a disagreement in the measurement executed?" (Hacker 1996, 303). Let us recall the example of wood-sellers which Wittgenstein resorted to in his *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*. The wood-sellers pile up logs in heaps of varying heights and then sell them at the price proportionate to the area the heaps cover and not by the cubic meter. How could we convince them that they make a mistake and that the bigger area that the pile covers does not entail "more wood"? We could, Wittgenstein proposes, arrange the pile which is small for them in such a way as to make it "big." Perhaps that would convince them, but we might as well get to hear "Yes, it's a lot of wood and it costs more." And "that would be the end of the matter," states Wittgenstein. "We should

presumably say in this case: they simply do not mean the same by 'a lot of wood' and 'a little wood' as we do; and they have a quite different system of payment from us." (Wittgenstein 1998, 94) At closer inspection, the example corresponds to the problem of partial translatability: the wood-sellers measure, count and sell, that is, they perform the same activities as we do, but they do it differently. "Differently" means simply wrongly. Their mistake seems to lie in the choice of the measure which determines the meaning "more wood" for them. It seems that it would be easy to convince them sooner or later that they are making a mistake, but it is in fact not the case, and Wittgenstein emphatically communicates that with the conclusive "That would be the end of the matter." Stating this, he meant, I guess, that although their activities are similar to ours, we do not understand them, in fact, and we do not know what they refer to when they use such expressions as "a lot of wood" and "a little wood." Neither do we know whether what they do is indeed measuring and selling because, as a matter of fact, we know only very little about them: what do they do with the wood, how do they distribute other products, why do they pile wood into heaps? Their activity of measurement and calculation cannot be correct or incorrect as we do not know for sure whether they indeed measure and calculate, or at least we are not authorised to identify such actions. We are seduced by a certain image, perhaps by the unconsciously applied "principle of charity", which holds that there are beliefs and concepts whose meanings are independent of practices in which these concepts are applied. In such circumstances, we are prone to think that the concepts of measuring, counting and sell-

ing are already present in the language of the wood-sellers, but they are wrongly applied in practice. But the practice of the wood-sellers, which focuses only to the area covered by the piles and lacks the activities of measuring and calculating the quantity of wood familiar to us, is not a practice in which measurement takes place.

Concluding, we could assume, I believe, that relativism is not unthinkable. Particularly when language is comprehended, the way it was by Wittgenstein, as a part of human forms of life, and the meaning of words as intertwined with our actions. I think that responding to Davidson's arguments, Wittgenstein would emphasise this interconnection, teaching us in this way, to perceive differences rather than to agree on shared truth conditions.

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# Moral Arguments and the Denial of Moral Certainties

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## Abstract

Arguments are often called ‘moral arguments’ because they deal with moral issues, such as the permissibility of killing in certain circumstances. I call this the ‘thin’ sense of ‘moral argument’. Some arguments in moral philosophy are moral in this sense, but fail to be moral in other respects. Inspired by Wittgenstein’s *On Certainty*, I argue that, if an argument about moral issues involves or leads to the denial of a moral certainty, the argument is not moral in a ‘thick’ sense and does not qualify as a proper response to a moral problem. We have good reason not to do whatever thin arguments involving the denial of moral certainties claim we ought to do, even if we have no reason to question the truth of the premises or the logical validity of the argument.

## Introduction

What is a moral argument? A straightforward answer is that a moral argument is an argument dealing with moral issues, such as the permissibility of killing in certain circumstances. Let us call this the ‘thin’ sense of ‘moral argument’. Arguments we find in normative and applied ethics are almost invariably moral in this sense. However, they often fail to be moral in other respects. I will focus on one way in which morality can be absent in thin moral arguments. Drawing on Wittgenstein’s *On Certainty*, I will argue that, if an argument about moral issues involves or leads to the denial of a moral certainty, the argument is not moral in a ‘thick’ sense and does not qualify as a proper response to a moral problem. That is, we have good reason not to do whatever thin arguments involving the denial of moral certainties claim we ought to do because they conclude we ought to do it, even if we have no reason to question the truth of the premises or the logical validity of the argument.<sup>1</sup> Our reason to reject the argument, namely that it involves the denial of a moral certainty, is a moral rather than a logical reason, but that does not prevent it from being a good reason. While logical reasons are available irrespective of one’s moral outlook, the availability of moral reasons is tied to a specific moral outlook or conception of morality. I will indicate what kind of conception or outlook is required in order for the moral reason ‘because it involves the denial of a moral certainty’ to be available as a reason to reject a thin moral argument.

## An Example: Singer’s *Practical Ethics*

How can morality be absent in a thin moral argument? Let us start from Hans-Johann Glock’s remark that ‘ever since Plato, philosophers have shown an uncanny willingness to follow the argument wherever it leads’ (Glock 2008, 194). Glock uses Peter Singer’s *Practical Ethics* as an example. According to Glock, Singer

[...] condones active *non-voluntary euthanasia*, the killing of innocent human beings that are incapable of understanding or making the choice between life and death – such as severely defective infants or grown-ups in a vegetative state. Moreover, he favours such a course of action not just in cases in which it is in the in-

terest of the patient, but also in cases in which it is best for *the patient’s environment* – the family or society. This includes both infants with Down’s syndrome and haemophiliacs. (Glock 2008, 197)

Glock does not see Singer’s argument as logically invalid or his conclusion as, logically speaking, inadequately supported. Rather, he thinks that the conclusion *cannot* be the right one, he refuses thinking about it as something that could possibly be right. Not only Singer’s argument, but *any* argument leading to such a conclusion *must* be dismissed, precisely *because* it leads to that conclusion. The possibility of a sound argument for non-voluntary euthanasia is excluded *a priori*. Why?

Nobody will dispute that, whenever an argument the validity of which one has no reason to question leads to an unexpected or controversial conclusion that goes against received views or intuitions, there is good reason to question its premises. However, its being unexpected or controversial does not mean that the conclusion cannot be right or that the argument cannot be sound. If it would mean that, there would be no room for criticizing received views. If we nevertheless want to hold on to the idea that certain conclusions, such as Singer’s, cannot be right, there has to be something more to them than their just being unexpected or controversial. Glock thus invites us to distinguish between, on the one hand, conclusions we are willing to evaluate because they could possibly be right and, on the other hand, conclusions we refuse to evaluate because they cannot be right.

## Empirical and Moral Certainties

It is helpful, in this regard, to have a look at Wittgenstein’s *On Certainty*. Wittgenstein discusses statements such as ‘I have a brain’ (Wittgenstein 1975, §4), ‘My body has never disappeared and reappeared after an interval’ (§101) and ‘The earth has existed long before my birth’ (§84). These statements are more aptly characterized as certainties than as beliefs. In contrast to beliefs, they cannot be meaningfully doubted or challenged (§234). The truth of these certainties ‘belongs to our frame of reference’ (§83), and to doubt them would be to ‘knock from under my feet the ground on which I stand on making any judgments at all’ (§492). Would we not ‘refuse to entertain any argument’ that tried to show that the earth has existed for only a hundred years (§577)? And would such a refusal not be reasonable? Here, ‘we are not ready to let anything count as a disproof of this proposition’ (§245), and rightly so. Wittgenstein asks:

<sup>1</sup> The phrase ‘because they conclude we ought to do it’ is meant to make clear that there may be other reasons to do what the argument concludes we ought to do. Suppose that an argument concludes that a man ought to leave his wife, but that there is good reason to reject the argument. That does not mean that there cannot be other good reasons to leave his wife or that it is not true that he ought to leave his wife. In what follows, I will leave the ‘because’-phrase out.

What if it *seemed* to turn out that what until now has seemed immune to doubt was a false assumption? Would I react as I do when a belief has proved to be false? [...] Would I simply say 'I should never have thought it!' – or would I (have to) refuse to revise my judgment – because such a 'revision' would amount to annihilation of all yardsticks? (§492)

What Glock finds uncanny about the philosopher's willingness to follow the argument wherever it leads is, I presume, that this willingness testifies of an unwillingness to consider Wittgenstein's question as a legitimate one. That is, because of an "exaggerated confidence in the power of philosophical judgment" (Glock 2008, 194), philosophers often fail to see that there is an alternative to the 'I should never have thought it!'-option.

Wittgenstein discusses only empirical certainties, but some commentators have argued that it is plausible to extrapolate his account to the moral realm and to speak of moral certainties as well (For a recent overview of the discussion and helpful references, see Pleasants 2015). Nigel Pleasants, for instance, has convincingly argued that the wrongness of killing is such a certainty (Glock 2008, 2015). It should be remembered that Glock describes Singer's argument as condoning 'the *killing* of innocent human beings' (my italics). Using Wittgenstein's conceptual tools, we could say that one of Glock's reasons for refusing to accept Singer's conclusion is that it involves the denial of a moral certainty. He understands 'it is wrong to kill innocent human beings' as relevantly analogous to 'the earth has existed long before my birth'. According to Wittgenstein, it is 'absurd' to doubt, justify or deny certainties (Wittgenstein 1975, §460), and it is conspicuous that Glock uses the very same term to characterize the conclusions of the philosophers he challenges (Glock 2008, 194).

## The Problem of Criticism

The problem of criticism re-emerges here. Although the distinction between beliefs and certainties allows for a reaction like 'that conclusion *cannot* be right' in certain cases and at the same time saves the possibility of criticizing received beliefs, it raises questions about the alleged impossibility of doubting or criticizing certainties. Wittgenstein's point is not that all certainties have remained the same throughout history and that they stand fast forever. It is not impossible that, in certain circumstances, what was immune to doubt becomes open to doubt, what was certainty becomes belief and the other way round (Wittgenstein 1975, §97). One could think here, I suppose, of the way in which Galilee made it possible to criticize what until then had functioned as a certainty: the certainty that the sun turns around the earth became a criticisable belief, the belief was shown to be false and replaced by the belief that the earth turns around the sun, a belief which has now become a new certainty. It is important to note that, without the certainty that the sun turns around the earth, the whole of astronomy's frame of reference changed. The ground on which they stood was knocked from under the astronomers' feet and replaced by a new one.

Can we then regard Singer as someone who does for morality what Galilee did for astronomy, that is, as someone who makes it possible to criticize what many regard as immune to doubt? If the consequence of such criticism is that the whole frame of reference changes, then why should we bother about that? What matters is not whether the frame of reference changes or not, but whether it is the right frame of reference. If Galilee was right, so could Singer be. Or not? Those who maintain, with Glock, that

Singer's conclusion cannot be right, have resources to respond to this challenge. They could argue that moral certainties are different from empirical certainties when it comes to the possibility of radical change. After all, Wittgenstein does not hold that *all* certainties are open to change:

And the bank of that river consists partly of hard rock, subject to no alteration or only to an imperceptible one, partly of sand, which now in one place now in another gets washed away, or deposited. (Wittgenstein 1975, §99)

## A (Line of) Response to the Problem of Criticism

The question then is, of course, why moral certainties would be 'hard rock'. Sabina Lovibond suggests an answer (or the direction for an answer) to that question when she says that, in moral matters, we do not have the idea of *fresh evidence*, an idea that "belongs to" our concept of the physical world, but not to our (possible) concept of the moral world' (Lovibond 1983, 79f). Fresh evidence justifies scientific revolutions and revolutions in our conception of the physical world. Such revolutionary changes in our conception of the moral world are unjustifiable, because there is no such thing as fresh evidence or new discoveries here. A related point, not specifically about morality but about philosophy in general, is made by Peter Hacker, who holds that "the characteristic reaction to an advance in scientific knowledge is 'Goodness me, who would have thought of that!'", whereas the characteristic response to a philosophical insight is 'Of course, I should have thought of that!' (Hacker 2009, 148). Hacker thus suggests that the 'I should never have thought it!'-option in Wittgenstein's question is not open to philosophers, making it necessary for them to refuse to accept conclusions that conflict with certainties. Put differently, while scientists seek new knowledge, philosophers seek understanding of what we already know (see also Wittgenstein 2009, §127). Hence, the normative theorist's task would not be to revise or revolutionize, but rather to make us understand. Moral exemplars such as Gandhi and Nelson Mandela did not come up with new evidence or revolutionize our conception of what is morally advisable or permissible, they rather deepened or reminded us in a powerful way of what, in a sense, we knew. As Raimond Gaita formulates it,

Ethical understanding is often coming to see sense where we had not seen it before, or coming to see depth where we had not seen it before. It is seldom learning something completely new (there are no Nobel Prize-winning discoveries in ethics) and it is seldom seeing that there is, after all, a valid argument to support positions we had previously judged to be dubious. It is often seeing what someone has made of something that we had often heard before. (Gaita 2004, 281)

## Conclusion

The line of response suggested by Lovibond, Hacker and Gaita is not meant to prove that, in moral matters, no such thing as a revolution is possible. Neither does it lead to a conventionalist position. Rather, its aim is to show that those who maintain that Singer's conclusion, involving the denial of a moral certainty, cannot be right, have resources to respond to those who (claim to) see no crucial difference between criticizing empirical certainties and criticizing moral ones. It is morally and philosophically defensible to say that the conclusion of a moral argument cannot be

right because it involves the denial of a moral certainty. By 'philosophically defensible', I mean that it does not suffice to assert, dogmatically, that a certain conclusion denies a moral certainty and should therefore be dismissed (as it does not suffice to assert, dogmatically, that everything is open to doubt). There are criteria for what counts as a certainty (see Rummens 2013), and those who defend that something is a moral certainty have to show that it fulfills these criteria. Moreover, they will be committed to defend (or subscribe to) a specific conception of or specific views about (moral) philosophy, such as those held by Lovibond, Hacker, Wittgenstein and Gaita. We can conclude that, if the conclusion of a thin moral argument involves the denial of a moral certainty, and given a certain conception of moral philosophy, there is good reason not to do what the argument concludes we ought to do, even if we have no (other) reason to doubt the validity or soundness of the argument.

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# “Übersichtliche Darstellung” as Synoptic Presentation in *Philosophical Investigations*, I, §122

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## Abstract

As was pointed out by Gordon Baker, *Philosophical Investigations*, I, §122 “(...) seems to condense into one short remark much of Wittgenstein’s distinctive conception of philosophy” (Baker, 2004, 22.), and it “is well known and often quoted” (*ibid.*). Despite this latter circumstance, Baker proceeded to further elucidate the key notion in §122 of a “perspicuous representation” [*übersichtliche Darstellung*]. Notwithstanding Baker’s reading, one further aspect might be important in trying to figure out what kind of view is an *übersichtliche Darstellung*, specifically, its translation. In my paper I want to suggest ‘synoptic presentation’ as a more befitting translation of *übersichtliche Darstellung*. In so doing I will draw a distinction between representation and presentation that might help us read PI, I, §122, and I will consider the reasons for translating *Übersicht* as ‘synopsis’ (and *übersichtliche* as ‘synoptic’). I conclude with a brief note on synoptic presentation and style.

## 1. A note on representation and presentation

*Vorstellung* and *Darstellung* can be said to frequently have overlapping uses. Still, bearing in mind that not only similarities but also differences between language games (cf. PI, I, §130) and between cases of employments of words, may help us to elucidate their use and clarify their meaning, it can be beneficial to note the possibility of correspondence between *Vorstellung* and the Latin *representatio*, and *Darstellung* and the Latin *presentatio*. The Latin words can assist us in drawing an important distinction. Representation is often used to convey a full-blown idea, sharply defined, or an image that stands for something else or mediates our access to something. In other words, representation has to do with how we usually see something by keeping hold of its more general characteristics – often by subsuming different aspects in an idea. On the other hand, presentation often has to do with bringing to the fore some aspect that our representations have obscured, whether by pointing out to us what we are failing to see, or by offering a new perspective that suddenly brings matters into a new, more comprehensive light (this is clear in expressions such as ‘presenting in a new light’). From this distinction, a further difference between the two words becomes visible. While ‘representation’ has a somewhat static character, like a fixed standpoint from where to look at the world around us, ‘presentation’ appears to involve the movement of seeing something from a new angle, freed from pre-conceptions. Thus, if we understand *Darstellung* as representation, we might be leaving out the possibility of standing directly before what is in front of our eyes (how we really use words in our language games), failing to acknowledge it<sup>1</sup>.

## 2. *Philosophical Investigations*, I, §122 and its earlier formulations

If we take a step back from the printed version of §122 in the *Philosophical Investigations*, we find different, earlier formulations of this remark, each time in a different con-

text<sup>2</sup> (in a characteristically wittgensteinian way of seeing, and showing us, the same thing from a different point of view - cf. MS 109 204, 6.-7.11.1930, C&V, 9/9e.). I have chosen, in the following citations, to translate ‘*übersichtliche Darstellung*’ as ‘synoptic presentation’. If we understand ‘synopsis’ (etymologically referring to a connected view of things) as a vision that allows us to bring together and remember what we know, in a manner that allows us to see things in relation and in a glance, its closeness to *Übersicht* is hardly deniable. However, choosing ‘synoptic’ as a translation of ‘*übersichtliche*’ has to do, also, with previous reflections on this matter - more precisely, Pichler’s and Venturinha’s. Pichler (cf. Pichler 2004, 180f) reminds us that although Wittgenstein didn’t give us any hint on PI, I, §122, as to what he meant by ‘*übersichtliche Darstellung*’, in other contexts - namely, in his 1930-1935 lectures - he did use ‘synopsis’ and ‘synoptic view’, and not ‘clear view’ (or ‘survey’), to emphasize the great effort tied with the difficulty in philosophy of attaining a proper synopsis of trivialities, that is, a synopsis of things that we already know as a way to remove the “intellectual discomfort” of philosophizing (it is not the case of abandoning one word such as ‘clear’ and replacing it with another, but, concerning the way – the method - in which “intellectual discomfort” diminishes, synopsis is more befitting).<sup>3</sup>

Venturinha points out that we owe the first rendering of ‘*übersichtliche Darstellung*’ in English as ‘*perspicuous representation*’ to Anscombe (see Venturinha 2010, 339), considering, like Pichler, Wittgenstein’s students’ recollections of the years 1930-1935 as good reason to favour the

<sup>1</sup> I don’t want to deny that our representations have an important role in our way of seeing things. After all, they too are part of our form of life. However, in what concerns philosophy, and specifically, the view of philosophy as an activity, it seems to me that presentation is a word less burdened with the weight of a theoretic understanding of philosophy, and more capable of agreeing with a method that does not rest on any given set of doctrines.

<sup>2</sup> It might be objected that this is like going after early passages in the *Nachlass* with the single purpose of justifying a position. But, indeed, it is not the case of trying to establish which is the earliest version of PI, I, §122, and then concluding that what is at play in the last version, already existed in the previous ones - without paying attention to what might have changed along the way. I intend only to see the earlier formulations and to some extent the context where they are placed, that is, to see each of them in its own surroundings. In fact, what will be stressed are not so much the continuities in the formulations, but what changed and why that matters in understanding the more polished final version.

<sup>3</sup> Pichler writes: “The concept of synoptic presentation [*übersichtliche Darstellung*] is multifaceted. It should not be denied that Wittgenstein used ‘synopsis’ as well as e.g., ‘survey’ or ‘clear view’, or that these words don’t belong to the notion of synoptic presentation [*übersichtliche Darstellung*], it should also not be claimed that ‘synoptic view’ apprehends everything that belongs to ‘*übersichtliche Darstellung*’. However, no other expression seems better suited to capture the methodological role which Wittgenstein recognized in the *Investigations*, in his philosophy and in the concept of ‘*übersichtliche Darstellung*’.” (Pichler 2004, 182, my translation)



use of 'synopsis' instead of '*perspicuous representation*' and other translations.<sup>4</sup> Venturinha goes on to add that

(...) the only way to *present* reality is to make our thought let us see what we cannot see directly, *thinking how we think*, in pieces of experience that involve everything. The *Übersicht* that Wittgenstein aims for must therefore coincide with the system, without being able itself to systematize anything; it is no vision *on* things, it is the *intertwined* vision of things which is important to take, recognizing how we are, a true 'synoptic view' - which is, incidentally, and symptomatically, a pleonasm, given that synopsis already means a 'concomitant vision'. (Venturinha 2010, 340, my translation)

Finally, the earlier formulations of PI, I, §122, are the following:

The concept of a synoptic presentation is of fundamental significance for us. It designates our form of presentation [*Darstellungsform*], the way we look at things. (A kind of '*Weltanschauung*' as it is apparently typical of our time. Spengler.)

This synoptic presentation brings about the understanding which consists precisely in the fact that we 'see the connections' [*Zusammenhänge sehen*]. Hence the importance of finding *connecting links*.<sup>5</sup> (MS 110, 257 / BFGB, 132 / TS 211, 281f / TS 212, 1144 / TS 213, 417 / P, 174, my translation)

A main source of our misunderstanding is, that we do not see the use of our words *synoptically* [*nicht übersehen*]. – Our grammar lacks synopticality [*Übersichtlichkeit*]. – The synoptic presentation brings about the understanding that consists precisely (?) (?) in 'seeing the connections'. Hence the importance of finding *connecting links*.

The concept of synoptic presentation is of fundamental significance for us. It designates our form of presentation, the way we look at things. (Maybe this is a kind of '*Weltanschauung*'. Spengler.) (MS 142, 107, my translation.)

The later formulation, in TS 227 (the final version of Part I of the *Investigations* (cf. von Wright 1993, 491)) is the familiar PI, I, §122:

A main source of our misunderstanding is, that we do not see the use of our words *synoptically* [*nicht übersehen*]. – Our grammar lacks synopticality [*Übersichtlichkeit*]. – The synoptic presentation brings about the understanding, that consists precisely in 'seeing the connections'. Hence the importance of finding and of inventing *connecting links*.

The concept of synoptic presentation is of fundamental significance for us. It designates our form of presenta-

tion, the way we look at things. (Is this a '*Weltanschauung*'?) (TS 227, 88 / PI, I, §122, 49, my translation)

What at first sight strikes one as puzzling when trying to understand these passages, is the uncharacteristic use of the pronoun 'our'. To whom is Wittgenstein referring?<sup>6</sup> If we take into consideration Wittgenstein's concern and critic of his time and his contemporaries, in whom he detects a tendency which is contrary to his individual effort of achieving transparency, it seems odd that he would identify his position with the prevalent Western inclination (see e.g. MS 109 204, 6.-7.11.1930, C&V, 8/8e-11/11e.). Nonetheless, he seems to mean by 'our form of presentation' something that is shared by himself and everyone.

The observation that immediately follows the first version of the remark (part of BFGB), calls our attention to all that a "hypothetical link" might do, and it might elucidate it:

"But an hypothetical link should in this case do nothing but direct our attention to the similarity, the relatedness, of the facts." (BFGB, 132f)

So, what is essential is that we recognize the facts, their connection - and what we may build up from a hypothesis excludes us from seeing what there is: our language games, the workings of our language. Furthermore, if we look at the remark in a different setting, amidst the observations in *Philosophy*, we have to take into consideration that the chapter where we find it is entitled:

"THE METHOD OF PHILOSOPHY: THE SYNOPTIC PRESENTATION OF THE GRAMMATICAL // LINGUISTIC // FACTS. THE GOAL: TRANSPARENCY OF ARGUMENTS. JUSTICE." (P, 170f, translation modified)

Precisely, in order to do justice to the facts, we must not represent them (i.e., build a theory out of them), but rather try to present them as transparently as possible, safeguarding the connectedness of things. A synoptic presentation must sharpen our eyes to the kinship between facts, and this also means looking attentively so that we might see where an affinity can no longer be observed. Thus, finding the connecting links, allows for a synoptic presentation - a coalescing of all the aspects that we know about something, that is, about the uses of words, or about a certain fact and its relation to another - helping us to find our way about.<sup>7</sup>

The final version overcomes difficulties previously pointed out in MS 142. The problem seemed to be that we fail to bring connections together in a significant manner - in other words, the problem was a lack of synopticality. In the final formulation, besides finding the connecting links, Wittgenstein speaks of the need of inventing them, thus suggesting a method for overcoming difficulties that is not wholly equivalent to our usual way of seeing things as it was characterized in the previous versions of the remarks. This very important addition helps us to better attain understanding by way of a synoptic presentation.

<sup>4</sup> Also pointing out that we can find 'synoptising' in Wittgenstein's notes for those lectures, namely in MS 153b; see (Venturinha 2010, 338). See also (Pichler 2004, 182f). The note from MS 153b is the following: "Difficulty of our investigations: great length of chain of thoughts. The difficulty is here essential to the thought not as in the sciences due to its novelty. It is a difficulty which I can't remove if I try to make you see the problems. I can't give you a startling solution which suddenly will remove your difficulties. I can't find one key which will unlock the door of your safe. The unlocking must be done in you by a difficult process of synoptising the facts." MS 153b, 30r-30v. This remark stresses the fact that philosophy, as it was understood by Wittgenstein, does not consist in giving his readers a solution for their problems, a cure in the form of a theory. In fact, if we remember PI, I, §133, in philosophy, therapies are methods - so, it is not possible to just adopt someone else's solution, we must find the correct juxtaposition of the facts of language that will remove our disquiet.

<sup>5</sup> In P the 'diplomatic version' of this remark is maintained: „Dieser übersichtliche Darstellung vermittelt das Verstehen // Verständnis//, welches eben darin besteht, dass wir die Zusammenhänge sehen. Daher die Wichtigkeit der Zwischenglieder // des Findens von Zwischengliedern.“

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of this matter see (Sluga 2011, 102). See also (Venturinha 2010, 343f).

<sup>7</sup> Note that, in MS 142, the observation that immediately follows the quoted passage, points out that philosophy cannot anticipate our use of language: if we put forward a theory that serves as a representation of what language is, we will lose our way about, for we will be blind to what we could not anticipate with our theory. No wonder that in TS 227, Wittgenstein follows §122 with the observation that a philosophical problem always has the form "I don't know my way about" [§123. "Eine philosophisches Problem hat die Form: 'Ich kenne mich nicht aus'."]

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# A Problem for Frege's Analysis of Propositional Attitude Reports and Its Metaphysical Consequences

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## Abstract

In this paper, I will consider a problem that affects Frege's analysis of propositional attitude reports. Firstly, I will outline Frege's analysis. Then, I will show how it straightforwardly leads into a problem that seems to undermine that very analysis. After that, I will consider an attempt to avoid the problem. Finally, I will point to potential metaphysical consequences of that problem that go well beyond Frege's framework and then connect Frege's problem with some more recent discussion concerning propositional attitude reports.

## 1

According to Frege (1960a, 1960b, 1960c), most of the expressions of a natural language fall into one of the following two categories. On the one hand, there is the category of proper names, on the other, the category of predicates. To expressions of both categories there belongs a sense as a mode of presentation of a referent and (possibly) a referent itself. The sense of an expression determines its referent, and if two expressions share the sense, they must share the referent as well (but not vice versa). Sentences that belong to constituents of a (declarative) sentence build compositionally its sense – a thought – and the thought a sentence expresses determines its truth-value, the True or the False, that is sentence's referent. In propositional attitude reports, however, expressions – both sentences and their constituents – refer to their customary sense (sense that belong to them outside such reports), and have indirect sense (a mode of presentation of the customary sense to which they refer).

To the category of proper names, according to Frege, belong not only expressions that one would typically classify as such – ordinary proper names, definite descriptions, or indexicals – but also sentences and clauses. And treating clauses on the par with ordinary names or descriptions brings a problem for Frege's analysis of propositional attitude reports.<sup>1</sup> In what follows, I will firstly outline Frege's analysis. Then, I will show how it straightforwardly leads into a problem that seems to undermine that very analysis. After that, I will consider an attempt to avoid the problem. Finally, I will point to potential metaphysical consequences of that problem that go well beyond Frege's framework and then connect Frege's problem with some more recent discussion concerning propositional attitude reports.

Having the above conception of sense and reference in mind, here is how Frege (1960c) arrives at the analysis of particular propositional attitude reports. We can start with a declarative sentence

(1) Plato is smart

that consists of the name "Plato", and predicates "is" and "smart" (for simplicity sake, I ignore the matter of tense here). To each of these expressions, there belongs a sense, say,  $S_{PL}$ ,  $S_{IS}$ , and  $S_{SM}$ . These senses determine referents of "Plato", "is", and "smart", respectively (namely, an object, the fall-under relation, and a concept under

which that object falls if (1) is true).  $S_{PL}$ ,  $S_{IS}$ , and  $S_{SM}$ , build compositionally the sense of (1) – the thought that (1) expresses – that we might represent as the ordered triple

(2)  $\langle S_{IS} (S_{PL}, S_{SM}) \rangle$

The referent of (1) – its truth-value – will be the True iff the object that  $S_{PL}$  determines as the referent of "Plato" falls (at the relevant time) under the concept SMART (or if it has the property of being smart).

Next we can assume that the following is true:

(3) Aristotle believes that Plato is smart

According to Frege, this attitude report consists of names "Aristotle" and "that Plato is smart", and the relational predicate "believes". Again, to these constituents there belong senses that, on the one hand, determine their referents, and, on the other, build compositionally the thought that (3) expresses. In turn, that thought determines the truth-value of (3).

We may represent the thought that (3) expresses as the ordered triple

(4)  $\langle S_{BE} (S_{AR}, S_{TH}) \rangle$

$S_{BE}$  belongs to the predicate (really, a verb) "believes",  $S_{AR}$  to the name "Aristotle", and  $S_{TH}$  to the name (really, a clause) "that Plato is smart". Recall Frege's thesis that in belief and other attitude reports expressions refer to their customary senses that thereby become their indirect referents, and have indirect senses. Now it follows that  $S_{AR}$  determines an object,  $S_{BE}$  the belief relation, and  $S_{TH}$  the thought that (1) expresses, namely (2). Accordingly, "Aristotle" in (3) refers to a person, Aristotle, "believes" to the belief relation, and the clause "that Plato is smart" to the thought that Plato is smart.

## 2

Now we are in a position to show how (or why) Frege's outlined analysis of propositional attitude reports faces a problem.

It is relatively clear what would  $S_{AR}$  be. It is less clear what would  $S_{BE}$  and in particular  $S_{TH}$  be. As far as  $S_{TH}$  goes, it is only clear that it would be a sense that determines the thought that is also expressed by (1). Apart from that, it is hard to specify it any further. For the present considerations, however, that does not matter. We can just grant that there are such senses (whatever they may be).

<sup>1</sup> I assume here that what Frege calls "thought" is a candidate entity for what was later called "proposition", given that most of the features Frege (1960c) attributes to thoughts were afterward standardly attributed to propositions.

What matters are Frege's additional remarks that shade some light on them, namely (Frege 1960c 59): "In order to speak of the sense of an expression 'A' one may simply use the phrase 'the sense of the expression 'A''." And:

The case of an abstract noun clause, introduced by "that", includes the case of indirect quotation, in which we have seen the words to have their indirect reference coinciding with what is customarily their sense. In this case, then, the subordinate clause has for its reference a thought, not a truth value; as a sense not a thought, but the sense of the words "the thought that ...", which is only a part of the thought in the entire complex sentence. (Frege 1960c, 66)

So, although we do not know how to represent in detail a sense that determines a thought that a clause has as its referent, Frege tells us which expressions apart from such clauses have the same senses. In the case of the clause in (3), that would be "the sense of 'Plato is smart'" and "the thought that Plato is smart". And if the clause "that Plato is smart" and the description "the thought that Plato is smart" have the same sense, they should, according to Frege, share the referent as well. Furthermore, from Frege's compositionally thesis it follows that reports (3) and

(3\*) Aristotle believes the thought that Plato is smart

express *the same thought* – namely, (4) – and so, accordingly, must have *the same referent* (truth-value). (3\*), one may observe, from the theoretical standpoint, should merely more explicitly indicate what thought (3) expresses, because (3\*) *explicates* the kind of entity the agent (Aristotle) is related to via the belief relation. One should expect, then, that such explication in no way affects at least the truth-value of the corresponding reports. Is that the case?

The report pair (3)/ (3\*) perhaps supports this (although intuitions about it may vary). Other attitudes that Frege (Frege 1960c, 67) mentions are *approving* and *inferring*. The analogous report pairs, e.g.

(5) Aristotle approved (inferred) that  $2+2=4$

(5\*) Aristotle approved (inferred) the thought that  $2+2=4$

support Frege's suggestion. If thoughts are attitude's content, one does approve or infer a thought we one approves or infers that  $p$ .

So assuming that Frege's analysis is the correct one, if (3) and (5) are true, (3\*) and (5\*) should be true as well. But – and here comes the problem – Frege's suggestion should apply not only to belief, approval, or inference, reports, but also to any other propositional attitude report. Accordingly, the explication of the kind of attitude's content should be applicable in following reports as well:

(6) Aristotle regrets that he is Greek,

(7) Aristotle fears that he is wrong.

(Frege 1960c, 67 grouped regretting and fearing with believing, approving, and inferring.) As it turns out, it is not. Reports corresponding to (6) and (7), namely

(6\*) Aristotle regrets the thought that he is Greek

(7\*) Aristotle fears the thought that he is wrong

although meaningful, are clearly not (necessarily) equivalent to (6) and (7). The former ones might be true, and, in the same circumstances, the latter ones false (or vice versa). But how could that be if Frege is right in claiming that expressions that share the sense must share the referent as well, that such expressions are universally substitutable, and that "that  $p$ " and "the thought that  $p$ " designate

the same thing (given that they have the same sense). That seems to be a problem for his analysis of attitude reports. I will call it "the explication problem".<sup>2</sup>

### 3

If the explication problem is a genuine one, it has metaphysical consequences that oppose Frege's view that propositional attitudes relate agents and thoughts, as well as his semantic analysis of such reports that presupposes it.<sup>3</sup> One potential metaphysical consequence would be that *at least some* propositional attitudes do not have *thoughts* as their contents. A more radical consequence could be that propositional attitudes do not have content *in the way* Frege is assuming, or even that they should not be treated *relationally*. All these consequences had their proponents, and many of them were motivated by the explication problem. Before I mention some of them, let us consider whether one could solve the explication problem in favour of Frege.

A way to do it would be simply to discard Frege's thesis that "that  $p$ " and "the thought that  $p$ " have the same sense (that they are synonymous), but to preserve the rest of his analysis. Indeed, denying the synonymy of these two expressions would preclude their substitution in attitude reports, and not much of Frege's original analysis would be lost. Accordingly, we would look at "that  $p$ "/"the thought that  $p$ " in the same way we are looking at "Cicero"/"Tully" or "Clark Kent"/"Superman". By denying their synonymy, however, we do not deny that "that  $p$ " and "the thought that  $p$ " designate one and the same thought. But as long as we keep *that* thesis, we still face the explication problem. I will give two arguments to support this claim.

Firstly, I have made an analogy between "that  $p$ "/"the thought that  $p$ " and "Cicero"/"Tully". Let us follow it further. We *could* substitute "Cicero"/"Tully" *salva veritate* in every attitude report where the subject of the report *knows* that Cicero is Tully. The same is not the case, however, with "that  $p$ "/"the thought that  $p$ ". Even if e.g. Aristotle had a firm belief that they are codesignative, we would still not be able to substitute them *salva veritate* in fear, regret, and many other attitude reports. Why is that? A natural response would be that "that  $p$ " and "the thought that  $p$ " are not codesignative after all.

The second argument: Let us start from Frege's two assumptions. Firstly, two expressions can be substituted in any context if they share the sense and the referent, i.e. if they are both synonymous and codesignative. Secondly, two expressions can be substituted in any *extensional* context if they are codesignative. If "that  $p$ " and "the thought that  $p$ " are codesignative but not synonymous, and if the context in which we were previously substituting them is not extensional, that would mean that the substitution was illegitimate. So, on those terms, discarding the thesis that "that  $p$ " and "the thought that  $p$ " are synonymous would solve the explication problem. That, however, is not the case.

Notice that one and the same sentence could be an extensional context in relation to the substitution of some of

<sup>2</sup> For further discussion and references see (Dožudić 2015). (Church 1956 8, n. 20) considers a similar problem for Fregean analysis of other "oblique" contexts.

<sup>3</sup> Since here I am primarily concerned with Frege, I will keep Frege's terminology of "thoughts", but it should be clear that the same problem would emerge if I were to use "propositions" instead. Indeed, the solution of the problem cannot simply be to deny that "that"-clauses designate Fregean thoughts rather than, say, Russellian (or whatever) propositions. So, in relation to the explication problem, "thought" should be read with the qualification "whatever it may be".

its constituents, and an intensional context in relation to the substitution of its other constituents. Propositional attitude reports would be a good example. So substituting "the thought that  $p$ " for "that  $p$ " in such reports does not automatically mean that substitution is carried out in an intensional context. In fact, I will show that previous substitutions of "the thought that  $p$ " for "that  $p$ " that generated the explication problem were carried out in *extensional* contexts.

Let us return to (3) as a typical example of an intensional context. (3), however, is an intensional context of substitution only for some of its constituents, most notably "Plato". So if we assume that Plato is identical to Aristocles, substituting "Aristocles" for "Plato" might intuitively turn (3) into the false report "Aristotle believes that Aristocles is smart" (given that Aristotle might well be unaware of the identity). The same goes for substituting the sentence "Aristocles is smart" for "Plato is smart". On the other hand, assuming that Aristotle is identical to the Stagirite, substituting "the Stagirite" for "Aristotle" in (3) in no way affects its truth-value. So in relation to that substitution, (3) would be an extensional context.

Accordingly, if "the proposition that  $p$ " is substituted for "that  $p$ " within an intensional context, that would enable us to eliminate the explication problems as long as the two expressions would be no more than codesignative. But that is not the case. To wit, in (7) the context "Aristotle fears \_\_\_\_" unlike "Aristotle fears that \_\_\_\_" is an extensional one. So the expression filling the blank "\_\_\_\_" – in this case, the clause "that he is wrong" – *should* be substitutable *salva veritate* for any codesignative expression. By assumption, "the thought that he is wrong" would be one such expression. But such substitution led us to (7\*) and confronted us with the explication problem.

But is "Aristotle fears \_\_\_\_" really an extensional context? Here is an argument for that (Dožudić 2015): Compare the pair of reports

- (8) Aristotle asserted [that Plato is smart]
  - (9) Aristotle asserted [the thought that Plato is smart]
- (square brackets indicate substituted expressions) with the pair
- (8\*) Theophrastus thinks that Aristotle asserted [that Plato is smart]
  - (9\*) Theophrastus thinks that Aristotle asserted [the thought that Plato is smart]

(8) and (9) will be (necessarily) equivalent, no matter what Aristotle knows or believes about thoughts as such. (8\*) and (9\*) will not. Theophrastus may lack any knowledge about thoughts as such, be unaware of their existence, or refuse to grant their existence. Accordingly, he would think one of the reported things without thinking the other; he would assent to (8) but not to (9), etc.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, only the context after "that", not the attitude verb, should be qualified as intensional.

## 4

All things considered, it is not Frege's peculiar assumption that "that  $p$ " and "the thought that  $p$ " share the sense (and are thus synonymous) that leads into the explication problem. Rather, it is the assumption that they designate one and the same thing. If that were the case, another way of trying to solve the problem would be to deny that these two expressions do designate the same thing. In the light of the explication problem, some authors adopted such a strategy. But it brings with it further worries. Most notably, if "that  $p$ " does not designate *the thought that  $p$*  (whatever that thought may be), what "that  $p$ " does then?

It seems that we have several available answers here. One is that it does not *designate* a thought (in the way a definite description would), but it is related to it in a different way (e.g. Bach 2000). The other one is that the clause does designate, but that it at least sometimes designates *something else* rather than a thought (e.g. Harman 2003 and Parsons 1993). Another is that in propositional attitude reports "that"-clauses are not related to thoughts or thought-like entities (e.g. Russell 1998 and Moltmann 2013). Finally, it might be that propositional attitude should not have been treated *relationally* in the first place (Prior 1971). All these alternatives are clear departures not only from Frege's analysis of propositional attitude reports, but also its underlying metaphysical assumptions about the nature of reported attitudes. What remains to be seen is whether the explication problem provides grounds for some such departure.

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<sup>4</sup> Notice, by the way, that the pair (8\*)/(9\*) shows that Frege was wrong in assuming that "that  $p$ " and "the thought that  $p$ " share the sense. If they did, (8) and (9) would express the same thought, and, accordingly, (8\*) and (9\*) should not only be necessary equivalent, but express the same thought as well.

# How to Find a Solution to the Word Problem for an Encoding System: the *Entscheidungsproblem* Revisited through Wittgensteinian Constructivism

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## Abstract

What these problems have in common are difficulties between levels of a system, whether that be an opacity which blocks knowledge or information, or the creation of numbers or types which fall outside of the system and therefore cannot be described or accounted for within the system of origin. Wittgenstein wrestled with such problems throughout his work, whether we look at the type theoretic problems of the *Tractatus*, the heterological paradox and '*uebersichlichkeit*' of the later 1930s, the mathematically theoretical issues about recursion in the middle period, with a range of issues of differentiation and indiscernibility in the later years. Similarly, in mathematics and logic Goedel's Incompleteness Theorems and Cantor's Diagonal Proof on the Incommensurability of the Reals and the Natural Numbers are all issues which Wittgenstein returned to repeatedly in his MSS. I have argued elsewhere (2012, 2014, 2015) for a reappraisal of Wittgenstein as a significant philosopher of mathematics. In the inaugural HAPP lectures and in a projected book for Cambridge University Press, I argue for a reappraisal of Wittgenstein's philosophy of physics. In this short piece, I will draw together ideas of mathematics and physics, using a Wittgensteinian constructivist approach.

## 1. Hawking and 't Hooft: realistic finitism and constructivism

Generically, we could think of the *Entscheidungsproblem* as that which arises when the encoding process of the assigning of names to elements of a system, for whatever reason, needs to use the same code or name for more than one element, thus, introducing opacity: the problem of undecidability. For at some point, we, or a machine, that is, some sort of 'reader' may have a sequence forced on us that we simply cannot decode because there is no way of decoding (within the system), no way of 'deciding', which element the sign 'names'. There are, of course, many manifestations and variations of this classic problem across the academic disciplines.

The Bekenstein-Hawking Bound suggests that only a finite amount of information can be stored in a finite space-time slice, and that a finite description can fully describe this. In black-hole parlance, there is a limit to how entropic a system can be and still exist at all. If we import the B-H Bound into our thinking about the *Entscheidungsproblem*, it is transformed into an interesting focus for the contemporary meeting point of physics, pure mathematics and information theory.

Hawking conceived this level of entropy as proportional to the logarithm of the number of ways the system could be configured at micro-level while keeping the macro-level description intact. Hawking's model is an equilibrium model and one that paints the picture of individual bits of energy (or information) being 'absorbed', used and then conglomerately emitted as radiation to maintain the balance of the system, while never registered individually.

We can think of the Black Hole Information Paradox created by Hawking as a variant of the *Entscheidungsproblem*. As the interlocutor against Hawking, Gerard 't Hooft did not accept the indiscernibility of the impact of particles entering the system, and his calculations show them as logarithmic 'tent pole' blips, discernible on the horizon.

Futhermore, and relatedly, the Gibbs formula for thermodynamic entropy using work by Boltzmann, and the von Neumann (1927) formula for entropy, which formally registers a 'trace' within his conception of quantum physics, support the thesis that microprocesses are discernible at macroprocessural level. For example, the Boltzmann constant relates energy at the individual particle level with the discernible temperature at the macro level. The *Entscheidungsproblem* purports that at the level of the code there is simply no trace or any other feature which could provide information for a decision, thus we reach undecidability. The Hawking variant is more sophisticated in that it allows the emission of radiation created by the input into the system - there is a registered 'difference' - but there remains an opacity concerning individual bits of energy or information, much like our indecipherable sign.

The problem resurfaces, however, when we ask two, related, questions: from what point of view is the description made, and from what point of view does a 'reader' operate? Gerard 't Hooft, *constructs* and embeds conservation of information within his system. So, in an analogous scenario, would our 'reader' overcome the *Entscheidungsproblem*? And perhaps the more serious philosophical question we are beginning to form is: does *constructive* conservation of information facilitate *emergent* forms of information? These are the questions at the nano level.

Of interest is one contrast and conclusion: the Turing Machine is conceived as having infinite storage capacity, thus the indecision which his 1936 paper purports, cannot be linked to a limitation of storage. Such a consideration has analogous rehearsals in, e.g. Russell's point about a construction of an infinite series being merely medically impossible rather than impossible *simpliciter*. Thus one conclusion we can make is that opacity and undecidability can be generated in both finite and infinite settings. This would mean, then, that it is not how much can be stored within in a system but how it is encoded that makes the difference to the solution to the relevant *Entscheidungsproblem*.

## 2. Turing and Wittgenstein: A similarity through family resemblance

"Der mathematische Satz steht auf vier Fuessen, nicht auf dreien; er ist ueberbestimmt." [A mathematical problem stands on four feet, not on three; it is overdetermined.] (BGM, III, 7, 115; RFM, III, 8, 115e).

One way that being over-determined can be thought of is that some sort of opacity develops; something becomes, and remains, unknown because of a systemic failing. This opacity is further analysed in the literature often as a form of ambiguity. Turing took this one step further in his formulation of the *Entscheidungsproblem*. We can see exactly how he does this by consideration of a couple points in his "Some Theorems about Church's System" (AMT/c/3).

When considering Church's simple theory of types, Turing argues that the system is consistent if the axiom of choice, descriptions and extensionality are omitted, but the axioms of quantifiers and infinity are kept. Normally, it is the case that when a series is infinite, there is no selection rule available, and no distinguishing descriptive characteristics, the axiom of choice must be used.

However, most constructivist mathematics do not use the axiom of choice, and this fact in itself makes Turing's work on type, computable numbers all the more interesting and formidable in dismantling his formulation of the *Entscheidungsproblem*. Put in another way, Turing's mathematics do not rely on a Cartesian product which would guarantee a function which selects elements in common to form the 'new' non-empty set. Thus, it could be argued, that Turing's position, in principle, leaves room for a more Wittgensteinian family resemblance conception of groups.

In addition, by omitting the axiom of extensionality, the classical method of defining equality of groups by sameness of members is lost, and the axiom of infinity itself as a guarantor of the existence of sets/groups is morphed into something somewhat different. What Turing does in this short article is, briefly, to set up a system which takes the property of a group being a type ( $P_0$ ) as a starting point and through minute analysis of what this would have to entail to make any sense, e.g. that there would be more than one group, that groups would have to have more than one member, he shows how logical material implication *becomes* a type of existential equivalence.

This observation of Turing's method goes some way in explaining the differences of opinion between Wittgenstein and Turing voiced in the *Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics*. For Turing there is always something like an empirical, experiment-aspect to the mathematics, which Wittgenstein rejects. But there is absolutely no doubt, however, that both men are trying through 'uebersichtlichen Beweis' to throw light on the variety of transformations that are negotiated between the general and the particular.

However, Turing's conclusion that these can be negotiated consistently within a Church-type theory, produces the very opacity that it at first looks to circumvent. Because it is a matter of logical fact that if consistency is achieved within a system in producing the next -member set without recourse to sorting by choice on some prescribed basis, by description of common property, or by sameness of members – axiom of choice, description and extensionality – that generation must come from some source.

## 3. Systems and Language Games: "Sprache ist die Maschine, der Satz der Maschinenteil" (MS 157a, the first section dated 4.6.1934)

However, we do not have the engine of *logische Zwange* and *unendlich Moeglichkeit* in Turing's machine. His machine is an actual machine; its running is an experiment, and this real machine suffers from a very real halting problem because over-determination cannot be dealt with consistently at an experimental level. One of the most telling remarks is made by Wittgenstein in a 1945 entry (TSS228/9), a wisecrack about Turing's machine, that his machine calculated like people, with the possible errors, ect. - not a machine.

Yet while Wittgenstein's people can make calculating errors, their understanding that there is a right and wrong way to calculate is a logical fact about calculation. Relatedly, should their behaviour be, even in *every* case, isomorphic at some level with that of behaving according to a rule, there remains a vital difference. From the mathematical constructivist point of view action is created, recreated like a series of numbers with the construction method or rule internal to the series so that the series is not merely (either by 'natural law' or accidentally), extensionally created. Moreover, it is not an intuition that is needed to know how to go on: "Wenn zur Fortsetzung der Reihe (+1) eine Intuition noetig ist, dann auch zur Fortsetzung der Reihe (+0)." (TS, 221; MS 117, 20; MS 118, 67). Earlier in MS 142, TS 220, PU 186: For rather than it being "eine neue Einsicht - Intuition", it would be more correct to say that "es sei an jedem Punkt eine neue Entscheidung noetig."

## 4. Each note of the Melody: internal rule of a system as a constructivist universe

Drawing together the ideas of having an attitude to surfaces as internally related to mathematical aspect perception (Edwards-McKie 2012, 2014), two examples given by Wittgenstein are relevant. The first is that of a Melodie, the second that of a number series. On the first, let us think and contrast the difference between tones as merely randomly or causally created and notes created as a melody. The important and overlooked point is that *each* note in a melody is heard differently from the single tone scenario. On the second, the first number would be thought of differently, if, e.g. one series is infinite and the other finite. At MS 118: 96/ 97: "... ein wesentlicher Unterschied in unserer Auffassung von dem hinge schrieben Reihenstück."

What about over-determination, then? How can this problem be approached? One way in, is to think of the following: Consider behaviour which produces the series 2,4,6,8 ... firstly as by accident, and secondly, as by some sort of physical or psychological causation, and thirdly, as in accordance with an internal rule of a system. These same sorts of considerations are explored at length by Wittgenstein about reading. And we find these distinctions at Tractatus 2.

We could consider the three productions of 2,4,6,8. ... a type of over-determination, or at least analogous to cases of over-determination, because at one level we cannot tell which is done by accident, or by causation (law-like) or by accordance with an internal rule.

The difference among the cases, however, becomes apparent when there is an 'error'. It is in our description or explanation of the error in each case which allows us to break the deadlock of over-determination by surface similarities. But the very important point must be made that it is only through our having an *attitude to surfaces*, initially, at the start, which produces *Uebersichtlichkeit*.

As late as TS 228 we find him returning to related issues: Wohur die Idee, es waere die angefangens Reihe ein sichtbares Stueck unsichtbar bis ins unendliche gelegter Geleise? Nun statt der [die witten above nun statt] Regel koennten wir [fuehrt witten above koennten wir] uns wie ein Geleise denken [denken marked through]. Und der nicht begrenzten Ansendung der Regel entsprechen unendlich(e) lange [lange marked through] Geleise.

## 5. The meeting of mathematics, physics and information

However, in closing, I want to juxtapose another approach, which is more overtly mathematical, this time taken from BFM, II: 54. At PU 189: "But then are the steps not determined by the mathematical formula" is asking and highlighting the difference between meaning the order, say,  $+n$ , in a certain way (which has been rehearsed over many passages) and the formula  $x_n = \dots$  as a (symbolic) form. At this point the decision was made to further explore the answer through appeal to use - that the inexorability of mathematics could be explained by custom and rule-following. The bridge concepts of MS 119 are pushed aside as he composes the first 19 pages of MS 117, which becomes TS 221.

The cusp of the question had always been mathematically, does the *variable have a property*, or is it merely a paradigm or pattern? Does the variable have the property of being able to be infinitely unlimitedly replaced and *thereby* represents infinite possibility? [See Ramsey *Notes on Time and Mathematics*.] The answer is that by shifting onto customs, non-isolated events of use, and language

games Wittgenstein makes the systemic point that even if we no longer have elementary, independent atomic units that can be bearers of symbolic properties and names, the case can be made that we do have emergent systemic symbolic properties –as- *Unendliche Möglichkeit* in which all symbols in some sense participate rather than merely aggregate.

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# The Social Construction of Wittgenstein. How a History of Editing Wittgenstein's Nachlass may contribute to the *Social Studies of the Humanities* (SSH)

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## Abstract

Analogous to *Science and Technology Studies* (STS), *Social Studies of the Humanities* (SSH) promise to illuminate everyday working practices in the humanities as well as the humanities' role in society. This paper summarizes results from a research project on the History of Editing Wittgenstein's Nachlass in order to show how this research may contribute to SSH's objectives. By showing that Wittgenstein's literary executors' distinct ways of editing were not merely informed, but formed by the practice of philosophizing they had learned from Wittgenstein in personal acquaintance, it is highlighted that acquisition of skills and demeanor taught by a master is of prime importance in the humanities.

1. *Social Studies of the Humanities* (SSH) are not a discipline yet, but they form a dynamically developing new field of research. Analogous to *Social Studies of Science and Technology* (STS), SSH promise to illuminate everyday working practices in the humanities as well as the humanities' role in society. A recent review (Dayé 2014) predicts three topoi that will be important in the formation of SSH in the near future:

- a: the role positivism
- b: the impact of Cold War
- c: adequate categories for describing techniques and practices

This paper very briefly summarizes fresh research results in order to show how the reconstruction of reasons and motives in the History of Editing Wittgenstein's Nachlass can contribute to fulfilling the promises of SSH and how this may relate to the three topoi. The main source for reported research has been the correspondence between Wittgenstein's literary executors kept at *Von Wright and Wittgenstein Archives at the University of Helsinki* (WWA, cf. Wallgren and Österman 2014). This most valuable resource allows to "open the black box of editing Wittgenstein".

2. The wider intellectual community has roughly this picture of an "early" and a "late" Wittgenstein: the early Wittgenstein is associated with the *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus* (TLP), a book that was inspired by and did inspire the movement of logical positivism. The late Wittgenstein is associated with the *Philosophical Investigations* (PI), a book in which the older Wittgenstein deconstructed the theories put forward by the younger. – This is a nice plot, and the story could indeed end here – if Wittgenstein had published these two books as his early and late work; but he didn't. When the TLP was published in 1922, Wittgenstein thought he had contributed to philosophy what he could. However, seven years later, he returned to philosophy. From then on, he worked – basically without interruption – towards a second book. He considered publishing his new thoughts in various forms at various times, but eventually did not finish a manuscript for publication. Instead he entrusted three of his friends with the task to publish from his writings what they thought fit. And this is where the story of Wittgenstein's Nachlass begins.

3. Wittgenstein's literary executors – Rush Rhees, Georg Henrik von Wright and Elizabeth Anscombe – had been students, colleagues and friends of Wittgenstein for many years. Rhees had met Wittgenstein for the first time in 1933. Being a loyal friend and cherished colleague, he witnessed the development of Wittgenstein's work on the PI from its first version onwards. Von Wright got to know Wittgenstein as a doctoral student in 1939 and later became his friend and successor as professor of philosophy at Cambridge. Anscombe attended Wittgenstein's lectures as a graduate student from 1944 onwards. At the latest in 1950, she agreed to translate the PI into English. She travelled to Vienna in order to equip herself with Viennese German and regularly met with Wittgenstein. Returning from Vienna, Wittgenstein moved into Anscombe's house in Oxford, where she finished the main part of the translation while he was still alive.

4. Immediately after Wittgenstein's death, the literary executors began preparing a first publication (cf. Erbacher and Krebs 2015). According to their insights into Wittgenstein's work, there was no doubt that the PI and its translation ought to be published as soon as possible. Anscombe and Rhees prepared Wittgenstein's original typescript for the printers. They added a "Part II" which they regarded as Wittgenstein's most finished remarks on the philosophy of psychology. As Anscombe and Rhees mentioned just briefly in their prefatory note that Wittgenstein would have included the material of Part II if he had further elaborated the book, scholars criticized the inclusion in later years. However, the correspondence kept in Finland shows that Anscombe and Rhees included Part II because they were told by Wittgenstein, on separate occasions in December 1948, that his work on the philosophy of psychology ought to go into his book (for this and some of the following information see: Erbacher 2015a).

5. The episode of Part II of the PI illustrates that the literary executors understood themselves as being authorized by Wittgenstein to prepare his writings for publications on the basis of their special insight into Wittgenstein's work which they gained through their personal acquaintance. PI, including Part II, was in their judgment the book that Wittgenstein would have wanted to publish. Thus, they may have thought that, together with the *Tractatus*, the philosophical message that Wittgenstein wanted to communicate had been transmitted; what remained for those who wished to receive it, was to read and understand it, to respond to it and to draw conclusions from it. Indeed,

Anscombe's way of fulfilling her role as a literary executor seems to match this idea to basically hold on to a canonical text and continue philosophizing from the plateau reached through it: both in her writing and teaching she made use of what she learned from Wittgenstein's philosophizing for her and her students' work on new philosophical problems.

6. Rhees did not regard his task as literary executor as finished, after the *PI* was published. He would entertain the greatest efforts to craft books from Wittgenstein's writings in order to present the reader with intermediate stages of his philosophical development. He composed parts from Wittgenstein's manuscripts and typescripts to create books that Wittgenstein himself may have wanted to publish at different periods of his philosophical life. The development of this editorial approach began with the *Remarks on the Foundation of Mathematics (RFM)* and led to the editions *Philosophical Remarks (PR)* and *Philosophical Grammar (PG)* which were supposed to show a "middle Wittgenstein" that bridges the philosophy of the *TLP* and the *PI*. The highpoint of Rhees' ambition to create unified books "last hand" was the *PG*: having traced Wittgenstein's corrections in the so called 'Big-Typescript', he aimed at creating the version that would have been resulted, if Wittgenstein had carried out his revisions. However, it was a scandal, when the translator published an article exposing that Rhees had excluded a whole chapter from the 'Big-Typescript', namely the chapter 'Philosophy'. This chapter corresponds to the so-called methodological remarks of the *PI* (§89-133) which are most popular today. The correspondence in Finland shows, however, that Rhees thought that one could only understand what philosophy was for Wittgenstein after practicing it over a long time. All those who would have done so, would see his way of treating philosophical confusions in any of his writings. On the other hand, those who had not practiced Wittgenstein's philosophizing wouldn't understand his "meta-remarks" when reading them. Thus, there was no benefit in publishing the chapter 'Philosophy', but the danger that scholars would lightheartedly adopt slogans without understanding. This was the kind of abuse that Wittgenstein had feared most when considering publication, and Rhees tried to respect this fear in his editorial work.

7. Just at the time when Rhees was editing his books to present the middle Wittgenstein, Brian McGuinness was editing Friedrich Waismann's Nachlass in Oxford. Waismann had been a member of the Vienna Circle and a great admirer, first, of Moritz Schlick and, then, of Wittgenstein. The three of them had met repeatedly between 1929 and 1932. In the early 1930's, Waismann had collaborated with Wittgenstein on a book that ought to present systematically his new thoughts (cf. Waismann 1976). Thus, the exchange with the Vienna Circle had been taken place at the period the writings of the middle Wittgenstein stemmed from. McGuinness found in Waismann's Nachlass notes of his discussions with Wittgenstein. These notes (published in *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle, WWK*) showed how Wittgenstein contributed to the emergence of the verification principle, not only through his *TLP*, but also through philosophical discussions (cf. McGuinness 2006). In turn, the link with the Vienna Circle shed also light on Wittgenstein's thoughts of the early 1930's and made it possible to investigate how he was influenced by his discussion partners. The editorial work around the middle Wittgenstein contributed thus to understanding the origins of neopositivism and to its critical discussion.

8. In contrast to the agenda of the Vienna Circle, Wittgenstein had never considered philosophy a science. He opposed to deriving principles or theories from his thought.

This was very different from the early convictions of von Wright, the third of Wittgenstein's literary executors. Under the guidance of Eino Kaila, a Finnish associate of the Vienna Circle championing his own branch of logical empiricism, von Wright became a convinced positivist and read the *TLP* as a first expression of what ought to be explicated by logistic philosophy. However, when he met Wittgenstein in Cambridge, they did not talk about logic and philosophy, but about Scandinavia and architecture. Also in later years, von Wright regarded their friendship as being based on their common cultural background. This may help to explain why von Wright was primarily concerned with "external" (von Wright 1982) or historical aspects of Wittgenstein's papers. In contrast to Rhees, von Wright increasingly favored to publish Wittgenstein's manuscripts with little editorial intervention, trusting that they would speak for themselves. Together with Norman Malcolm, he convinced Rhees that the whole Nachlass ought to be microfilmed and safely stored. And when this had been done, von Wright catalogued the corpus and devoted studies to describing the historical origins of the *TLP* and the *PI* (cf. von Wright 1982). Later on, he would investigate and publish the manuscripts sources that led to the typescript used for printing Part II of the *PI*, thus questioning the justification of Anscombe and Rhees' original inclusion.

9. Von Wright edited one volume that seemingly contradicts his general historical approach to preserve and publish Wittgenstein's papers as they stood: *Culture and Value (CV)*. *CV* assembles Wittgenstein's aphorisms on art and culture that von Wright selected according to his own taste. Von Wright saw in Wittgenstein a great writer and, as soon as he read his manuscripts, he was struck by the beauty and depth of some general notes. However, taking philosophy to be distinct academic profession, he had scruples to publish a selection of Wittgenstein's general aphorisms. A justification for publishing them he saw only when his view of the world and of philosophy changed, as his life became more political in the late 1960s: As president of the Academy of Finland, he had to struggle with Finland's president and the political left, a consequence of which was von Wright's stronger orientation towards the USA; there, however, he was appalled by the war policy against Vietnam. These developments greatly influenced von Wright's idea of the philosopher's role: he could no longer be regarded a specialized professional only, but had to engage actively with the issues of his times. Having acquired this attitude, von Wright recognized that Wittgenstein's aphorisms on culture showed him responding to his times. Further, von Wright was convinced that seeing the historical man Wittgenstein responding to his cultural surroundings is necessary for understanding his philosophizing as a fight against the deterioration of culture (cf. Erbacher 2015b).

10. Returning to the three topoi that may become important in the formation of SSH, a study of the History Editing Wittgenstein's Nachlass:

- a: leads to the origins of logical positivism and to the critical discussion of its assumptions
- b: shows how the Cold War led to a change in the picture of Wittgenstein and in von Wright's understanding of the philosopher's role to society
- c: shows that the literary executors' distinct ways of editing were not merely informed, but formed by the practice of philosophizing they had learned from Wittgenstein in personal acquaintance

11. Preparing editions from Wittgenstein's papers was for Anscombe, Rhees and von Wright not a matter of scholarship, but a question of doing justice to the man they knew, to his philosophy and his wishes for publication. Though they developed different editorial approaches, each of them emphasized Wittgenstein's operative understanding of philosophy: Anscombe continued, with her own topics, the living philosophizing in Wittgenstein's spirit; Rhees presented Wittgenstein's continuous work on his writings towards a representation of his philosophizing; and von Wright historically situated Wittgenstein by portraying him as a man responding to his times. By highlighting – among other things – philosophy as an activity in relation to one's surrounding, the History of Editing Wittgenstein turns thus eventually into a study of the origins of SSH themselves and indeed of their for-runners STS. However, as the History of Editing Wittgenstein continued, the rise of digital technology would also change its course. But this is another part of that story.

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# Ethical Rationality in Light of the Later Wittgenstein

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## Abstract

Inspired by the later work of Wittgenstein, this paper will discuss how to understand ethical rationality as potent and legitimate in secular, democratic societies wedded to the belief that the ethical is a dynamic and pluralistic phenomenon. It will do so by references to the philosophical theories moral realism, constructivism and relativism.

## 1. Moving Beyond Good and Evil: Challenges to Ethical Rationality

How are we to understand ethical rationality in the light of moral dynamics and moral pluralism? An example of moral change is Denmark, where it was once legal and considered the duty of a morally good husband to chastise his children, servants and wife if they misbehaved. This practice - and the worldview supporting it - slowly changed over centuries and by 1997 it became forbidden for parents to hit their children. This example can be characterized as a case of human beings who, for ethical reasons, change the moral values of their culture and society – as these values are expressed in their laws and practices. But what happens normatively when our values, practises, societies, and laws change ethically, and how are we philosophically to understand the background for this ethical dynamics?

These questions present themselves as particularly challenging to answer in a secular, democratic society because we often take for granted that we do not have the ability to reach outside human culture and find unquestionable ethical measuring rods for our practices. So how can we, as secular democrats, ethically legitimate, criticize and develop our practices when all we have are the moral criteria of those same fluid practices? This is a distinct problem for contemporary philosophers. As Vattimo expresses the concern:

It is easy to see how all this has a significant impact on the way we conceive of ethics, law, and politics. Will it still be possible, after the death of God, to speak of moral imperatives, of laws that are not grounded in arbitrary acts of will, of an emancipatory horizon for politics? (Vattimo 2007, xxvif)

Or as Hoy puts it: "How can a body of thought that mistrusts universal principles explain the possibility of critical resistance? Without appeals to abstract norms, how can emancipatory resistance be distinguished from domination?" (cf. Hoy 2005). How can we describe the rationality (or lack of rationality) in ethical dynamics and avoid both the impotent position of moral relativism (the danger in moral constructivism) and the violence of moral dogmatism (the danger in moral realism)?

These questions are the starting point of this paper and the aim is to use the later Wittgenstein to point to sources for ethical rationality.<sup>1</sup> This will hopefully address the worry about the potency and legitimacy of ethical rationality in secular, democratic societies.

## 2. Sources of Ethical Rationality: Nature & Concepts

In Wittgenstein's later writings we find insights similar to those found in realistic theories, here under forms of moral realism. For instance that humans have to face up to a world sometimes, if not outright often, beyond our control, but which we can gain understanding and knowledge of. Our ethical rationality can be fuelled by experience, and nature is here seen as a source of both resistance and aid in our thinking and living. One of the phenomena moral realism points to is 'human nature' (e.g. Nussbaum and Finnis). This idea of such a nature is implicit in Human Rights. There is something common to all humans – needs, capabilities, and vulnerabilities – and we have made laws and courts to protect people from harm to basic needs and rights. According to moral realism a culture can fail in moral matters if we do not take human nature into account.

In Wittgenstein's writings we encounter ideas of 'Natur-tatsachen' and 'Naturgeschichte' (Wittgenstein 1995, 578): "Das Essen und Trinken ist mit Gefahren verbunden, nicht nur für den Wilden, sondern auch für uns" (Wittgenstein 1995b, 34). Human nature consists not only of biology, but also common psychological, cultural and social experiences: "[...] dass Menschen dem [...] Menschen gefährlich werden können, ist jedem bekannt." (ibid.). Nature thus form a background that can provide us with legitimate reasons for ethically criticising and improving our societies.

But Wittgenstein, as well as a growing group of moral realists, not only points to our interaction with nature as a source of ethical rationality. Our concepts also supply us with ethical insights. For instance, we say it is ethically always better to behave just than unjust, create joy than suffering. We *can* say, we don't care about being good at running marathons, but we cannot *not* care about being ethically good persons, at least not without being blameworthy, that is. As Wittgenstein puts it:

Suppose that I could play tennis and one of you saw me playing and said 'Well, you play pretty badly', and suppose I answered 'I know, I'm playing badly, but I don't want to play any better,' all the other man could say would be 'Ah then that's all right'. But suppose I had told one of you a preposterous lie and he came up to me and said 'You're behaving like a beast' and then I were to say 'I know I behave badly, but then I don't want to behave any better,' could he then say 'Ah that's all right'? Certainly not; he would say 'Well, you *ought* to want to behave better.' Here you have an absolute judgment of value. (Wittgenstein 1993, 39)

These are remarks on the concepts 'morally good and bad', and they display some of what being a human being

<sup>1</sup> The paper does not aim to present Wittgenstein's thinking on the subject. Thanks to Anne-Marie S. Christensen and Dennis Patterson for helpful comments.

and being morally good or bad amounts too. And this we are taught by parents, friends, and teachers, by growing up in a culture, learning a language and by living a life (Wittgenstein 1995, §77). Wittgenstein is not giving us any new information about the ethical but points to 'the logic of ethics' and familiar facets of our everyday lives: It is entirely up to us what we do. But it is not up to us, whether what we cause is good or bad. And it is not up to us to decide whether it is better to do good than to do bad (cf. Fink 2007, 52). Through conceptual investigations we can thus get clearer on what being just, decent, courageous, and kind amounts to – and this in turn can help us make better ethical judgements.

To sum up the moral realistic traits in Wittgenstein's thinking: Both nature and our concepts are potent and legitimate sources for ethical rationality, which can supply us with experience, ideals, measuring rods and reasons for making ethical critiques or changes of our own or others practices.

But do these reminders really answer the worries about ethical rationality? The worry sprang from the fact that what people understand by the words good and bad has in fact changed throughout human history and at any point in time it differs across different individuals, classes and cultures. So how can we *legitimately* use *our* rationality to judge in matters concerning such, perhaps very different, values, and traditions? This is a serious question for democracies in a globalised world. It is a fact of human history that mathematicians do not fight with armies over mathematical disagreements (Wittgenstein 1995, 286) – but humans do fight like that over religious, economic and political matters.

### 3. Ethical Dynamics

Unsere Zeit ist wirklich eine Zeit der Umwertung aller Werte. (Die Prozession der Menschheit biegt um eine Ecke & was früher die Richtung nach oben war ist jetzt die Richtung nach unten etc.). (Wittgenstein 2003, 60)

Wittgenstein's thinking is not only realistic in its spirit – it is also an elaboration of insights associated with the group of theories labelled 'constructivism' and even 'relativism' that concern an acceptance of human choice and freedom (Wittgenstein 1991, I, §51, 113), of the groundlessness of our life (Wittgenstein 1997, §204, 232, 512, 559), of the fluid character of rationality and practices, that human nature is cultural, of deep differences between both individuals and lifeforms (ibid. §609-612). Both the world, human nature and our concepts are dynamic phenomena:

Stellen wir uns die Tatsachen anders vor als sie sind, so verlieren gewisse Sprachspiele an Wichtigkeit, andere werden wichtig. Und so ändert sich, und zwar allmählich, der Gebrauch des Vokabulars der Sprache.

Wenn sich die Sprachspiele ändern, ändern sich die Begriffe, und mit den Begriffen die Bedeutung der Wörter.

[...] was Menschen vernünftig oder unvernünftig erscheint, ändert sich. Zu gewissen Zeiten scheint Menschen etwas vernünftig, was zu andern Zeiten unvernünftig schien. U.u. (Wittgenstein 1997, §63, 65, 336)

But somehow, this acceptance of a fluid rationality and of value disagreements does not discourage Wittgenstein, to make him think his ethical rationality is impotent or illegitimate. Why not?

There are many ways to answer this question. I will sketch a couple in the following. First of all, to be able to imagine a legitimacy problem with our ethical rationality is not the same as having that problem:

Kann ich nun prophezeien, daß Menschen die heutigen Rechengesetze nie umstürzen werden, nie sagen werden, jetzt wüßten sie erst, wie es sich verhalte? Aber würde das einen Zweifel unsererseits rechtfertigen? (Wittgenstein 1997, §652)

Aber das sagt nicht, daß wir zweifeln, weil wir uns einen Zweifel *denken* können. (Wittgenstein 1995, §84)

The response here must be to investigate the matter further. When a philosopher expresses an abstract worry we must ask for examples, for more information. If we do indeed have good reasons to worry, it is a complex matter to change our ethical rationality, and not a job for philosophers alone.

Exactly *how* difficult it can be to transform moral values, ideals, and patterns of reasoning, even when outer circumstances force a people to do so on pain of annihilation, Lear's story of the Crow's transformation from a nomadic, hunter-warrior-tribe to modern Native Americans can bear witness to (Lear 2008). Fighting battles, defending one's territory, preparing to go to war or hunt – all of this permeated the Crow way of life – it was the concern of the whole population from cradle to grave (ibid., 11f). When people from Europe slowly conquered America the tribe ended up living in reservations, warfare was forbidden and hunting became impossible, because all the beaver and buffalo had been killed, and because the crows were forbidden to peruse a nomadic life (ibid., 27). In this situation not only the physical conditions of the Crow life radically changed but in many ways their whole world view and world concept broke down (ibid., 32ff). Nothing could now count as 'counting coups' or dancing the sun dance – these acts had ceased to *make sense* – a form of life, a form of human *telos* had evaporated (ibid., 57).

How does a leader lead his people to new ethical values, when his practical reason is deprived of important resources, because the physical environment has changed radically, life has lost its *telos* and his ethical concepts are now empty? (ibid., 44f, 57). The Crow found resources in their practice of vision-quests and dream interpretation, in a trust in the good of the future – a good that transcended their understanding of the good, and in an ability to embrace a new life despite huge pains and sorrows (ibid., 66-90). In the old Crow culture there were an *imaginative excellence* when it came to ethical life (ibid., 117), and this excellence was part of what allowed them to move beyond the destruction of their life form. So even when our worries about our ethical rationality are justified, and we face a call to move beyond our good and bad, we have some sources to ethical thinking and living left, even if that is something as weak and as strong as a belief in a good one cannot yet imagine or incarnate.

This leads to the third point. Even though we as a matter of fact encounter deep cultural differences and witness radical ethical changes, it is important not to make a mystery out of this. For instance we can understand Plato's dialogues as dialogues about the nature of justice even though the concept of justice has changed in many ways since. And even the most radical changes, as the one the Crow lived through, is never a case of *absolute* incommensurability between now and then, between them and us, because in that case we could not recognise it as an *ethical* difference. Some values, ideals and relations remain (the importance of caring for children), while others

completely disappear (the importance of going to war with the Sioux), and some stay, but in a transformed form (the nature of courage) (ibid., 55-157). So to think our ethical rationality at any time is impotent or illegitimate, because it has been and can be dynamic is to have a worry unnecessary to some extent. And to have a *global* worry about our ethical rationality seems to be an empty, meaningless worry. Even with those with whom we are in deep disagreement we still have common ground, otherwise we would not be having a *moral* disagreement, i.e. we would not be able to recognize it as such. And to meet the other(s) is what enables us to improve ethically.

#### 4. Forget Your Perfect Offerings

The pluralistic and fluid nature of ethical rationality – and the consequent possibility for self-doubt, mistakes, disagreements, war – is not a sign of a *disorder* in our ethical rationality. It is a sign of the ethical *order* of the world: a consequence of human freedom and responsibility.

The philosophical pertinent griefs to which language comes are not disorders, if that means they hinder its working; but are essential to what we know as the learning or sharing of language, to our attachment to our language; they are functions of its *order*. (Cavell 1989, 54)

One of our challenges in our meeting with the other(s), when it comes to understanding and practicing ethical rationality, is to strike a balance between moral relativism and moral dogmatism, between despair and utopia, between giving up and using violence in the name of the good. There lies a possibility for ethical improvement.

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# Reconciling those Living in Different Worlds. Can Wittgenstein Help Against Claims of Incommensurability?

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## Abstract

Radical cultural relativism poses a weighty threat on understanding between groups that are supposed to *live in different worlds*. There are two main lines of argument for this claim: one *radical* form claiming that incommensurable conceptual schemes are implemented in untranslatable languages. A *weaker* form, typically concerned with magical or religious beliefs, defends the view that religious/magical beliefs and meanings of religious statements are inaccessible to non-believers, being only fully understandable to those sharing the religious/magical belief system.

I want to argue that the claim of incommensurability can be defeated. In its radical form it is strongly attacked by Donald Davidson. The weaker form can be met by a new interpretation of Wittgenstein's "Lectures on Religious Beliefs" offered by Martin Kusch. He argues for a distinction between "ordinary" and "extraordinary" beliefs, thus giving a broader contextualisation of religious beliefs and allowing for understanding and dialogue between believers and non-believers.

Since Kuhn and Feyerabend, the talk of incommensurability is often used to claim a total difference, not of scientific theories, but of *belief systems, languages or world views*. These varying applications of the term involve implications beyond the realm of philosophy of science: Although both Kuhn and Feyerabend used the metaphor of *living in different worlds*, they rejected a complete breakdown of communication and understanding between the groups divided by an alleged incommensurability. With a wider concept of incommensurability, involving whole languages and world views, it becomes possible to say that incommensurability of systems of language or beliefs demarcates a limit to understanding: people on the different sides of that line have insurmountable *meaning differences* grounded in their respective scheme – be it language or belief system – that cannot be brought into a rational form of argumentative discourse. So the groups embodying such systems are bound to their own system, unable to understand each other. This picture of cultural incommensurability – ascribed to positions of strong cultural/(epistemic/conceptual) relativism –, a picture characterizing "cultures as self-sealing monads impervious to context-transcendent standards" (Healy 2013, 268), became very influential and widely asserted in several areas of social sciences.<sup>1</sup>

Feyerabend's famous remarks capture this picture of incommensurability as *living in different worlds*:

"Not everybody lives in the same world. The events that surround a forest ranger differ from events that surround a city dweller lost in a wood. They are different events, not just different appearances of the same events. The differences become evident when we move to an alien culture or a distant historical period." (Feyerabend 1988, 157)

The arguments for this view of cultures as different worlds are often spelled out along two main lines: Either as a matter of untranslatable languages, or in terms of certain inaccessible areas inside an otherwise understandable language, e.g. religious or magic beliefs.

As to the first line, it is claimed that the possibility of untranslatable languages, that means, languages that are not translatable in principle and not out of contingent reasons like a missing Rosetta stone, proves the truth of the possibility of principled inaccessibility. Such arguments, put forward by e.g. Hacker (1996), Glock (2007) and in Dancy's (1983) "essentially different concepts", are supposed to show that the epistemological distinction between a conceptual activity and the perception or understanding of the world allows for quite radical differences between different groups of speakers, irreconcilable differences of different realities. These views are reactions to Davidson's famous attack on conceptual relativism (Davidson 1974), where he argues against the intelligibility of the distinction between scheme and content. This distinction, Davidson holds, is the reason for the implausible assumption of such radical incommensurability. Instead, he offers a picture of language that relies on a) interpretation and b) communication with other speakers as well as c) interaction with the world. Davidson's defends the idea that interpretability is a necessary criterion of languagehood, excluding totally untranslatable languages. Radical interpretation shows that it is through the attribution of rationality and shared assumptions about general things in the world with which we interact, that we come to understand others in interpretation. If this view of language is plausible, it excludes the idea of inaccessibility. Although there was considerable criticism of Davidson's essay enduring till today, it seems at least reasonable to consider his arguments against the most radical view of incommensurability as convincing.

The other line of argument considers *restricted* areas of discourse to be incommensurable, often discussed examples are religious or magical beliefs. They cannot, it is claimed by the so-called "fideist" interpretation of Wittgenstein<sup>2</sup>, be translated or conveyed into non-religious talk. There is no way to reconcile the believer and non-believer, as they mean different things using the same words. They have insurmountable meaning differences because the meaning of religious/magical terms is only fully understandable to the believer, hence also unattainable for criticism.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Benhabib: "The premise of the absolute heterogeneity and incommensurability of regimes and discourses is never argued for; it is simply asserted." (Benhabib 2002, 29) Cf. also Bar-On's description of the cultural relativist's position: "[...] different cultures view the world through conceptual schemes that cannot be reconciled. (Bar-On 1994)

<sup>2</sup> This position is especially ascribed to Peter Winch, also to Norman Malcolm and Stanley Cavell (cf. Nielsen 1967, 191).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the five theses attributed to Wittgenstein Fideism, especially the second thesis "that religious beliefs can only be understood by religious believers." (Phillips 2001, 26f)

There is something deeply worrying and uneasy about characterizing a situation of differences in religious beliefs or such between religious and non-religious beliefs as insurmountable in principle. It suggests that there is nothing argumentative or discursive that could be done to ensure communication or solve conflict, leaving only non-discursive ways of living together. Further, this view is often connected to regarding someone holding religious/magical beliefs as rationally inferior to a scientifically minded person. While there is little evidence for the existence of untranslatable languages, differing religious beliefs and radical differences in cultural norms and beliefs are a phenomenon we need a way to deal with.

In the remaining part of the paper, I want to suggest – *pace* the Fideism interpretation – a more optimistic reading of Wittgenstein's ideas on religious and magical beliefs; one that actually could be connected to Davidson's argumentation as it relies on similar assumptions about interpretation.

Here are some preliminary remarks. I will try to bypass several questions of the exceedingly wide Wittgenstein debate, e.g. the question whether Wittgenstein himself should be categorized as a relativist and if, as which kind of relativist, as well as detailed exegetical questions. Instead, I try to show how a certain understanding of Wittgenstein's remarks offered by Martin Kusch (Kusch 2010 and unpublished papers) could help to deal with the problem of radical diversity, offering a new perspective that aims towards a reconciliation of concrete practices in their varying contexts.

In "Lectures on Religious Beliefs" (Wittgenstein 1938), "Bemerkungen über Frazers *The Golden Bough*" (Wittgenstein 1967) and passages in *On Certainty* (Wittgenstein 1994) Wittgenstein offers a broader characterisation of the different roles religious and magical beliefs play in the life of speakers. Martin Kusch offers an interpretation of LRB that avoids the incommensurability of the fideist reading<sup>4</sup> by differentiating between two kinds of propositional attitudes. In 'normal', non-religious, contexts we have 'ordinary' beliefs, which Wittgenstein characterises as varying in degree of reasonableness and strength, supported by (empirical) evidence, being describable as 'opinions' or 'hypotheses', and they do not really have life-changing power (Kusch 2010, 4). 'Extraordinary' beliefs that are characteristic for religious thinking function quite differently from propositional knowledge as they are not apt for evidence support (or falsification) and knowledge-status, but are best understood as 'dogma' or 'faith', have extraordinary firmness and emotional, life-guiding strength. They are connected to pictures that are expressive for a religious form of life (ibid). The outcome of this distinction is that the believer and the non-believer disagreeing on the statement "There will be a Last Judgment" neither contradict nor misunderstand each other but differ in their propositional attitudes towards the sentence. The believer makes a faith statement while the non-believer expresses a hypothesis about future events, so they do not contradict each other. It is even possible for the believer to utter both, affirming it as a faith statement and denying it as a

hypothesis. Importantly, this reading does not prevent the non-believer from learning the meaning of religious language – through study of "religious narratives and rituals" and investigation of "the various descriptions, intentions and actions involved" in them (Kusch 2010, 15) – or criticising the religious statements (cf. ibid, 5). It also avoids characterising the believer as rationally inferior to a scientifically minded non-believer.

Kusch's interpretation achieves three goals: First, it removes the obstacle of semantic incommensurability between groups of speakers (believers and non-believers or other-believers) that is claimed by the followers of Fideism. Secondly, it offers a new reading of Wittgenstein's analysis of the supposed disagreement between the believer and non-believer regarding religious statements. This reading calls attention to the specific roles religious – extraordinary – beliefs play in the lives of believers, thus providing them with a broader context and deeper understanding than one that is achieved by purely linguistic analysis. Thirdly, by understanding religious beliefs as part of a form of life and as accessible social practices with understandable and learnable meanings, we can apply this knowledge to achieve communication and discursive conflict solution.

The difference between extraordinary and ordinary beliefs does not mean that it is only the ordinary beliefs that are accessible and changeable, but that we need to invoke wholly different means when talking about extra-ordinary beliefs. Hereby we are enabled to see the believer on equal epistemic footing with a non-believer or a different-believer, but engaged in a much more complicated form of discourse. Interreligious dialogue as well as a discussion between believers and non-believers could then be characterized as a discussion between epistemic peers, and not as a rationally questionable trade-off.

Combining the positions of Davidson and Kusch's interpretation of Wittgenstein's ideas on religious beliefs yields a refutation of the threat of cultural relativism. Incommensurability as a principled limit of understanding can then be blocked in its radical form of untranslatability of languages by Davidson's argumentation against conceptual relativism. In the weaker form, the incommensurability thesis is presented by the claims of Wittgensteinian Fideism, which see religious beliefs as a closed sphere only understandable to believers. Against this view there are strong reasons favouring the interpretation offered by Kusch, that sets religious beliefs as "extraordinary" beliefs in a wider context of the roles that they have in the lives of the believers and puts them back in the area of discourse. According to this interpretation of Wittgenstein's thoughts, understanding could be achieved by proper distinction between the areas of beliefs that are involved in each case, and a proper adjustment to the respective belief context.<sup>5</sup> Thus the non-believer and the believer can be reconciled. Both, Davidson's argumentation and Wittgenstein's view of the believer as situated in another, but accessible context, share the assumption that there is essential openness in communication but also that it is a social practice. To understand it we need more than isolated sentences but a broader approach to the respective contexts.

<sup>4</sup> Kusch's reading also removes the problem of purely *expressive* understanding of religious or magical utterances that is sometimes read into Wittgenstein's position. Seeing religious practices as a mere alleviating of strong emotions is one-sided and would severely impair the understanding of their other functions, and hence the understanding of those who engage in those practices (cf. List 1978).

<sup>5</sup> Of course, a lot more must be said about the relations between ordinary and extraordinary beliefs, their identification etc. Here, the focus is on the possibility to access those beliefs.



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# Four Arguments for Universal Relativism

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## Abstract

In the academic literature and elsewhere, specific relativisms are often a hotly debated topic. In this paper, I considerably up the ante by proposing an across the board 'universal relativism' that is supported by four arguments: the inductive argument, the argument from causality, the argument from elimination, and the counterargument against self-refutation.

## 1. Introduction

While various descriptive or normative versions of relativism (cf. e.g. Baghramian 2004, Krausz 2010, Baghramian 2014) may currently be (re)emerging in various disciplines, I would be inclined to say that the *fundamental relativistic principle* (FRP) of 'Ys being relative to Xs' (Swoyer 2014, sect. 1.1) has always been around. The FRP's likely omnipresence in time would also appear to be accompanied by its omnipresence in ontological or existential scope: Not only does the FRP apply to constructed, subjective or mind-dependent as well as to real, objective or mind-independent existence, but it also seems that we cannot seriously or sensibly conceive how non-relative existence could be possible. Universal relativism thus contains the descriptive and empirically confirmable hypothesis of 'stuff always somehow depending or having depended on other stuff' (I am using the term of "stuff" here since I want to use the ontologically most general term possible and since "stuff" is even more general than "things" or "events").

Secondly and as a consequence of (a) our general appreciation of and our normative demands about truth and of (b) the above *descriptive universal relativism* (i.e. the position that affirms *universal relativity* or the *universality of the FRP*) being regarded as true, universal relativism also contains of the thesis of *normative universal relativism* according to which we should adopt a universally relativistic worldview. Due to the inherent connectedness of these two aspects of relativism and since I also have strong reservations about the alleged "gap" between the descriptive and the normative, I will mostly just talk about a unified "universal relativism" here.

Needless to say, universal relativism is an exceptionally far-reaching claim and one with which many of us may be quick to disagree. In my opinion, however, closer inspection is likely to reveal that resistance to relativism often turns out to be not much more than a fairly unreflected and epistemically and otherwise unjustified 'knee-jerk reaction' that cannot seriously be maintained in the face of an analytic and non-superficial treatment of the topic. To back up that claim, I would like to present four arguments in favor of universal relativism.

## 2. The Inductive Argument

The first of these arguments is a classical inductive generalization: One points to relativity here and relativity there, and after a certain sample size that one believes to be representative for the whole of existence and without having encountered examples to the contrary one infers to the conclusion "relativity everywhere!" In this respect and as far as the latter 'relative to X' aspect of many relativisms is concerned (for an overview over popular X-components,

cf. Swoyer 2014, sect. 3), one could point to the 'anthropocentric perspectival relativism' that was described in and affirmed by Protagoras' famous saying that "man is the measure of all things" and according to which Y-components are relative to subjective perception, interpretation or even construction of them. Among many other sources, one can find more recent affirmation and variations of this generic X-type relativism in Nietzschean *perspectivism* or in Nagel's famous essay of 1974. Due to limitations of space and time though, I will cut the discussion of the latter 'relative to X' part short and concentrate more on the former 'Y is relative' part of universal relativism.

In this respect, one could point to several somewhat more specific 'Y-type' relativities and relativisms such as central concept relativism, central belief relativism, perceptual relativism, epistemic relativism (cf. e.g. contextualism as discussed by Cohen 1998 or DeRose 1999, 2009), moral relativism (Gowans 2012), semantic relativism, alethic relativism or even reality relativism (cf. Swoyer 2014, sect. 2, for an overview over these Y-type relativisms). Presumably, one could or should also point to the principle of causality since that is also an inherently relativistic affair, and if one is more scientifically inclined, one could also point to something like Einstein's general theory of relativity. Then, when one is beginning to feel dizzy or exhausted after having gone into the specifics of these and many other aspects of the FRP, one can and typically will make the inductive jump from some to all.

## 3. The Argument From Causality

The second and in my estimation stronger argument in favor of universal relativism is the deductive argument from causality. As the first premise of the argument, I take the in my opinion true belief that relativity and causality are at the very least strongly overlapping concepts, given that causality is about effects and causes and that effects are 'relative to' their causes (cf. Swoyer 2014, sect. 3.1: "relativistic claims ... are claims about *causal influence*"). More specifically, it seems as if everything that is causal is relative, but that not everything that is relative is causal, meaning that relativity is even more encompassing than causality. Formalized, one could perhaps write that as "relativity  $\geq$  causality" or, since the following is sufficient and also more fitting for our purposes, as "relativity  $\approx$  causality." As the argument's second premise I take the in my opinion equally evident and true belief that causality, including various versions of probabilistic causality (cf. e.g. Eells & Sober 1983, Eells 1987, Dupré 1990; for an overview cf. Hitchcock 2012), is a universal phenomenon or principle. The conclusion that follows from these two premises is once again an affirmation of universal relativism, because when "relativity  $\approx$  causality," when causality is accepted as

a fairly universal thing, and especially when relativity is considered as even more encompassing than causality, then we have no choice but to also accept relativity as universal, whether we like it or not.

#### 4. The Argument From Elimination

The third argument in support of universal relativism is another deductive argument, this time from elimination. Here I now try to show that the non-relative cannot be sensibly conceived to exist and that, due to the complete elimination of everything non-relative, universal relativity is the only remaining possibility.

In regard to the argument itself, I start out from the closely related set of first premises that (1a) “the non-relative” is equal to “the absolute,” which are both definable as “stuff that is and has been *completely independent* from other stuff,” that (1b) “the non-absolute” is in turn equal to “the relative,” which are both definable as “stuff that is or has been *somehow dependent* on other stuff,” and that (1c) the absolute and the relative are typically contradictorily opposed to and mutually exclusive with each other. The second premise is that (2) the absolute and the relative mutually exhaust all ‘possible categorial values’ of the ontological category that they inhabit. (This once again assumes bivalence, and while I am generally opposed to bivalent categorization and in favor of multivalent categorization, I will leave considerations about multivalence aside here mainly because the conclusion would not be noticeably different if we assumed a multivalent framework). The third premise is that (3) the absolute does not exist (except as a highly problematic concept). From this it follows that (4a) everything must be relative, but also that (4b) anyone who is opposed to 4a or to *any* claim to the extent of “Y is relative” would be compelled to assume that this Y is absolute or “completely independent from other stuff.”

Yet what single thing or being has ever fulfilled the thusly defined criterion of absoluteness? ‘Absolute’ monarchs, for instance, may have declared and installed themselves as the sole power in the state or as being *legibus absolutus* (lat. for “absolved from the law,” “above the law”). That state, however, was *relative* to their convictions or to the power they had amassed, but by no means something that was completely independent from other stuff. As such, there was nothing genuinely absolute about ‘absolute’ monarchs. The same could also be said about allegedly ‘absolute’ values of measurement such as temperature measured in kelvin: Its inventor Thomson thought that he had discovered “an absolute scale, since its characteristic is quite independent of the physical properties of any specific substance” (1848, 69). That independence, however, is once again only a very limited independence that is counterbalanced by a lot of other dependencies (note that this is the fundamental standard flaw behind alleged absolutes in science and one that also typically escapes recent commentators on Thomson’s actually quite relative scale, such as Chang & Yi 2005). Thomson’s (aka Lord Kelvin’s) initial judgment that “we are left without any principle on which to found an absolute thermometric scale” (1848, 67) would therefore have been the far more fitting or correct one.

Needless to say, one can also find plenty of other loose, grandiose, pretentious and in the end inappropriate or superfluous talk about the absolute in ordinary language, for

instance in the expressions “the absolute best/worst” or “She did absolutely everything/nothing”: In these and many other cases, the main function of “absolute” simply is to emphasize a superlative. Overall though, the term of absolute is superfluous here since we would essentially be saying the same with just “the best/worst” or “She did everything/nothing.”

Besides this rather inappropriate or superfluous use of “absolute,” there is also a more fitting and philosophically interesting use of it that occurs when the wordform is associated with the meaning “stuff that is and has been *completely independent* from other stuff.” The reason why this version of absolute is philosophically interesting is that it would make possible the conception of a first cause or origin of it all: If everything were to be relative to something else (in a linear and non-circular manner), the search for a first cause would be lost in an infinite regress and, overall, in obscurity. The absolute, on the other hand, would allow us to bottom out at some point in our search, and this is perhaps the main reason for the great appeal of the absolute in and beyond philosophy.

The huge problem with that ‘strong’ and potentially useful conception of the absolute, however, is that it is not at all supported by experience. Given that our thinking is shaped by experience, the philosophically interesting strong version of the absolute consequently becomes rather inconceivable and wide open to relativization on closer inspection. Three examples by way of which this can demonstrated are the religious concept of God, the philosophical and Aristotelian concept of an unmoved mover, and the scientific concept of the Big Bang: All three of those concepts are, in their own way and among other things, the result of attempting to come up with an uncaused first cause and, overall, this is about as absolute as it gets. My point, however, is that we can utterly demolish and relativize these alleged absolutes by a) asking the seemingly innocent question “And what was before that?” or “And what has caused that?” and by b) pointing out that this is a highly legitimate question, because as opposed to the empirically empty claim of the absolute, the claim of universal relativity that is implied in that question is empirically well-founded.

Absolutists have of course attempted to defend their thesis, perhaps most notably with the *causa sui* argument about God or with some other mysterious non-relativistic genesis of an allegedly absolute first cause. At the end of the day, though, there is (as far as I am aware of) no empirical backing for these or other absolutes, which is also the primary reason for why the absolute cannot be sensibly conceived or why it can always be relativized with the legitimate question about its antecedent. Philosophically relevant mention of the absolute would therefore only appear to make sense in the context of something like John Duns Scotus’ *nihil simpliciter* or the Kyoto School’s “absolute nothingness” (Davis 2014, sect. 3), because with all existence apparently being relativistic, the (me)ontological realm that is left for the absolute can only be nothingness or non-existence.

The argument from elimination would thus appear to have been brought to a successful conclusion, because when not even God or the Big Bang can sensibly be conceived to be absolute, then all the ‘lesser candidates’ certainly will not turn out to be absolute either. Conclusion (4a) that everything is relative thus once again wins the day.

## 5. The Counterargument Against Self-Refutation

But wait: If everything is relative, would relativity itself then not be absolute and thus *not* universal? There are several arguments against relativism on the basis of its alleged self-refutation (Swoyer 2014, sect. 5.9), with the above being perhaps the strongest one. That objection, however, can easily be defeated by pointing out that the truth of everything being relative *is relative to everything being relative*, i.e. that universal relativism is relative to the principle of non-contradiction and thus not self-refuting or above the FRP. As such, even the metalevel does not seem to be problematic. So much, in any event, for my four arguments for universal relativism.

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# Kierkegaard on Language and Meaning: A Brief Contribution to Kierkegaard-Wittgenstein Scholarship

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## Abstract

Søren Kierkegaard did not develop any systematic analyses of language and meaning, despite the fact that these themes are omnipresent in his works. These questions have unfortunately often been neglected by scholars interested in Kierkegaard's influence on Ludwig Wittgenstein. In this paper, we will examine a short extract from *Works of Love* in which Kierkegaard gives a rather concise presentation of his understanding of language and meaning. Our examination of this passage will show that many of the points of convergence generally noted between Kierkegaard's and Wittgenstein's writings, especially those articulated by James Conant, do not hold in light of Kierkegaard's actual conception of language. A closer examination of Kierkegaard's writing on language and meaning does however open up the possibility of more serious encounter with Wittgenstein's philosophy.

While much work has been done in recent years on Ludwig Wittgenstein's relationship to the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, many of these studies have focussed on the questions of philosophical method, nonsense, and the ethico-religious. Our attempt in this paper will be to demonstrate that Kierkegaard's writings also offer a solid, if not systematic, theory about the way in which higher-order concepts are formed which remains through-and-through realist, and which is generally overlooked by analytic philosophers, which could be fruitfully drawn upon in comparison with Wittgenstein's writings on logic and language. In this paper we will examine a short extract from *Works of Love*, where Kierkegaard offers a clear and concise analysis of language and meaning. In light of this reading, we will then show why the five major points of convergence between Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, articulated by James Conant (Conant 1998, 243f), do not hold in light of Kierkegaard's actual understanding of language.

The passage we will be examining is comprised of the opening pages of the discourse "Love Builds Up," in *Works of Love*<sup>1</sup> (Kierkegaard 1995, 209-12). The discourse begins with the idea that: "All human speech [...] about the spiritual is essentially metaphorical [*overført*, carried over]" (Kierkegaard 1995, 209). If speech about the spiritual is *carried over*, it is because what we know, or have access to, about the spiritual realm (ourselves as thinking beings, first and foremost) is not immediately given, but can only be derived through reflexion (indirectly, through language). Kierkegaard posits that the world to which language directly refers is that perceived through our "sensate-physical" engagement (Kierkegaard 1995, 209). Words describe the world accessible to empirical evidence; speaking of that which is not immediately given or accessible through the senses thus requires an extension of language practices. Yet, "metaphorical words are of course not brand-new words but are already given words" (Kierkegaard 1995, 209). We do not invent a new language when speaking about concepts not accessible to immediate perception, neither do we invent the concepts themselves; all we can do is transpose our former lan-

guage into another domain, give new meanings through the ways in which words are used.

As concerns the ways in which these new meanings are to be understood, Kierkegaard suggests that one ought to start with a careful examination of what words "*signify* in ordinary speech" (Kierkegaard 1995, 210). And Kierkegaard offers a detailed example as to how the meaning of this term ought to be analysed, with reference to the expression "to build up". As he writes:

"To build up" is formed from "to build" and the adverb "up," which consequently must receive the accent. Everyone who builds up does build, but not everyone who builds does build up. For example, when a man is building a wing on his house we do not say that he is building up a wing but that he is building *on*. Consequently, this "up" seems to indicate the direction in height, the upward direction. Yet this is not the case either. For example, if a man builds a sixty-foot building twenty feet higher, we still do not say that he *built up* the structure twenty feet higher—we say that he built *on*. Here the meaning of the word already becomes perceptible, for we see that it does not depend on height. However, if a man erects a house, be it ever so small and low, from the ground up, we say that he built up a house. Thus to build up is to erect something *from the ground up*. [...] (Kierkegaard 1995, 201-11)

From this passage, we may conclude that Kierkegaard's theory of language is one of "building up." Language is not, for Kierkegaard, a mere arbitrary construction. Like the house, it must have solid foundations. And these foundations reside in what language itself refers to: the empirical world to which linguistic constructions immediately refer. The signs we use to refer to worldly facts may be arbitrary—yet "what is essential: the thought content" (Kierkegaard 1997, 89) is not deemed by Kierkegaard to be arbitrary. The empirical world which is the object of sensate-physical experience *is the foundation through which language acquires its meaning structures*, a starting-point upon which the construction of meaning becomes possible as we move up to the more elevated spheres of the psychological/subjective or the spiritual. Kierkegaard thus offers an essentially realist view of language: all language (and knowledge) begins with the world we know through sensate-physical experience, yet since language is related immediately to the physical world, and not to the spiritual dimensions of subjective existence, it must be remodelled

<sup>1</sup> Wittgenstein wrote to Norman Malcolm on 5 February 1948 that he had not read *Works of Love*. As Glebe-Møller has pointed out, this may however not have been the case. Whether Wittgenstein actually read this text, however, has little relevance for our analysis, since the arguments presented here can be found in many other places in Kierkegaard's writings.

and reconstructed in order to say something meaningful about non-physical entities.

The second conclusion which can be drawn from this passage, is that that getting at the meaning of a word is possible through the analysis of *how the word is used in ordinary language*. When we reflect on correct and incorrect grammatical uses of a term, we get a sense as to the more profound *meaning* of the expression itself. Hence, understanding when and where an expression is properly used indicates its meaning. Of course, "careless and incorrect use of language" (Kierkegaard 1995, 212) is always possible—and is moreover the target of many of Kierkegaard's critiques in other works, where he denounces the "confusion of the categories" (Kierkegaard 1992, 31) predominant in much of modern speech, or the meaningless chatter of modern society (see Kierkegaard 1978, 68-112). Yet Kierkegaard indicates that examining how words are used in ordinary language gives indication as to *what they really mean*—in other words, *what reality they refer to*. Linguist analysis gets us back to the foundations of language, the conditions of meaningfulness, but also the facts to which expressions refer (in this case: a particular type of act).

Yet if language refers directly to reality (to the physical world as it presents itself to the observer), its status becomes more problematic when we attempt to use language to refer to non-physical realities, such as subjective spiritual beings. When speaking about these realities, we cannot, Kierkegaard affirms, simply invent new words—if we did so, we would not be able to communicate at all. We must therefore use the words of the language of the physical world, but make sense of them by analogy. Beyond making sense of the words, however, Kierkegaard indicates that with the change of context, the words themselves take on new meanings. There is an "infinite difference" (Kierkegaard 1995, 209) between the meaning of a term applied to physical realities and the meaning when applied to spiritual existence, which is constructed through the change of context, the passage from one realm of existence to another. Yet despite this, there remains a connexion: as Kierkegaard enigmatically remarks: "The person in whom the spirit has awakened [...] continues to remain in the visible world and to be visible to the senses—in the same way he also remains in the language, except that his language is the metaphorical language!" (Kierkegaard 1995, 209).

Remaining in the visible world, remaining in language... Kierkegaard clearly indicates that all language starts with what we can see, what is immediately accessible. All language does not remain there, however, yet it is the foundation upon which all other meaningful propositions can be built. If we insist on this, it is because much of the literature on Wittgenstein's relation to Kierkegaard has overlooked this point, essential to Kierkegaard's philosophy. James Conant, notably, articulates a series of five similarities found between Kierkegaard's *Postscript* and the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*:

(1) both were concerned to draw a distinction between sense and nonsense (or between what can and cannot be objectively comprehended) and to relegate matters of importance (ethics, religion) to a realm beyond the limits of sense; (2) both works draw a distinction between what can be said (or directly communicated) and what can only be shown (or indirectly communicated); (3) both works attempt to show what cannot be said (or thought) by drawing limits to what can be said (or thought); (4) both works consistently climax in a final moment of self-destruction in which we are asked to

throw out the ladder [...]; (5) both works end with a proclamation that silence is the only correct form that an answer to their questions could take. (Conant 1989, 243-44)

While these conclusions seem appealing, we would argue that all of these conclusions are inaccurate with regard to Kierkegaard's theory of language itself, as can be seen in this short passage from *Works of Love*.

(1) Firstly, it is clear that Kierkegaard here in no way articulates a theory of nonsense, or the idea that there is a "realm beyond the limits of sense" to which ethical or religious concepts should be relegated. If spiritual meaning is metaphorical, it is not nonsensical; to the contrary, the meaningfulness of any language use about the spiritual relies on the "connection" with both the physical world and the ordinary language uses related to that world. Kierkegaard does not suggest that the spiritual cannot be objectively comprehended, he merely affirms that it cannot be objectively comprehended *in the same way* that we might understand the act of building or any other physical act. We fail to understand the meaning of an expression when we neglect to take into consideration the context in which it is uttered, to what type of reality it is referring, but this does not entail that these realities are in themselves incomprehensible.

(2) In light of Kierkegaard's analyses, it seems erroneous to assimilate metaphorical speech with that which *cannot be said*. To the contrary, the possibility of carrying over expressions from one sphere of reality to another (from the physical-sensate to the spiritual) does not imply the impossibility of expression itself. Metaphorical language is still *meaningful* language, precisely because it resides upon the foundation of language rooted in sensate-physical reality. We may not mean the same thing when we are using expressions with regard to different contexts, but we are certainly still saying something—and moreover, saying it very directly.

(3) Kierkegaard's analysis of language, in this passage from *Works of Love*, certainly seeks to delimit meaningful use of expressions from "incorrect" grammatical use which leads to "false" propositions (Kierkegaard 1995, 212). Yet the aim is not to show what cannot be said or thought; to the contrary, Kierkegaard attempts to demonstrate that the limits that appear to be inherent within the correct grammatical use of an expression *can and must be extended* if we are to really understand the significance that an ordinary expression such as "to build up" can take on when used in reference to spiritual upbuilding. The appeal to language's capacity to carry meaning over from one context to another testifies not to language's limits, but rather to its openness. It is through language that we come to express different levels of reality; we are able to say and think what goes beyond sensate-physical experience because language offers us the possibility of ascribing new and different meanings to the same expressions. The limits of language are quantitative (signs), not qualitative (meaning).

(4) While Kierkegaard's pseudonym, Climacus, does invite us to revoke the *Postscript*, it is nevertheless clear that in this passage from *Works of Love*, Kierkegaard in no way suggests that we ought to revoke earlier meaning structures. Throwing away the foundations upon which meaningful discourse is to be built would amount to nothing other than building castles in the air (Kierkegaard 1995, 212), and deprive us of the possibility of all meaningful expression. Yet that which is *carried over* is not forgotten or discarded, it simply takes on new possibilities within a new

context. “Throwing away the ladder” would lead to nonsense—yet this is neither possible nor (if it were) desirable. To the contrary, groundedness is the root of all faith and all meaning, both pertaining to the worldly and to the spiritual.

(5) Finally, silence is certainly an important theme in Kierkegaard’s writings. However, for Kierkegaard, becoming silent does not imply that language ceases to be meaningful; it is to the contrary the condition upon which meaning can *be received from outside*. Kierkegaard’s appeal to silence is a warning against the chatter which prevents us from *listening* (to the world, to others, to God). We are not to become silent because nothing can be said; we are to the contrary to become silent in order to learn that there is so much more to be said than we had previously imagined (see Kierkegaard 1997, 10-39). In other words, it is silence, and not language, which is the ladder that finally must be thrown away.

The aim of this paper has been to demonstrate that Kierkegaard had a great deal more to say about language, meaning and knowledge than is generally recognized in Kierkegaard-Wittgenstein scholarship, which often dismisses Kierkegaard as an irrationalist or anti-realist. While it goes beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate on links with Wittgenstein’s philosophy, we would suggest that despite their divergences, Wittgenstein’s readings of

Kierkegaard may have had a more serious impact on the development of the *Investigations* than is generally acknowledged, and that a more attentive look at Kierkegaard’s understanding of language in future research is necessary.

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# Was sind „Spiele“

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## Abstract

Wittgenstein hat sich im Rahmen der Sprachspiele gefragt, was denn das Wesentliche eines Spieles ausmache und dabei Beispiele für den ganz unterschiedlichen Sprachgebrauch des Wortes „Spiel“ diskutiert.

Inzwischen haben Linguisten zwei Beschreibungsmodelle entwickelt, um dieses Phänomen besser zu erfassen: die Polysemie, d.h. ein gleichlautendes Wort bezeichnet Unterschiedliches, und die Prototypentheorie, wonach es für Klassen von Dingen, die mit einem Wort bezeichnet werden können, bessere und schlechtere Beispiele gibt; schliesslich ist auch auf die in Kommunikationssituationen wichtige Funktion des Kontextes, welcher die Bedeutung eines Wortes verändert, hingewiesen worden.

Vor diesem Hintergrund präsentieren wir einen neuen, analytischen Zugang zur Funktion des Kontextes, der auf quantenmechanischen Überlegungen aufbaut, der aber mit Datenbank-Methoden beschreibbar und auch durchführbar ist. Damit ergeben sich praktikable Lösungsansätze für die von Wittgenstein aufgeworfenen Fragen.

## 1. Einleitung

Wittgenstein hat sich im Rahmen der Sprachspiele gefragt, was denn das Wesentliche eines Spieles ausmache und dabei auf so unterschiedliche Beispiele wie Schach, Kartenspiele, Reigenspiele u.v.a. hingewiesen (Wittgenstein 1960). Die zuverlässige Erfassung der Bedeutungen eines Wortes erfolgt über den jeweiligen Kontext, in dem es erscheint: der Kontext beschränkt die Interpretation eines vieldeutigen Wortes, damit Kommunikation erfolgreich sein kann. Wir verstehen hier Kontext als Funktion, die von einem Wort ausgehend dessen Interpretation bestimmt. Wie Kontext, so definiert, wirkt, lässt sich formal beschreiben und es lassen sich praktikable Algorithmen dazu angeben.

Im nächsten Abschnitt rekapitulieren wir kurz die Annahmen, die der Frage Wittgensteins nach dem Wesentlichen des Spiels zugrunde liegen, und stellen dar, welche neueren Zugänge sich in der Forschung seither eröffnet haben; dabei werden besonders die Polysemie und die Prototypentheorie für die hier gestellte Frage als wichtig erachtet. In Abschnitt drei wird die Funktion des Kontextes beschrieben und ein von Aerts, Rosch und Gabora vorgeschlagener Zugang zur analytischen Behandlung mittels quantenmechanischer Theorien vorgestellt. In Abschnitt vier geben wir eine formal äquivalente, aber verständlichere und leichter durchführbare Lösung, deren Anwendung auf den Begriff „Spiel“ wir demonstrieren. Der letzte Abschnitt fasst die Ergebnisse zusammen und zeigt die Verbindung mit konstruktivistischen Überlegungen auf.

## 2. Polysemie und Prototypentheorie

Die sprachanalytische Philosophie des frühen 20. Jahrhunderts versucht einen Brückenschlag zwischen formaler Logik und natürlicher Sprache zu schaffen, beginnend mit Whitehead und Russell über Frege bis hin zu Montague, dessen Aufsatz „English as a formal language“ vermutlich den Höhepunkt der Bemühungen bildet (Frege 1964, Whitehead/Russell 1910, Montague 1974). Das verbreitete semantische Dreieck, ursprünglich von (Ogden/Richards 1923), und noch bei (Eco 1977) belegt, zeigt eine direkte Beziehung zwischen Gegenstand und Wort, zwischen »Hundetier« und »Hund«.

Die Bedeutung eines Wortes wird, verkürzt gesagt, extensional als Beschreibung einer Menge von Dingen aufgefasst (oft als Kategorie oder Klasse bezeichnet); das Wort meint die Essenz, die wesentlichen Eigenschaften

der Elemente der Menge (intensionale Bestimmung). Wittgenstein weist, so etwa in den *Philosophischen Untersuchungen* (Wittgenstein 1960) direkt und an verschiedenen Beispielen auf die Schwierigkeiten dieser Theorie hin, nach der es nicht möglich ist, z.B. für „Spiel“ eine „notwendige und ausreichende“ Eigenschaft anzugeben.

### 2.1. Polysemie

Ein Wort kann sehr unterschiedliche Bedeutungen haben, deren gemeinsame Eigenschaften nicht erkennbar sind; als Beispiel dient immer wieder „Bank“: das Gemeinsame von (Garten-) bank und (Geld-)bank ist nicht ohne weiteres erkennbar. Moderne systematische Untersuchungen zeigen für das englische Substantiv „bank“ zehn verschiedene Bedeutungen, für die kaum eine gemeinsame Eigenschaften gefunden werden kann. Solche Wörter werden als polysem oder homonym bezeichnet, wobei die schwierige Abgrenzung zwischen diesen beiden Effekten hier nicht wesentlich ist; wir verwenden im folgenden Polysemie als umfassenden Begriff.

Polysemie bezeichnet Erscheinungen, die bei der Übersetzung von einer Sprache in eine andere ins Auge springen: die vereinfachende Annahme, dass Wörter eine einfache, bestimmte Bedeutung haben und darum als Einheiten von einer Sprache in Wörter einer anderen übersetzt werden können, ist offensichtlich falsch. Wordnet (Miller 1998) gibt unterschiedliche Bedeutungen für englische Wörter an, z.B. für das Substantiv „game“ elf unterscheidbare Bedeutungen, für die jeweils andere Synonyme (gleichbedeutende englische Wörter) angegeben werden. Vergleichbare Projekte in anderen Sprachen (z.B. GermaNet) und ein multi-linguales Wörterbuch (Euro-WordNet - <http://www.illc.uva.nl/Euro-WordNet/>) bauen auf der gleichen Idee von Mengen von Synonymen auf, die minimale semantische Einheiten repräsentieren.

### 2.2. Prototyp-Theorie

Eleonor Rosch (Rosch 1973) hat darauf hingewiesen, dass die Menge der durch ein Wort bezeichneten Dinge eine interne Struktur von Zentrum zu Peripherie haben, die in psychologischen Experimenten aufgedeckt werden kann. Zum Wort „Hund“ stellen sich die meisten Menschen einen mittelgrossen Schäferhund vor; Bernhardiner und Chihuahua sind schlechtere Beispiele. Zu Vogel stellen sich Mitteleuropäer wohl einen Spatz vor, Amerikaner an-



geblich einen „Robin“ (Star); jedenfalls sind Pinguine und Strauss schlechte Beispiele. Diese Struktur hat Auswirkungen auf kognitive Prozesse, die bei systematischen Tests aufgedeckt werden können. Sie lässt sich auch in den Regeln zur Sprachverwendung nachweisen (Langacker 1987 and Lakoff 1987).

## 2.3. Ergebnis

Es ist zwischen den extern manifestierten Wörtern (hier mit „...“ markiert), die zwischen Menschen auf verschiedenen Kanälen ausgetauscht werden, und den mentalen Konzepten (hier mit „...“ markiert) zu unterscheiden. Ein Wort kann auf verschiedene mentale Konzepte hinweisen.

## 3. Die Funktion des Kontexts

In einer Kommunikationssituation werden Sätze ausgetauscht; der Empfänger soll den vom Sender erwünschten Zuwachs an Information erreichen; er kann anschliessend zu Handlungen führen; eine Aufzählung verschiedener Situationen, in denen Sprache zur Kommunikation genutzt wird, gibt Wittgenstein in den *Philosophischen Untersuchungen* an (Wittgenstein 1960).

Zur Kommunikation müssen die übermittelten Worte in mentale Konzepte übersetzt werden (hier Interpretation genannt). Dazu ist zusätzliche Information notwendig; diese zur Interpretation der Worte benutzte Information nennen wir Kontext der ausgetauschten Sätze.

### 3.1. Die quantenmechanische Theorie von Kontext

(Aerts/Gabora 2005a and 2005b) haben eine Theorie der Wirkung von Kontext auf die Interpretation der Worte in einem Satz unter Verwendung quantenmechanischer Theorien vorgeschlagen. Vorangehende Theorien (von Gabora/Rosch/Aerts 2008) ausführlich diskutiert) mit einfacheren Ansätzen (wahrscheinlichkeitstheoretisch, Fuzzy-Set etc. ) erklären beobachtbare Effekte des Einflusses von Kontext nicht vollständig. Besonders bekannt ist der sogenannte Guppy-Effekt (Osherson/Smith 1981): «Guppy» ist kein gutes Beispiel für ein Haustier (gut wären «Hund» oder «Katze») und auch kein gutes Beispiel für einen Fisch («Hai» oder «Forelle» wären typisch), hingegen ist «Guppy» ein exzellentes Beispiel für „pet fish“ (Fisch für einen Hobbyaquaristen), was die bisherigen Modelle nicht erklären können.

Der theoretische Ansatz von Gabora et al. geht von einer Menge an Zuständen, die ein Konzept (dort „states of concepts“) annehmen kann, aus. Durch Kontext wird die Interpretation eines Wort als Konzept genauer bestimmt (oder gleich belassen). Das Konzept «Tier» ist zum Beispiel gröber als «Haustier» und dieses wiederum gröber als «Goldfisch» usw. Hier eine Folge von Sätzen, wie sie in einem Dialog vorkommen können:

Dialog	Zustand	verfeinernder Kontext	Interpretation
Ich muss nach Hause, Peter füttern.	„Peter“	füttern	«Baby»
Peter ist mein Haustier.	«Baby»	Haustier	«(Haus)tier»
Er hat ein grosses Aquarium	«Haustier»	Aquarium	«Aquarium-Fisch»
und mich freut seine goldene Farbe jeden Tag!	«Aquarium-Fisch»	goldene Farbe	«Goldfisch»

Die Theorie postuliert:

- einem Wort entspricht ein Konzept mit minimaler Bestimmung (Zustand: Kontext\_1);

- durch Kontext wird ein Konzept verfeinert (oder bleibt gleich); Kontexte sind partiell geordnet und können in der mathematischen Struktur, spezifisch einem Verband (engl. lattice siehe (Birkhoff 1967) abgebildet werden; aus der Kombination von Kontexten entstehen stärkere Kontexte. Wichtig sind die stärksten Kontexte, die die Interpretation der Konzepte maximal einschränken; eine feinere Unterteilung ist für diesen Sprecher nicht verfügbar. Nicht jede Kombination von zwei Kontexten ergibt einen sinnvollen neuen Kontext. Zum Beispiel gibt die Verbindung von Kontext a: «gehen» mit Kontext b: «fahren» keinen sinnvollen Kontext.

- ein bereits angewandter Kontext verfeinert ein Konzept nicht mehr (Kontexte sind idempotent); das Konzept, das nach der Anwendung eines Kontextes entsteht, hat (in der Terminologie von Aerts) die Eigenschaft eines Eigenwertes (eigenstate);

- die Funktion  $\mu(p, e, q)$ , beschreibt die Wahrscheinlichkeit des Überganges eines Zustandes  $p$  in einen feineren  $q$  gegeben durch einen Kontext  $e$ .

- ein schwächerer Kontext als der zuvor angewandte verfeinert ein Konzept nicht mehr.

(Gabora/Rosch/Aerts 2008) gehen von einer Tabelle aus, in der für verschiedene Kontexte die Häufigkeiten der zu einem Wort gemeinten Konzepte aufgelistet sind. Eine solche Tabelle mit hypothetische Häufigkeiten für Teile des oben angeführten Dialoges ist die Tabelle 1.

Exemplare	verfeinernde Kontexte		
	Haustier	Haustier im Aquarium	Kontext_1
Hund	8	0	9
Huhn	6	0	7
Katze	10	0	11
Spinne	1	0	2
Aquarium Fisch	4	4	4
Goldfisch	3	3	3
Schlange	1	0	1
SUMME	33	7	37

(Tabelle1 Häufigkeiten für das Konzept «Tier», verfeinert mit verschiedenen Kontexten)

Die Theorie fasst die Zustände  $p$  eines Konzeptes in der Menge  $\Sigma$  zusammen, Kontexte  $e$  in dem Verbund  $\mathcal{M}$ . Ein Zustand eines Konzeptes wird mittels der Abbildung  $\lambda(e) = \{p | p \text{ ist ein Eigenwert von } e\}$  an einen Kontext  $e$  gebunden. Die Abbildung  $\lambda$  bildet die Schnittmenge aus Konzepten für verfeinernde Kontexte im Gegensatz zu erweiternden Kontexten, für die Untermengen aus Konzepten verwendet werden. Diese Eigenschaft spiegelt laut (Aerts/Gabora 2005a) den quantenmechanischen Charakter dieses Modells wieder.

Die Implementierung der Theorie mittels Hilberträume (siehe Aerts/Gabora 2005b) beschreibt ein Konzept durch orthonormale Vektoren  $|\mu\rangle \in [A] \otimes [A]$ . Wir verwenden ebenfalls die von Aerts et al. gebrauchte Dirac Schreibweise (Dirac 1939):  $|x\rangle$  bezeichnet einen (Spalten-) Vektor. Somit kann das Konzept «Tier» in minimaler Bestimmung (Kontext 1) laut Ausgangstabelle 1 wie folgt dargestellt werden:

$$|x_p\rangle = (1/\sqrt{(37)})\sum |u\rangle.$$

Die Übergangswahrscheinlichkeit für die Verfeinerung mittels den Kontext  $e$  (repräsentiert durch die Matrix  $P_e$ ) wird durch die Funktion

$$\mu(\hat{p}, e, q) = \langle x_p | P_e | x_p \rangle$$

abgebildet. Die tatsächliche Verfeinerung wird durch die Funktion

$$|x_{pe}\rangle = (P_e | x_p \rangle) / (\sqrt{\langle x_p | P_e | x_p \rangle})$$

berechnet und muss den Regeln der Wahrscheinlichkeitsrechnung genügen (was sich in einem Hilbertraum als Orthonormalität ausdrücken lässt; der Term im Nenner entspricht einer Normalisierung). Diese Funktion kann als Filter interpretiert werden, wobei das Ergebnis  $|x_{pe}\rangle$  nur mehr Konzepte enthält, die dem verfeinerten Kontext  $e$  entsprechen.

Mit diesen Formeln kann der Einfluss eines Kontextes wie oben dargestellt und analytisch nachvollzogen werden. Der „Guppy-Effekt“ wird dabei als verschränkter Zustand (im Sinne der Quantenmechanik) formalisiert.

Diese Theorie ist theoretisch gut abgestützt und mit Erfahrungen übereinstimmend; die Verwendung der Methoden der Quantenmechanik erschwert den Zugang, erleichtert aber die Umsetzung in Programme, die quantenmechanischen Formeln lassen sich direkt in eine Programmiersprache übersetzen. Leider sind die resultierenden Programme ineffizient; auch für einfache Beispiele wird mit Matrizen mit Milliarden von Elementen operiert.

#### 4. Kontext als Sammlung von Erfahrung

Die detaillierte Analyse der quantenmechanischen Formeln führen zu einer formal äquivalenten Beschreibung, diese zu einer effizienten Realisierung als Program und zu einer kognitiv-adäquaten Interpretation.

Die Theorie von (Gabora/Rosch/Aerts 2008) kann kognitiv interpretiert werden als systematische Sammlung von Erlebnissen (Kontexte), bei denen Konzepte mit Wörtern verbunden wurden. Ein Mensch, der Wörter interpretiert, tut dies im Licht seiner bisherigen Erfahrung, indem vergleichbare Kontexte aus früherem Erleben herangezogen werden, um die Wahrscheinlichkeit verschiedener Interpretationen zu beurteilen und zum Beispiel das am häufigsten bisher verwendete Konzept zu wählen. Missverständnisse werden durch nachfolgende Sätze in der Kommunikation aufgelöst, allenfalls signalisiert der Empfänger auch dem

Sprechenden, dass eine zusätzliche Information notwendig ist (Weiser/Frank 2013).

Beispiel:

Kommunikation	Zustand	verfeinernder Kontext	Interpretation
Gestern habe ich einen Fisch nach Hause gebracht	Fisch	nach Hause	«Forelle»
es soll unser neues Haustier werden (Korrektur)	«Fisch im Hause»	Haustier	«Goldfisch»

«Goldfisch» ist daher die wahrscheinlichste Interpretation, was aber in nachfolgenden Sätzen zu tropischem Aquariumfisch korrigiert werden kann, bis das Exemplar selber als maximale Verfeinerung vorgezeigt wird.

Eine Interpretation ist nur immer soweit notwendig, als es die dialogische Situation erfordert und Missverständnisse, die für die Situation nicht störend sind, werden meist nicht einmal wahrgenommen.

Bei Wittgenstein findet sich ein Dialog in einem Gedankenexperiment:

Person A sagt zu Person B : „Zeige den Kindern ein Spiel!“

Antwort von B: Ich lehre sie, um Geld zu würfeln.

daraufhin A zu B: „Ich habe nicht so ein Spiel gemeint“.

(Wittgenstein 1960, §71)

Die Differenz zwischen der Interpretation von A («Reigenspiel») und B («Würfelspiel um Geld»), was für B nicht eine Verfeinerung des Konzeptes «Kinderspiel» ist) beruht auf verschiedenen Erfahrungen. Hypothetische Erfahrungen von A und B, die zu oben angeführtem Dialog passen, sind in Tabelle 2 enthalten.

Exemplare	verfeinernder Kontext		Kontext_1	
	Person A	Person B	Person A	Person B
Ballspiel	3	0	7	4
Reigenspiel	8	0	9	0
Würfelspiel um Geld	1	0	4	11
Brettspiel	5	0	7	9
SUMME	17	0	27	24

(Tabelle2 Erfahrungen als Ausgangstabelle zusammengefasst für Person A und Person B)

A verfeinert das Wort „Spiel“ durch den Kontext „Kinder“ wobei in diesem Zustand das Exemplar «Reigenspiel» am häufigsten erlebt worden ist. Dies kann durch Anwendung der Theorie in folgender Rechnung (siehe Forme 1) demonstriert werden (um Platz zu sparen, steht der Buchstabe  $K$  für Kinder,  $W$  für Würfelspiel um Geld und  $R$  repräsentiert Reigenspiel):

$$\begin{aligned} \mu(\hat{p}, e, q) &= \langle x_p | P_e | x_p \rangle \\ |x_p\rangle &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{27}} \sum |u\rangle \\ |x_{pk}\rangle &= \frac{P_k | x_p \rangle}{\sqrt{\langle x_p | P_k | x_p \rangle}} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{17}} \sum_{u \in M_K} |u\rangle \\ \mu(x_{pk}, P_R, R) &= \langle x_{pk} | P_R | x_{pk} \rangle = \\ &= \sum_{u \in M_R \cap M_K} \langle x_{pk} | u \rangle \langle u | x_{pk} \rangle = \frac{8}{17} = 0,47 \end{aligned} \quad (1) \quad (2)$$

Für das Wort im Zustand „Kinder“ können auch die Wahrscheinlichkeiten für die anderen Exemplare berechnet

werden: Ballspiel  $(3)/(17) = 0,17$ , Würfelspiel um Geld  $(1)/(17) = 0,05$  und Brettspiel  $(5)/(17) = 0,29$ .

In gleicher Weise können die Bedeutungen für das Wort „Spiel“ für B berechnet werden. B hat keine Erfahrungen über Spiele für Kinder weshalb der Kontext Kinder für B keine Wirkung zeigt. Daher kann das Wort nur in minimaler Bestimmung herangezogen und die wahrscheinlichste Interpretation laut Formeln (3), (4) und (5) berechnet werden.

$$|x_j\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{24}} \sum |n\rangle \quad (3)$$

$$\begin{aligned} p(x_j, P_B, R) &= \langle x_j | P_B | x_j \rangle = \\ &= \sum_{n \in M_B} \langle x_j | n \rangle \langle n | x_j \rangle = \frac{6}{24} = 0 \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

$$\begin{aligned} p(x_j, P_B, R) &= \langle x_j | P_B | x_j \rangle = \\ &= \sum_{n \in M_B} \langle x_j | n \rangle \langle n | x_j \rangle = \frac{11}{24} = 0,45 \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

Basierend auf den Erfahrungen von B kann dieser das Wort „Spiel“ nur als «Würfelspiel um Geld» interpretieren.

## 5. Schlußfolgerungen

Die hier angenommene ontologische Position, nämlich dass Sprache menschliche Konzepte ausdrückt und Ontologien dementsprechend Beschreibungen der Konzeptualisierung der Realität wie sie Menschen wahrnehmen, liefern, ist in der (informatik-nahen) Ontologie-Forschung verbreitet (Gruber et al. 1993, Guarino 1992). Diese Position ist eine direkte Weiterführung der Einsichten der radikalen Konstruktivistin (von Glasersfeld 1995; Watzlawick 1981; Lettvin/Maturana/McCulloch/Pitts 1970 und andere); sie ist aber nicht unwidersprochen, z.B. von (Smith 2004) dem eine direkte, objektive Beschreibung der Welt als Ziel von ontologischen Studien vorschwebt und möglich scheint.

Die Auffassung, dass Sprache als Vehikel in einer kommunikativen Situation als Sprachspiel aufzufassen sei, bei dem der Austausch von Information im Vordergrund steht und der pragmatische Effekt als Handlung des Gesprächspartners zeigt, ob die ausgetauschten Sätze richtig (d.h. von Sprecher und Hörer mit genügender Übereinstimmung) interpretiert worden sind. Es ist nicht mehr zu kommunizieren als für die Situation notwendig ist („Halt mal das Ding da“ reicht erstaunlich oft!); die Worte sind im Lichte der Situation und der vorangehenden Sätze (dem Kontext) zu interpretieren. Eine direkte Entsprechung zwischen Wörtern und Dingen gibt es nicht, nur eine durch jeweils menschliches Denken vermittelte, die situationsbedingt und erfahrungsabhängig, keinesfalls jedoch objektiv ist. Das semantische Dreieck ist also besser als Zusammensetzung zweier Dreiecke, des Senders und des Empfängers, darzustellen.

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# Mehrdeutigkeit, Vagheit, Wahrheit und Falschheit

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## Abstract

Der Satz „Der Mount Everest ist ein hoher Berg“ ist wahr, denn der Mount Everest hat eine Höhe von 8848 Metern; er wäre aber auch wahr, wenn der Mount Everest 100 Meter niedriger und somit nur so hoch wie sein Südgipfel wäre. Sätze, die vage Begriffe enthalten, sind mit mehr Sachverhalten verträglich als Sätze, die exakte Begriffe enthalten. Aber wie verhält es sich mit Sätzen, die mehrdeutige Begriffe enthalten? Welche Voraussetzungen muss man machen, um zum Wahrheitswert von mehrdeutigen Sätzen zu gelangen? Ist es trivial, einem Satz wie „Bruno sieht die Katze mit dem Fernglas“ einen Wahrheitswert zuzuordnen? Mehrdeutigkeit und Vagheit sind in der Alltagssprache eher die Regel als die Ausnahme. Damit stellt sich unwillkürlich die Frage, welchen Einfluss Mehrdeutigkeit und Vagheit auf den Wahrheitswert von Sätzen unserer Sprache ausüben. Ziel dieses Beitrages ist es, den Zusammenhang von Mehrdeutigkeit und Vagheit und dem Wahrheitswert von Sätzen zu klären.

Der Satz „Der Mount Everest ist ein hoher Berg“ ist wahr, denn der Mount Everest hat eine Höhe von 8848 Metern; er wäre aber auch wahr, wenn der Mount Everest 100 Meter niedriger und somit nur so hoch wie sein Südgipfel wäre. Bei „hoch“ handelt es sich um einen vagen Begriff. Sätze, die vage Begriffe enthalten, sind mit mehr Sachverhalten verträglich als Sätze, die exakte Begriffe enthalten (Quine 1980, 227). Aber wie verhält es sich mit Sätzen, die mehrdeutige Begriffe enthalten? Ob der Satz „Der Schimmel ist weiß“ analytisch oder synthetisch ist, hängt davon ab, ob gerade von Pilzen oder von Pferden die Rede ist. Welche Voraussetzungen muss man machen, um zum Wahrheitswert von mehrdeutigen Sätzen zu gelangen? Ist es für einen Hörer trivial, einem Satz wie „Bruno sieht die Katze mit dem Fernglas“ einen Wahrheitswert zuzuordnen? Mehrdeutigkeit und Vagheit sind in der Alltagssprache eher die Regel als die Ausnahme. Damit stellt sich unwillkürlich die Frage, wie Mehrdeutigkeit und Vagheit den Wahrheitswert von Sätzen beeinflussen.

## Vagheit und Mehrdeutigkeit als Grade semantischer Bestimmtheit

Vagheit und Mehrdeutigkeit hängen insofern zusammen, als man sich im Zuge ihrer Definition bisweilen der Notion des *Grades semantischer Bestimmtheit* bedient, die an dieser Stelle auch als Ausgangspunkt dienen soll. Demnach wird Vagheit als semantische Unterbestimmtheit und Mehrdeutigkeit als semantische Überbestimmtheit charakterisiert. Wie hängt nun der Grad semantischer Bestimmtheit mit dem Wahrheitswert von Sätzen zusammen? Quine schreibt sinngemäß, dass die Vagheit von Begriffen keinen Einfluss auf die Wahrheit von gewöhnlichen Sätzen hat, in denen diese Begriffe vorkommen (Quine 1980, 226). Dies bedarf einer Erläuterung, denn allgemein ist es schlicht falsch, dass die Vagheit von Begriffen *keinerlei Einfluss* auf den Wahrheitswert von Sätzen hat. Es kann nur gemeint sein, dass ein wahrer Satz, der einen bestimmten Begriff enthält, nicht falsch werden würde, wenn man den Begriff vage und nicht ganz so exakt verstehen würde. Es kann aber nicht gemeint sein, dass ein Satz wahr bleiben würde, würde man einen darin vorkommenden vagen Begriff exakter fassen. So könnte man den Begriff „hoher Berg“ exakt als „Berg mit einer Höhe von über 3000 Metern über dem Adriatischen Meer“ definieren, womit der Satz „Der Dachstein ist ein hoher Berg“, der vor der Definition vielleicht als wahr angesehen worden wäre, nach erfolgter Definition eindeutig falsch würde. Man kann also festhalten, dass durch die Erhöhung des Grades semanti-

scher Bestimmtheit aus wahren Sätzen falsche Sätze werden können, nicht aber durch die Verringerung des Grades semantischer Bestimmtheit.

Mehrdeutigkeit ist etwas anderes als Vagheit - semantische Überbestimmtheit - doch da es sich in beiden Fällen um den Grad semantischer Bestimmtheit handelt, kann man fragen, ob eine Änderung des Grades semantischer Bestimmtheit auch im Falle der Mehrdeutigkeit ähnliche Auswirkungen hat. Hierbei zeigt sich, dass die Verringerung des Grades semantischer Bestimmtheit den Wahrheitswert von mehrdeutigen Sätzen unberührt lässt, und dass die Erhöhung des Grades semantischer Bestimmtheit - d. h. von der Exaktheit hin zur Überbestimmtheit - den Wahrheitswert von mehrdeutigen Sätzen verändern kann. Ein Beispiel. Angenommen der mehrdeutige Satz „Bruno sieht die Katze mit dem Fernglas“ ist wahr (bzw. falsch), so kann man den Satz eindeutig machen indem man die tatsächliche Struktur des Satzes offenlegt, und man wird feststellen, dass der Satz nach wie vor wahr (bzw. falsch) ist; umgekehrt funktioniert dies nicht, der Wahrheitswert des Satzes kann sich ändern. Es stellt sich also heraus, dass sich Mehrdeutigkeit in Bezug auf die Änderung des Grades semantischer Bestimmtheit anders verhält als Vagheit. Diese Asymmetrie muss als Hinweis darauf verstanden werden, dass die alleinige Charakterisierung von Vagheit und Mehrdeutigkeit als semantische Über- bzw. Unterbestimmtheit dem Phänomen nicht gerecht wird.

Meiner Meinung nach liegt die Ursache der hier erwähnten Asymmetrie darin, dass Vagheit eine Eigenschaft von Begriffen ist, Mehrdeutigkeit aber auf allen Ebenen der Sprache und auch auf nichtsprachlichen Ebenen der Kommunikation angetroffen werden kann. Mehrdeutigkeit und Vagheit sind zwei klar unterscheidbare Phänomene, die sich nur auf den ersten Blick als semantische Über- und Unterbestimmtheit definieren lassen. Auch der Versuch, Mehrdeutigkeit und Vagheit als dasselbe sprachliche Phänomen aufzufassen und sie dann aufgrund des mehr oder weniger großen semantischen Abstandes zwischen den verschiedenen Bedeutungen von mehrdeutigen bzw. vagen Begriffen zu unterscheiden (Tuggy 1993), kann aufgrund der folgenden Überlegungen nicht aufrecht erhalten werden. Einer der Gründe ist, dass das Auftreten von Mehrdeutigkeit im Grunde nicht auf die Sprache beschränkt ist.

Wenn man nun für den ersten Schritt der Überlegung bei der Mehrdeutigkeit von Sätzen bleibt, stellt sich die Frage, ob es überhaupt sinnvoll ist, von der Wahrheit solcher Sätze zu sprechen. Man könnte dafür argumentieren, dass

ein Wort oder ein Satz an sich nicht mehrdeutig sein kann. Zu einer solchen, inadäquaten Auffassung der Mehrdeutigkeit von Sätzen könnte man überhaupt nur gelangen, wenn man sich der Tatsache, dass ein Satz bzw. ein Wort normalerweise nicht außerhalb eines Äußerungskontextes steht, nicht klar genug bewusst wäre. Denn wenn jemand einen Satz oder ein Wort äußert, dann gibt es genau zwei Möglichkeiten. Entweder er hat eine klare Vorstellung davon, was er sagen will, oder er hat eine solche Vorstellung nicht. Hat der Sprecher eine klare Vorstellung davon, was er sagen will, dann ist der geäußerte Satz für ihn selbst immer eindeutig. Hat er hingegen keine klare Vorstellung davon, was er sagen will, dann kann er zwar scheinbar etwas Mehrdeutiges sagen, er sagt aber streng genommen gar nichts, er drückt keinen Gedanken aus, sondern er macht nur Lärm. Mehrdeutigkeit tritt bei der Äußerung von Sätzen auf, es ist keine inhärente Eigenschaft von Sätzen (Black 1952). Wenn man nun die Seite in einer Kommunikationssituation wechselt und den Hörer betrachtet, so sieht die Sache anders aus. Mehrdeutigkeit entsteht dann, wenn ein Satz gehört oder gelesen wird, denn ein Hörer kann nicht wissen, was ein Sprecher sagen will, er weiß nur, was er tatsächlich sagt. Das Nichtwissen um das Vorhandensein einer Bedeutung darf nicht mit der Absenz einer Bedeutung verwechselt werden.

## Zwei Seiten der Kommunikation

Wie teile ich einer anderen Person das mit, was ich mitteilen will? Die folgenden Überlegungen nehmen ihren Ausgang von der Frage, an welchen Stellen im Kommunikationsprozess Mehrdeutigkeit entstehen kann. Man wird sehen, dass es zwischen der Stelle an der Mehrdeutigkeit entsteht und der Art der Mehrdeutigkeit einen direkten Zusammenhang gibt. Die Kommunikation zwischen Sprecher und Hörer findet immer auf der physikalischen Ebene statt; findet auf der mentalen Ebene ist sie nicht möglich. Der Sprecher hat einen Gedanken, den er seinem Gesprächspartner mitteilen will und dazu in Worte fasst. Über Schallwellen oder in der Form des geschriebenen Wortes - mittels Sprache oder Schrift d. h. über irgendeine Art von Kanal - erreicht die Information den Hörer. Der Empfänger der Information muss diese erst einmal als Information erkennen und er muss sie sogleich einer Sprache zuordnen, wobei er die Zeichen fälschlicherweise anders interpretieren kann, als dies vom Sprecher beabsichtigt war; hier könnte man von *translinguistischer Mehrdeutigkeit* sprechen. Das deutsche Wort „bellen“ und das niederländische Wort „bellen“ (dt. anrufen, klingeln) sind in dieser Art mehrdeutig. Normalerweise gibt der Kontext darüber Auskunft, welcher Sprache ein Zeichen zuzuordnen ist.

Im nächsten Schritt geht es darum, aus einer Zeichenkette eine Bedeutung zu konstruieren. Die natürlichen Sprachen haben sich so entwickelt, dass eine Zeichenfolge mehr als einen Begriff hervorrufen kann, damit man mit einem endlichen Vorrat an Zeichen potenziell unendlich viele Sätze bilden kann. Man könnte auch sagen, dass eine Zeichenfolge als mehr als ein Wort fungiere, wenn man bevorzugt, von mehrdeutigen Wörtern zu sprechen. Eine Folge davon ist die *lexikalische Mehrdeutigkeit*, deren beiden wichtigsten Unterarten Homonymie und Polysemie sind. Die beiden Bedeutungen lexikalisch mehrdeutiger Begriffe sind in der Regel in einem Wörterbuch eingetragen; sie ist leicht aufzulösen. Zwischen homonymen Begriffen wie Tau (Seil/Niederschlag) gibt es keine etymologische Verbindung, die Gleichheit ist zufällig entstanden. Zwischen polysemen Begriffen wie Ring (Straßenzug/Schmuckstück/Boxring) oder Bank (Sitzgelegenheit/Geldinstitut) gibt es eine wortgeschichtliche Verbin-

dung. Deshalb löst sich die homonyme Mehrdeutigkeit bei einer Übersetzung fast immer auf, polyseme Mehrdeutigkeit bleibt eher erhalten, nämlich dann, wenn sich in der etymologischen Entwicklung zweier Sprachen die entsprechenden Parallelen finden. Die Unterscheidung von Homonymie und Polysemie ist nicht absolut, neue Erkenntnisse können bewirken, dass sich von einem Wort, von dem man geglaubt hat, es sei homonym mehrdeutig, herausstellt, dass es ein polysem mehrdeutiges Wort ist; und umgekehrt. Denkt man an weitere Bedeutungen von Bank, z. B. an „bis an die Wasseroberfläche reichende Ablagerung von Gestein und Sand in Flüssen“ oder „vom umliegenden Gestein gesonderte, fest zusammenhängende Gesteinsschicht“, so wird man nicht ohne eingehende etymologische Kenntnisse sagen können, ob Bank nun homonym oder polysem mehrdeutig ist. Diese Komplexität spricht nicht gegen die Unterscheidung von Homonymie und Polysemie, sie soll nur zeigen, dass die Unterscheidung nicht trivial ist.

Ein Begriff kommt in einer realen Kommunikationssituation immer in einem Satz vor; nur Einwortsätze wären als Ausnahme zu nennen. Ganz grundsätzlich kann man sagen, dass mehrdeutige Sätze (bzw. Satzteile) aus zwei Gründen zustande kommen: Entweder enthalten mehrdeutige Sätze zumindest ein mehrdeutiges Wort, dessen Mehrdeutigkeit sich auf den Satz überträgt, oder ihre Struktur lässt mehrere Interpretationsmöglichkeiten zu. Enthält ein Satz ein mehrdeutiges Wort, so ist der Ort seiner Mehrdeutigkeit bei diesem Wort zu finden; es wäre eine lexikalische Mehrdeutigkeit. Der Satz „Der Bauer ist fast zwei Meter groß“ ist mehrdeutig, da er das mehrdeutige Wort ‚Bauer‘ enthält, ohne aber dass die Struktur des Satzes mehrdeutig wäre. Die Struktur des Satzes ist eindeutig. Ohne einen zusätzlichen Anhaltspunkt kann jedoch nicht entschieden werden, ob man von einem Landwirt oder einem Vogelkäfig spricht. Enthält ein Satz kein mehrdeutiges Wort, so kann es dennoch auch auf dieser Ebene bei der Rekonstruktion der ursprünglichen Bedeutung des Satzes durch den Hörer zu vom Sprecher nicht beabsichtigten Interpretationen kommen. Dabei kann man von *struktureller Mehrdeutigkeit* sprechen. Der Satz „Caesar und Kleopatra waren verheiratet“ enthält kein mehrdeutiges Wort, er kann aber in zweifacher Weise interpretiert werden. Der Satz besagt nämlich entweder, dass Caesar und Kleopatra miteinander verheiratet waren, oder aber, dass Caesar und Kleopatra, jeder der beiden für sich, verheiratet waren. Ein spezieller Fall der strukturellen Mehrdeutigkeit ist die *referenzielle Mehrdeutigkeit*. Der Satz „Der Hund sitzt auf dem Sessel; er ist weiß“ ist referenziell mehrdeutig, da es für den Hörer nicht klar sein kann, wie die intendierte Struktur des Satzes aussieht, das heißt worauf sich das Relativpronomen „er“ im zweiten Satzteil beziehen soll; auf den Hund oder auf den Sessel. Mit anderen Worten, spricht man von einem weißen Hund oder einem weißen Sessel? Der wörtlich genommene Satz selbst schießt keine der beiden Interpretationen aus. Bemerkenswert ist auch im Fall der strukturellen Mehrdeutigkeit, dass die Mehrdeutigkeit von Sätzen im Allgemeinen bei einer Übersetzung in eine andere Sprache erhalten bleibt, sofern es sich um keine Mehrdeutigkeit handelt, die auf die Mehrdeutigkeit von Wörtern zurückzuführen wäre. Hierbei kann man sich des Hilfsmittels des Phrasenstrukturbaukasten bedienen, um damit die semantische Struktur eines Satzes sichtbar zu machen.

Diese kurze Aufzählung verschiedener Arten von Mehrdeutigkeit ist bei Weitem nicht vollständig, doch sie illustriert, dass es nicht immer dieselbe Art von Dingen ist, die mehrdeutig sind. In der Aufzählung gänzlich unberücksichtigt geblieben sind beispielsweise mehrdeutige Bilder,

mehrdeutige Situationen oder mehrdeutige Gedichte; dies da es an dieser Stelle um die Mehrdeutigkeit von Dingen geht, die im Prinzip einen Wahrheitswert haben können. Festgehalten sei einerseits, dass man die Seite des Sprechers und die Seite des Hörers unterscheiden muss. Andererseits, dass es für den Autor einer Äußerung selbst immer sinnvoll ist, nach dem Wahrheitswert eines mehrdeutigen Satzes zu fragen, für den Hörer nur dann, wenn für ihn klar ist, in welcher Bedeutung der Sprecher den mehrdeutigen Satz verwendet.

### **Zum Wahrheitswert von vagen und mehrdeutigen Sätzen**

Die vorangegangenen Überlegungen zur Mehrdeutigkeit lassen sich nicht auf das Phänomen der Vagheit übertragen, denn es gibt nicht verschieden Arten der Vagheit. Vagheit entsteht immer in derselben Weise, nämlich dann, wenn es auf der Begriffsebene fehlende Klarheit gibt, d. h. wenn die Grenzen eines Begriffs nicht exakt festgelegt werden (aus welchen Gründen auch immer); Vagheit ist in der Sprache vorhanden. Vagheit liegt dann vor, wenn es Grenzfälle gibt, also Individuen von denen sowohl sinnvoll behauptet werden kann, dass sie unter einen Begriff fallen als auch, dass sie nicht unter diesen Begriff fallen. Da Vagheit an den Grenzen der Extension eines Begriffs auftritt, wird die Frage nach der Wahrheit von vagen Sätzen eine Frage nach der Grenze von Begriffsumfängen. Anhand oben erwähnter Beispiele sieht man, dass man einen vagen Satz etwa durch die willkürliche Setzung einer Definition eindeutig machen kann, d. h. man legt die Grenzen des Begriffsumfanges exakt fest. Damit wird es grundsätzlich denkbar, würde man das Bivalenzprinzip aufgeben wollen, von mehr oder weniger wahren Sätzen zu sprechen. Man ist vielleicht eher bereit, den Mont Blanc als hohen Berg zu bezeichnen als den Dachstein. Es spielt keine Rolle, ob man tatsächlich mehr als zwei Wahrheitswerte zulässt; wesentlich ist zu sehen, dass sich mehrdeutige Sätze nicht so verhalten. Der Satz „Bruno sieht die Katze mit dem Fernglas“ wird nicht „wahrer“ oder „falscher“, indem man die Bedeutung von Wörtern exakt an-

gibt oder seine Struktur klar darlegt; der Satz wird wahr oder falsch.

Was zeigt die Frage nach der Veränderung des Grades semantischer Bestimmtheit von Sätzen? Die Grenzen mehrdeutiger Wörter oder Begriffe sind eindeutig (solange sie nicht zusätzlich auch vage sind). Mehrdeutigkeit entsteht anders als Vagheit im Kommunikationsprozess an Übergängen von einer Ebene zu einer anderen Ebene, z. B. beim Übergang von den einzelnen Wörtern eines Satzes zum Satz. Dieser grundsätzliche Unterschied zwischen Mehrdeutigkeit und Vagheit macht sich auch im Verhalten des Wahrheitswerts von mehrdeutigen und vagen Sätzen bemerkbar.

Es ist möglich, vage Sätze exakt zu machen und umgekehrt. Es ist auch möglich, mehrdeutige Sätze eindeutig zu machen und umgekehrt. Der Unterschied ist, dass es im Falle der Vagheit grundsätzlich möglich ist, von einer kontinuierlichen Änderung des Grades semantischer Bestimmtheit zu sprechen, im Fall der Mehrdeutigkeit nicht. Sätze sind entweder eindeutig oder mehrdeutig, es ist keinerlei Annäherung von der Mehrdeutigkeit hin zur Eindeutigkeit denkbar; der Übergang von einer Bedeutung zur anderen Bedeutung erfolgt abrupt. Daraus folgt, dass ein Satz zwar mehrdeutig sein kann, dass er aber immer, also in jeder seiner Bedeutungen, eindeutig wahr oder falsch ist.

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# Absolute Pluralism and Degrees of Nonsense

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## Abstract

Wittgenstein's Tractatus was to an important extent a development of ideas first presented by Russell with his version of logical atomism. Russell himself reacted to the doctrines of the monism of British Idealists. The monists held the view that a singular judgement can only be partially true. Russell and Wittgenstein tried to show that judgements – or propositions – can be and must ultimately be independent and can thus be absolutely true without reference to other judgements.

Whereas a proposition of the postulated ideal language depicts an existing or not existing state of affairs and is thus unequivocally either true or false, the propositions of everyday language are often vague and ambiguous or nonsensical. Everything that is not strictly true or false is to some degree nonsensical. This includes propositions following the law of induction or a lot of hypotheses of natural science that have heuristic value but are not and do not claim to be true.

## 1. Pluralism vs. Monism

In 1914 Wittgenstein makes the following remark in his Note Books:

A proposition like 'this chair is brown' seems to say something enormously complicated, for if we wanted to express this proposition in such a way that nobody could raise objections to it on grounds of ambiguity, it would have to be infinitely long. (NB 19.9.14)

Even an apparently simple proposition like this, he thought at the time, must be analyzed into really simple propositions, the elementary propositions that depict configurations of really simple objects by means of simple names.

This view, of course, the picture theory of meaning, follows the doctrine of logical atomism that was first proposed by Russell: "The philosophy which I wish to advocate may be called logical atomism or absolute pluralism, because while maintaining that there are many things, it denies that there is a whole composed of those things". (Russell 1976, 108)

The philosophy Russell introduced was a direct reaction to predominant philosophical tradition of the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century namely monism as advocated by British Idealists as e.g. F. H. Bradley.

Russell rejected the view that knowledge alters the fact and the doctrine that every proposition attributes a predicate to a subject. (Russell 1959, 32f) More specifically he rejected what he calls the axiom of internal relations. (Russell 1959, 43)

For the monist no proposition can be absolutely true, not even propositions of mathematics. The monistic view is ably expressed by Harold H. Joachim:

To the boy who is learning the multiplication table  $3^2 = 9$  possesses probably a minimum of meaning. It is simply one item of the many which he is obliged to commit to memory. Three times three are nine, just as three times two are six, or as  $H_2O$  is water, or as *mensa* is Latin for table. These are 'truths' which he accepts and must not forget, but which he does not understand. But for the arithmetician  $3^2 = 9$  is perhaps a short-hand symbol for the whole science of arithmetic as known at the time. (Joachim 1906, 93)

No universal judgement of science "expresses in and by itself a determinate meaning. For every judgement is really

the abbreviated statement of a meaning which would require a whole system of knowledge for its adequate expression." (Joachim 1906, 96)

To give a trivial example: "There are eight planets in the Solar System." This judgement was wrong 200 years ago, true 150 years ago, false 80 years ago and now it is true again. Obviously the truth is not only dependent of the nature of our Solar System but also on our definitions of the terms.

But when Russell and Moore led the rebellion against monism, they were sure they had common sense on their side. Truth in isolation must be possible. As Russell put it: „Some propositions are true and some false, just as some roses are red and some white." (Russell 1904, 523)

It cannot be an essential, intrinsic property of Napoleon that he was admired by Stendhal. And so it must be possible to reach a verdict on the truth value without recursion to every object in the universe to which an object has some relation.

If it was clear what an alternative to monism must accomplish it was not easy to come up with a sound theory. There were two main obstacles. First, what was the nature of an object, if it could not be the sum of its internal and external properties? How do we refer to Napoleon at all, if every proposition about him should state a contingent fact? And second, what does a proposition refer to, in case it is wrong? Russell addressed both points with his theory of descriptions. The baldness of the current king of France is handled by introducing an otherwise unspecified  $x$  as subject of two propositions, that  $x$  is king of France and that  $x$  is bald. And a third proposition claiming that  $x$  exists. The important achievement is, of course, that by analyzing a proposition like this the ambiguity vanishes. And this meant that the way to reach the pluralistic goal was to be achieved by disregarding language of everyday life and postulating an ideal language, consisting of propositions pointing unequivocally to facts.

## 2. Wittgenstein's Solution of the Riddle of External Relations

Unlike Russell Wittgenstein was not really interested in epistemology when he stated his own version of logical atomism in the Tractatus. So the first thing he would get rid of were logical objects, that according to Russell one had



to be acquainted with e.g. to understand a multiple relation.

Instead he postulated two realms, one ultimately consisting of objects one of names. These realms were isomorphic, meaning that every possible combination of objects, a state of affairs, had an exact counterpart in the realm of language, an elementary proposition (and *vice versa*, of course).

The external relation between objects is what is contingent about the world but that the external relation is possible is guaranteed by the internal properties of the objects. To know an object I would need to know its internal properties, not the external. (T 2.01231)

Whatever elementary proposition one utters (if it were possible in practice) would depict a possible reality. It would necessarily be true or false.

In the realm of elementary propositions it is impossible to judge "a nonsense". This, Wittgenstein says, is a condition that Russell's theory does not satisfy. (T 5.5422)

Everyday language is different, unfortunately. Language disguises thought, he said. It is impossible to infer the form of the thought beneath it. There are enormously complicated tacit conventions that make understanding everyday language possible. (T 4.002) And obviously, somewhere on the road taken to get from the form of thought to actual language nonsense emerges.

### 3. Kinds of Nonsense

The propositions of the *Tractatus* are nonsensical. The author himself said so, as if he were not sure that his readers would be able to make this observation. The ongoing argument now, of course, is whether they are "mere" nonsense or somehow "illuminating" nonsense. The suspicion that resolute readers try to discourage is that some kind of nonsense manages to somehow carry some meaning. Roger White gives a couple of examples of what he considers clear cases of nonsense that, nevertheless, get some meaning across. One example is Shakespeare's "uncle me no uncle" another is a comment to a chess game: "Bj10 would have been even stronger" (than Bh8, that is). (White 2011, 38 and 41) Not surprisingly, perhaps, resolute readers are not impressed. The examples, so Conant and Dain argue in their reply, are not nonsensical at all, since they have a "clear use" (Conant and Dain 2014, 70) And indeed since it is always possible to attach some meaning to everything and the examples clearly are understood, they cannot really be nonsensical. The suspicion arises that maybe nonsense might be found only in the *Tractatus*.

What is nonsense? The old fashioned approach would be to ask how the word is used.

The first kind of nonsense is the one we associate with Lewis Carroll or Edward Lear or Monty Python or *Mad Magazine*. Here is an example by Christian Morgenstern: (Morgenstern 1963, 16f)

Es war einmal ein Lattenzaun  
mit Zwischenraum hindurchzuschauen.  
Ein Architekt, der dieses sah,  
stand eines Abends plötzlich da  
und nahm den Zwischenraum heraus  
und baute draus ein großes Haus.

There used to be a picket fence  
with space to gaze from hence to thence.  
An architect who saw this sight  
approached it suddenly one night,  
removed the spaces from the fence,  
and built from them a residence.

It is very easy and maybe tempting to read in some deeper meaning into this but the fact remains, you cannot build a house out of spaces. It is nonsense, meant as nonsense and should be regarded as nonsense. We might call this fun-nonsense.

For some reason Russell and Wittgenstein seemed to worry about propositions like "Socrates is identical" or "this table penholders the book". This is grammatical nonsense.

The third kind of nonsense is nonsense used as a term of abuse. For example when we say that Intelligent Design is nonsense. What is meant by this is that a proposition or an argument is not only false, but the underlying assumptions or the conclusions appear to be so devoid of rational substance that it would seem a waste of time to even enter a discussion with the believers. It goes without saying that the people holding nonsensical beliefs do think their beliefs make perfect sense. (With the notable exception of Tertullians' *Credo, quia absurdum est*). Russell calls an early essay of his, still written under the influence of Hegel, "unmitigated rubbish" and "complete nonsense". (Russell 1959, 32f). Let us call this kind of nonsense rubbish nonsense then.

Religion offers a lot of propositions that seem nonsensical: "Jesus fed the 5000 with two fishes and five loafs of bread." This makes perfect sense in a way. We can either believe it to be literally true by some sort of miracle or maybe somehow take it to be metaphorically true (although this is hardly possible, considering the twelve baskets full of crumbs, which remained at the end of the feast.) But what is not possible with this kind of proposition is to just regard it as false. This might be called nonsense by exaggeration.

Next: "Time wounds all heels". This apparently is not nonsensical at all, and yet it has a nonsensical ring to it. It is a kind of parody of "Time heals all wounds". This is a good example of a proposition that seems to be trivially true and obviously false at the same time. A great truth, Niels Bohr is supposed to have said, is a truth whose opposite is also true. That may be true but it is certainly the mark of nonsense. This is truly therapeutically nonsense. If someone is comforted by it, very good, if not, not much is lost.

"The surface temperature of an oxygen atom is 44°C." This is similar to Wittgenstein's "It is 5 o' clock on the sun". (PI, 350) An atom is just not the kind of stuff that can have a temperature, since its movements define what emerges as temperature at a macro level. What we have here is categorical nonsense. This, by the way, is a reason why one cannot talk about the existence of (Wittgensteinian) objects or the number of objects. Since the configuration of objects is the ontological foundation of any true proposition it does not make sense to build a proposition about objects. Now, Wittgenstein does talk about objects, being well aware that he is producing nonsense, but to paraphrase a well-known aphorism by Bradley: Where everything is nonsense it must make sense to avoid categorical nonsense.

To Leibniz the proposition that there is no finite speed was a universal truth, that is, a necessary truth, because in contrast to a contingent truth the proof of it requires only a



finite number of steps. If, his *reductio ad absurdum* went a point on the circumference of a rotating wheel were moving at the highest possible speed, then the diameter must only be enlarged to make the point moving with a greater speed. (Leibniz 1989, 25)

Something must be wrong with this argument, if the speed of light cannot be surpassed, as we now think. And indeed the underlying concepts of space and time and mass have radically changed since Einstein. But the interesting question is the following: Can the configuration of objects somehow constitute a possible world in which there is no limit to speed? If not then Leibniz' universal truth is not only wrong but nonsense. This would be meta-physical nonsense.

#### 4. Degrees of Nonsense

So far I spoke about different kinds of nonsense. But are there different degrees of nonsense? Imagine being a piece in a chess game, a pawn, for example. You could perceive the moves being made and you would know "by instinct" how to move, that is you would not do an illegal move. But everything else you are ignorant about. You do not know what the purpose of the game is (or that it is a game) and you would have no idea of a world outside of the game.

Consider now the following propositions uttered by some pieces:

1. Bc4 Bc5
2. A Bishop always moves diagonally.
3. Black and White move alternately, moving only one piece at a time.
4. A pawn arriving at the last line is transformed into a Queen.
5. Black pieces are better than white pieces.
6. All pieces are equal.
7. A Bishop is worth 3.5 pawns.
8. The object of the game is to kill the opposing King.
9. The object of the game is to make as many moves as possible without capturing an opposing piece.
10. One should always make the best move possible.

The first proposition obviously makes sense. It describes in common notation the moves of the two Bishops. While they are not really elementary propositions since they depend on absolute space and so violate the independency requirement, they are as close as one can get to describing reality unambiguously.

The next two propositions are tricky. They follow by induction from the observed facts. But what is the status of induction? Wittgenstein says that the law of induction is "obviously a proposition with sense" (T 6.31) and thus cannot be a logical law. Now, that is a rather lame argument, why does he not consider the possibility that it is nonsense? At least the propositions can be falsified, as 3 indeed is due to castling. Let us say these propositions are somewhere between sense and nonsense.

Proposition 4 is true on a meta level, it is just a rule, but from within the game, if it had never happened, there is no foundation for the claim, so it qualifies as rubbish nonsense.

Propositions 5 to 7 are nonsensical as long as there is no framework available that provides criteria for the claims.

Such a framework could be given by the hypotheses of 8 and 9. These do not follow by induction. Even if it could be observed that the King gets trapped in every game, it does not follow that it is the object of the game to go after the opposing King. Hypothesis 9 is equally valid. Both are nonsensical assumptions, but without such an assumption it would not be possible to make a meaningful move. These hypotheses have a heuristic value. If proposition 8 were true *then* proposition 7 becomes immediately meaningful, and more it would be part of a heuristic method to evaluate the position of a game and would thus help into deciding which move to make.

If the pieces accept hypotheses 8 and if all the rules were known, they could in theory come up with a perfect game. But that would still leave the question unanswered why they should make the effort.

This brings us to proposition 10, which is nonsense of the highest degree. It does not gain sense on a meta level. But just because it is nonsense it does not mean that the pieces - or we for that matter - do not live by such a principle, even if only by implication.

#### 5. Conclusion

Is it true what Wittgenstein says that we should only say what can be said? And is it true that natural science says only what can be said? (T 6.53) When Democritus suggested the existence of atoms, how could that not have been nonsense? When Pauli postulated the existence of the Neutrino, he had good reasons to do so, but in what sense was it not nonsensical? Many would agree that the Copenhagen interpretation is nonsense or the many-worlds interpretation but is it not science? The distinction between sense and nonsense is an important one, but in many cases it is impossible and also unwise to avoid making nonsensical assumptions.

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# PI 117: A Problem for Therapeutic Readings of Later Wittgenstein?

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## Abstract

In recent years, so-called “therapeutic” readings have centered on the claim that Wittgenstein’s treatment of questions involving ‘meaning’ should not be seen as playing a foundational role for his project of dissolving philosophical problems by clarifying the grammar of expressions. As they argue, the dissolution of problems involving ‘meaning’ is of no special relevance for this method as such. Now in PI §117, Wittgenstein is bringing in his criticism of the “atmosphere” conception of meaning – which he links directly to this method. Assuming the widespread view that what should be pitted against this “atmosphere” conception are remarks clarifying the grammar of ‘meaning’, the problem confronting therapeutic readings is that the clarification of the grammar of this particular word appears to assume yet a special relevance for this method. I will show how this dilemma can be avoided by reconsidering the role of this clarification for the debunking of such misconceptions.

In recent years, so-called “therapeutic” readings of Wittgenstein have centered on the claim that Wittgenstein should not be seen primarily as a *philosopher of language*. What these readings have rejected is the view that Wittgenstein’s main concern – early or late – was with providing answers to questions of the type “How does language hook on to the world?” or “What are the preconditions of meaningful language use?” As they take it, Wittgenstein’s main concern had always been that of finding ways of dissolving philosophical problems – which ways do involve asking ourselves what we mean by our words. As they argue, the problems epitomized in questions such as “What is the meaning of a word?” must themselves be seen as *particular* problems, to be dissolved by clarifying the grammar of the expressions involved. In this “criss-cross” or “anti-hierarchical” view of Wittgenstein’s philosophy, grammatical remarks central to the dissolution of such particular problems – such as “the meaning of a word is its use in the language” or “rule-following is a practice” – are not taken to have a special relevance to the dissolution of *any other* problem by means of grammatical clarification.

Now in §117, Wittgenstein criticizes a certain idea about the meaning of words – namely, the idea that the meaning of a word is something which the word carries with it like an atmosphere into every context of use. And from the context of this remark it appears to be clear that Wittgenstein thinks that his criticism of this idea is directly relevant to the method which he outlined just one section before – namely, bringing words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use. The problem I see for therapeutic readings of Wittgenstein is this: If they follow the widespread view that what should be pitted against this “atmosphere” conception of meaning are remarks clarifying the grammar of the word ‘meaning’ – remarks such as “the meaning of a word is its use in the language” – how can they still hold that the clarification of the grammar of this particular word is of no special relevance for the method of grammatical clarification in general? In the following, I wish to show how this dilemma can be avoided by reconsidering the role of remarks on the grammar of ‘meaning’ for the debunking of such misconceptions.

I will start by giving a brief introduction to therapeutic readings’ “anti-hierarchical” (or “criss-cross”) view of Wittgenstein’s philosophy. Next, I will outline how Wittgenstein connects his method of grammatical clarification to his criticism of the “atmosphere” conception of meaning in §116/117. Then, I will show how the problem that Wittgenstein’s grammatical remark “The meaning of a word is its use in the language” might thus appear to play a general

role which on the other hand it shouldn’t play can be avoided. This, as I will argue, can be achieved by our coming to see that the idea that these general misconceptions can at all be debunked by grammatical remarks about ‘meaning’ is actually incoherent.

Let us start with what therapeutic readings have to say about the role of problems involving ‘meaning’ for the whole of Wittgenstein’s philosophy. As I said before, an earmark of these readings is the rejection of the view that Wittgenstein’s main concern – early or late – was with providing answers to questions of the type “How does language hook on to the world?” or “What are the preconditions of meaningful language use?” What these readings instead insist on is that Wittgenstein’s main concern had always been that of finding ways of dissolving philosophical problems – which ways do 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. This, as they insist, also holds for questions such as “What is the meaning of a word?” – also the problems epitomized in such questions must themselves be seen as *particular* problems, to be dissolved by clarifying the grammar of the expressions involved (cf. e.g. Kuusela 2008, 157-8, Diamond 2004, 213). Take as an example Wittgenstein’s famous dictum “the meaning of a word is its use in the language”. Therapeutic readings hold that this remark, rather than constituting an *answer* to the question “What is the meaning of a word?”, is actually designed to *dissolve* a specific problem involving the expression ‘meaning of a word / name’ – by reminding us that one use we would make of the expression ‘meaning of a word’ in actual circumstances is to use it in the sense of ‘use of the word’ (rather than in the sense of ‘what the word stands for’) (cf. Conant 1999, 1-2). This means that therapeutic readings reject the view that the dissolution of problems involving ‘to mean’ (or ‘to follow a rule’) were something which mattered to the dissolution of *any other* philosophical problem by means of the method of grammatical clarification (cf. e.g. Diamond 2004, 207, 208-11, 213, Kuusela 2008, 65-9, esp. 99-102, also 215-28).

Let us then turn to *Philosophical Investigations* §116/117. In §116, Wittgenstein writes:

When philosophers use a word – “knowledge”, “being”, “object”, “I”, “proposition”, “sentence”, “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 meta-physical to their everyday use.

And then, immediately afterwards, in §117, Wittgenstein continues:

You say to me: 'You understand this expression, don't you? Well then – I am using it in the meaning you are familiar with.' As if the meaning 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.

In this section immediately following his programmatic statement of §116, Wittgenstein mentions an idea about the meaning of words and then criticizes it – namely, the idea that the meaning of a word is something which the word carries with it like an atmosphere into every context of use. (This idea is sometimes called the "atmosphere conception" of meaning.) Now from the context of this remark one thing appears to be clear: that Wittgenstein thinks that his criticism of this idea is directly relevant to the method which he outlined just one section before – namely, bringing words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use. It appears that our being in the grip of this conception were something which makes us not mind such everyday uses – and that the debunking of this misconception is something which will help us taking to heart Wittgenstein's methodological question of how words are actually used in the language-game which is their original home.

Now it is a widespread idea among commentators that what Wittgenstein thought should be pitted against misconception of this sort are remarks clarifying the grammar of the word 'meaning' – i.e., remarks such as "the meaning of a word is its use in the language" (cf. e.g. Hacker 2005, 15, also 74, 129, 174/5, Glock 1995, 88, 376-7, 44, 260). However, it is not immediately clear that this view could be endorsed by therapeutic readings of Wittgenstein's later philosophy. For if Wittgenstein thought his criticism of the atmosphere conception of meaning to be directly relevant to his method of clarifying the uses of words – in that it dealt with something that makes us not mind such uses –, and a clarification of the grammar of 'meaning' were the thing to be pitted against this conception, would not the clarification of the grammar of this particular word assume some kind of foundational role for this method in general? It appears that claiming this would be an outright denial of the anti-hierarchical view of Wittgenstein's philosophy outlined above.

On the other hand, isn't it a very straightforward idea that the atmosphere conception of meaning of §117 *should* be dispelled first and foremost by clarifying the use of 'meaning'? In what remains, I wish to show that this idea is actually not as coherent as it might first appear. As I wish to demonstrate now, there is an internal problem with the thought that grammatical reminders such as "the meaning of a word is its use in the language" could play a privileged role in debunking the atmosphere conception of meaning that Wittgenstein mentions in §117. As I will conclude, this should shift our view on the dilemma that therapeutic readings appear to be facing here.

Speaking on a general level, the reason why I see a problem with the idea that the atmosphere conception of meaning which Wittgenstein mentions in §117 could be

dispelled by reminders of actual uses of the word 'meaning' is the following: On the one hand, we are reading "meaning is use" as an answer to the question after an *actual use* someone would make of the word 'meaning' – and on the other, we are taking the atmosphere conception of meaning to be something which makes us not mind *actual uses* of words. To see my point, let us consider Wittgenstein's interlocutor of §117. Let us imagine that, after our having come to the conclusion – like Wittgenstein – that he seems to think that the meaning of a word is something like an atmosphere which the word carries with it into every kind of application, we would tell him: "But think of uses which you would make of the expression 'meaning of a word' in actual circumstances! Then you will see that this conception of meaning is not truly yours at all." Now let us imagine that he would respond: "Maybe you're right. Maybe I should really take into account actual uses which I would make of the expression 'meaning of a word'. What uses were you thinking of?" My question is: would we say of someone who is reacting like this that he had at all been adhering to the atmosphere conception of meaning? It seems we would not – since we had taken this conception as making people not mind actual uses of words, yet here, someone is expressing his readiness to mind actual uses of a word – namely, 'meaning'. What this question shows, as I take it, is that the idea which we are discussing in fact involves a regress structure: Grammatical reminders such as that one use we make of the expression 'meaning of a word' is to use it in the sense of 'use of the word' can effect the result of freeing someone from the grip of the atmosphere conception of meaning only if this result has already been achieved (cf. also Gieseewetter 2014, 80-83).

Of course, the following question immediately presents itself: If the idea that someone can be removed from the grip of the atmosphere conception by making him mind a specific use which he would make of the word 'meaning' lacks the coherence that we thought it had, how can this goal at all be achieved? For an answer, we need just go back to our example. If it wasn't the reminder of a specific use of the word 'meaning' – such as that one use we make of the expression 'meaning of a word' is to use it in the sense of 'use of the word' – which had removed our interlocutor from the grip of the atmosphere conception of meaning, what had? Well, it must have been our saying to him: "But think of uses which you would make of the expression 'meaning of a word' in actual circumstances!" For after all, it was *that* which prompted him to respond: "Maybe I should really take into account actual uses which I would make of the expression 'meaning of a word' – What uses were you thinking of?" So one of the things that *can* move someone away from the atmosphere conception of meaning is asking him to consider actual uses of the word 'meaning'. But what should be clear now is that it need not be actual uses of the word '*meaning*' which he would have to consider. For of course, we would also say of him that he had freed himself from the grip of the atmosphere conception of meaning if he were to express his readiness to consider actual uses of the word 'knowledge', the word 'I', or the word 'being'. That is, even if in the scenario of my argument, the trick in moving our interlocutor away from the atmosphere conception of meaning had been done by our saying to him "But think of uses which you would make of the expression '*meaning of a word*' in actual circumstances!", the same thing could equally well have been achieved by saying to him: "But think of uses which you would make of the word '*knowledge*' in actual circumstances!" The answer to our question is then this: Any grammatical remark – through its issuing an invitation to mind a *use* we would make of a word in *actual circum-*

*stances* ("But think of uses...!") – must be thought of as being equally able to counter the atmosphere conception of meaning mentioned by Wittgenstein in §117. That is, invitations to mind uses which we would make of the word 'knowledge', the word 'I', or the word 'being' in actual circumstances must all be thought of as being able to move someone away from the atmosphere conception of meaning in the same way as remarks on the grammar of the word 'meaning'. Remarks on the grammar of the word 'meaning' – such as "The meaning of a word is its use in the language" – cannot be thought of as playing a *privileged role* in doing this (cf. also Gieseewetter 2014, 83-85).

If this is right, then the dilemma which therapeutic readings appeared to be facing is not a real one. The dilemma was this: Given the role that Wittgenstein assigns the "atmosphere" conception of meaning in §116/117, and given that what should be pitted against this misconception are remarks clarifying the grammar of the word 'meaning', how can we avoid concluding that these kind of remarks – remarks such as "the meaning of a word is its use in the language" – must be taken as having a foundational role for Wittgenstein's later philosophy? However, if remarks on the grammar of 'meaning' indeed have no privileged role to play in debunking the atmosphere conception of meaning, then the dilemma that they must play a general role which

on the other hand they shouldn't play is avoided. We are again free to view problems involving 'meaning' as entirely *local* problems, as therapeutic readings have been arguing.

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# A Metaphilosophy Without Truth? A Realist Reading of Wittgenstein's Notion of Grammar

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## Abstract

In different contexts, Wittgenstein holds the view that philosophy can and should 'describe' language by drawing artificial distinctions and imagining alternative language-games. It is then quite tempting to conclude that he conceives philosophy as a merely therapeutic activity, which does not necessarily aim to provide a true picture of the actual grammar of our language. The main goal of this paper is to challenge this strong therapeutic reading by showing that the use of fiction is not incompatible with the idea of a true and accurate description of our ordinary language.

Although the definition of the concept of philosophy has always been a highly controversial issue, this metaphilosophical question has recently become more and more important for several philosophers (Williamson: 2007; 2013; Horwich: 2012). In the last decade, one of the main issues that has divided philosophers interested in metaphilosophical questions concerns the very nature of philosophical statements. More precisely, what is at stake is the claim made by a large array of philosophers that what they say can be true or false as in any other scientific theory. Rejecting such a view, some philosophers have tried to develop a 'deflationist' approach, according to which philosophical statements do not describe metaphysical or fundamental facts and, for this reason, they cannot help us to discover new scientific truths.

That kind of 'deflationist' and 'anti-metaphysical' conception relies often, as in the case with Horwich, on a reading of the later Wittgenstein<sup>1</sup>. That interpretation is based on the idea that language is a thing so messy that the very idea of a theoretical and scientific approach is wrong-headed as far as language is concerned. In a similar vein, Oskari Kuusela and some resolute readers of Wittgenstein like Rupert Reed (2005) have sketched a far more radical version of this idea. According to that account, the goal of philosophy is not to say something true or substantial about the nature of language, but to *construct* models and objects of comparison in order to help us to be conscious of the complexity of our language and dissolve philosophical and nonsensical questions<sup>2</sup>. In this respect, the goal of Wittgenstein would be purely deflationist and therapeutic in the sense that Wittgenstein does not want to give any substantive or general account about the true nature of language. Philosophy is not an accurate theory of the nature of language, but a therapeutic activity that can, in some

cases, state 'trivial' and 'non-scientific' truths that will discourage philosophers to try to give a theoretical account of the true nature of language.

The aim of this paper is to show that the idea of a philosophical grammar does not completely exclude the ideal of truth endorsed by traditional philosophy. Roughly speaking, I would like to make the point that a grammatical remark cannot be correct without being, in some non-trivial sense of the term, 'true'. As we will see later on, such a view presupposes to take very seriously the original account of the relation of reality and imagination put forward by the later Wittgenstein. My argument will then be divided into two different parts. 1/ A brief account of Wittgenstein's notion of grammar will be fleshed out. 2/ I will try to unfold Wittgenstein's conception of 'fiction' and 'imagination' that allows him to argue that invented grammatical descriptions can, despite their fictive character, have a legitimate claim to be true.

## 1. The *Big Typescript* on Language, Grammar and Description

Wittgenstein's use of the notion of grammar is highly complicated and it is far from obvious that a simple definition of that notion can be provided. Although grammar has a technical sense in Wittgenstein's writings, this notion is slightly ambiguous. As a matter of fact, one may trace back the debate between therapeutic and realist readings of Wittgenstein to the constitutive ambivalence of what the author of *Philosophical Investigations* means by grammar.

From the outset, Wittgenstein's position seems to be fairly simple: a word has a meaning because it belongs to a 'grammatical system'. According to that account, grammar fixes the meaning of a word through a set of 'rules' determining how, and in which circumstances, it should be used (*PO, Wittgenstein's lectures*, 51). As Wittgenstein puts it in the *Big Typescript*: "I could call 'meaning' the location (*Ort*) of a word in a grammar (*Grammatik*)". (TS213, 31) The arbitrary character of grammatical rules is one of their essential features. Granted that grammatical rules are the product of an arbitrary 'convention', they cannot be said to be *true* or *false* (TS213, 236) in any substantial sense of the word. Contrary to 'rules of cooking' (TS213, 235), grammatical rules are 'autonomous' and 'independent' of reality for they are not the product of some natural fact about the world or our psychological consciousness. Then, since there is no necessary correlation between the grammatical structure of our language and the natural world we live in, it is quite natural to conclude, like Witt-

<sup>1</sup> According to Horwich, contrary to T-philosophers (i.e. philosophers who share the traditional conception of philosophy as a theoretical and scientific endeavour), Wittgenstein thinks that there is no philosophical truth (Horwich 2012, 2). Such a view implies that Wittgenstein does not hold any theory about what is meaning, language or reality. When Wittgenstein claims that meaning is determined by the use of the word, he is then not committed to any kind of substantial theory about the nature of meaning. (Horwich 2012, 114-115).

<sup>2</sup> Oskari Kuusela is not a resolute reader, but he holds the view that Wittgenstein has tried to develop a completely non-dogmatic conception of philosophy. This idea implies that philosophical grammar consists essentially in developing fictive examples that are object comparisons that can help us to grasp some aspect of the reality, even though they match more or less with our actual use of the language: "This brings us to Wittgenstein's suggestion that instead of being used as the basis for a philosophical thesis, an example should be comprehended as an *object of comparison*. In this role the example is employed to characterize the objects of investigation by way of comparison, noting *both* similarities and differences between the example and the cases modelled on it. The example, that is to say, is used to draw attention to certain characteristics of the objects of investigation, but to what extent the latter actually corresponds to the former is left open." (Kuusela 2008, 124-125)

Wittgenstein does, that "grammar can't be justified by reality" (TS213, 183).

However, Wittgenstein does not stick to that narrow understanding of 'grammar'; he also calls 'grammar' any description of our use of language. In this respect, any description of any grammatical rule or 'linguistic action' (TS213, 191) can be considered as part of what the *Big Typescript* names the 'book of grammar' (*Grammatik*) (TS213, 115). Thus, if we take the word in its broader sense, "grammar is the description (*Beschreibung*) of the language" (TS213, 192). Grammar can therefore be apprehended as a *description of the use* of an expression that will function as an explanation of its meaning. Framed in those terms, the notion of grammar seems to hint to a realist metaphilosophy according to which philosophical problems are solved by an *accurate description* of some *grammatical or linguistic facts* about our *actual use of the language*. No matter how unorthodox such a view is, this reading principle lines up with some of Wittgenstein's formulation where he claims that philosophy aims at rejecting 'errors', 'myths' and 'false analogies' on which relies most philosophical anxieties.

This blunt formulation of Wittgenstein's metaphilosophy is nevertheless misleading for several reasons: one of which is the fact that Wittgenstein is committed to the view that every description is the product of a 'decision' (*Entscheidung*)<sup>3</sup> provided that it is an incomplete 'allusion' to the real grammatical structure of the language. Roughly speaking, meaning of an expression is always produced in contrast (*Gegensatz*) with other expressions. Therefore, a description can explain the meaning of an expression as long as it helps us to draw a distinction with other expressions. Alternatively put, descriptions are *artefacts* or *tools* that aim to draw an artificial distinction that might help to clarify the meaning of some words<sup>4</sup>. Wittgenstein goes far in this direction since he seems to think that even mere 'fictions' can count as a legitimate 'grammatical description' (as long as they make a grammatical contrast). In order to explain this idea, Wittgenstein makes an analogy with the *fiction* of the social contract that is nevertheless useful since it helps us to clarify the actual structure of our society (TS213, 196).

According to Wittgenstein, grammatical descriptions can be fictive because philosophers can invent new *notations* (TS213, 244) that will improve our understanding of our language. Notations correspond to an alternative language that can nevertheless be illuminating if we compare it to our actual language. In other words, a grammatical description can be an alternative mode of expression taking its value not from its exactness, but from the fact that an imperceptible grammatical contrast becomes plain and obvious and allows us to find our way about in the labyrinth of the grammar of our language.

## 2. Fiction, Model and the Accuracy of Grammatical Descriptions

Certainly, this metaphilosophical use of imagination raises a major objection: if a grammatical description can be invented and constructed, does that mean that philosophers should not care about truth and the exactness of their de-

scription? Does Wittgenstein's metaphilosophy move us to conclude that the only criterion that should be used in order to evaluate the legitimacy of a grammatical description is its therapeutic effect? Such a reading is quite problematic since it seems to push Wittgenstein in the direction of a poorly attracting form of relativism. As this section will establish soon enough, this therapeutic and relativist interpretation relies on a misunderstanding of Wittgenstein's account of imagination and possibility.

According to Wittgenstein's approach, philosophers can forge new objects of comparison and intimate to consider language as made of language-games or as a kind of 'primitive language'. Philosophers can even propose us to imagine fictive language games like Wittgenstein does at the very beginning of *Philosophical Investigations*. It is thus very tempting to think that philosophers, with their imaginary scenarios, are able to go beyond the very limits of our actual language. However, such a view is false and misleading since philosophy, like any meaningful discourse, has to follow the grammar of our language. This passage is famous, but its learning is quite easy to forget when we philosophize: "One might think: if philosophy speaks of the use of the word 'philosophy', there must be a second-order (*zweiter Ordnung*) philosophy. But that's not the way it is; it is rather, like the case of orthography, which deals with the word 'orthography' among others without then being second order" (*PU*, §121). No matter what the word we are spelling is, the rules of orthography remain the same. Likewise, even though philosophers are interested in complicated notions and deal with fictions and possibilities, the grammatical rules of language have not changed. Wittgenstein's methodological stance can be resumed as follows: philosophy should manage a way to hold a meaningful discourse about fictions and possibility because grammatical rules of language cannot be suspended or reformed.

At first glance, it seems difficult to see how the philosopher can follow the actual grammar of the language since he often makes use of fictive scenarios and forges imaginary languages or artificial notations. As I have already mentioned, such a perplexity stems from an inaccurate understanding of the articulation of actuality and possibility. When it comes to grammar, it does not really make sense to draw a distinction between actuality and possibility because 'possibility' is an *actual word* determined by the *actual grammar* of our language: "If someone says, 'If our language had not this grammar, it could not express these facts' – it should be asked what 'could' means here" (*PU*, §497). Differently put, when a philosopher envisages new possibilities or imagines new language-games, he does not transgress the grammatical rules of our actual language, but he tries to put into relief the connection between the grammar of our notion of 'possibility' and the grammar of a different concept such as 'language', 'meaning' or 'expression'. For instance, when I try to invent a new language, I do not try really to forge a new language in order to go beyond the limits of my own language. As Wittgenstein underlines it explicitly, the goal is rather to have a clearer view of the grammar of my language by describing what is the grammatical relation connecting 'language' to 'invention' (*PU*, §492). To sum things up, 'fiction', 'invention', 'construction' are words belonging to our language and they can be used, like any other words, to achieve a better representation of the actual grammatical rules of our language. It is then false to think that there is any kind of contradiction between the idea of description of the actual grammar of our language and the use of imagination as a philosophical method.

<sup>3</sup> As Wittgenstein puts it: "If a description were not the result of a decision, it would have nothing to say." (TS213, 93)

<sup>4</sup> Here is Wittgenstein's wording of this idea: "We are trying to free ourselves from philosophical anxieties, and we do this by emphasizing distinctions that the grammar of everyday language obscures. By retracing in bold the rules that are written in faded ink, as it were, and other such things; his can indeed make it seem as if we were reforming language" (TS213, 256).

## Conclusion

Even though Wittgenstein claims that grammatical descriptions are the product of a decision and can be partly fictive, this does not imply that they can be inaccurate or false. On the contrary, fictive scenarios or invented notions constitute a genuine contribution to a better description of the actual grammar of our language. For this reason, the fact that Wittgenstein describes philosophical devices he uses as 'model', 'artificial distinction' or 'object of comparison' does not contradict necessarily the idea that the goal of philosophy is to provide a true and accurate picture of our language.

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# Manifest in Behaviour

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## Abstract

"An 'inner process' stand in need of outward criteria" asserts Wittgenstein. Mind is made manifest in behaviour. But manifest to whom? This paper discusses how we should understand the Wittgensteinian concept of criterial access to minded life, not as regards our understanding of animal minds but in the context of interactions amongst and between non-linguistic animals themselves.

## 1. Introduction

"An 'inner process' stand in need of outward criteria" (Wittgenstein 2009, §580) asserts Wittgenstein. But how should we interpret this claim in its application to non-linguistic animals?

My focus is not on the issue of whether non-linguistic animals have psychological states and what we linguistic humans can say about them (cf. Bavidge & Ground 1994, Ground 2013) But rather on the question of what non-linguistic animals make of each other's psychological states and what we should say about that. In particular, should we think that the Wittgensteinian account of behaviour as criterial has any role to play in what we make of the relations and interactions between non-linguistic animals?

## 2. Ethological Context

It would be over-optimistic to claim that the question of whether non-linguistic animals are capable of psychological states at all is completely settled (Dawkins 2012). Still the extensive attention given by the ethological sciences to the question of what animals make of each other's states seems certainly to assume that they are, as we may say, minded and that the existence and nature of their psychological, cognitive and affective lives is capable of empirical investigation.

The problem is that pretty much the whole debate in the ethological sciences is framed in terms of a paradigm which it is the point of Wittgenstein's investigations into meaning and mind to reject wholesale and at which the concept of criterial access is aimed in particular. This paradigm is the Theory Theory of Mind (for a discussion see Bavidge & Ground 2009): broadly the idea that since psychological states – 'inner processes' – are necessarily hidden and unobservable, a creature, if any of its own psychological states take the psychological states of other creatures as their object, must needs be in possession of some schema of inferences. A schema which allows it to acquire beliefs and make judgements about the "inner" attitudes and perspectives of other creatures based only on the "outer" behavioural evidence that is available to it.

This paradigm had led ethologists to make claims which, to Wittgensteinians, will seem very strange indeed. Thus, sceptics (for a survey see Vaart & Hemelrijk 2012) complain that experimental designs are unable to distinguish animal "mind-readers" from animal "behaviour-readers" (Lurz & Krachun 2011). Cheney and Seyfarth, conclude their study of vervet monkeys with the claim that:

"In sum, many fundamental differences in social behaviour between human and non-human primates depend on

the presence, or lack, of a theory of mind: whether individuals can recognize their own knowledge and attribute mental states to others. Apparently monkeys see the world as composed of things that act, not things that think and feel." (Cheney/Seyfarth 1992, 365)

Such lab-coat Cartesianism will seem to Wittgensteinians in rather urgent need of philosophical therapy and a critical step in that treatment will be to dissolve the confused contrast between "mind" and "behaviour", "inner" and "outer" through the deployment of concept of a criterion. But the question then is how fit this Wittgensteinian notion is to travel across the species barrier between human and non-human, enlanguaged and un-enlanguaged.

## 3. A Principle of Parity

To make that crossing, we should, it seems to me, pack with us a Principle of Parity viz.:

PP: philosophical arguments concerning mind and meaning that are compelling in the human case, are, in the absence of arguments to the contrary, also so in the non-human case.

That is not to say, of course, that there could not be arguments to the contrary. But they have to be arguments. They have in particular to be more than just reassertions that human beings are linguistic and others animals not. If being enlanguaged makes all the difference we have to show how being enlanguaged, whatever we mean by that, hooks up with the issues to make that difference. We cannot be Wittgensteinian about mind and meaning in the case of humans but Cartesian (or Russellian) in the case of non-linguistic animals.

## 4. Criteria

In general, critical interpretation of the concept of psychological criteria has moved from an early, essentially epistemological, conception to that of a connection, variously called "conceptual", "internal" or "constitutive" aligned with a defeasibility condition. The contrast between criterial and non-criterial behaviour contrast is mapped, somewhat uncertainly, on that between expression and symptom: behaviour such as grimacing and groaning, writhing and weeping is contrasted with blinks and blushes, excretions and jerks. Uncertainly, because while all expressive behaviour is criterial, it is not clear that all criterial behaviour is expressive. An uncertainty compounded when the Wittgensteinian contrast between expression and symptom cross-cut by the ethological distinction between signal and display (c.f Tomasello 2008).



For the current purpose, we can put aside such issues and isolate the more particular one of whether criterial access as such has any role to play in the understanding of the lives of non-linguistic animals as they relate to each other. A default position, I think, is that whereas the Wittgensteinian story about criterial access to psychological states is true of our relation to non-linguistic animals, it cannot be true of the relation of non-linguistic animals to each other. I want to suggest that this default position, which arises from standard interpretations of criterial access, is unstable.

The case against criterial access to psychological states amongst and between non-linguistic animals might be reconstructed as follows. A criterion in the semi-technical Wittgensteinian sense should be understood as lending support to a claim or judgement or ascription about the psychological state of another: it is, as Hacker claims, “a standard by which to judge something” (Honderich 2005). But claims, judgements and ascriptions can only be made by enlanguaged creatures. Not being enlanguaged, other animals do not make such epistemological, truth-sensitive moves. And so criteria can play no role for them.

However this way of objecting to non-human criterial access that it looks, right from the outset, altogether too epistemological and for that reason not recognizably Wittgensteinian. Criteria look like a kind of super-evidence: a magic bullet to defeat the other minds sceptic. We might then deepen the objection by claiming that criteria are established “by convention” or through teaching or some other way of getting to the idea that the criterial support is “partly constitutive of the meaning of the expression for whose application it is a criterion”. Thus, we say, wincing, groaning etc. belong to our concept of pain, are part of the meaning of “pain”.

Now we run the same argument. Not being enlanguaged, other animals are not capable of concepts in the relevant sense and so criterial access can play no role for them.

Note that this position may be consistent with holding that non-linguistic animals do in fact have psychological states. That they give expression to such states in characteristic ways and that we humans can make true or false judgements about whether they have such states. We can maintain too that a condition of the possibility of those judgements – our judgements – is our own “primitive reactions”, say to pain behaviour. No doubt sometimes we will be fooled by misleading surface similarities between their expressive behaviour and ours. But in many cases the similarities will be genuine and we can recognise, acknowledge and describe the animal’s psychological state. The position then will be that that the argument from analogy is an illegitimate way of solving the problem of other human minds. But that analogy has traction in the case of other species minds because, insofar as their behaviour is relevantly similar to our own, it will get taken up into the concepts we develop, establish and use amongst ourselves and thus license our application of the relevant concepts to them. In this way we might maintain the thought that in both the human and the animal case, there are no psychological states that are not capable of being manifested in behaviour and yet hold that criterial access is for and between us alone.

## 5. Glock

Some Wittgensteinians travel, as they see it, yet more adventurously in this territory and claim that the criterial move

licenses, amongst the ascription to non-linguistic animals of psychological states, the ascription of what deserve to be called “thoughts”. Thus Glock, rejecting those who tie the possibility of thought to its linguistic expression – a position he calls “lingualism” – contends that:

animals are capable of having thoughts of a simple kind, namely those that can be expressed in non-linguistic behaviour. (Glock 2006)

holding that in thinking about animal minds we should:

not appeal to phenomena – whether mental or neurophysiological – that cannot be manifested in behavior even in principle. (Glock 2006)

– a stricture he identifies with taking up a third person perspective.

On Glock’s view, the essential Wittgensteinian position on mind and meaning can thus be preserved and put to good use, both supporting our common sense ascriptions about animals and, more generally, by removing Cartesian assumptions which appear to make a third person stance impossible, ensuring the possibility of Ethology as a science. Thus the psychological states of non-linguistic animals, including simple thoughts, are made criterially manifest to us in their behaviour and are open to empirical investigation.

## 6. The Instability

However what is left uncertain by the default position, even with Glock’s extension, is what we are to say about whether such psychological states, including simple thoughts, are made manifest to and between animals themselves. Once we have got pass the question of whether the dog thinks that the cat is up the tree, is it the case – are we to say – that the cat thinks that the dog thinks that she – the cat – is up the tree?

But this surely is the issue that matters. It is this issue – what one non-linguistic creature makes of another non-linguistic creature’s psychological states – which is the subject of extensive empirical investigation. This is the territory currently occupied by the Theory of Mind which, in the human case, it is the purpose of the criterial move to make unnecessary.

The default position on criterial access is therefore, I think, unstable. Either non-linguistic animals do not have criterial access to each other or they do. Given the current state of the debate, we must say that if they do not, then they either have no such access to all to each other’s psychological states or they have inferential access, licensed by a Theory of Mind. It seems absurd to say that they have no access to each other states. But it violates a Principle of Parity for Wittgensteinians to say they must use a Theory of Mind whereas we do not. A violation compounded if our account of criterial access in the human case is underwritten, as it surely is in Wittgenstein, by an emphasis on our own animal nature at the same time as we deny such access in the case of other animals. It follows that the Wittgensteinian notion of criterial access must be applicable to linguistic animals too. But then we should understand the notion of criterial access accordingly. To that end, either we accept that, to the required extent, non-linguistic animals must be capable of the relevant concepts or we hold that criterial access does not primarily operate through the formation of concepts but through a route which is available to the non-linguistic.

## 7. Conclusions

We should not hold that the scope of Wittgenstein's claim that psychological concepts are rooted in our shared and interactive lives is restricted to the human case. It is not because "inner processes" are human that they stand in need of criteria, but because they are psychological. So long as we are not in denial about the non-human or non-linguistic psychological, the claim applies, via a Principle of Parity, to non-human animals as well. In this respect, animal psychological states are no more and no less "inner" than our own.

One consequence of accepting that some kind of non-inferential, non-propositional criterial access is at the foundation of human and animal interactions alike, is the live possibility that non-linguistic animals are manifesting to each other much more complex psychological states than we currently ascribe to them. We are unable, at present, to ascribe such states to them, not because their "inner states" are hidden from us because such behavioural manifestations, visible between them, are, at present, invisible to us.

This is a matter of our not seeing what is happening but also of our not seeing what is not happening. The behaviour sufficient to underpin our ascriptions of each other is not just a matter of what we do, but also what we refrain to do. As Wittgenstein tells us, the significance of psychologically criterial is diverse, defeasible and very highly contextual. By the Principle of Parity, this applies to other animals too. Thus criterially significant behaviour has a place in a behavioural repertoire and its absence may be as criterially significant to interactants as its presence. But if we are unfamiliar with the species repertoire, we will not even see the absence of that behaviour and so will not, as we should, make the relevant ascription.

What this means is that anthropomorphism is not just a matter of illegitimately ascribing too much to non-human animals because of misleading overlaps between our behaviour. But also, and perhaps more commonly, of looking in the wrong places, at the wrong scale, or in too broad or too narrow a context.

However, this is a possibility for which we should made philosophical house space. After all, it is built into the possibility of Ethology as a science that it is capable of making discoveries and our current ignorance is a condition of that possibility. The contextual complexity of criterial access in and between con-specifics is precisely the kind of thing to which Ethology, particular Field Ethology, is meant to sensitise us and render in objective form. In our understanding of species-specific behaviour, "light dawns gradually over the whole" (Wittgenstein/Wright 2001, sec.141).

What this also means is that the force of criterial access in the philosophy of mind does not derive from a metaphysical commitment or an epistemic requirement but from the actual felt interactions between living creatures. If criterial access has a semantic role in concept formation or a second order epistemic value to observers and metaphysical implications for theory-builders, it is only because it has a first order value in establishing and maintaining relationships between agents. So the constitutive character of criteria arises through direct interactions and mutual reciprocity in those interactions. In our case, it is in such contexts

that our psychological concepts are acquired and deployed. But in their primary and foundational role they are actively and continuously forged through the dynamics of second person interaction and it is this that enables them to play any epistemic or conceptual role. So criterial access is primarily and foundationally a matter of social phenomenology (Zahavi/Overgaard 2008).

It will follow from this that we should concede, in principle, that there are psychological states possessed by other animals, and which are criterially manifest in their behaviour, one to another, about which, as a matter of fact, we will never come to know. That, mark, is a very different matter from saying that animals possess psychological states about which, in principle, we can never know. But the replacement of philosophical puzzlement with the recognition of the difficulty of the empirical problems we actually face seems to be the mark of a useful philosophical inquiry and in particular, of one that takes its inspiration from the philosophy of Wittgenstein.

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# Ein Argument gegen den moralischen Relativismus bei Wittgenstein?

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## Abstract

Eine Beobachtung des späten Wittgenstein lautet, dass Begründungen an gewissen Überzeugungen bzw. Verhaltensweisen an ein Ende gelangen, die selbst wiederum nicht weiter begründbar sind. Dieser Gedanke führt schnell zur Behauptung, dass Überzeugungen nur stets relativ zu gewissen Annahmen begründet sind. Allerdings findet sich in Wittgensteins Ausführungen auch eine antiskeptische Überlegung, die diesem Schluss entgegensteht. Sie lautet, dass das Verstehen von Äußerungen voraussetzt, diese in einem Netz von Überzeugungen verorten zu können. Der Beitrag besteht im Versuch, zu zeigen, dass sich auf dieser Grundlage auch ein Argument gegen den moralischen Relativismus gewinnen lässt.

## 1. Eine relativistische Lesart von *Über Gewißheit*

Viele der Überlegungen in *Über Gewißheit* umkreisen die Frage, auf welchen Voraussetzungen das Argumentieren beruht, also die Möglichkeit, Überzeugungen gegenüber anderen zu begründen. Diese Frage stellt sich besonders dringlich angesichts von Skeptikern, die bezweifeln, dass man jemals etwas wissen kann. Klar ist, dass man diesen Skeptikern nicht mit dem Hinweis darauf begegnen kann, dass wir uns doch vieler Überzeugungen gewiss sind, denn es gilt, dass auch diejenigen, die sich einer Sache gewiss sind, täuschen können. Subjektive Gewissheit ist keine Garantie dafür, dass wahr ist, worüber man sich gewiss ist. (Vgl. z.B. ÜG §30, 137, 174, 194) Wittgensteins Entgegnung beruht vielmehr auf der Überlegung, dass auch Skeptiker einen Grund brauchen, um zu zweifeln, und sich also auf etwas berufen müssen, dessen sie gewiss sind. (ÜG §115, 341) Diese Überlegung führt Wittgenstein zu Annahme der Existenz der sogenannten Angelsätze. Das sind solche Sätze oder Überzeugungen, deren Wahrheit wir beim Argumentieren immer schon voraussetzen. Für diese Überzeugungen gilt, dass man sie nicht ausdrücklich lernt; vielmehr werden sie von Kindern im Laufe der Erziehung einfach ungeprüft übernommen. (ÜG §94, 159) Diese Überzeugungen bilden, wie Wittgenstein schreibt, ein „Weltbild“ (vgl. ÜG §94, 162); sie sind selbst nicht der weiteren Begründung fähig, sondern bilden den Hintergrund, vor dem erst Argumentieren möglich wird. (ÜG §103-105)

Dieses Bild der Struktur unserer Überzeugungen bildet die Grundlage einer relativistischen Lesart von *Über Gewißheit*. Wenn wir ein solches Weltbild sozusagen kritiklos von unseren Eltern bzw. unserer sozialen Umgebung übernehmen müssen, dann liegt die Vermutung nahe, dass es unterschiedliche Weltbilder geben kann, und wenn das, wofür bzw. wogegen man argumentieren kann, von einem Weltbild abhängt, dann scheint doch zu gelten, dass verschiedene Weltbilder zu sehr verschiedenen Ansichten darüber führen können, was tatsächlich der Fall ist. Wittgenstein selbst thematisiert diese Befürchtung in einigen Paragraphen, etwa in folgender Bemerkung:

Ist dies nicht ganz so, wie man einem Kind den Glauben an einen Gott, oder daß es keinen Gott gibt, beibringen kann, und es je nachdem für das eine oder das andere triftig scheinende Gründe wird vorbringen können? (ÜG §107)

Die Frage, die sich angesichts der Möglichkeit sehr unterschiedlicher Weltbilder stellt, lautet, ob wir auch diejenigen durch Argumente überzeugen können, die ein Weltbild haben, das sich in fundamentaler Weise von dem unseren unterscheidet. Was ist etwa mit denjenigen, denen im Kindesalter beigebracht wurde, dass die Erde erst seit ihrer Geburt existiert, oder dass sie Regen machen können? (Vgl. ÜG §92) Kann man so jemanden mit rationalen Argumenten davon überzeugen, dass diese Überzeugungen falsch sind? Oder gilt in solchen Fällen, dass unsere Argumente keine Anknüpfungspunkte mehr finden und darum zum Scheitern verurteilt sind?

Sicher ist jedenfalls, dass auch die Überzeugungen des Weltbildes nicht ein für allemal feststehen; auch diese Sätze können einer Veränderung unterliegen. Die feststehenden Sätze des Weltbildes, so Wittgenstein, können nämlich mit einer Mythologie verglichen werden, und diese Mythologie kann auch wieder in Fluss geraten. (ÜG §96-99) Doch wie genau diese Veränderung vonstatten geht, darüber schweigt sich Wittgenstein an der entsprechenden Stelle aus. Es könnte also durchaus sein, dass solche Veränderungen sich nicht durch Argumentation, sondern eben bloß durch Überredung erzwingen lassen. Eine entsprechende Lesart legen folgende Bemerkungen nahe, in denen Wittgenstein sich fragt, was geschehe, wenn wir mit Menschen diskutierten, die ein magisches Weltbild haben und, statt sich auf die Erkenntnisse der Physik zu berufen, ein Orakel befragen:

[...] Ist es falsch, daß sie ein Orakel befragen und sich nach ihm richten? – Wenn wir dies „falsch“ nennen, gehen wir nicht schon von unserm Sprachspiel aus und *bekämpfen* das ihre? (ÜG §609)

Ich sagte, ich würde den Andern ‚bekämpfen‘, – aber würde ich ihm denn nicht *Gründe* geben? Doch; aber wie weit reichen die? Am Ende der Gründe steht die *Überredung*. (Denke daran, was geschieht, wenn Missionäre die Eingeborenen bekehren.) (ÜG §612)

Diese Bemerkungen legen eine relativistische Lesart der Überlegungen in *Über Gewißheit* nahe, der zufolge Menschen, die Weltbilder haben, die sich in fundamentaler Weise voneinander unterscheiden, bloß durch Überredung, nicht aber durch Argumentation von ihren Ansichten abgebracht werden können. (vgl. auch ÜG §262)

## 2. Eine antirelativistische Überlegung in *Über Gewißheit* und in den *Philosophischen Untersuchungen*.

Allerdings spricht meines Erachtens einiges dafür, dass die relativistische Lesart von *Über Gewißheit* nicht das letzte Wort sein muss, wie im Folgenden klar werden wird. Ein Einwand, den Wittgenstein gegen die Existenz des Skeptikers, der an allem zweifelt, ins Feld führt, lautet nämlich, dass ein solcher Skeptiker gar nicht wirklich wissen kann, wovon er spricht. (ÜG §114) Und genauso wenig, wie dieser Skeptiker sich des Sinnes seiner Worte gewiss sein kann, genauso wenig sind wir dazu in der Lage, ihn zu verstehen. (ÜG §154, 231) Diese Bemerkungen legen nahe, dass Wittgenstein ein bedeutungstheoretisches Argument gegen die Möglichkeit des radikalen Zweifels vertritt. Wie lautet dieses Argument?

Wittgensteins Überlegung nimmt ihren Ausgangspunkt erstens von der Beobachtung, dass Überzeugungen in vielfältigen Weisen miteinander in Verbindung stehen oder, in Wittgensteins Worten, ein System bilden. (ÜG §105, 141f, 248, 410, 594) Die Verbindungen der Überzeugungen zeigen sich unter anderem daran, dass das Für-wahr- bzw. Für-falsch-Halten einer Überzeugung das Für-wahr- bzw. Für-falsch-Halten vieler anderer Überzeugungen erfordert. Wenn es etwa wahr wäre, dass die Erde vor 100 Jahren noch nicht existiert hat, dann wäre unter anderem auch falsch, was in Lehrbüchern der Geografie steht und was man über Napoleon zu wissen glaubte. (ÜG §162, 183) Aufgrund dieser Verbindungen zwischen Überzeugungen ist es also nicht möglich, nur eine ganz konkrete Überzeugung bezweifeln; der Zweifel an einer konkreten Überzeugung zieht vielmehr den Zweifel an einer ganzen Reihe von anderen Überzeugungen nach sich, die mit der ersten Überzeugung zusammenhängen. Der Zweifel breitet sich also, metaphorisch gesprochen, über Teile des Systems aus. Die Behauptung Wittgensteins lautet nun, dass gewisse Zweifel, z.B. solche an den oben erwähnten Angelsätzen, gar nicht verständlich sind, weil mit diesen Zweifeln sogleich das ganze System angezweifelt werden muss. (ÜG §185) Warum aber sind solche Zweifel laut Wittgenstein gar nicht verständlich?

Sie sind laut Wittgenstein nicht verständlich, weil es zum Verstehen von Äußerungen möglich sein muss, wahre Überzeugungen zu identifizieren. Diese Ansicht drückt Wittgenstein in den folgenden Bemerkungen aus:

Man prüft an der Wahrheit meiner Aussagen mein Verständnis dieser Aussagen. (ÜG §80)

D.h.: wenn ich gewisse falsche Aussagen mache, wird es dadurch unsicher, ob ich sie verstehe, (ÜG §81)

Diese Bemerkungen verweisen auf einen Gedanken, der schon in den *Philosophischen Untersuchungen* eine Rolle spielt, und der lautet, dass die Verständigung in einer Sprache eine Übereinstimmung auch in den Urteilen voraussetzt. (Vgl. PhU §242) Wittgenstein meint damit, dass wir, um einander verstehen zu können, schon in sehr vielen Fällen in dem übereinstimmen müssen, was wir für wahr oder falsch halten. Dies zeigt sich unter anderem in Gedankenexperimenten wie dem folgenden, die davon handeln, wie wir Menschen verstehen können, die eine uns unbekannte Sprache sprechen:

Hat es Sinn zu sagen, die Menschen stimmen in bezug auf ihre Farburteile im allgemeinen überein? Wie wäre es, wenn's anders wäre? – Dieser würde sagen, die Blume sei rot, die Jener als blau anspricht, etc., etc. – Aber mit welchem Recht könnte man dann die Wörter

„rot“ und „blau“ dieser Menschen *unsere* ›Farbwörter‹ nennen? – [...] (PhU, II, 572)

Sind, was diese Menschen äußern, unsere Farbwörter? Unterstellen wir, dass es sich dabei um unsere Farbwörter handelt, dann müssen wir zugleich unterstellen, dass die meisten der beobachteten Menschen falsch liegen mit ihren Urteilen darüber, welche Farbe die Blume hat. Das aber ist, außer, unter bestimmten Umständen – etwa, wenn alle Farbenblind sind –, nicht plausibel. Denn die falschen Überzeugungen über Farben müssten viele weitere Folgen haben: Diesen Menschen etwa wäre mit Ampelanlagen, die wie die uns bekannten funktionieren, nicht geholfen, und sie könnten auch die Frage danach, ob eine Tomate reif ist nicht wie wir durch bloßes Hinschauen unterscheiden. Wenn diese Menschen sich stets darüber täuschen würden, welche Farbe die Dinge haben, würden also auch weite Teile ihres restlichen Lebens in Mitleidenchaft gezogen. Sobald wir erkennen, dass die Menschen die gerade genannten Aufgaben gut bewältigen, haben wir darum einen starken Grund zur Annahme, dass sie sich nicht stets über die Farben der Gegenstände täuschen. Plausibler ist es in einem solchen Fall, davon auszugehen, dass diese Wörter nicht unseren Farbwörtern entsprechen sondern eine andere Aufgabe erfüllen; vielleicht dienen sie dem Ausdruck einer ästhetischen Bewertung der Blume?

Diese Überlegung zeigt, dass wir beim Versuch, die uns unbekannte Sprache zu verstehen, davon ausgehen müssen, dass die Menschen mit ihren Überzeugungen größtenteils richtig liegen (außer, wenn es eine Erklärung für das Gegenteil gibt). Sobald wir Menschen zu viele falsche Überzeugungen unterstellen, wird unklar, ob wir sie überhaupt richtig verstehen. (ÜG §156) Diese Überlegung lässt sich folgendermaßen auf den Skeptiker übertragen: Um jemanden überhaupt verstehen zu können, muss gelten, dass er in Bezug auf viele Dinge mit unseren Urteilen übereinstimmt; tut er dies nicht, so kommen wir gar nicht dazu, die Laute, die er von sich gibt, als sprachliche Äußerungen zu verstehen. Der Skeptiker, der an einem Angelsatz zweifelt, muss aber zugleich das ganze System von Überzeugungen bezweifeln – doch dann besteht keine Übereinstimmung mehr zwischen seinen und unseren Urteilen, was zur Folge hat, dass wir ihn gar nicht verstehen können. Diese Überlegung ist die Grundlage der Zurückweisung des Skeptikers. (ÜG §155). Wenn aber eine Übereinstimmung in gewissen Urteilen gegeben sein muss, um überhaupt sprachliche Äußerungen verstehen zu können, dann gilt auch, dass die Relativisten nicht Recht haben können, die behaupten, dass verschiedene Menschen ganz unterschiedliche Weltbilder haben können, und dementsprechend Überzeugungen stets nur relativ zu den jeweiligen Angelsätzen eines Weltbildes wahr bzw. falsch sind. Dies darum, weil wir gar nicht dazu gelangen könnten, jemanden als Sprecher zu interpretieren, der ganz andere Angelsätze für wahr hält als wir. In Wittgensteins antiskeptischer Überlegung verbirgt sich also zugleich ein Argument gegen den Relativismus.

## 3. Ist eine Übertragung dieses Gedankengangs auf die moralische Überzeugungen möglich?

Wenn man sich vergegenwärtigt, dass einige strukturelle Parallelen zwischen unseren nichtmoralischen und den moralischen Überzeugungen bestehen, dann liegt es nahe, dass die genannte antirelativistische Überlegung sich auch auf den Bereich der Moral übertragen lässt.

Die erste Parallele besteht darin, dass auch moralische Überzeugungen auf vielfältige Weise miteinander verbun-

den sind – und zusätzlich mit nichtmoralischen Überzeugungen –, so dass gilt, dass auch das Für-wahr- bzw. Für-falsch-Halten einer moralischen Überzeugung damit einhergehen muss, viele weitere moralische und nichtmoralische Überzeugungen für wahr bzw. falsch zu halten. Wer etwa glaubt, dass es falsch ist, Tiere zu quälen, der legt sich darauf fest, dass es falsch ist, Hunde zu quälen, dass es falsch ist, Katzen zu quälen, usf. Und wer sagt, dass eine Handlung falsch ist, weil sie eine Lüge ist, sollte auch alle weiteren Handlungen, die in den relevanten Eigenschaften gleich sind, für falsch halten. Die zweite Parallele besteht darin, dass auch das moralische Urteilen gewissen Regelmäßigkeiten gehorcht, die sich entdecken lassen. So gilt etwa, dass wir über moralische Aussagen diskutieren und dass Verstöße gegen die Moral gewisse Reaktionen hervorrufen, etwa Empörung und Sanktionierungen des Abweichlers. Auch im Bereich der Moral sollte es uns also als Beobachter von Menschen, die eine uns unbekannte Sprache sprechen, angesichts der Regelmäßigkeiten möglich sein, die Laute dieser Menschen als sprachliche Äußerungen verstehen zu können.

Aber reichen diese Parallelen tief genug, um den Schluss zu rechtfertigen, dass wir Menschen nicht verstehen könnten, die ein ganz anderes moralisches Weltbild haben? Manchmal wird etwa gesagt, dass solche Leute ein ganz anderes Weltbild hätten, die die Gleichberechtigung zwischen Mann und Frau für falsch halten. Wer in einer sozialen Umgebung aufwächst, in der sich diese Ansicht in vielen Dingen widerspiegelt – etwa darin, dass nur Männer, aber nicht Frauen, Auto fahren, sich scheiden lassen und bestimmen dürfen, wen sie heiraten –, dem wird wohl die Überzeugung, dass Frauen nicht die gleichen Rechte wie Männer haben sollen, ein Angelsatz sein, an dem sehr viele weitere Überzeugungen hängen. Aber zeigt nicht die Tatsache, dass wir so jemanden sehr wohl verstehen können, dass die Übertragung der antirelativistischen Gedanken auf den Bereich der Moral nicht gerechtfertigt ist?

Die Antwort, die sich aus den bedeutungstheoretischen Überlegungen ergibt, lautet anders. Dass wir auch so jemanden verstehen können, der in vielen konkreten moralischen Urteilen nicht mit uns übereinstimmt, muss daran liegen, dass wir trotzdem in vielen anderen Dingen mit ihm übereinstimmen. Zu diesen Übereinstimmungen müssen erst einmal solche in Bezug auf nichtmoralische Dinge gehören wie etwa, was Frauen und was Männer sind, was

Autos sind, was es heißt, zu heiraten und was eine Scheidung ist, denn ohne eine Übereinstimmung in diesen Dingen würden wir gar nicht die gleichen Dinge moralisch bewerten, sondern bloß aneinander vorbei reden.

Zum zweiten muss allerdings auch eine gewisse Übereinstimmung in den moralischen Urteilen bestehen, denn erst diese ermöglicht es uns, zu erkennen, wann diese Menschen moralische Urteile aussprechen. Plausibel ist es, anzunehmen, dass auch diese Menschen es falsch finden, zu lügen und einfach so jemandem Schmerzen zuzufügen, und dass sie es richtig finden, sich an seine Versprechen zu halten und anderen Menschen zu helfen. Wenn unsere Übersetzungsversuche zum Ergebnis gelangen würden, dass sie jeweils anderer Überzeugung wären, dann würde dies die Korrektheit unserer Übersetzung in Frage stellen. Wie kommen wir überhaupt darauf, irgendwelche Äußerungen als moralische Äußerungen zu verstehen, wenn diese Äußerungen nichts mit den Äußerungen gemein haben, die wir für moralische Äußerungen halten? In diesem Fall läge wiederum die Ansicht näher, dass das, was wir für moralische Äußerungen hielten, in Wirklichkeit gar keine sind. Wenn das Ergebnis eines Übersetzungsversuchs darin besteht, dass jemand in allen moralischen Dingen total anderer Ansicht ist als wir, dann würden wir die Äußerungen desjenigen gar nicht als moralische Ansichten zu erkennen vermögen.

Heißt das auch, dass Meinungsverschiedenheiten in moralischen Dingen durch Argumente gelöst werden können? Aus den Überlegungen folgt zumindest, dass wir auch mit Menschen, die in einem doch recht tiefliegenden Punkt anderer Ansicht sind, gewisse moralische sowie nichtmoralische Überzeugungen teilen, und also von diesen Punkten ausgehend mit ihnen diskutieren können. Dies stellt freilich keine Garantie dafür dar, dass solche Argumente zum gewünschten Erfolg führen. Aber in diesem Punkt unterscheidet sich das Argumentieren in der Moral in nichts vom Argumentieren in nichtmoralischen Fragen.

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# Wahre Geschichte. Bemerkungen zu einem nicht-dualisierenden Verständnis von Geschichte

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## Abstract

Für Geschichtswissenschaft ist Vergangenheit zugleich Problem und Voraussetzung. Ohne Vergangenheit kann nichts erforscht werden, zugleich ist es nicht möglich, die Vergangenheit selbst zu erforschen, weil sie nicht direkt gegeben, d.h. vorbei, ist. Ich möchte in meinem Text die Geschichtsauffassung von Hayden V. White vorstellen, der geschichtswissenschaftliche Diskurse als erzählerische Interpretationen historischer Quellen versteht, im Gegensatz zu einer Auffassung von Geschichtsschreibung als objektive Rekonstruktion der Vergangenheit. Anschließend wird auf Ähnlichkeiten zwischen Whites Auffassung von Geschichte und Josef Mitterers nicht-dualisierender Redeweise hingewiesen und ein gemeinsames Problem beider Auffassungen diskutiert: wie sollen Fakten von Fiktion unterschieden werden?

## Geschichte als Erzählung

Leopold von Ranke eröffnet den zweiten Band seiner *Englischen Geschichte* mit dem Wunsch nach einer objektiven Geschichtsschreibung: „Ich wünschte mein Selbst gleichsam auszulöschen, und nur die Dinge reden, die mächtigen Kräfte erscheinen zu lassen [...]“ (Ranke 1860, 3). Historische Referentialität, die Bezugnahme auf Quellen und Zeugnisse der Vergangenheit, sichert das Wissen für eine objektive Geschichtsschreibung und ermöglicht, dass Geschichte eine akkurate Beschreibung vergangener Ereignisse ist.

Diese Ansicht ist nicht unproblematisch, denn Vergangenheit ist eben vergangen. HistorikerInnen haben die Aufgabe, über etwas zu schreiben, das sich einer Untersuchung entzieht. Der Historiker und Literaturwissenschaftler Hayden V. White kritisiert in seinen Arbeiten sowohl die Vorstellung eines Bezugs auf die Vergangenheit als auch die Bezugnahme auf historische Zeugnisse innerhalb geschichtswissenschaftlicher Diskurse. Seine Kritik an historischen Zeugnissen betrifft deren Interpretationsbedürftigkeit: Geschichtswissenschaftliche Diskurse beinhalten keine historischen Fakten, sondern deren Interpretationen. White beschreibt im Aufsatz *Historicism, History, and the figurative imagination* aus 1975 historische Fakten als „data or information“ (White 1975, 55), und meint damit objektive Tatsachen; Interpretationen werden hingegen als „explanation or story told about the fact“ (White 1975, 55), also als subjektive Beschreibungen verstanden. In einem späteren Aufsatz aus 1989 nennt White (1989, 20f) bereits „simple chronicle or lists of facts“ als Beispiele für Interpretationen. Gemeinsames Merkmal aller Interpretationen sei ihr „treatment of a narrative mode of representation“ (White 1989, 20f).

Auf einer theoretischen Ebene behält White die Unterscheidung zwischen Faktum und Interpretation bei: Jahreszahlen oder Altersangaben sind historische Fakten. Wird ein Faktum in einen historischen Diskurs überführt, wie es in der Geschichtsschreibung passiert, kann allerdings nicht mehr zwischen Fakt und Interpretation unterschieden werden. Ein historischer Diskurs gewinnt seine Bedeutung durch die Interpretation von Fakten. Was HistorikerInnen machen, egal, ob sie ungesichtetes Material in Archiven oder Ausgrabungsstätten bearbeiten oder auf Texte der Geschichtsschreibung zurückgreifen, ist, neue Interpretationen zu schaffen und den historischen Diskurs damit anzureichern. Fakten sind nur insofern Teil des Diskurses, als dass sie interpretiert werden. In allen his-

torischen Diskursen gilt: „It is not the case that a fact is one thing and its interpretation another“ (White 1975, 55).

White schlägt eine alternative Auffassung von wissenschaftlicher Geschichtsschreibung als Erzählung vor. Auch historische Beschreibungen kommen nicht ohne Ästhetisierung, Ideologisierung und der Einnahme einer bestimmten Erzählperspektive aus (vgl. White 1975, 54f). Angemessene Methoden zur Erforschung der Geschichte seien daher eher in der Literaturwissenschaft zu finden als in der Geschichtswissenschaft selbst. Diese Methoden werden am ausführlichsten in seinem Buch *Metahistory* (1973) beschreiben. White unterscheidet verschiedene Gattungstypen historischer Erzählungen (Romanze, Komödie, Tragödie und Satire), analysiert vermeintlich objektive Geschichtsschreibung hinsichtlich ihrer sprachlichen Merkmale (rhetorische Wendungen, Tropen usw.) und zeigt ihre interpretierenden Erzählmuster.

White gibt damit historische Referentialität auf. Statt einer Auffassung, in der zwischen passierter Geschichte und einer Beschreibung der passierten Geschichte unterscheiden wird, und sich HistorikerInnen darum bemühen, möglichst akkurat zu beschreiben, wie und weshalb etwas passiert ist, schlägt White eine diskursinhärente Auffassung von Geschichte vor, in der es um interpretierendes Erzählen geht.

Auf den Vorwurf, dass sich gemäß seiner Auffassung Fakt und Fiktion nicht mehr voneinander unterscheiden lassen, antwortet White, dass Ziel der Geschichtsschreibung sei nicht, falsche von wahren Interpretationen zu unterscheiden, sondern, angemessene Diskurse zu führen. Sich über Interpretationen zu streiten sei nicht zielführend, zumal Fakten nicht als Kriterien dafür, ob eine Interpretation wahr ist oder nicht, herangezogen werden können: „We are not helped by the suggestion that ‘competing narratives’ are a result of ‘the facts’ having been *interpreted* by one historian as a ‘tragedy’ and *interpreted* by another as a ‘farce.’ This is especially the case in traditional historical discourse in which ‘the facts’ are always given precedence over any ‘interpretation’ of them“ (White 1992, 39).

## Nicht-dualisierende Redeweise

Die Kritik von White an historischer Referentialität sowie an der Unterscheidung zwischen Fakt und Interpretation erinnert an die nicht-dualisierende Redeweise, die Josef Mitterer in *Das Jenseits der Philosophie* entwickelt. Mitterer macht darauf aufmerksam, dass im philosophischen

Diskurs Objekte ihren Beschreibungen vorausgesetzt werden, und entwirft eine alternative Redeweise, bei der auf Objektreferenz verzichtet wird. Damit sollen bisherige Probleme der Philosophie nicht gelöst, sondern ihr Zustandekommen erklärt werden. Ein Umstand, auf den selten hingewiesen wird, ist, dass die nicht-dualisierende Redeweise – eben als Redeweise – im sozialen Kontext relevant ist, wenn GesprächspartnerInnen miteinander sprechen und damit Argumentationstechniken analysiert werden können oder, in einem breiteren, wissenschaftlichen Kontext, als Möglichkeit zur Diskursanalyse. Somit handelt es sich nicht um eine Theorie darüber, wie oder was Sprache ist, sondern um eine Theorie darüber, wie wir miteinander sprechen.

Mitterer ist konsequenter als White und verneint auch die theoretische Trennung zwischen Interpretation und Objekt: Objekte sind als Diskursobjekte sprachlich und werden im Diskurs beständig verändert. Sprachverschiedene Objekte sind eine Argumentationstechnik, die nur im Konfliktfall relevant sind, in dem sie als stumme und objektive Zeugen herangezogen werden, um mit der Stimme einer Konfliktpartei gegen andere zu sprechen.

Mit der Angabe eines Objekts wird eine Rudimentärbeschreibung als Diskursobjekt in den Diskurs eingeführt (vgl. Mitterer 2011a, §63f, 71f). Whites Begriff der Interpretation kann als Rudimentärbeschreibung verstanden werden, allerdings beziehen sich Rudimentärbeschreibungen nicht auf Fakten oder Objekte odgl. Jeder Versuch, das Objekt einer Rudimentärbeschreibung anzugeben, resultiert in neuen Rudimentärbeschreibungen (vgl. Mitterer 2011a, §57, 69). Anstatt davon auszugehen, es gebe Objekte einerseits und deren Rudimentärbeschreibung andererseits, versteht Mitterer einen Diskurs als das Entwickeln von Rudimentärbeschreibung zu elaborierten Beschreibungen sowie deren Erneuern, Verwerfen und Austauschen.

Die Voraussetzung für einen Diskurs ist dabei Einigkeit – und sei es auch nur in kleinem Ausmaß: Es gibt bestimmte Beschreibungen, denen alle GesprächspartnerInnen zustimmen. Etwa sind sich vor Gericht sowohl KlägerInnen als auch Verteidigung darüber einig, dass eine angeklagte Person mit diesem oder jenem Namen vor Gericht stehe. Dieser Umstand wird nicht in Frage gestellt, auch dann nicht, wenn Uneinigheiten darüber aufkommen, ob die angeklagte Person schuldig oder unschuldig ist. Kommen verschiedene DiskursteilnehmerInnen zu widersprüchlichen Beschreibungen und entstehen daraus Konflikte, zeigt Mitterer, worin sich dualisierende und nicht-dualisierende Argumentationen voneinander unterscheiden: Herkömmlich, d.h. dualisierend, sollen Konflikte gelöst werden, indem auf das infrage-stehende, sprachverschiedene Objekt verwiesen wird, das Konfliktlösung sein soll, den Konflikt aber zugleich ermöglicht (vgl. Mitterer 2011a, §30, 53). Der Bezug auf das sprachverschiedene Objekt wird allerdings vollzogen, indem die eigene Interpretation, d.h. die im Widerspruch zu anderen Beschreibungen stehende Beschreibung, gegeben wird. Es kommt somit nicht zum Bezug auf etwas Gemeinsames, sondern nur zum Wiederholen der jeweils eigenen Beschreibungen und zu keiner Lösung des Konflikts.

Nicht-dualisierend wird keine Trennung zwischen referenzierender Beschreibung und beschriebener Referenz vollzogen. Im Streitfall haben Konfliktparteien ausgehend von einer gemeinsamen Beschreibung so-far jeweils eigene Beschreibungen from-now-on entwickelt (vgl. ebd., §36f, 55f). Diese neuen Beschreibungen bilden jeweils neue Objekte (vgl. ebd., §39, 56). Im Unterschied zum dualistischen Diskurs werden konfliktierende Beschreibungen

nicht als verschiedene Beschreibungen desselben Objekts verstanden (unter denen sich eine wahre und viele falsche befinden), sondern als verschiedene Objekte. Eine Konfliktlösung kann erreicht werden, wenn das gemeinsame Finden einer neuen Beschreibung angestrebt wird. Dabei kommt die Entscheidung „[...] mithin nicht durch einen *Rückgriff* auf gegebene Beschreibungen zustande, sondern durch einen *Vorgriff*, durch ein *Weitergehen* auf neue Beschreibungen [...]“ (ebd., §50, 65).

## Über Geschichten streiten

Gemäß einer nicht-dualisierenden Auffassung von Geschichte lassen sich Konflikte und Fragen der Geschichtsschreibung durch das „Weitergehen auf neue Beschreibungen“ lösen, nicht durch ein Zurückgehen auf gegebene Beschreibungen oder einen Rekurs auf historische Zeugnisse. Man findet darin Whites Kritik historischer Referentialität wieder, wenn er Fragen und Konflikte innerhalb des historischen Diskurses nicht durch Rückbezug auf Fakten, sondern durch erzählendes Neuinterpretieren lösen möchte.

Beide Denker vertreten damit eine Position gegen die derselbe Einwand erhoben werden kann: Wie soll die wahre Geschichte von falschen Geschichten unterschieden werden? Es ist deutlich, dass weder White noch Mitterer versuchen, ein Konzept der Wahrheit in ihre Theorien zu integrieren. Im Gegenteil: es geht ihnen darum, zu zeigen, dass Wahrheit überwunden werden kann, sie – wie Mitterer – als „Diskursregulativ“ (Mitterer 2011b, 7) zu demaskieren oder – wie White – sie als literarische Ausdrucksmöglichkeit zu verstehen.

Das Problem ist damit nicht gelöst: Was kann man tun, wenn jemand augenscheinlich falsche Geschichte erzählt? Dabei kann es um belangloses Anzweifeln der Sicherheit historischer Daten gehen (etwa Geburtsdaten, Sterbedaten, EinwohnerInnenzahlen etc.) oder um das Abstreiten historischer Umstände, etwa das Leugnen des Holocausts. Der erste Impuls etwa gegenüber LeugnerInnen des Holocausts ist es, gerade auf das offensichtlich nicht zu leugnende hinzuweisen – Aussagen von ZeitzeugInnen, Bauwerke, Dokumente etc. Auf Natur, Vergangenheit oder AutorInnen hinzuweisen, ist allerdings aussichtslos unter den Umständen, dass Natur stumm ist, Vergangenheit vorbei und AutorInnen tot. Ohne Referenzmöglichkeit und die Notwendigkeit von Interpretation scheint man der Argumente beraubt. Ich möchte im Folgenden zwei Vorschläge machen, wie mit solchen Situationen umgegangen werden kann:

(1) Wenn in Argumentationen nur diskursinhärente Elemente herangezogen werden können, dann können nur diskursinhärente Kriterien überprüft werden. Bei wie vielen Gerichtsfällen ist ein Weiterkommen durch Widersprüche in den Aussagen einzelner ZeugInnen, und nicht durch eine Rekonstruktion der Details eines Verbrechens zustande gekommen? Damit möchte ich nicht den wohl angebrachten Verdacht auf Meineid schüren, sondern darauf hinweisen, dass Diskurse auch ein Maß an Qualität aufbringen müssen, um ernst genommen zu werden. So fällt an kruden Verschwörungstheorien udgl. nicht nur auf, dass sie im Widerspruch zu alltäglichen Überzeugungen stehen, sondern auch, dass sie eine inkohärente Geschichte erzählen.

Diese Überlegung mag für manche Anfechtungen der Geschichte zutreffen, aber nicht generell. Einerseits können Kohärenzkriterien bezweifelt werden, andererseits kann auch eine kohärent erzählte Geschichte unglaubwür-

dig sein. Gibt es andere Wege, falsche Geschichten abzuweisen? Das öffentliche Äußern von eigenen Überzeugungen findet unter strafrechtlichen Rahmenbedingungen statt. Aber auch damit ist das Problem keineswegs gelöst: Denkt man etwa an Galileo Galilei und die historischen Umstände, unter denen er seine Forschungen öffentlich gemacht hat, kann anhand seiner Person ein Gegenbeispiel entwickelt werden, in dem sich eine Einzelmeinung, gegen die herrschende Überzeugungen gerichtet waren, eben gegen diese durchgesetzt hat. Insofern brauchen HolocaustleugnerInnen kaum auf Gegenargumente einzugehen und sich stattdessen auf ihre Hoffnung berufen, dass ihre Wahrheit über die Geschichte doch noch ans Licht kommen werde.

(2) Die Verantwortung, Geschichte aufrechtzuerhalten, liegt nicht an den geschichtlichen Zeugnissen, sondern an den TeilnehmerInnen des Diskurses. Es geht in der Geschichte somit nicht darum, Wahrheit mithilfe historischer Referentialität zu sichern, sondern um einen verantwortungsvollen Umgang mit Erinnerung. Dabei wird ein Unterschied zwischen dem dualisierenden und nicht-dualisierenden Verständnis von Geschichte besonders deutlich: Dualisierende DenkerInnen geben ihre Verantwortung über den Diskurs ab an Zeugnisse außerhalb des Diskurses. Nicht-Dualisierende DenkerInnen nehmen die Verantwortung über den Diskurs selbst auf.

Naturkatastrophen und TerroristInnen haben zahlreiche historische Bauwerke zerstört. Damit wurden Kunst- und Kulturschätze unwiederbringlich vernichtet, aber nicht die Geschichte zerstört. In diesen Fällen sind historische Zeugnisse verschwunden, aber die Erinnerung daran wird trotzdem bewahrt: Denkmäler weisen darauf hin, dass einst bestimmte Gebäude an einem Ort standen oder einst bestimmte Ereignisse stattgefunden haben. Historische Referenz auf diskursjenseitige Objekte kann es nicht geben, weil diese Objekte nicht mehr bestehen.

Diese Überlegung verdeutlicht, dass ein Diskurs nicht der sprachverschiedenen Gegenstände bedarf. Erinnerung wird durch Erzählen der Geschichte aufrechterhalten, nicht durch die Gegenstände der Geschichte. Werden Diskurse

bestritten, kann auf folgendes hingewiesen werden: Material, das historische Umstände widerlegen bzw. bestätigen soll, richtet sich nicht gegen bzw. auf historische Umstände, sondern wird von DiskursteilnehmerInnen als Widerlegung bzw. Bestätigung interpretiert und ist gegen die Interpretationen anderer, die am Diskurs teilnehmen, gerichtet. Eine solche Interpretation als Widerlegung zu akzeptieren oder zu verwerfen, liegt nicht an dieser Interpretation selbst, sondern alleine in der Verantwortung aller DiskursteilnehmerInnen.

White (1989, 27) schreibt, dass es müßig sei, danach zu fragen, ob eine Geschichte wahr ist; denn "there is no such thing as a 'real' story. Stories are told or written, not found. And as for the notion of a 'true' story, this is virtually a contradiction in terms. All stories are fiction". In einer nicht-dualisierenden Auffassung von Geschichte ist es nicht wichtig, ob eine Geschichte wahr ist, sondern, dass sie erzählt wird.

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# Wittgenstein's Grammar of Assent

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## Abstract

In John Henry Newman's *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* the notion of assent is central to his critique of a conception of knowledge and understanding informed by a scientific method of enquiry. He argues that there are areas of life and social practices such as religious belief that do not conform to formal empirical method. Newman anticipates Wittgenstein's view that explanation must come to an end; that we do not begin with the process of questioning and the suspension of assent. The importance Newman attaches to the notion of assent connects with Wittgenstein's remarks on doubt and certainty. The paper explores the connection between these lines of thought.

### I.

Newman's most philosophical work, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, hereafter *GoA*, undertakes a detailed investigation of different ways of knowing and understanding. Newman offers many examples and descriptions of particular experiences, from religious and secular life, and on the strength of these he argues that before enquiry can take place there must first be a prior attentiveness: in Newman's preferred terms, this involves an 'assent', a saying 'yes'. There is an interesting resonance between this and the work that occupied Wittgenstein during the last years of his life, which was edited and published posthumously under the title *On Certainty*. The paper explores the connection between these lines of thought, beginning with Newman's notion of assent.

### II.

*GoA* is concerned with the question of how Newman can believe that which he does not understand. It was written in response to the growing interest among Newman's contemporaries in the scientific method, and a conception of knowledge conceived scientifically. Newman maintains that there are areas of life such as religious belief that cannot be judged by any formal empirical method of enquiry or conventional standards of logic. In arguing this Newman does not mean to suggest that those areas of life that do not succumb to it do not involve reason and judgement, but rather that they involve different kinds of reason and judgement. In the case of a religious belief he explains it in the following terms:

After all, man is *not* a reasoning animal; he is a seeing, feeling, contemplating animal... Life is not long enough for a religion of inferences; we shall never have done beginning, if we determine to begin with proof... Life is for action. If we insist on proofs for every thing, we shall never come to action: to act you must assume, and that assumption is faith. (Newman 1870, 94, italics in the original)

Newman goes further and distinguishes between real assent and notional assent; the latter is abstract whereas real assent has a psychological and therefore personal character about it. He is concerned with the everyday, real life situations where words are used within a framework of beliefs that make up a particular world-view. He explains real assent as

... an intellectual act, of which the object is presented to it by the imagination; and though the pure intellect does

not lead to action, nor does the imagination either, yet the imagination has the means, which the pure intellect has not, of stimulating those powers of the mind from which action proceeds. Real Assent then, or Belief, as it may be called, viewed in itself, that is, simply as Assent, does not lead to action; but the images in which it lives, representing as they do the concrete, have the power of the concrete upon the affections and passions, and by means of these indirectly become operative. (Newman 1870, 89)

Newman also draws a distinction between theory and dogma on the one hand and religious belief on the other; the former he describes as involving notional assent while the latter is constituted by real assent. Religious belief is not a matter of following a theoretical argument. This, however, does not mean that assent is irrational:

Religion has to do with the real, and the real is the particular; theology has to do with what is notional and the notional is the general and systematic. Hence theology has to do with the Dogma of the Holy Trinity as a whole made up of many propositions; but Religion has to do with each of those separate propositions which compose it, and lives and thrives in the contemplation of them. In them it finds the motives for devotion and faithful obedience; while theology on the other hand forms and protects them, not merely one by one, but as a system of truth. (Newman 1870, 140)

His argument also stands in the case of non-religious beliefs such as the belief in the certainty of Great Britain being an island. Although this is a rational belief it is not acquired by means of rational or theoretical argument; it is taught in childhood and appears on maps and in books. It is part of our world-view. We believe propositions that we cannot prove. Newman argues that assumptions and inferences are important and are the basis of much of what we believe; we would not be able to reason at all if we did not first assume something. It does not matter how systematic an enquiry is there is always something that is assumed; a saying 'yes', or an 'assent', must be live before induction and deduction and empirical analysis can begin. He wants to draw attention to the importance of the grammar of assent in the life of human beings. At the beginning of his essay Newman says that to assent fulfils our nature, as human beings.

Newman also distinguishes between notional and real apprehension. The former is deductive: we know something through arriving by way of logical argument at a conclusion, provided the premises are true. The latter, real apprehension is quite different: it does not come from the

force of logic but from an open-ended range of factors that together constitute proof. This process of coming to knowledge is achieved through the use of what Newman terms the 'illative sense', by which he means the capacity to make judgements. He again gives some examples, including Newton's perception of mathematical truths, in cases where proof is absent, and Napoleon's genius in reasoning and interpretation, 'without apparently any ratiocinative media' (Newman 1870, 334). Evaluative judgements are involved in the formation of beliefs; judgement is developed by practice and experience. Newman anticipates Wittgenstein's view that explanation must come to an end somewhere and that a human being cannot stand outside their mind or escape its language and thought.

### III.

Neither Wittgenstein nor Newman were concerned with putting forward theories but wanted rather to draw attention to particulars and give examples of how words are used within a framework of beliefs and everyday practices. Both attach great importance to a world-view, or in Wittgenstein's term *Weltbild* (world-picture), within which language operates.

Wittgenstein's interest in religion and the religious aspect to his thought are also well known. What mattered greatly in his philosophy and personal life was the spirit in which things were *done*. Wittgenstein believed that one of the things Christianity holds most closely is that "sound *doctrines* are all useless. That you have to change your life" (italics added). He told his friend Maurice O'Connor Drury that 'if you and I are to live religious lives, it mustn't be that we talk a lot about religion but that our manner of life is different' (Monk 1990). What Wittgenstein draws attention to is the fact that the way things are done reflects a kind of assent. This seems to be true both *descriptively* at the level of a practice where a participant is in some degree committed to the values of the practice, and *prescriptively* in that one should take up the possibilities of one's life with a certain spirit and commitment.

In his *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough*, Wittgenstein thinks that Frazer goes wrong in focusing on trying to find explanations and origins for the ceremonies and rites of the people he studied. Rather than explain the errors or misconceptions underpinning the ceremonies we need to recognise the way in which the beliefs and rites express something important in the lives of the people and that the ceremonies are a form of language. Beliefs and faith are not separate from myths and the everyday. Wittgenstein writes, "a whole mythology is deposited in our language" (Wittgenstein 1979, 10e); and elsewhere he notes, "I once said, perhaps rightly: The earlier culture will become a heap of rubbish and finally a heap of ashes, but spirits will hover over the ashes." (Wittgenstein 1979, 3e)

For Wittgenstein a belief, religious or otherwise, is not an isolated proposition but part of a wider network of propositions and practices that make up a world-picture; beliefs are inherent in such networks, not merely in the obvious sense that they relate to specific propositions but also in the way that they reflect a broader orientation to life, and it is this that provides the background and gives the framework for enquiry. Seeing connections and the relationship between things is crucial for Wittgenstein; our understanding depends on seeing connections. He expresses this quite powerfully in the following:

It was not a trivial reason, for really there can have been no *reason*, that prompted certain races of man-

kind to venerate the oak tree, but only the fact that they and the oak were united in a community of life, and thus that they arose together not by choice, but rather like the flea and the dog. (If fleas developed a rite, it would be based on the dog.)

One could say that it was not their union (the oak and the man) that has given rise to these rites, but in a certain sense their separation.

For the awakening of the intellect occurs with a separation from the original *soil*, the original basis of life. (The origin of *choice*.)

This section appears in the extended version of *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough* published in *Philosophical Occasions 1912-1951* (Wittgenstein 1993, 139). Connection also presupposes separation and this occurs partly through language. Separating things out also requires imagination, seeing as - something which animals do not have. This awareness of separation opens up the experience of self-consciousness and the realm of choice. Does it ask also what I am to do with my life?

One difficulty Wittgenstein observes is 'to realise the groundlessness of our believing' (OC §166). He illustrates this in terms of the work of the scientist:

Think of chemical investigations. Lavoisier makes experiments with substances in his laboratory and now he concludes that this and that takes place when there is burning. He does not say that it might happen otherwise another time. He has got hold of a definite world-picture - not of course one that he invented: he learned it as a child. I say a world-picture and not hypothesis, because it is the matter-of-course foundation for his research and as such also goes unmentioned (OC §167).

What he intends by world-picture here is to defuse the belief that there must be a secure foundation in the sense of a foundation of certain beliefs. Later he writes:

You must bear in mind that the language-game is so to say something unpredictable. I mean: it is not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or unreasonable). It is there - like our life (OC §559).

It is not reasonable or unreasonable because something other than ratiocination must be at work here. Its being there like our life is suggestive of our living with it in a relation of tacit assent, which may be revealed to falter at times, perhaps in times of crisis, but which otherwise is the condition for the operation of our reason. This need not necessarily imply anything quite like religious belief, and in any case the level at which it is there 'like our life' implies something below that of the conscious entertaining of putative beliefs. It is there in what we do. And it is crucial that Wittgenstein's conception of religion depends upon belief extending downwards, as it were, into this level of practice, characterised by a kind of assent or acceptance of a world-picture. Religious belief needs to be understood in terms of a way of living; a religious belief provides guidance for life.

In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein argues that the act of believing precedes doubt, logically and psychologically. The child, he points out, learns by believing the adult; doubt comes after belief. The child begins by trusting its parents and teachers. In a mathematics lesson we are taught 'twice two is four', and this is a mathematical proposition: to learn this is more like being guided by a rule than coming to learn a new fact about the world (PI, IIxi, 226-7). Similarly, Wittgenstein's insights into language in use point to there being no reasoning without the prior giving of assent in one way or another.

#### IV.

Newman's assent does not derive from logical or rational deduction, because there must always be something that is assumed. What this is is informed by the background of a way of life. A tradition must be something sustained by people who, in some sense, give it their assent. Assent is not an extra to these things: it is constitutive of them. Wittgenstein draws attention to the ways in which things are done or the spirit in which they are carried out, and, to the extent that we are talking about human practices, this cannot be other than ethically charged in some degree. A grammar of assent is *ipso facto* an ethical matter as it is a saying something, affirming its value. We are first and foremost members of a community of language and, hence, we are responsible for our words and what we do with them. Each of us must make judgements in what we say – must, in saying things, be making judgements; ultimately that responsibility is one that we cannot escape or opt out of. In a democracy consent is built in, and in everyday life you have to consent to things in some degree. But “consent” dulls the sense of affirmation expressed in “assent”. It quietsens or misses the personal struggle that is

rarely absent from the philosophy of Wittgenstein and Newman.

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# On the Philosophical Importance of Wittgenstein's Remarks on Aspect-Blindness and Experience of Meaning

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## Abstract

In work from the 1940's, Wittgenstein explicitly states that there is a relation between the concepts of aspect seeing (including aspect-blindness) and experiencing the meaning of a word. This paper investigates that relation along various lines: Wittgenstein's notion of aspect-blindness is considered from both a perceptual and a linguistic perspective. An explicit parallel between seeing aspects and experiencing meaning is suggested. Consequences of being aspect-blind are outlined. And finally, conclusions are offered as to the philosophical significance of these results.

## 1. Introduction

In a large number of remarks, Wittgenstein studies the topic of aspect seeing (e.g., seeing the duck-rabbit figure as a picture-duck or as a picture-rabbit), and as part of that investigation, he introduces the notion of 'aspect-blindness'. In separate remarks, Wittgenstein considers our inclination to say in certain circumstances that we *experience* the meaning of a word. These two strains of thought come together when he comments:

The importance of this concept [of aspect-blindness] lies in the connection between the concepts of seeing an aspect and of experiencing the meaning of a word. For we want to ask, "What would someone be missing if he did not *experience* the meaning of a word?" What would someone be missing, who, for example, did not understand the request to pronounce the word "till" and to mean it as a verb – or someone who did not feel that a word lost its meaning for him and became a mere sound if it was repeated ten times over? (PPF 261; cf. LWI 784)

The case of [linguistic] 'meaning experienced' is *related* to that of seeing a figure as this or that. We have to describe this conceptual relationship; we are not saying that the same thing is under consideration in both cases. (RPPI 1064)

The present paper explores the link that Wittgenstein notices between seeing aspects and experiencing the meaning of a word. Specifically, the notions of aspect-blindness (Section 2) and experience of meaning (Section 3) are carefully delineated, and a detailed account of the parallel between aspect seeing and experience of meaning is provided (Section 3). A further characterization of the aspect-blind individual (Section 4) and philosophical implications that follow from these readings of Wittgenstein's remarks (Section 5) are also presented.

## 2. Aspect-Blindness

The main conceptual feature of aspects is that they have alternatives. So, for example, if  $x$  is an aspect, then 'I see  $x$  as opposed to  $y$ ' (e.g., 'I see a picture-rabbit as opposed to a picture-duck') makes sense. Furthermore, 'I see it as  $x$ ' makes sense if and only if 'I see it as  $x$ , as opposed to  $y$ ' makes sense. Correspondingly, the salient characteristic of perceptual aspect-blindness is that an aspect-blind person does not understand the concept of a perceptual aspect. In other words, the 'see it as  $x$ , as opposed to  $y$ ' form does not make sense to the person. An aspect-blind person can

see (what we would call) different aspects, but not as aspects; hence, he does not experience change in aspect. Conceptually speaking, he only has ordinary perceptions – what he sees is not one thing seen two ways, it is two things. That is, (what we would call) a change in aspect is a change in the environment for him, like seeing a totally new object in the external world.<sup>1</sup> An important facet of this is that an aspect-blind person (logically) cannot understand his condition: if he were able to grasp the idea that one thing can also be seen as a different thing, he would no longer be aspect-blind.

Extending this to language is straightforward, since word meanings can have alternatives. To put this differently, it makes sense for one word (e.g., 'bank') to have alternate meanings, including no meaning. These alternatives might be called 'meaning-aspects'. Then in analogy with perceptual aspect-blindness, it can be said that a linguistically aspect-blind person does not grasp the concept of a meaning-aspect. Although he can understand a meaning of a certain word, the statement that the meaning of that word can also be different (or change) makes no sense to him. It therefore follows that a word that has 'lost' its meaning or a word that has a second meaning is simply a different word for him. The aspect-blind person hears/reads two different words, not one word with two meanings.

## 3. Experience of Meaning

Wittgenstein mentions a variety of examples of experiencing linguistic meaning. We may, for instance, experience one meaning for a word said in isolation and then experience a different meaning, such as experiencing 'bank' as meaning a financial institution and then as meaning a river's edge (PPF 261, 271). We may also experience a loss of meaning for a word when the word is repeated several times (PPF 261; RPPI 194). Or we may experience a meaning as unique to a certain word, such as the 'if-feeling' or the 'fit' of a proper name or pronouncing a word with expression (PPF 44, 264-265, 270; RPPI 243).

These examples of experiencing meaning all involve meaning-aspects, since in each case we experience *this* meaning as opposed to *that*, or *none* as opposed to *that*, or *this* as opposed to *any* other. In addition, the experience of meaning seems to coincide with the 'lighting-up' of a meaning-aspect. More specifically, it might be concluded that linguistic meaning is experienced if and only if a

<sup>1</sup> For an extended remark about aspect-blindness, see PPF 257. For a longer, textually-based discussion of the characteristics of (perceptual) aspect-blindness, see Hausen (2013).

meaning-aspect lights up, where the term 'lighting up' is borrowed from Wittgenstein's remarks on aspect seeing. (As the text below will show, it is meant to correspond to the lighting up, in Wittgenstein's sense, of a perceptual aspect.) But in particular, experiencing meaning is not taken to involve just a *change* of meaning. For Wittgenstein says:

Suppose I am learning a language and want to impress upon myself the double meaning of the word "bank", and so I alternately look at a picture of a river bank and then a money bank, and in each case say "bank", or "That is a bank" – would the 'experience of meaning' then be taking place? Certainly not there, I'm inclined to say. But if the inflection of voice, for example, seems to me to determine whether I mean one thing or the other – then I would be experiencing meaning. (LWI 60)

And judging by this statement, Wittgenstein apparently thinks that the meaning we understand a word to have may change without being *experienced*.

Now, this result shows a connection between aspects and experiencing the meaning of a word. But what is the relation between *seeing* aspects and experiencing the meaning of a word? To answer this question, consider Wittgenstein's comment that we see meaning when looking at an object (RPPI 869). This insight arguably holds both for aspects that we see (e.g., a picture-rabbit in the duck-rabbit figure) and for objects of ordinary perception (e.g., a book that we are holding). But then, in analogy with the linguistic result, perceptual meaning is *experienced* just when a perceptual aspect lights up. And the most general parallel that suggests itself is that seeing an object/an aspect of an object and hence its meaning is analogous to understanding a word and hence its meaning; and the lighting up and experiencing of a perceptual aspect and hence a perceptual meaning is analogous to the lighting up and experiencing of a linguistic meaning.<sup>2</sup> That is to say, both objects and words have meaning-aspects that may be seen or understood; and in both cases, when these aspects light up, we *experience* the meaning.

To conclude this Section, it should be noted that such an analysis sheds light on a number of particular remarks Wittgenstein makes regarding perceptual aspects. These remarks include what Wittgenstein says about the house aspect of a chest in a children's game (LWI 687-690; PPF 206-207), the person aspect of a portrait (LWI 681-682, 685; PPF 199-200), the rabbit aspect of the duck-rabbit (PPF 201, 208) and the running-horse aspect of a painting of a horse (RPPI 874). Although space does not permit a discussion here, Wittgenstein's language in these remarks strongly suggests that he has experience of meaning, as it is explicated in the text above, in mind. That is, in certain circumstances (namely, when aspects light up) we do not simply see the chest as a house, we *experience* the chest as a house (and "Now it's become a house for me" is an expression of that experience), we *experience* the portrait as a person (and "He smiles down on me" is an expression of that experience) and so on.

<sup>2</sup> One might complain that although this scheme can apply to objects that have 'traditional' aspects (e.g., ambiguous figures), it does not apply in the case of, say, unambiguous objects, since these have no aspects that can light up. This reasoning is flawed, however. For although in typical contexts I do not see a book as a book (that is, ordinary perception does not involve first-person aspects), it is possible to change the context (e.g., by concentrating specifically on what I am looking at), and then I *can* see a book as a book as opposed to (e.g.) a meaningless object.

## 4. Consequences of Aspect-Blindness

Applying the results of Sections 2-3, it is clear that aspect-blind individuals cannot experience meaning, which is in keeping with what Wittgenstein intimates in several remarks (e.g., RPPI 202, 232, 243). Furthermore, this has been shown to be a *logical* 'cannot': To an aspect-blind person, the possibility of there being an alternative to the thing he sees (perceptual aspect-blindness) or to the word he understands (linguistic aspect-blindness) does not make sense. Hence, although what he perceives or understands may change, it is not a change in *aspect* for him. In other words, aspects (logically) cannot light up for him, and correspondingly, he cannot experience meaning. In what ways, though, does this manifest itself?

It seems that aspect-blind people could, by and large, learn our language and would, by and large, interact with the world as we do.<sup>3</sup> Of course, they cannot play, for example, language-games with 'see-as'. But they can understand linguistic meaning in general and can see meaning. Language learning, however, would be different in character for a linguistically aspect-blind person. For instance, if a word previously had no (or a different) meaning for the person when he learned the (new) meaning, this would be like learning an entirely new word. For this reason too, there would be no such thing as a *code* (cf. PPF 263; RPPII 489) for a linguistically aspect-blind person: the concept of a code is such that a word is given a meaning it normally does not have; but for a linguistically aspect-blind person, this would involve learning a completely new (second) word, not *re-assigning* the (first) word to a different meaning. To put it most generally, for an aspect-blind person, a word simply has *the* meaning it has. It does not make sense to him to suggest that the word may also have a different meaning or no meaning at all. This makes him in a way 'neutral' toward language. The world of language to him simply is as it is, just like an ordinary visual perception of the external world.

## 5. Philosophical Implications

In a methodological vein, Wittgenstein comments, 'In these considerations we often draw what can be called "auxiliary lines". We construct things like the "soulless tribe" – which drop out of consideration in the end. That they dropped out had to be shown' (RPPII 47).<sup>4</sup> His remarks on aspect-blindness are perhaps best read in this spirit. What is important about aspect-blindness is not (the existence or non-existence of) an aspect-blind person himself. Rather, aspect-blindness is philosophically interesting because it encourages us to focus on aspectual features of our language and our world that we otherwise tend to overlook. And in particular, it is because of this aspectual character that 'experience of meaning' is possible.

A linguistically aspect-blind person, who lacks experiences of meaning, relates to language in an entirely different way than we do. In a sense, therefore, an aspect-blind person would have a different language than we do. His language might 'look' and 'act' like our language, but it would be what Wittgenstein alludes to when he says, 'There might also be a language in whose use the 'soul' of the words played no part. In which, for example, we had

<sup>3</sup> Possible limiting cases are excluded here. For instance, it may be that a perceptually aspect-blind person who understands that there is *something* amiss in how he sees the world (but cannot understand what it is) may ultimately come to treat all perceptions as unreliable.

<sup>4</sup> In order to direct our focus away from 'inner states' when philosophically investigating psychological concepts, Wittgenstein introduces the 'soulless tribe' in LPP 38-43, 160-168, 280-285.

no objection to replacing one word by a new, arbitrarily invented one' (PI 530). Via this kind of juxtaposition, Wittgenstein's remarks on aspect-blindness and experience of meaning throw into relief the relation we have to *our* language.

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# Intentional Action: Privacy, Publicity, Relativity

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## Abstract

Wittgenstein's 'private language argument', whatever its precise structure and content, has received its fair amount of philosophical attention. It has also motivated various analogous arguments in domains of practical philosophy, such as Korsgaard's argument against the privacy of reasons for action, or Thompson's against the privacy of life forms. Here I advance another related argument, against the privacy of intentional action. I take as my point of departure Anscombe's account of intentional action, for being a foundational account for contemporary philosophy of action which is congenial and variously indebted to Wittgenstein's philosophy. I conclude by sketching how the argument against private intentional action has (limiting, moderating) upshots for relativist accounts of intentional action such as Velleman's.

## Introduction

Wittgenstein's 'private language (PL) argument' has received its fair amount of philosophical attention. Ongoing disputes regarding its precise structure and content notwithstanding (see e.g. Hacker 1990, Kripke 1982, McGinn 1987, on standard lines of dispute) it is agreed that at its core it is usually taken to argue against the possibility of *necessarily* private meaning and its expression, on grounds of a lack of criteria for assessing the correctness of use such meaning and expression. The argument thus notably targets understandings of meaning in terms of private mental entities.

The private language argument has motivated various analogues in domains of practical philosophy, such as Korsgaard's 1996 argument against the privacy of reasons for action, or Thompson's 2011 against the privacy of life forms. Here I advance another related argument, against the privacy of intentional action. I take as my point of departure Anscombe's account of intentional action, for being both foundational for contemporary philosophy of action and congenial (inter alia for being variously indebted) to Wittgenstein's philosophy. I conclude by sketching how the argument against private intentional action has (limiting, moderating) upshots for relativist accounts of intentional action such as Velleman's 2013.

## 1. Intentional action

Anscombe famously frames that intentional action as action "to which a certain sense of the question 'Why?' is given application; the sense is of course that in which the answer, if positive, gives a reason for acting." (Anscombe 2000, 9 §5) 'Giving application' to the question does not imply giving a positive reason in answer to it, but to recognize it as the right kind of question to ask for the of action under the description at issue; it means most basically not to reject it. As Anscombe argues, this might be done e.g. by pointing out that the action was involuntary, or that one was not aware of realizing it, under the description at issue. Intentional action then is such that a reason for realizing it can be given at least *in principle*. In order for that to be the case, on might think, the action must in principle be intelligible be explicable as intentional, at least to the agent herself. And this is precisely the case. As Anscombe argues, in order for an action to be intentional under a description, the action has to be intelligible for and understood by the agent realizing it. And, Anscombe continues to argue, the intentional realization of action does not in-

volve just any understanding or knowledge of action, but specifically practical knowledge of it.

## 2. Private intentional action

Now consider the idea of an *ex hypothesi* private intentional action, that is, an intentional action that necessarily only the agent herself can understand as intentional. One potential misunderstanding should be cleared right away. One might argue that, insofar as intentional actions are goings-on in the world, they are *ipso facto* public, not private; that the very notion of intentional action bars any room for issues of privacy. It is certainly important to recognize actions as worldly goings-on. Yet it is equally important to bear in mind that, unlike perhaps *action* generally, *intentional action* does not designate an extensional class of goings-on, since one and the same action can be intentional under some description, unintentional under another (see Anscombe 2000, 11-12 §6; Davidson 1971, 46-7). (A private language analogue to such a dismissal of the idea private intentional action might be to argue that insofar as linguistic expressions are in principle perceivable – in speech, writing, or the like – they cannot be essentially private. Yet of course the private language argument is concerned with private meaning and criteria for it, not with the privacy of linguistic expressions as such) The idea of 'private intentional action' argument, as it concerns *intentional* action, is located between the chiefly extensional and intensional domains.

## 3. Against private intentional action

Arguments against private action have been advanced before. Thus Kannezky 2005, 2007 offers an argument against the idea of private action very closely modeled on the original private language argument. Kannezky argues for the publicity of intention in parallel with the publicity of meaning. I do not take issue with this argumentative strategy but will here advance a slightly different one, attending more closely to the specificities of intentional action rather than to intentionality and meaning generally.

As sketched earlier, in order for an action to count as intentional by Anscombe's criterion, the question 'Why?' must have application in the requisite sense, implying the agent's understanding of her action as intentional under the description at issue. Here one already encounters some difficulty, as an interlocutor, *ex hypothesi* necessarily barred from understanding the action at issue, cannot straightforwardly ask, "Why are you  $\phi$ ing?" – at least not

knowing what she is querying when querying the agent's *qing*. After all, *ex hypothesi* our interlocutor is necessarily barred from understanding what it means to  $\phi$  intentionally. Thus if employing the description at all she will have to defer to the agent's understanding regarding the concept of *qing*, or else rather ask e.g. demonstratively "Why are you doing what you are doing there?"

Now how about possible answers to the question?

A straightforward, positive answer, containing a positive reason for acting, cannot be provided. Why not? A positive reason for action would represent – and render intelligible – the action queried in light of its wider circumstances in which it is supposed to figure purposively as a means, part, or the like (see Anscombe 2000, e.g. 37-41, §23; 45-7 §26; Thompson 2008, 85-7). An ordinary – that is, public – reason would thus render the supposedly private intentional action publicly intelligible by explicating its purposiveness – which is ruled out for necessarily private intentional action.

But what about a positive *private* reason, that is, involving another *private* description of action? Appealing as this response might seem at first (if it does at all), it would hardly resolve the issue: the supposedly private intentional action would again be represented as purposive in its wider circumstances; the agent would again make a corresponding claim about actual purposive goings-on. And it is hard to see what necessarily private purposive relations among actions – that are after all going-on in the world – could amount to. The problem thus with the idea of private intentional action done for a reason is the purposiveness of intentional action – that is, the actual obtaining of purposive relations of worldly goings-on standing in relations of means and ends, which is inherently resistive to privacy.

One might think that the exclusion of positive reasons and corresponding purposive relations of intentional actions under different descriptions deals a fatal blow to the ideal of intentional private action. An argument to that effect might run as follows: in short, one could argue as follows: first, in order for an action to count as intentional, it has to give application to reason-explanation for action; thirdly, a private action does not give application to reason-explanation in virtue of the exclusion of positive reasons for private intentional action; consequently, there can be no private intentional action. This argument, handy as it may seem, is somewhat rash, however, resting on a common misreading of Anscombe's notion of 'giving application' to reason explanation. For: 'giving application' to the question does not imply giving a positive reason for action (see e.g. Anscombe 2000, 28 §18). Consequently, the exclusion of positive reasons for private intentional action does not as such rule out the possibility of private intentional action.

There are after all forms of giving application to the question that do not contain positive reasons, which, one might think, leaves room for intentionality *and* privacy of action after all. Anscombe recognizes e.g. "For no particular reason", or "I just thought I would" as candidate answers (see Anscombe 2000, 25-8, §17-18).

Yet again, purposiveness creeps in: for it is not just present in intentional actions as they are related to one another; purposiveness is *internal* to *any given intentional action as such*. It is in this vein that Thompson, generally following Anscombe, complements her account with its inversion, claiming that a given intentional action is not just apt to be rationalized by a reason for action, but is itself rationalizing its purposive parts; that purposiveness, this

"peculiar etiological structure, is inscribed within every intentional action proper." (Thompson 2008, 112)

Where there is no defying the purposiveness of intentional action generally, there is no retaining privacy for it either.

There is thus indeed a two-pronged case to be made against the idea of intentional private action: from the publicity of intention, modeled strictly on Wittgenstein's private language argument (see e.g. Kannezky on this), and that from the purposiveness of intentional action and its publicity, as advanced here.

#### 4. Extension: on relativism about intentional action

In his recent work on moral relativism, Velleman employs a notion of 'doables': of socially constructed types of action (or their descriptions, respectively) as *ordinarily done*. He argues that "everyone has to converge on a repertoire of ordinary actions that isn't defined in advance of everyone's converging on it. Ordinarity is socially constructed, and constructing it is a classic coordination problem. Because ordinarity is socially constructed, it is also local, in the sense that it is relative to some population of agents who interact regularly, usually because they live in one another's vicinity." (24) Velleman takes doables to be constructed not against a shared neutral background as to what is doable but rather within specific agential communities. He takes this as an important starting point for moral relativism: insofar as there is no shared or neutral agential background as to what is doable, there is no shared or neutral agential background for agreement or disagreement about what is or isn't doable beyond that of a given agential community. And not just agreement or disagreement but understanding in general: doables form a "socially constructed ontology that must be shared by agent and interpreter if mutual understanding is to be attained." (*Ibid.* 38)

The present considerations about the necessary publicity of intentional action help to show that a case of relativism such as Velleman's is necessarily benign. (NB: I do not claim that Velleman advances a more ambitious relativism than the modest one I will confine his account to; I only avail myself of his account as it is particularly suited to demonstrate the necessary benign character of such conceptions of relativism.) How so? If, on account of the necessary publicity of intentional action as argued for earlier, it is not in principle impossible to understand an individual's intentional action, then plausibly it cannot not be in principle impossible to understand intentional actions of which an understanding is *already shared* within a given community. The attainment of such understanding might well be difficult, involving the acquisition of a requisite shared agential background understanding, which may practically be difficult to attain. Its difficulty notwithstanding, however, it is an *cannot be* in principle *impossible* to attain such understanding and

Whatever case there is to be made for relativism on grounds of the social construction of agential ontologies, it is necessarily a case for a relatively benign form of relativism according to which the entering into an agential community's understanding of action is, at least in principle, possible.



## Conclusion

I have argued against the idea of necessarily private intentional action, on grounds of the intrinsic purposiveness of intentional action and its publicity. The case for the necessary publicity of intentional action, as I have tried to show, serves as basis to argue against ambitious forms of relativism about intentional action (and with it moral relativism).

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# What's Wrong with Moore's Response to Skepticism?

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## Abstract

In this paper, I will try to show why Wittgenstein found Moore's approach to skepticism interesting, but all the same unsatisfactory. To that end, I will take some remarks from Wittgenstein's *On Certainty* as my reference point, but I don't pretend to offer a coherent interpretation of this collection of working notes not prepared by Wittgenstein himself to be published. According to Wittgenstein, Moore realized something essential about the skeptical doubt: that it makes no sense; but failed to see the real nature of this nonsense. Moore believed that the skeptic falls into absurdity because she tries to doubt certainties that are obviously true, but he did not notice that the real nature of the skeptical nonsense is "grammatical". We will see what exactly this grammatical nonsense consists of and how the skeptical doubt is neutralized by the grammatical analysis.

Initially, we have to understand why Moore's response to skepticism attracted Wittgenstein's attention. I think the most remarkable feature of Moore's position is the fact that he doesn't try to elaborate complex argumentations to prove the absolute certainty of the propositions that the skeptic tries to undermine. On the contrary, he takes the certainty of these propositions absolutely for granted and, on that basis, he tries to show that the skeptical doubt is unjustified, even "ridiculous" (cf. Moore 1959, 227).

In a famous paper (Moore 1959a), Moore proves the existence of the external world by asserting "Here is one hand" and "Here is another" while pointing at his own hands. Moore claims that his proof is perfectly valid, but he concedes that it would leave many philosophers unsatisfied. This is so, because he never tries to prove the premises of his argument. But this doesn't mean that they are not true, not even that they are not perfectly certain. Indeed, Moore claims that he knows with certainty that they are true without needing to prove them.

In another well-known paper (Moore 1959b), Moore makes a series of statements he held to know with certainty, such as, that he has a body, that he is a human being, that the Earth has existed long before his birthday, etc. At no time does Moore try to prove the truth of these propositions, but rather asserts that he knows with certainty that they are true.

Although these two papers pursue different goals, they both share a common strategy against skepticism. When the skeptical philosopher tries to undermine any of the obviously true propositions Moore claims to know, Moore doesn't react like other philosophers: he doesn't try to prove them, instead, he just insists that he knows with certainty that they are true. This is not, however, a dogmatic refusal to deal with the skeptical challenge, but a clever move against skepticism: he is reversing the burden of proof. Instead of offering grounds to support his certainties, Moore shows how unreasonable it would be to doubt them and challenges the skeptic to prove that the skeptical arguments are more certain than the propositions he claims to know (cf. Moore 1959, 226).

Wittgenstein found this way of countering skepticism unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, he thought that Moore was trying unsuccessfully to make an important point. According to Wittgenstein, Moore was trying, without never fully realizing it, to make a grammatical remark, i.e., a remark about how we in fact use our language and what does and what doesn't make sense to say according to the rules that define our language games.

[...] One says, too, "I don't *believe* it, I *know* it". And one might also put it like this (for example): "That is a tree. And that's not just a surmise". But what about this: "If I were to tell someone that that was a tree, that wouldn't be just a surmise." Isn't this what Moore was trying to say? (OC §424)

Thus, the way to rebut the skeptic is to make clear that when she casts doubts on some empirical propositions, she is misusing language and thus saying nonsense, since she tries to raise a doubt exactly where a doubt would make no sense. This would be the point that Moore tries unsuccessfully to make in his writings. By insisting in claiming that he *knows* what the skeptic tries to doubt, Moore shows that he is not clear about the nature of the problem.

Moore's mistake lies in this—countering the assertion that one cannot know that, by saying "I do know it". (OC §521)

The queer thing is that even though I find it quite correct for someone to say "Rubbish!" and so brush aside the attempt to confuse him with doubts at bedrock,—nevertheless, I hold it to be incorrect if he seeks to defend himself (using, e.g., the words "I know"). (OC §498)

When Moore counters the skeptic with claims of knowledge, he is accepting the challenge, he is "defending himself", as if it came to determine whether one actually knows certain things, as if there were a real question to be answered, though a question with an obvious answer.

As a consequence of this *faux pas*, Moore's position suffers from the same kind of nonsense as the skeptic's. If doubting certain things makes no sense at all, claiming to know those very same things doesn't make sense either. The use of "I know", "I know with certainty", "it is absolutely certain", etc., is connected to doubt. Malcolm remarks that if we analyze the cases in which we say that we know something, we will realize that "'I know' seems to be used in contrast with someone's (perhaps one's own) previous, present, or potential, disbelief, or doubt, or insecure belief." (Malcolm 1986, 212) Therefore, where doubt makes no sense, neither does it the claim of knowledge, unless one merely wants to make a grammatical remark.

If "I know etc." is conceived as a grammatical proposition, [...] it properly means "There is no such thing as a doubt in this case" or "The expression 'I do not know' makes no sense in this case". And of course it follows this that "I *know*" makes no sense either. (OC §58)

That is, "I know" may be used to make a grammatical remark, but this remark concludes that in certain cases it makes no sense to doubt, and it makes no sense either to claim that one knows. But Moore insists he is using the expression "I know" in its ordinary sense when he claims to know the propositions the skeptic tries to doubt (cf. the "Letter to Malcolm", in Baldwin 1994, especially 216). Thus, Moore misuses the expression, as philosophers usually do.

834. We say "I know..." where there can be doubt, whereas philosophers say we know something precisely where there is no doubt, and thus where the words "I know" are superfluous as an introduction to a statement. (Wittgenstein 1986, 106)

But Moore and the skeptic believe that there is in fact a doubt to deal with. However, as Malcolm points out, this doubt could only be considered a philosophical doubt, a doubt that only appears where there is not and there cannot be any real doubt (see Malcolm 1949, especially 205-208). We could imagine situations where the doubt whether this is my hand and the corresponding statement "I know that this is my hand" are perfectly in order, and, in so far, would both the expression of doubt and the claim of knowledge make perfectly good sense. Though, of course, "[a]nyone who is unable to imagine a case in which one might say 'I know that this is my hand' (and such cases are certainly rare) might say that these words were nonsense" (OC §412). Nevertheless, this is not the kind of doubt that the skeptic is interested in. She is only interested in those doubts that rise when there is no real doubt, when doubting, as usually understood, doesn't even make sense.

This lack of sense of the skeptical doubt, however, must not be confused to mean that it is impractical or not very reasonable. This is how some authors have understood this line of criticism (see, e.g., Stroud 1994, ch. 2). Doubt may be impractical if it makes no difference whether the alternative hypothesis that the doubt presents is really the case or not, or it may be unreasonable if the grounds offered to support the doubt are not regarded as reasonable in our frame of reference.

But the doubt the skeptical philosopher tries to provoke is not just impractical or unreasonable, it makes no sense at all, since there are no grounds to support it. As Wittgenstein remarks, we need grounds to doubt (see OC §4, OC §122, OC §458). This is not a psychological remark, but a grammatical one. It does not mean that we need a particular motivation to turn into a mental state of doubt, but that grounds are an essential part of the language game of doubt. A doubt comprises several alternatives, i. e., to doubt something means not to be sure that *this* is the case, instead of *that*. But in order to arrive at this situation, we must be able to think that it is *possible* that what we think to be the case is not really the case.

Here we must be careful with language. "Being possible" doesn't mean in this case being *logically* possible, that is, being conceivable without contradiction, but rather being a *real* possibility. We consider something a real possibility only if there are some grounds, no matter how scarce, to think that this possibility might really be the case. When we say that it is possible that A will come to the party we don't state that that is a logical possibility, but that we have some reasons to believe that this will happen, even though these reasons are just that A has heard about the party and she likes parties. (For a detailed analysis of this ambiguity in expressions such as "be possible", "possibility", "might/may/could be", etc., see Malcolm 1963, especially 37-40.)

The skeptical hypotheses are presented as though they were real possibilities, but they really are not. If this were so, the doubt they raise could be solved. Even the brain-in-a-vat type could be solved. Someone could see the brain in the vat or even the brain in the vat could be reincorporated to a body and then convinced that it has lived in a vat for years and be shown how the whole mechanism works. The skeptic would ask us how we know that we are not a brain in a vat made to believe that it has been freed from where it has been kept alive. If we take the skeptical doubt as a real doubt, the skeptic will always place the doubt at a further level, so that it continues to have skeptical consequences.

For this reason, the skeptical doubt will never be supported by grounds. We could be led to take into consideration the most extraordinary hypotheses if the most unheard-of things happened. But even these hypotheses would not have skeptical consequences as long as they were not disconnected from every possible way of confirmation. Hence, the skeptic necessarily disconnects his hypotheses from confirmation, and thus she also disconnects them from grounds. A reason to doubt is some more or less well-founded evidence that speaks for an alternative hypothesis, and this evidence can always be further supported or ruled out by subsequent investigation. Everything that gives us grounds to doubt points at a way of either confirming or ruling out the alternative hypothesis and, therefore, if we disconnect our hypotheses from any possible confirmation, we are giving up every possible reason to doubt.

Thus, the skeptic tries to raise a doubt which does not and cannot have real grounds. This is a complete subversion of the "grammar" of doubt, since it goes against the rules that define this language game.

But the nonsense of the skeptical doubt has deeper roots. When we acquire a language, we don't just learn which things are referred by which words, we also learn the use of the words and, through that learning, we "swallow" some basic "truths", which are absolutely certain because they are, in a way, part of the meaning of our words. That is why "I am not more certain of the meaning of my words than I am of certain judgments" (OC §126), because if I am not certain of those judgments I cannot either know what my words mean. So, when the skeptic questions certain obviously true propositions, we are inclined to answer: "If this is not true beyond all possible doubt, then nothing is". But this means that if these statements are not certainly true, then we don't even know what "true" is supposed to mean or how these sentences are being used. Hence, knowing the meaning of our words implies being certain of some basic facts (cf. OC §114 and OC §506) and any attempt to doubt this facts, not supported by any real ground, goes against the grammar of our language and thus destroys itself.

Moore sees that something is deeply wrong with the skeptical challenge but he doesn't realize that the skeptical doubt is absurd not just because the statements it tries to undermine are obviously true, but because this kind of doubt subvert the grammar of our language games and therefore it doesn't even get to be a real doubt. Moore's mistake lies in not noticing this grammatical fact and, because of that, countering the skeptic with claims of knowledge that are as out of order as the skeptical doubt itself. Instead of that, he should have refused to play the game of the skeptic and he should have made clear why the skeptical doubt fails to be a real doubt.

This might not convince the skeptical philosopher, since in order to completely cast off the spell of skepticism it is necessary to show the deep roots of this philosophical temptation and to clarify why the skeptical challenge is "a misfiring attempt to express what can't be expressed like that" (OC §37). In order to do this, however, it is first necessary to clarify, as I have tried to do in this paper, the nature of the skeptical nonsense.

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# Abstract Cognition and the Nature of Mathematical Proof

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## Abstract

The importance of mathematical proof is hardly underestimated; it is the doorway to finding new and non-ordinary ways to look at the systems and to explain phenomena. We certainly know that mathematics allow us to solve an equation, to find a function or to prove a theorem. However, knowing how to differentiate a function is certainly not the same as trying to understand how a theorem is possible. The question of how and why is it possible for numbers to accurately represent relationships and entities in the physical world is an epistemological question of what mathematics is. In this paper I will consider Aristotle's conception of mathematics as abstractions from physical objects and their properties as the major advance in the human understanding of reality. Firstly, I will evaluate why proof is important, and subsequently how we, cognitive beings, are able to understand them and their relationship with the world.

## 1. The Nature of a Mathematical Proof in Aristotle's Philosophy

Even if it is intuitively true that there are infinite prime numbers, it is not obvious how human cognition comes to this understanding. The reason we know this to be true, is because Euclid presented a mathematical proof some 2300 years ago.

The central problem persisting from Aristotle's until our days is to provide an account of mathematical truths that is harmonious with our understanding of how mathematical proofs are able to directly relate to the natural world. The question of why and how is it possible for numbers to accurately represent relationships and entities in the physical world is an epistemological question of what does mathematics reason about.

Concerning the status of mathematical objects as described in *Metaphysics*, mathematics cannot be about such a class of independent substances because they do not exist, just as Platonic Forms do not exist; on the other hand, mathematical sciences cannot be about sensible things subject to change and perishable. This problem means that Aristotle has to find an intermediate solution; this is, to find another mode of being for mathematical objects. As we mentioned previously, etiologically from Greek, mathematics means "that which is learnt", therefore, it is unthinkable to Aristotle that mathematics wouldn't have its own subject.

In Met.1076a32-37 Aristotle outlines the logical possible modes of being of mathematical objects:

1. Mathematical objects are in sensible things<sup>1</sup>

ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς

2. Mathematical objects are separated from sensibles

κεχωρισμένα τῶν αἰσθητῶν

Although Aristotle does not identify its proponents, this logical possibility might be related to a strict Platonism, the view that mathematical objects are separated from sensible things as independent substances<sup>2</sup>.

Since the first two possibilities cover the ways in which mathematical objects can exist as substances, the last two possibilities must be about alternative modes of being:

3. Either mathematical objects do not exist

ἢ οὐκ εἰσὶν

4. Or they exist in some other way

ἢ ἄλλον τρόπον εἰσὶν

Aristotle shares with Plato the postulation that any genuine science must have a real or existent object. For this reason, it would be unthinkable that mathematical entities would not exist at all. The two first logical possibilities of being are to be refuted and the third to be relinquish, since Aristotle does not consider it further. The third and forth possibilities are the ones we need to address.

To understand his abstraction, it is crucial that we assume an ontological division between Physics and Mathematics. In Physics, Aristotle defines mathematical activity by contrasting it with the study of nature. According to Lear:

1. Physical bodies contain surfaces, lengths, and points that are the subject matter of mathematics (193b23-25);
2. The mathematician studies surfaces, volumes, and lengths; however not considering them as surfaces, volumes or lengths;
3. The mathematician is able to study surfaces, volumes, lengths, and points in isolation from their physical bodies, since he separates them in thought;
4. Since mathematical objects are separated in thought, they are free from mutability inherent to physical objects;
5. No falsity results from this separation (193b34-35).

This type of separation is very unlike from Platonism. According to Aristotle, the Theory of Forms makes at least two mistakes: (1) it does not realize that they are doing no more than engaging in this process of separation in thought (193b35); (2) It separates two wrong things, since Platonists tried to separate from matter things that could not be conceived of except as enmattered. It is now clear that the separation Aristotle is thinking is a very different

<sup>1</sup> in *Metaphysics* Beta 2 (998a7-19)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Cleary, 1985, 2001.

one from the separation of forms and that if we understand how and why this separation occurs, we will understand mathematical objects. In *Metaphysics* M3, Aristotle explains:

Just as universal propositions in mathematics are not about separable objects over and above magnitudes and numbers, but are about these, only not as having magnitude or being divisible, clearly it is also possible for there to be statements and proofs about (peri) perceptible magnitudes, but not as being of a certain kind. (...) so in the case of moving things there will be statements and branches of knowledge about them, not as moving but merely as bodies, and again merely as planes and merely as lengths, as divisible and as indivisible but with position and merely as indivisible. So since it is true to say without qualification not only that separable things exist but also that nonseparable things exist (e.g., that moving things exist), it is also true to say without qualification that mathematical objects exist and are as they are said to be. It is true to say of other branches of knowledge, without qualification, that they are of this or that — not what is incidental. (...)

The best way to study each of these things would be this: to separate and posit what is not separable, as the arithmetician does and the geometer. A man is one and indivisible as a man, and the arithmetician posits him as one indivisible, then studies what is incidental to the man as indivisible; the geometer, on the other hand, studies him neither as a man nor as indivisible, but as a solid object. That is why the geometers speak correctly: they talk about existing things and they really do exist — for what exists does so in one of two senses, in actually or materially. (*Met.* M3, 1077b18-1078a31).

This argument is a strong objection to Platonism, and especially to the universal existence of objects. So Aristotle's point can be summed as follows: the generalized theory of proportion need not to commit us to the existence of any special objects — magnitudes — over and above numbers and spatial magnitudes. The theory is about spatial magnitudes and numbers, only not as spatial magnitude or number but rather as magnitude: that is, they exhibit a common property, and they are being considered solely in respect of this (Lear, 1982).

If one admits that there are objects that can be thought in isolation from all of their other attributes, such as moving bodies, then it is possible to treat these objects solely as bodies; planes; lengths and so on (1077b23-30). In other words, Aristotle's substances such as men, horses, tables, planets can be considered from the feature point of view in isolation.

Mathematical objects are supposed to exist in some qualified fashion. In which way mathematical objects exist? Mathematical properties are truly instantiated in physical objects and, by applying a predicate filter, we can consider these objects as solely instantiating the appropriate properties. In studying geometry one need to study physical objects, not platonic ones, furthermore, if someone should postulate and investigate objects that are separated from incidental properties, he would be speaking falsely. For he is assuming the existence of an object whose only properties are those that are logical consequences of its being for instances a triangle.

## 2. Aristotle's Methodology: abstracting mathematical objects

In respect to Aristotle's methodology, it is important to consider that the first principles of science are known through induction from experience rather than from demonstration. In *Posterior Analytics* II.19, Aristotle considers that knowledge of the premises comes from perception (100a10-100b5). Scientific knowledge is about the properties found in sensible objects. This means that the mathematician studies the properties relevant to his field by isolating or abstracting the sensible thing that has the properties. The account of isolating scientific objects, in particular mathematical ones, is controversial. The term 'χωρισμός' can be translated as the product and the process of isolating scientific objects. The terms "abstraction", and "method of abstraction" are often used by commentators. However, the term may also be translated as "separation" or "isolating". For now I will just focus on the "isolating the scientific object". This form of isolating takes particular objects and focuses on them only 'as' objects of study. This means, setting aside all properties that are not relevant to the subject matter of the science. The physicist will look at the man as his object in so far as the man has motion, a property studied by physics. The doctor will look at the same man as his object in so far as the man has health, a property studied by medicine. The geometer will look at the same man as his object in so far as the man has solidity, a property studied by geometry. (*Met.* XIII.3 1077b24-30). In case of mathematics, the isolation of the objects of mathematics concentrates only on the properties of the sensible thing, which are essential for it as mathematical. All other properties are ignored (*Physics* II.2.193b31-194a5).

The abstraction process helps the mathematician focus in the sensible thing as having the properties which are the subject-matter of mathematical sciences and allows her to consider the sensible thing as a mathematical object. The sensible thing has the properties of magnitude and shape, which are geometrical properties. It also has unity and membership in a plurality, which are arithmetic properties. After identifying and study the numerical properties in sensible things, the mathematician can also separate or take away the properties and consider them as unchanging, eternal and perfect objects. The things resulting from separation — the properties considered as objects that are unchanging, eternal and perfect, are the *abstracta*.

When isolating mathematical objects, Aristotle rejects the view that there is a new object discovered or created distinct from sensible things. For Aristotle does not intend his separation to create or discover a distinct, separate entity.

## 3. Cognitive abstraction on the Soul's Rational Faculty

We have examined how mathematical proofs are able to directly relate to the natural world in Aristotle's theory. Now we need to address the question of how human cognition are able to grasp them

Aristotle developed his theory of abstract cognition and the concept of abstraction according to which mathematical objects are created by the intellect by detaching or abstracting and retaining the form that characterizes the relation or quantitative order in what is individual and material. In this way mathematical objects are created although these do not exist on their own (as Plato held). Aristotle defends therefore, an operation of the intellect, which was

characteristic of the soul's rational faculty, and by which "objects [of the knowledge] are separable from their matter" (De Anima, 429b), as one of the first and most basic operation of the intellect in general. This operation allows creating objects of scientific cognition — objects that are general forms abstracted from individual and concrete things, from which we form the cognitive images of things (De Anima, 429b).

The process by whereby concepts arise and the objects of the intellectual cognition are formed is based on a distinction from *passive intellect* and the *active intellect* of the soul's rational faculty. This distinction depends on the functions performed by the faculty. The passive intellect is a part of the soul's internal structure — the soul as the form of the organic body. The active intellect is "separable, impassive and unmixed (De Anima, 429b). It is not joined with the body and it functions as a light that gives the passive reason. It is though this light that the reason grasps or conceives the intellectual image of the thing.

This form of operating an abstraction from the individual and concrete thing and retained in the intellectual as an intellectual cognitive form, is possible because abstraction is conceived as an operation whereby concepts are joined and divided or as the extensions of concepts (universalization). The operation of abstraction's ultimate endeavor is to produce cognitive forms of things that reflect an essential or accidental arrangement of contents.

## Discussion

A scientific proof is a deductive system. The truths of a science are the theorems of such a system — the propositions that we are able to deduce from the *archai* by means of reasoning. A scientific proof or a demonstration (*apodeixis*) is a derivation of a conclusion from more basic truths.

Aristotle's account of mathematical objects trusts on a distinction between qualified substances (objects) and unqualified substances. Unqualified substance has independent existence. A substance, as explained in *Categories*, is neither something, nor it is present in something. In *Metaphysics* VII.1, substance is that which is "primary in every sense — in formula, in order of knowledge, in time" Meta. VII.1.1028a31. However, mathematical objects are not independent or primary. The scientist isolates object by focusing on the properties relevant to her science. The scientific objects are substance in so far as they are sensible subjects, which have certain scientific properties, but not because the physical object, the biological object, or the ethical object has independent existence as a physical, biological, or ethical objects. Rather, the scientific objects are dependent on sensible things. For this reason, there is a distinction between scientific object and substance simpliciter with the later having independent existence and the

former being a qualified substance. The mathematical objects are a result of an abstracting or separation process in though, however, even the mathematical objects are dependent on sensible things as they have no existence prior to, nor completely separate from *sensibles*.

In respect to how the human cognition apprehends the mathematical object, Aristotle contemplates that mathematics can be described as a series of descriptive conceptual frameworks abstracted directly from human sensory perception of the physical world. He acknowledges that the numbers as unit-abstraction, do not exist as actual properties of objects in the world, but they exist as valuable fictitious concepts that, in spite of not existing as a unit or number, they assure their existence and validity because they are derived from objects or properties that do actually exist in the physical world. This unit-perspective is, therefore, object and property-neutral. For these reason, numbers that actually exist as different substances, are valid since they are abstracted from the objects that are subject to change. The remaining properties of those objects are to be ignored.

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# “Isms” Lead to Misinterpretations of Moderate Concepts and Frame Debates

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## Abstract

My paper draws attention to the fact that the use of isms predetermines the manner how we perceive the issues expressed by them. Realism seems to be diametrically opposed to relativism and constructivism, but it is of the same kind by virtue of being an ism. Isms accomplish to constrain our thinking by limiting the linguistic registers we are allowed to use when discussing a topic. They exclude registers that express e.g. restraint, uncertainty, attitudes of modesty or moderation, private opinions, and insincerity. This leads to misinterpretations of moderate concepts like “skepticism” and “relativism” which are actually contradictions in terms.

„Wir führen die Wörter von ihrer metaphysischen, wieder auf ihre alltägliche Verwendung zurück.“  
(Wittgenstein 1984, 116)

A possible approach to the topic of this year's (2015) Wittgenstein Symposium “Realism – Relativism – Constructivism” might be to ask: what is actually the difference between isms and not talking in isms?

## Properties of isms

It cannot be said that somebody is e.g. a socialist in one occasion but not in the other. Generally, Isms seem to have the following properties: They are opinions or attitudes persons or groups express publicly, openly, truthfully, repeatedly, always (without exemption), and wholeheartedly.

An ist is a person who does not just have the habit of thinking in a certain way but has made a principle out of it. Additionally isms seem to have an expansive component in the form that e.g. a socialist wants everybody to be a socialist and even takes action in order to convince people to become socialists.

## Anarchism as a contradiction in terms

In his tale *The Anarchistic Banker* (1922) Fernando Pessoa showed a case where an attitude (striving for a life free of domination) is in conflict with its ism-ending: if an anarchist expresses his anarchism in public action, he will provoke the opposition of society and end up being vigilantly controlled by the police. On the other hand, a bourgeois life in capitalist society (e.g. the life of a banker) seems to be the fullest realisation of the anarchistic attitude in practice. Anarchy then means doing anything one wants to do and trying not to get caught, if a law is infringed.

## The anarch

In his novel *Eumeswil* (1977) Ernst Jünger coined the term “anarch”. An anarch is an anarchist who, conscient of the fact that his attitude might provoke social repugnance, shrewdly hides it.

It seems that, basically, there is an arch to every ist (like there is an anarch to the anarchist), although not all isms may allow for an arch-form. “Skepticism” does allow

both forms, so that we could understand “skeptical” analogically to “anarch” and “skepticist” analogically to “anarchist”.

## Skepticism

Skepticism, especially in Analytic Philosophy, is understood as the position that knowledge is impossible. However, this seems to be a misinterpretation, for being skeptical about something means that one doubts that a belief is true; it does not mean that one is sure that it is not true. How does it come that the concept of skepticism has turned around 180 degrees, from doubting to being sure that knowledge is impossible?

The reason for this change might be found in the effect of the ism-ending onto the word. For explanation: being skeptical means to withhold taking a position, but ismioning a word requires the creation of a position. Consequently, withholding one's position is understood as one theoretical position among others. However, in reality being skeptical is a non-position (one refuses to take a stance). This is why it is fundamentally not possible to transform being skeptical into an ism. Nevertheless this was done; so we have with “skepticism” a concept that is a contradiction in terms.

## The Epimenides paradox

I suspect that use of ism-words inclines us towards an ism-way of thinking. However, the ism-way of thinking does not rely exclusively on the use of ism-words. An example for that can be found in the Epimenides paradox: Epimenides the Cretan says, that all the Cretans are liars, but Epimenides is himself a Cretan.

The Epimenides paradox relies on the belief that a liar always lies (doing something always, repeatedly, as the ism requires). However, this is impossible for a real liar who tries to mislead other persons' beliefs with the motive of generating an advantage for himself. He needs true statements to hide false ones between them.

From that follows that the liar in the Epimenides paradox is not a liar but a liarist (somebody who lies on principle) in order for the paradox to work. If he really were a liar, the alleged paradox would resolve itself as follows: When Epimenides, the Cretan, says that all Cretans are liars we cannot determine whether he is lying or telling the truth because there is no liar who always lies. Therefore, he



might well by lying, but it could as well be the case that he is telling the truth.

## Relativism

"Relativism is the concept that points of view have no absolute truth or validity, having only relative, subjective value according to differences in perception and consideration." (Wikipedia) Furthermore, relativism seems to be something bad for most philosophers: "But it is also true that most academic philosophers in the English-speaking world see the label 'relativist' as the kiss of death, so few have been willing to defend any version of the doctrine (there is less reluctance in some other disciplines)." (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

In the case of relativism ismioning the word has a similar effect like in the case of skepticism. In skepticism a non-position is transformed into a position, in relativism a position that refuses to be generalized is generalized.

A person with a relative worldview tries to form her beliefs according to what seems to be true or right from her personal point of view. She is cautious not to generalize her views from the very start because she is aware that she possesses direct access only to her own experience and that other people might have other experiences that bring other things into view and make them relevant.

A relative attitude is an attitude of modesty that blatantly contrasts to the self-assured position represented by relativism.

## Relativism is not relative, anyway

Furthermore, in contrast to the general understanding of "relativism", a relative position is not relative from the point of view of the person who holds it.

Such a person would say, "Anybody, who judges the issue from my point of view, would arrive at the same conclusion." This does not sound relative to me, but rather like one possible way of seeking universal truth.

In universalism or objectivism, the perspective is mostly one from above (Thomas Nagel's "view from nowhere"), whereas the perspective of the relative knower is one from now and here. It is like the painter who sets up his easel at one specific place and paints the landscape the way it looks like from that point of view. Actually, there is nothing subjective in the attitude of relativity: a camera put in the same place as the painter's easel could also depict the landscape only from that perspective and not from the view from nowhere.

If we ask ourselves, how we came to adopt the belief that relativism consists in its relativity, the issue of framing surfaces. Logical oppositions may contain hidden messages. For example, the logical opposition between "morally good" and "morally bad" contains the message that it is morally good to differentiate between "morally good" and "morally bad". Analogically, the message of the logical opposition between "relativism" and its opposite term "universalism" is that universalism is something good and that relativism is not so good.

The *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (see the keyword: "Intellektualismus") reminds us that many isms originally carried a pejorative meaning, being coined in order to denominate an attitude that should be overcome.

## Individualism

Some people refuse the idea of individualism because it seems impossible to them to comply with the pretension dwelling in that notion, namely, that everybody should be unique and find ways to express his or her uniqueness publicly by ways of dressing, hobbies and life-style. However, this pretension is not the essence of the idea of "individualism" but is provoked by the ism-ending of the word.

From the perspective of the individual, the individual does not need to boast with her uniqueness or individuality, because she is already unique by the pure fact of being psychically separated from other human beings. Finding her individuality, therefore, is not a competition of winning a contest of glamour against others. In reality, the function of the term "individualism" seems not consist in offering an attitude they can adopt to individuals but rather in describing a specific structure of society in which individuals try to differentiate themselves from each other by acting in glaring ways. There are individualistic versus collectivistic societies.

The problem with the term "individualism" is that up to now individuals do not understand that its content is over-emphasized by its ism-ending.

## Epistemology

Isms are abundant in epistemology, especially in the epistemology of the Analytic School of Philosophy. Apart from realism, relativism and constructivism, there are internalism, externalism, reliabilism, coherentism, contextualism, essentialism, foundationalism, reductionalism and others. It has to be mentioned that they fulfil the latent function (see: the sociologist differentiation between manifest and latent functions) to exclude everybody from discourse who is not familiar with their meanings.

It is a typical strategy of scientific disciplines to coin terms for the exclusive use of the members of the scientific community. Everyday language, in contrast, tries to avoid uncommon terms as much as possible in order to augment the probability of understanding.

## Relativism was born at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century

The *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* states that the term „relativism“ became established only at the transition from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is interesting! Did the idea the term describes not exist before, throughout all history, e.g. together with skepticism? Was Plato's parable of the cave not already an early example of people judging reality relatively to their own point of view?

What was new at that time? The 19<sup>th</sup> century was the era of the emergence of great social movements and academic currents: marxism, socialism, liberalism, positivism, historicism, psychologism and the like.

This hint might be useful for the interpretation of isms. An ism could be not just a point of view but a social movement created from a specific point of view. In this case, for a person to judge whether to hold a certain ism or not, does not only require making up her mind about the truth of the corresponding point of view, but also to decide whether she wants to join the movement.

Here lies another pitfall isms haunt us with, for not every person with a socialistic worldview might want to join the

socialistic party. Being convinced that socialism is right is compatible with the belief that the socialist party is wrong.

### The lack of ism-critique in Wittgenstein's philosophy

Isms were especially prominent at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. That means that Ludwig Wittgenstein was surrounded by isms in the social and the academic world. However, I do not have any notice of an analysis of isms in Wittgenstein's philosophy.

This fact is even more surprising as Wittgenstein's program of analysis of language designated him to study isms. He was inclined to analyze words from the point of everyday use. This inclination could have motivated Wittgenstein to criticize scientific language from the perspective of everyday language. He also advanced the concept of the language game. Why did he never ask who the winner was and who the loser in a specific language game? Why did he not ask how language games are utilized in order to exclude certain persons from discourse? He reflected on rule following. Why is there not any thought to be found in his writings about how we are urged to follow rules instead of being allowed to think for ourselves?

Maybe the reason for this fact was that Wittgenstein was preoccupied with certainty but not with freedom of thought?

### The lack of the keyword "ism" and of ism-critique in philosophical dictionaries and encyclopedias

A search in a number of philosophical encyclopedias, in the library as well as in the internet, yielded no result for the keyword "ism". There is just no such keyword and, correspondingly, no analysis of the phenomenon and of the history of isms in language. I do not know of and have not found any scientific or philosophical ism-critique either. Isms seem to be accepted as something entirely uncontroversial unproblematic.

Isms in encyclopedias are often presented as "doctrines" or as a "set of theories" omitting the expansive dynamics of isms highlighted by me in this paper.

### Conclusion

My paper shows that isms do something to words. They change their contents in a subtle and generally unobserved way. They predetermine how a word should be perceived without arguing themselves. Isms accomplish this by excluding private forms of expressing oneself and expressions that are formally or morally not apt for public announcements. They exclude linguistic registers from discourse that do not allow speaking aloud and in a self-assured way, e.g. expressions of restraint or uncertainty, attitudes of modesty, private opinions, and insincerity.

A problem arises with concepts that, within their core idea, express such a moderate register. Such concepts, transformed into isms, end up being contradictions in terms. The reason for that is that they express private attitudes, or attitudes that should better be hidden from the public, in public.

A reason for the widespread use of isms in current philosophy might be the conviction of many philosophers that philosophy should be a public discourse. Their concept of philosophy is opposed to the ancient concept of philosophy as a form of life (see Hadot 1981). Public philosophy is a constraint of what can be said to what can be said publicly.

The topic of this year's Wittgenstein Symposium seems to suggest that realism is diametrically opposed to relativism and constructivism. The aim of my paper was to show that, furthermore, these terms are all of the same kind by virtue of being isms. Ideas packed in the form of isms are delivered to us already together with an interpretation of how they should be understood and used in discourse. The ism-form deters us from reflecting upon the ideas expressed by them in a manner as if we were alone with an idea and able to find and express our attitude towards it as an individual.

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# World-picture Propositions in *On Certainty*

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## Abstract

In this paper, hinge propositions, or “Weltbild propositions” (Moyal-Sharrock 2013, 366) in *On Certainty* are considered. Wittgenstein characterizes the basis of our knowledge, beliefs and activities by means of these words. By examining Moyal-Sharrock’s interpretation and Hacker’s interpretation of these issues which Wittgenstein suggests in *On Certainty*, we can grasp our basis is a kind of conditions which we cannot state explicitly. This research focused on the argument that there is implicit assimilation (Moyal-Sharrock 2007, 105) through which such basis is acquired.

## Introduction

In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein thinks about propositions like, “here is one hand” (OC §1), or “The earth was already there before my birth” (OC §233). He expounds on these propositions by commenting as follows: “It may be for example that *all enquiry on our part* is set so as to exempt certain propositions from doubt, if they are ever formulated. They lie apart from the route travelled by enquiry.” (OC §88)

Here, Wittgenstein discerns the propositions that become our basis and part of the method of our doubt and enquiry, and not become representations of our knowledge from other propositions. That is, for Wittgenstein, there is a distinction between the propositions that become our basis of knowledge and allow us to investigate and to doubt, and the proposition, on this basis, which are doubted, and investigated. However, in *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein also raises the following concern: “But it isn’t that the situation is like this: We just *can’t* investigate everything, and for that reason we are forced to rest content with assumption. If I want the door to turn, the hinges must stay put.” (OC §343)

“It might be imagined that some propositions, of the form of empirical propositions, were hardened and functioned as channels for such empirical propositions as were not hardened but fluid; and that this relation altered with time, in that fluid propositions hardened, and hard ones became fluid.” (OC §96)

In the above, this means that sometimes propositions, which are our basis of knowledge may become propositions that are doubted and investigated into, and vice versa. That is to say, Wittgenstein comments on the compatibility between the former propositions and the latter propositions.

In this paper, I want to consider how we can understand the propositions which constitute our basis, according to Wittgenstein’s understanding. It suggests that there is a distinction between the propositions that become our basis of knowledge and the propositions, which are on this basis doubted and investigated, but in between those propositions compatibility is recognized.

## Grammar

When considering what becomes our foundation, I want to refer to the conception of grammar in Wittgenstein’s thought, which Peter Hacker and Danièle Moyal-Sharrock demonstrate in their papers. This is because Hacker put his idea as follows:

It is true that we can, in certain cases, transform an empirical proposition into a rule or norm of representation by resolving to hold it rigid. (But ‘The world has existed for many years’, which we could not abandon without destroying the web of our beliefs, is nevertheless not a rule, since its role is not to determine concepts or inference rules.) (Hacker 1996, 215)

I think it is concerned with what our basis is. In other words, admitting a distinction between those two kinds of propositions and admitting the possibility of those propositions merging do not conflict with each other.

The difference between the views of Hacker and Moyal-Sharrock is as follows. On the one hand, Hacker regards our foundation as true empirical propositions, and on the other hand, Moyal-Sharrock regards it as our ways of acting (Moyal-Sharrock 2013, 369). According to Moyal-Sharrock, the reason for the misconception of Hacker lies in his narrow view of grammatical rules and it is apart from Wittgenstein’s original view.

Moyal-Sharrock’s criticism of Hacker includes the following two points. Firstly, Wittgenstein’s view of grammatical rule is not limited to rules which can determine our correct use of words, concepts, or inference rules (Moyal-Sharrock 2013, 364). In addition to this, grammatical rules formulate bounds of sense (Moyal-Sharrock 2013, 367). This point follows from Hacker’s remark which says, although we could not abandon the proposition, “The world has existed for many years” without destroying the web of our beliefs, nevertheless, this proposition is not a rule because of its role which does not determine concepts or inference rules (Hacker 1996, 215). Thus, grammatical rules have to determine not only our use of concepts or inference rules, but the base of activities in which we use concepts and words.

Moreover, from this point, Moyal-Sharrock noticed that Hacker made a false conclusion when he said “hinges or *Weltbild propositions*” in *On Certainty* are empirical propositions (Moyal-Sharrock 2013, 366). This is because, if the grammatical rules are only concerned with correct use of words, concepts, or inference rules, as Hacker interprets it, it results in missing the fact that propositions like “The world has existed for many years” are grammatical holding fast (Moyal-Sharrock 2013, 366). Here, Moyal-Sharrock refers to Wittgenstein’s view of the proposition and expresses disagreement with Hacker’s conclusion. As for Hacker, hinge propositions, such as “The world has existed for many years”, are propositions which we could not abandon without destroying the web of our beliefs, and they are “indubitable, not negatable” (Moyal-Sharrock 2013, 366). In addition, Hacker assumes they are propositions which are removed from possible doubt but also em-

irical propositions (Hacker 2012, 11). Still, Wittgenstein grasps the proposition as something that must be capable of being true and of being false, and it cannot be compatible with Hacker's grasp that recognizes hinge propositions which are empirical propositions and cannot be false. Therefore, Hacker does not discern the certainty of hinge propositions correctly, which means he loses sight of the grammatical certainty. This is because Hacker has a narrow view of grammatical rules and he distances himself from the correct understanding of certainty of propositions such as "The world has existed for many years". Furthermore, this leads him to the conclusion, standing apart from Wittgenstein, that our foundation is empirical propositions which cannot be false.

On the other hand, Moyal-Sharrock thinks of our foundation as not true empirical propositions, but rather grammatical propositions which formulate bounds of sense, and whose negation come into "nonsense" (Moyal-Sharrock 2013, 367). Specifically, with regards to the proposition such as "The world has existed for many years", though they do not only concern with our correct use of words, concepts, or inference rules, but also work as grammatical rules, they become the underpinning of all thought and action (Moyal-Sharrock 2013, 369). In brief, the underpinning of all our thought and action appear to be true empirical propositions but ways of acting (Moyal-Sharrock 2013, 370).

In conclusion, there are two interpretations of our basis in Wittgenstein's thought. One is Hacker's interpretation. Hacker suggests that we can transform empirical propositions into rules and our foundation which cannot be false. The other is Moyal-Sharrock's. Sharrock suggests that hinge propositions have the form of empirical propositions, but are in fact not empirical propositions. In addition, she claims that our foundation is our way of acting. This means that our basis has a "non-propositional nature" (Moyal-Sharrock 2013, 370), and we do not need to suppose there are self-justifying propositions, or have to struggle to find a basis for those hinge propositions.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I want to forward the line of thought which Moyal-Sharrock presents.

Furthermore, I suggest our foundation can be interpreted as basis which permits us to share activities, but are different from conditions we can state explicitly. This is because from the excerpts below in *On Certainty*, it can be said that the acquirement of our basis sometimes occurs without articulation.

"Children do not learn that books exist, that armchairs exist, etc. etc., -they learn to fetch books, sit in armchairs, etc. etc...." (OC §476) "The child learns to believe a host of things. I.e. it learns to act according to these beliefs...." (OC §144)

From these passages, it can be said that our basis, which means *Weltbild propositions*, such as "here is one hand" (OC §1), or "The earth was already there before my birth" (OC §233) are part of our activities. Through mastering those activities, we learn those propositions. Thus, our basis is included in our activities, and in the process of learning those activities we do not necessarily need explicit training to acquire this basis. It means, in the process, the basis does not need to be put into words. This understanding of our basis, which says it becomes underpinning our thoughts and actions, and nevertheless does not appear in shape of propositions, is consistent with Moyal-

Sharrock's understanding suggesting our basic certainties are *ways of acting* (Moyal-Sharrock 2013, 370).

And in the same line of thought,

As children we learn facts; e.g., that every human being has a brain, and we take them on trust. I believe that there is an island, Australia, of such-and-such a shape, and so on and so on; I believe that I had great-grandparents, that the people who gave themselves out as my parents really were my parents, etc. *This belief may never have been expressed; even the thought that it was so, never thought.* (OC 159; *Italic emphasis mine*)

If a child asked me whether the earth was already there before my birth, I should answer him that the earth did not begin only with my birth, but that it existed long, long before. And *I should have the feeling of saying something funny.* Rather as if the child had asked if such and such a mountain were higher than a tall house that it had seen. *In answering the question I should have to be imparting a picture of the world to the person who asked it.*

*If I do answer the question with certainty, what gives me this certainty?* (OC §233; *Italic emphasis mine*)

Wittgenstein suggests in the above excerpts that we acquire our basis even though we never have expressed and thought it, and in addition he mentions funny feelings we have when we teach our basis to others with expression. This understanding matches with Moyal-Sharrock's understanding, which suggests, in acquiring some hinges, there is no "training and often no formulation at all" but "something like *repeated exposure*" (Moyal-Sharrock 2007, 105) occurs. Moreover, Moyal-Sharrock takes the case of acquiring the hinge propositions, "I am part of the human species" (Moyal-Sharrock 2007, 113), and pays attention to the implicit assimilation. It suggests that assimilation of these hinge propositions occurs when there is absence of conflict, an experience which I referred to as 'a table' or 'a cat' (Moyal-Sharrock 2007, 113). Therefore, if I do not have an experience which is opposed to "I am part of the human species" and all of my experiences harmonize with this hinge proposition, acquirement of this proposition can occur.

From the quotations mentioned above, we can derive that *Weltbild propositions* are the basis which may have never been expressed and thought of acquiring them through mastering activities. However, there is a possibility that people share activities, but there is a difference in *Weltbild propositions* they have. This has to be revealed when they articulate the basis they have. For instance, "Things which surround us never vanish when we do not watch" can be seen as a part of our basis and acquiring of this hinge proposition occurs without articulation. This is because with regard to this basis, we usually do not say in words or think of, but it underlies our activities, such as putting things out of drawers. However, it can be said that we may still share the activity with people whose basis is different from ours. They may believe 'Things may disappear while no one is watching, and they appear when people start to watch' and 'There is no chance to catch the moment when things appear again and it never changed'

In conclusion, when we take into account that *Weltbild propositions* are the basis allocated to our activities and acquired through processes in which we do not need to express this basis in words, it becomes possible for people not to share the same basis but the same activity. From this point, I think the basis Wittgenstein is concerned with in *On Certainty* is the one which underlies our activities,

however, it does not need to be identical with people who share activities. That is to say, it can be said that this basis is different from conditions which we can state explicitly.

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# The Concept of Luck as an *Object of Comparison* to Magic

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## Abstract

I argue that comparing the concept of magic, which is alien to us, to the concept of luck, which is familiar to us, will help us to better understand magical thinking. This is due to important connections and similarities between these two concepts, concerning where they stem from, their highly independent status as concepts and their role in our moral lives.

Language-use and concepts play central roles in our lives. The concept of *luck* is familiar to us all. We say things like “I wish you good luck!”, “Let’s hope we’ll get lucky” and “Luck never seems to be on our side”. But what do we mean hereby? What is this “luck” we talk about? The concept of luck has not been given major attention in philosophy. Nevertheless there is an on-going discussion on so-called *moral* and *epistemological luck* and to some degree on the nature of luck. My intention is however not to directly partake in these discussions, but to use the concept of luck as an *object of comparison* (see Wittgenstein 2009, §130-1) to the concept of *magic*. By making this comparison, we come to see that there are some important connections and similarities between these two. As the concept of luck is familiar to us, we may gain some foothold in magical thinking, which to us may appear quite alien, through these connections. The concept of luck can therefore serve as a bridge of understanding, as an *intermediate link* or *case* (see *ibid.* §122), helping us to clarify and understand the concept of magic.

In a quite recent survey (Pritchard and Smith 2004) of both philosophical and psychological literature on luck it is stated that luck has proven to be very difficult to characterise or define in a satisfying way. This is said partly to be due to the fact that our intuitions about luck seem to be incoherent, thus leaving the concept ambiguous. The survey nevertheless discerns two main approaches to luck, that people actually have, from the results of various psychological polls: a “*rational*” *conception of luck*, where luck is seen as nothing more than a matter of probabilities, chance and random events; and an “*irrational*” *conception of luck*, where luck is seen as a personal quality of some kind: a “*force*” or a “*skill*” that some people possess while others do not.

That the “irrational” conception of luck is related to magical beliefs should be quite evident. Like luck, magic too is thought as something that some people—witches and sorcerers—possess, i.e. a “*force*” or a “*skill*” of some sort. Furthermore, magic is closely connected to luck, as it sometimes is specifically designed to affect it, e.g. rites and offerings to deities to ensure crop luck. In rural Finland, still a hundred years ago, witchcraft was considered a natural cause for bad luck. We are moreover all familiar with the idea of talismans: magical items that are meant to bring luck to their bearer. Thus, we can see, that, at least formerly, the borderline between luck and magic seemed to be quite blurred.

Even today, we occasionally speak and think as if luck were some kind of personal quality: some persons just being lucky and others not. I do not suggest that we commit ourselves to anything irrational hereby, but thinking and speaking about luck in this manner simply comes naturally for us. Furthermore, still today, e.g. many athletes and

gamblers wear talismans or go through certain “rituals” before their performances. We may of course discard this as mere superstition; yet, even people who consider themselves perfectly rational may at some occasions resort to this kind of behaviour (see Darke and Freedman 1997, 488). What is crucial is therefore not whether or not athletes and gamblers “really” believe in rituals and talismans, but that they may in any case feel seriously distressed if they had to perform without them. Both the concepts of magic and luck seem hence to be connected with attempts to cope with situations that are beyond our control. Consider also the following case: You burst out in anger: “Again he’s lucky!” when someone obtains something you would have wanted for yourself (in a case where the result was just a matter of chance). This seems a fairly natural reaction. Hereby one is directing one’s anger at the other person—think of Donald Duck’s reactions when his always lucky cousin Gladstone Gander once again is stricken by luck—even if one is fully aware that the other person is not to blame. Alternatively, it is imaginable that one might direct ones anger at the world as a whole, which never seems to be “on one’s side”. Both cases resemble Wittgenstein’s remark of him beating the ground with his walking stick when furious, even if he knows that the ground is not to blame. Interestingly, he contends that all rites are of this kind (Wittgenstein 1993, 137-8). If we believe Wittgenstein in this, both the concepts of magic and luck can be regarded to have roots in this kind of “instinct-actions”, as he calls them. To conclude, although magical thinking did not survive the emergence of modern rational thinking, the concept of luck still seems to bear traces of it, like a remnant from the past; even if luck can be made perfectly compatible with a scientific world-view, the concept still remains something of an odd case.

Our concept of luck is not merely a bit particular: some philosophers have pointed out that the very idea of luck is incompatible with our conceptions of morality (see Pritchard and Smith 2004). One variation of this so-called *problem of moral luck* goes as follows: we think someone can be held morally responsible for her actions only if she is in control over them, i.e. is free to choose how to act. On the other hand, the kind persons we are, and consequently, how we act, seems partly to be a function of, among other things, our upbringing, the cultural environment we live in, and of course, of our genes that at least in part determine our physical and psychological traits. These we cannot choose; they seem simply to be matters of chance and luck. Hence, how can we be held responsible for our actions, when they appear to be conditioned by things we have no control over? Does not our concept of luck stand in severe contradiction with our ideas of freedom of choice, responsibility and morality?

Our language thus contains an ambiguous and particular concept—luck—which moreover seems to be incompatible

with some of our most important concepts. Is this not quite remarkable that we nevertheless keep on using the concept, that we have not discarded it as unreasonable? One might imagine we would regularly run into problems and conflicts in form of misunderstandings, misinterpretations and disagreement when using it, especially as it is possible to conceive luck in directly opposite ways, “rationally” and “irrationally”. Actually, however, everything appears to run smoothly when we play the language-game of luck. Disputes do not break out. We do not e.g. ask each other in which way we understand luck in order to ensure that we are talking about the “same thing”. The lack of a common definition, the fact that no general decision has been made concerning its relation to a scientific world-view and the alleged contradiction with morality do not bother us. We do not question the language-game of luck. We are content and satisfied with it. Our use of the concept of luck is uncritical, if you like. I am not saying we could not question it, or that we will not; we simply *do not*.

This makes one wonder whether the way in which we conceive luck and relate it to other concepts actually is of any significance, as it seems to have little or no consequences for our use of the word. Indeed, need we at all be committed to a particular conception of luck, of what it is and how it connects with other concepts, in order to use the word? When we use it, *do* we have a particular conception or interpretation of it in mind? I think not. I would even claim that most of us, philosopher and non-philosopher alike, have never given much thought to luck at all, not to mention formed explicit conceptions of it. Imagine you were suddenly asked: “Does magic exist?”. Most people would without hesitation answer with a resolute “No”. Now imagine you were asked: “Does luck exist?”. I believe this question would initially confuse us somewhat. We would need some time to think how to even relate ourselves to the question: What is it about? How would an answer to it even look like? After some reflection, surely, we would decide for one or another answer, probably hereby forming some conception of luck, likely either the “rational” or the “irrational” one. But were we committed to a particular conception *before* someone brought up the question. If so, how well thought over was it? As resolute as our views on e.g. magic?

Let us compare what has been said above to a well-known remark by E.E. Evans-Pritchard on the Zande tribe’s belief in magic. He writes that “they have no theoretical interest in the subject” (Evans-Pritchard 1937, 25, cited in Winch 1986, 314). Evans-Pritchard makes his remark in connection to the observation, that when an apparent contradiction in the Azande’s magical beliefs is pointed out to them, they take no real interest in it, even though they to some degree recognise the contradiction. Peter Winch (1986, 314f) sees this as a sign of magical and rational thinking operating at different levels: attempts to rationalise magical beliefs are simply out of place. Of course, this does not mean that the Azande could not take theoretical interest in magic; they simply *do not*. They are content with their system of magic, so they keep on using it. When it comes to the subject of luck, are we not behaving like the Azande when the “contradiction” in their magical beliefs is pointed out to them? The ambiguities and incoherencies with our concept of luck are of course in many ways different from the contradiction in the Azande’s magical beliefs. But what is similar is our indifference towards such issues. We both go on happily living our lives as before, keeping on using our systems, after having the problems pointed out to us. We ignore and fail to take seriously the alleged threats to our practices and language-games. These kinds of theoretical (and philosophical) con-

cerns tend to have no or very little impact on us. The *point* or the *sense* of neither the concept of luck nor magic is annulled by such issues. Just as the Azande lack a theoretical interest in magic, we seem to lack a theoretical interest in luck.

In conclusion, most of us have no particular notions of luck, and even if we do, e.g. in form of conceptions or criticism, our language-game of luck remains quite unaffected by these. The game seems to be well-nigh completely independent from any abstract speculations. If we can appreciate the manner in which theoretical claims and concerns about the concept of luck simply seem irrelevant to our use of it, we might also get a feel of how demands of rationality can be out of place concerning magic.

In order to further our understanding of magical thinking, Winch (1986) suggests that, rather than comparing it to science or attempting to assess its coherency, we should observe its actual employment, acknowledging especially its *moral* dimension: its connections to social relations, ideas about good life and how it may serve as a way to recognise and deal with the contingencies and uncertainties of life. However, since magical thinking is rather alien to us, this may prove to be an overpowering task. Something similar to Winch’s suggestion might nevertheless apply to luck as well. Therefore, I suggest we begin by taking a look at the role the concept of luck plays in *our* social and moral lives. As luck is a familiar concept to us, this ought to be an easier task.

If someone says she does or does not believe in luck, is this an attempt to state what exists, like when saying “I believe that dark matter exists”? Are this kind of statements rather not expressions of attitudes towards life, slogans for moral standpoints? Could not someone who says she does not believe in luck, just as well say: “Everyone is the architect of his own life”, i.e. that success in life depends on one’s personal efforts? This attitude may come together with the view that we need not give sympathy or aid to losers in life, as they alone are seen as responsible for their own failures. On the other hand, someone who is devoted to helping others might maintain that chance and luck are significant factors in our lives, that we cannot choose the cards we are given. Such a person is probably less prone to take pride in her own success and to condemn others—as success and failure are regarded to be due to luck. Belief in luck may also prove a handy weapon in various situations: think of discrediting someone’s achievements by saying: “He was just being lucky!”. And when losing a competition, it is always easier to blame bad luck, than taking responsibility for one’s failure.

An examination of our moral lives with which the concept of luck is entwined, in the manner indicated by the above examples, may result in an improved understanding of our somewhat ambiguous concept of luck (the participants of the *moral luck* discussion suggest the direct opposite, namely, that an examination of the concept of luck is required in order for us to be able to understand morality). By first recognising the moral dimension of our own language-game of luck, the corresponding task of evaluating the moral dimension of alien magical beliefs, suggested by Winch, will become easier. For a clearer picture of luck will allow us to better use it as an object of comparison to magic, to make new connections visible. This is however an undertaking for another time.

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# Wittgenstein and Dostoevsky on the Ethical-Aesthetic Perspective on “the Whole”

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## Abstract

In the *Tractatus* and the *Notebooks*, ethics and aesthetics delimit the sayable because they conceptually mark the limit of the world of facts, as opposed to representing isolable subject matter that can be talked about in factual language. They can only be “shown”. However, what is shown is an impossible view: the view on the language using subject’s relation to the world from outside the subject and from outside the world of all sayable propositions. However, art can provide the impossible view by means of the artifice of a fictional world. I offer a reading of *The Brothers Karamazov*, one of Wittgenstein’s most obsessed-over novels, that narratively performs the ethical relation to the world by reflecting the protagonists’ involvement with the limits of the novel’s world.

## Introduction

Ludwig Wittgenstein has written only a few scattered and notoriously cryptic remarks on ethics and aesthetics. Most of them are to be found in the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* and the *Notebooks* (written contemporaneously), where “ethics” and “aesthetics” belong to the category of concepts delimiting the world i.e. language about the world, as opposed to labels for isolable subject matter within the world.

In the following, I will offer a reading of the *Tractatus* which has grown out of the “resolute” tradition of Wittgenstein exegesis, but that still focuses on the passages of the work that concern the “showing” of the unsayable—an emphasis more prominent in the “ineffability” tradition, especially by Elisabeth Anscombe (Conant 2002). I argue that art shows what the propositions of the *Tractatus* delimit as unsayable. In section 2, I will offer a reading of one of Wittgenstein’s favorite novels, *The Brothers Karamazov*, which narratively performs the convergence of the ethical and aesthetic perspective that Wittgenstein evokes in the *Tractatus*.

## 1. The Ethical-Aesthetic Relation to the Whole in the *Tractatus*

In the *Tractatus*, ethics and aesthetics are called “inexpressible” and “transcendental” (6.421). I will argue that this implies that they are not expressible in language referring to isolable facts in the world, but that they provide a (pseudo-)conceptual framework for the subject’s relation to the world.

In 6.43, Wittgenstein describes good and bad willing not as referring to a will to change isolable facts in the world, but rather as an attitude to the world as a whole:

If good or bad willing changes the world, it can only change the limits of the world, not the facts; not the things that can be expressed in language.

In brief, the world must thereby become quite another. It must so to speak wax or wane as a whole.

The world of the happy is quite another than that of the unhappy.

Thus, ethics involve a change of perspective on the part of the subject in his relation to the world, and cannot be exhaustively defined with purported isolable “ethical” facts found in the world. Note that though Wittgenstein partly

uses Kantian vocabulary, such as referring to “good willing” and to ethics as “transcendental” (6.421), thus likening it to transcendental logic (6.31), he also introduces a *eudaimonic* aspect. Namely he treats both “good willing” and “the world of the happy” under 6.43. He clearly considers these terms to belong to the same topic, a notion of *good life*, which in *eudaimonic* terms considers human flourishing to be conceptually inseparable from a life of virtue.

However, unlike e.g. Martha Nussbaum’s account of the good life, on Wittgenstein’s terms, the good life is not to be found within the sum of the facts that make up the world, but rather it is manifest in an attitude to the world as a whole. The *Tractatus* defines the “world” as: “1. The world is all that is the case.” And “1.1. The world is the totality of facts, not things.” Ethics, according to 6.43 above, pertains to the “limits of the world”—a phrase Wittgenstein uses to describe the subject as well, “The subject does not belong to the world but it is a limit of the world” (5.632).

Several resolute readers have pointed out the interpretative frame of the *Tractatus*, contained in its foreword and ending (Diamond 2000, 57f, Kremer 2015, 41f), in which Wittgenstein addresses the implied reader. The foreword stresses that what follows is “not a textbook” (*Lehrbuch*), but that “its object would be attained if there were one person who read it with understanding and to whom it afforded pleasure” [*Vernügen*] (TLP 9).

Furthermore, the second to last sentence before the silencing exhortation in 7 is as follows,

My propositions are elucidatory in this way: he who understands *me* finally recognizes them as senseless, when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them. (He must so to speak throw away the ladder, after he has climbed up on it.) He must surmount these propositions; *then he sees the world rightly*. (6.54, *my italics*)

The reader has been lead up a ladder of propositions throughout the book. Here she is asked to “throw them away”. Her attention is snapped away from the propositions and to an interpersonal encounter with their author, for Wittgenstein claims that the reader “who understands *me*”—not “who understands my propositions” will recognize the meaninglessness of *Tractarian* propositions, and will “*then see the world rightly*”.

Taken together with the foreword, this means that the *Tractatus* is not meant to teach us new facts, rather to pro-

vide the (aesthetic) pleasure of exercising our own capacities of logical and ethical judgment, which we share with the author. The *Tractatus* is not a book of facts, rather it is, in Frege's<sup>1</sup> terms, a meeting of minds. Its aim is that the reader sees "the world rightly"—a transformation of the reader. The "ethical point" (*Letters* 94) of the book is that the reader takes up the right perspective, the ethical perspective in intersubjective encounters, as opposed to reducing ethics to empirically verifiable propositions. Ethics is thus, "a kind of responsiveness to life" (Waismann 1969, 12), as Wittgenstein once phrased it verbally, as opposed to an isolable set of "ethical" facts.

By addressing the reader, Wittgenstein reaches beyond the "limit of the world" of his own subjectivity to meet the reader. Therefore, even though the "early" Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* is often accused of solipsistic monologue, and the "later" *Philosophical Investigations* is celebrated for a social language philosophy (Kitching 2003, 210f), the interpretative frame of the *Tractatus* manifests precisely the intersubjective approach that is later fully unfolded in the idea of language as social practice in the *Investigations*.

In the following, I will turn to a reading of one of Wittgenstein's favorite novels, *The Brothers Karamazov*. In contrast to the *Tractarian* propositions, which he calls nonsense for purporting to say something about ethics and aesthetics—which involve an outside perspective on the subject's involvement with the world as a whole—the novel shows this perspective in interaction with the reader and by performing it narratively.

## 2. Bearing the Heart of the Whole: The Ethical-Aesthetic Relation in *The Brothers Karamazov*

Wittgenstein was reportedly "certifiably obsessed with" the novel *Brothers Karamazov* (Klagge 2011, 135f). And his diary entry on July 6, 1916, "...Dostoevsky was probably right, when he says that he who is happy fulfills the purpose of being." (*Notebooks* 168)—likely refers to a passage from the said novel. Elder Zosima pronounces namely,

[...] people are created for happiness, and he who is completely happy can at once be deemed worthy of saying to himself: "I have fulfilled God's commandment on this earth" (Dostoevsky 2004, 55)

Furthermore, the novel contains a recurrent motif that "life is paradise" (Dostoevsky 2004, 288, 298, 303). As I will argue, this notion suggests that nothing needs to be added to life to achieve "good life", rather that it is paradise when viewed from the right perspective. It is a perspective few of the novel's protagonists could achieve, most prominently Alesha Karamazov, described as he "who bears within himself the heart [*serdse* *sevin*] of the whole" (Dostoevsky 2004, 3). I will discuss the typically Dostoevskian interactive narration of the world of the novel (Young 2004, 22-7) as an aesthetic performance of the ethical stance to the world. Firstly, I will turn to Dostoevsky's address to the reader in the foreword in relation to the novel's ethical considerations on the good life, i.e. life as "paradise". Then I will analyze the figure of Alesha Karamazov who embodies the ethical-aesthetic perspective Wittgenstein evokes. The key scene is in the Epilogue of the novel, providing the reader with a similar interpretative frame consisting of the Foreword and the end as it is found in the *Tractatus*.

Considering Wittgenstein's obsession with the novel, the structural parallels are unlikely to be accidental.

The foreword to *The Brothers Karamazov*, titled "From the Author," introduces the novel as a biography of Alexei Fyodorovich Karamazov. Dostoevsky starts by justifying his choice of Alesha as a hero of the novel:

While I do call Alexei Fyodorovich my hero, still, I myself know that he is by no means a great man, so that I can foresee inevitable questions, such as: What is notable about your Alexei Fyodorovich that you should choose him for your hero? What has he really done? To whom is he known, and for what? Why should I, the reader, spend my time studying the facts of his life? (Dostoevsky 2004, 3)

Dostoevsky denies that there is anything special Alexei did to deserve the status of the hero. It is not from any facts of his life that we might deduce his noteworthiness. However, Dostoevsky hopes that the reader might nonetheless agree with him on Alesha's noteworthiness.

Dostoevsky goes on to explain that Alesha is worthy of being the hero of the novel, for it is he "who bears within himself the heart of the whole, while the other people of his epoch have all for some reason been torn away from it for a time by some kind of flooding wind." (Dostoevsky 2004, 3) Therefore, it is not necessarily isolable facts of his life that sets him apart as remarkable, rather it is his relation to "the whole"—of his family, his society, we might even say of the world.

While Alesha is introduced in aesthetic terms, in the context of the question of being a worthy main protagonist of a novel, the attitude that distinguishes him from "the other people of his epoch", his "bearing the heart of the whole" is revealed to have an ethical dimension in the course of the novel.

From Alesha's own activity as an author, we learn of the ethical ideal he has inherited from Elder Zosima, whose disciple he was at the local monastery. The Book Six, "The Russian Monk", Elder Zosima's hagiography penned by Alesha, provides a philosophical key to the interpretation of the novel (Terras 2002, 73). Here a notion of good life is introduced, namely the dictum that "life is paradise": "We are all in paradise, but we do not know it, and if we did want to know it, tomorrow there would be paradise the world over" (Dostoevsky 2004, 288). The idea of life already being paradise is closely intertwined with the ideal of "brotherhood", as uttered by Zosima's mysterious visitor. He, too, subscribes to the paradisiacal view on life and adds, "Until one has indeed become the brother of all, there will be no brotherhood" (Dostoevsky 2004, 303) In the logic of the novel, the ideal of brotherhood in fact implies a universal siblinghood, for one of the key scenes of the novel shows the main protagonist Alesha being able to view Grushenka, hitherto seen as a villain, as a "true sister" (Dostoevsky 2004, 351). Furthermore, even though Dostoevsky primarily seeks to transform [obrazit] Russian society with this novel (Jackson 1966, 6), this ideal transcends ethnic boundaries within the logic of the novel. As Nathan Rosen argues, the German Dr. Herzenstuben's small fatherly gesture in Dmitry's childhood may have been the decisive factor in preventing the latter from becoming a murderer (Rosen 2011, 730) (Dostoevsky 2004, 671-5).

Thus, the notion that Alesha is worthy of being the hero of a novel because he "bears within himself the heart of the whole" (Dostoevsky 2004, 3) should be read with this ethical ideal in mind, that of extending love to "the whole", of maximal inclusiveness in one's world. If this could be

<sup>1</sup> Wittgenstein pays homage to Frege in the foreword of the *Tractatus* (9).

achieved, we should see that life is *already* paradise, if only people would live with the world as a whole in mind, instead of asserting themselves at the expense of others. In the following, I will argue that the ethical ideal of universal reconciliation and siblinghood is arguably aesthetically performed by the novel's various stagings of the relation between the reader and the novel, and on the diegetic level, among the protagonists interactively co-narrating the world of the novel.

Firstly, in the foreword, Dostoevsky stages an author persona who hopes that the reader will also find Alesha noteworthy, establishing a relation to the reader, a meeting of the minds. The reader is made self-aware at the outset of the novel—in another avid Dostoevsky reader's terms, the critical reader is indeed a *co-author* of the artwork (Bakhtin 1992; 29, 65). Dostoevsky's aesthetically-ethical ideal can be described as non-coercive interactive authorship of the world leading to a paradisiacal community. The artifice of a fictional world serves to show the relation of a subject to his world, and to other subjects in shared, sometimes even coercive narration. This makes authorship a philosophical concept pertaining to conscious structuring efforts of the shared world.

Alesha acts as a binding link between all other characters. He is described as non-judgmental and loving towards everybody; he reconciles a band of boys to the class outsider, Ilyusha, and instigates what can be described as a paradisiacal community among these boys (Book Ten: Boys and Epilogue). At Ilyusha's funeral, Alesha gives a speech to the rest of the boys.

And whatever may happen to us later in life, even if we do not meet for twenty years afterwards, let us always remember how we buried the poor boy, whom we once threw stones at [...] and whom afterwards we all came to love so much. (Dostoevsky 2004, 774)

His speech narratively forges a unity among them. Alesha includes the boys in his narrative by referring to them individually:

Gentlemen, my dear gentlemen, let us all be as generous and brave as Ilyushechka, as intelligent, brave and generous as Kolya (who will be much more intelligent when he grows up a little), and let us be as bashful, but smart and nice, as Kartashov. (Dostoevsky 2004, 775)

All of them individually are to be united "in the heart":

You are all dear to me, gentlemen, from now on I shall keep you all in my heart, and I ask you to keep me in your hearts, too! (Dostoevsky 2004, 775)

Their unity is reflected on the formal level of the narrative, when the boys echo Alesha's words in choral unison:

[...]  
 "Let us remember his face, and his clothes, and his poor boots, and his little coffin [...]"  
 "We will, we will remember!" the boys cried again, "he was brave, he was kind!"  
 "Ah, how I loved him!" exclaimed Kolya.  
 "Ah children, ah dear friends, do not be afraid of life! How good life is when you do something good and rightful!"  
 "Yes, yes" the boys repeated ecstatically. [...] (Dostoevsky 2004, 775f)

Their intermingled, choral narrative goes on to exclaim that they will be bound together, even after Alesha leaves town and they all part ways and grow up. Kolya, one of the boys, exclaims, "all our lives hand in hand!" (Dostoevsky

2004, 776), evoking a community overarching space and time.

In conclusion, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, "life is paradise", but we usually "do not know it", and it is realized in a community of love, a universal siblinghood. This is an ethical notion that is aesthetically performed. It is introduced as the ethical teaching of the saintly Elder Zosima. But, it is *aesthetically* staged in the foreword "From the author", where the reader is addressed and allowed free judgment of Alesha Karamazov, as well as, on the diegetic level, in the manner in which Alesha's narration interacts and involves other characters, drawing them in a co-narration of a community of universal siblinghood. By including his audience in the co-authorship of his narrative, Alesha recalls Dostoevsky's own strategy of interacting with *his* audience, the reader.

This convergence of ethics and aesthetics as a kind of an attitude to the world recalls Ludwig Wittgenstein's thoughts discussed in 1. According to the *Tractatus*, accomplishing "good willing" and "the world of the happy" (6.43) does not pertain to achieving specific facts in the world, but to the "limit of the world", another term he uses for the subject (5.632). The idea that good life is a right perspective to the world is also an aesthetic one, for it implies the right manner of beholding and interactively co-narrating the world, one that gives pleasure [*Vergnügen*] (TLP, 9), that is: happiness (Wittgenstein 1984, 168) (Dostoevsky 2004, 55).

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# Would early Wittgenstein have Understood a Lion?

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## Abstract

One of the reasons why Wittgenstein's *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough* are interesting for a research project focused on the development of his philosophy is the presence of a method, which in *Philosophical Investigations* he called a perspicuous representation. However, while in the former, understanding people from different cultures is possible, in *Philosophical Investigations* he certainly denied it. This change of views is followed by an important methodological change. What enabled understanding culturally different ritual actions in the *Remarks* was an immediate reference to the subject. In *Philosophical Investigations* the subject is absent, and what took its place as the basis of understanding were forms of life. This methodological shift has a significant impact on the limits of sense as Others, like people from other cultures and animals, reach beyond its outer bounds. Therefore, discussing Wittgenstein's methodological approach in the *Remarks* seems important both to cultural anthropology and philosophical ethology. Moreover, I am going to suggest, that in his methodological survey, Wittgenstein owes a greater debt to Arthur Schopenhauer than it is usually acknowledged.

One of the reasons why Wittgenstein's *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough* are interesting for a research project focused on the development of his philosophy is the presence of a method, which in *Philosophical Investigations* he called a perspicuous representation. However, while in the former, understanding people from different cultures is possible, in *Philosophical Investigations* he certainly denied it. This change of views is followed by an important methodological change. What enabled understanding culturally different ritual actions in the *Remarks* was an immediate reference to the subject. In *Philosophical Investigations* the subject is absent, and what took its place as the basis of understanding were forms of life. This methodological shift has a significant impact on the limits of sense as Others, like people from other cultures and animals, reach beyond its outer bounds. Therefore, discussing Wittgenstein's methodological approach in the *Remarks* seems important both to cultural anthropology and philosophical ethology. Moreover, I am going to suggest, that in his methodological survey, Wittgenstein owes a greater debt to Arthur Schopenhauer than it is usually acknowledged. Even if my considerations do not necessarily betoken influence, both philosophers are definitely entangled in similar investigations and comparing them may benefit in better understanding.

In *Developmental Hypotheses and Perspicuous Representations: Wittgenstein on Frazer's Golden Bough* Peter Hacker addressed Frank Cioffi's accusations of Wittgenstein's alleged limits and methodological obscurantism. I do agree with Hacker's arguments, therefore I am not going to repeat them. However, I think that the emphasis on the expressive and not only instrumental character of ritual actions was not the main purpose of Wittgenstein's remarks. The distinction between expressive and instrumental function is a distinction from within the realm that, Frazer called magic. I am going to claim, that the more appropriate perspective to view Wittgenstein's remarks is to look at them as presenting two different methods of cognition. From this point of view, Wittgenstein's remark that Frazer's whole attempt to explain is wrong becomes clear. As a frame of reference I am going to use Schopenhauer's insights from the first volume of *The World as Will and Representation*, as they are more explicit than Wittgenstein's.

Schopenhauer distinguished two general groups of sub-disciplines of natural science as two different scientific methods. The first one, aetiology, deals with the explanation of alterations. The second one, morphology, deals

with the description of forms. Aetiology (for instance, mechanics, physics, chemistry, physiology) focuses on how one state of matter determines another one and explains it according to natural law, i.e. "the unchanging constancy with which such a force expresses itself, whenever its known conditions are present" (Schopenhauer 2010). Schopenhauer stated that this is precisely what we call an explanation. But even the best aetiological explanation would only be a catalogue of natural laws as natural laws are the basis of explanation, therefore their inner essence remains unexplained. On the other hand, morphology describes different constant forms and classifies them. Sciences like botany or zoology demonstrate that "a ubiquitous, infinitely fine-grained analogy is present in both the whole and the parts (unity of plan), which makes them similar to a set of exceedingly diverse variations on an unspecified theme" (Schopenhauer 2010). As aetiology explains alterations by unexplained natural laws, morphology "presents us with an infinite variety of innumerable forms that are clearly related through an unmistakable family resemblance; these are representations that will forever remain foreign to us if we approach them along this path; looking at them only in this way, they stand before us like hieroglyphs we do not comprehend" (Schopenhauer 2010). Schopenhauer used here term *Familienähnlichkeit*, which is also present in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. In remark 67 Wittgenstein decided to use the term "family resemblances" (*Familienähnlichkeiten*) to characterize "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail" (Wittgenstein 1999). The identity of the term does not necessarily betoken influence, nonetheless I would claim that Schopenhauer's description of morphology anticipates to some extent the later Wittgenstein's method. It is important to emphasise that Schopenhauer was satisfied neither with aetiology, nor with morphology. Accepting one of these methods would be looking at things 'from the outside' and "no matter how much we look, we find nothing but images and names. We are like someone who walks around a castle, looking in vain for an entrance and occasionally sketching the facade" (Schopenhauer 2010). In other words, by using one of these methods we are dealing only with intuitive representations. The philosophical question posed by Schopenhauer asks whether there is any other kind of reference to the external world possible after rejecting aetiology with its *explanations* and morphology with its *descriptions* indicating on family resemblance. The method introduced by

Schopenhauer, which scholars sometimes call a hermeneutics of experience is focused on understanding. But it is a very specific kind of understanding, precisely because it is constituted by the relation between an intuitive representation (an object) and a subject's will. This is how Schopenhauer expressed it: "We will be particularly interested in discovering the true **meaning** of intuitive representation; we have only ever **felt** this meaning before, but this has ensured that the images do not pass by us strange and meaningless as they would otherwise necessarily have done; rather, they speak and are immediately **understood** and **have an interest** that engages our entire being" (Schopenhauer, 2010).

Schopenhauer claimed that everyone could understand what he meant by investigating his own body, thanks to which we are rooted in the world. We could describe our own body in the morphological manner, like we describe other objects in it, or we could explain its movements and actions in the aetiological way by referring to some particular laws of nature – what we do when we explain for instance planets orbiting the Sun. From this perspective, our own body would be to us nothing more than an intuitive representation, an object among other objects. But, as Schopenhauer emphasised, we notice that we also have another way of approaching our own body and understanding its movements and actions, which makes our body immediately familiar to us – we understand it as *will*. These are two different *aspects of perception* of our own body, not two different substances of which we are made up. The considerations presented above created controversy among Schopenhauer scholars concerning two different interpretations of his philosophy: the strong one, in which Will becomes a unifying metaphysical principle, and the weak or actualizing one, in which embodied will becomes a criterion for interpretation. As I shall demonstrate later, both of these approaches are present at a particular point of Wittgenstein's philosophical development. Meanwhile, for my present investigations, it is enough to distinguish, following Schopenhauer, between three different methods of cognition: morphology, aetiology and the third one, which refers to subject's will.

If we now use Schopenhauer's categories to describe Frazer's research, we notice that what Frazer actually did was to use a morphological method, i.e. describing different ritual actions, and arranging them in a developmental order, what suggested doing aetiology. Wittgenstein pointed it out by emphasizing that "the explanation as an hypothesis of development, is only *one* way of assembling the data." (Wittgenstein 1993). However, Frazer indeed intended to explain ritual actions by reference to some kind of societal law. As Hacker has correctly pointed out, Frazer incorporated the Darwinian theory of evolution into his research, and for cultural evolutionism the search for a developmental law of societies and institutions was the main task. It is important to notice that Wittgenstein did not criticize the whole of Frazer's enterprise, but precisely this aspect of it, which intended to impose the evolutionary hypothesis. What Wittgenstein agreed with was what I shall refer to as its morphological aspect. The morphological aspect consists in perspicuous representation, which enables one to see connections, similarities between different descriptions, pictures, or intuitive representations. But, as Schopenhauer claimed in the aforementioned quotation, marking family resemblances by an adequate arrangement of descriptions is all that we can obtain from such a procedure. Up to this point, Wittgenstein rejected the developmental relation between different ritual actions and insisted on an order, which expressed a general unity between them, revealing the fact that they are not so alien

to each other. The ritual actions described by Frazer and the religious actions of modern Europeans are, to use Schopenhauer's metaphor, 'similar to a set of exceedingly diverse variations on an unspecified theme'. If perspicuous representation was a sufficient improvement in Frazer's method, then "[...] the satisfaction being sought through the explanation follows of itself. And the explanation isn't what satisfies us here at all" (Wittgenstein 1993). But Wittgenstein, just like Schopenhauer in above-mentioned passages, remained unsatisfied. Despite perspicuous representation, ritual actions remained foreign to us. Wittgenstein could not return to the aetiological explanation as it is precisely Frazer's approach, which he criticised. His philosophical situation clearly resembles Schopenhauer's, when he was trying to answer question of why intuitive representations 'are immediately understood and have an interest that engages our entire being'. Wittgenstein's triumph over the method of perspicuous representation is evident in a following passage: "Besides these similarities, what seems to me to be most striking is the dissimilarity of all these rites. It is a multiplicity of faces with common features which continually emerges here and there. And one would like to draw lines connecting these common ingredients. But then one part of our account would still be missing, namely, that which brings this picture into connection with our own feelings and thoughts. This part gives the account its depth" (Wittgenstein 1993). The 'connection with our own feelings and thoughts', with the subject's will, gives depth, satisfaction, and understanding. But this method of understanding surpasses level of language. It is the subject, who ascribes a meaning from his inner experience, therefore it would be incorrect to say that all ritual actions are universally true. As Wittgenstein emphasised: "The correct thing to say is that every view is significant for the one who sees it as significant (but that does not mean, sees it other than it is). Indeed, in this sense, every view is equally significant" (Wittgenstein 1993). It follows that what is significant or non-significant is decided by a subject and hence, *relative* to it.

The above-mentioned method is also present in a well known example concerning a Rain-King. Frazer explained people prayers to the Rain-King for rain by a reference to a causal relation between peoples' action and nature or spirits' reaction. He assumed that people pray for rain to actually make it rain. In other words, he explained their behaviour, like the ebb and flow of sea level is explained by the Moon's and Sun's gravitational forces. Frazer assumed that people had presupposed a causal relation between their prayers and rain, and from the perspective of Western science he judged their opinion as an error. Meanwhile, Wittgenstein noticed firstly that these people must have observed earlier when the rain period begins, as they pray precisely just before it should begin. Secondly, if they had really believed that they could make it rain, they would have prayed during the dry period, when the rain is most needed. Therefore, it is not the explanation of that ritual action but the understanding of its meaning that can actually enrich our cognition. It is interesting to contrast these two approaches with Frans de Waal's description of a chimpanzee 'rain dance':

The chimps at the Arnhem Zoo sat around miserably with their 'rain faces' (an expression of disgust with eyebrows pulled down and lower lip stuck out) under the tallest trees, doing their best to stay dry. When the rain intensified however, and reached under the trees, two adult males got up, with bristling hair and started a display known as the bipedal swagger (which, one can imagine, made them look human in a thuggish sort of way). With big, rhythmic, swaying steps they walked

around, leaving their shelter, getting completely wet. They sat down again when the rain eased (de Waal 2013).

De Waal interpreted this description in the same way that Frazer interpreted prayers for rain – as a chimpanzee's false belief that through dance it can have an impact on nature. De Waal recalled also Jane's Goodall description, who observed a similar chimpanzee dance, not during a rain, but near a waterfall. It is hard to call a comparison of two descriptions a perspicuous representation, but already here similarities and differences indicate a direction of interpretation different to de Waal's. Indeed, Goodall did not consider the chimpanzee's false belief but explicitly posed a question about the possibility of the ritualization of such behaviours. Similarly to Wittgenstein, she emphasised the expressive character of chimpanzee dance as she recognized it as a kind of 'pre-ritual' action.

An effort to understand animal behaviours is the main task of philosophical ethology. In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein clearly stated that "if a lion could talk, we could not understand him" (Wittgenstein 1999). Of course, he did not mean that the reason why we could not understand a lion is because a lion would speak a different language. The crucial difference between human and non-human animals is not speech or language, but a form of life. The ability to use language does not create the gulf between men and other species in the sense of rational psychology, rather „commanding, questioning, recounting, chatting, are as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing" (Wittgenstein 1999). Therefore it is more akin to the difference which makes it impossible to teach a cat how to fetch. It is rooted in a difference of forms of life. But with the introduction of the category of forms of life not only animals reach beyond the limits of sense. In *Philosophical Investigations* the possibility of understanding by reference to a subject's will is absent and understanding people from other cultures is no more possible than understanding a lion. Probably, ritual actions should now be considered a family resemblance term grounded in particular forms of life, which is precisely what makes them incomprehensible for a contemporary English man. Wittgenstein explicitly claimed that one human being can be a mystery to another one. "We learn this when we

come into a strange country with entirely strange tradition; and, what is more, even given a mastery of a country's language. We do not *understand* the people. (And not because of not knowing what they are saying to themselves.) We cannot find our feet with them" (Wittgenstein 1999). The last sentence translated literally from German would read: We cannot find us in them. Recognizing, that our inner essence is the same both in people from other cultures and animals is a characteristic of the strong interpretation of Schopenhauer's metaphysics. Schopenhauer definitely would not claim that we cannot understand a lion, because by referring to our will, we could find many similarities between ourselves and a lion. In his *Notebooks*, Wittgenstein, apparently rethinking Schopenhauer's thoughts, took a different stance than in *PI*. Let it be the answer to the question posed in the title of my talk: "This parallelism, then, really exists between my spirit, i.e. spirit, and the world. Only remember that the spirit of the snake, of the lion, is *your* spirit. For it is only from yourself that you are acquainted with spirit at all. Now of course the question is why I have given a snake just this spirit. And the answer to this can only lie in the psycho-physical parallelism: If I were to look like the snake and to do what it does then I should be such-and-such" (Wittgenstein 1961).

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# “My glance...like that of someone admiring the illumination of the sky and drinking in the light”: Perspectives and “the Real” in the *Tractatus*

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## Abstract

This paper is ultimately concerned with various aspects of reality in the *Tractatus*. Following largely James Conant's and Cora Diamond's resolute reading, it tries to interpret, first and foremost 6.54. of the *Tractatus* in the light of § 415 of *Philosophical Investigations* and identifies the conflict of three perspectives in 6.54. It argues that this conflict can be upheld as a model of how human consciousness works, and that the *Tractatus* itself is a slow-motion picture of the operation of consciousness. Thus the *Tractatus*, from the perspective of the Third Person, makes absolute sense, while it is sheer nonsense from the First Person perspective, and their conflict, characteristic of the whole book, “culminates” in 6.54. This has implications as regards our various senses of reality, as well as the degrees of reality we are able to acknowledge.

“For the crucial moments in the philosophical conjuring trick performed by the author of the *Tractatus* are ones that are performed by him on himself” – James Conant and Cora Diamond write in “On Reading the *Tractatus* Resolutely” (Conant and Diamond 2004, 85). The ongoing debate between “resolute” and “standard” readers, infusing new energy into Wittgenstein-studies, and, in several ways indebted to Stanley Cavell's, my American master's reading of *Philosophical Investigations*<sup>1</sup>, has a far greater significance than ‘what the *Tractatus* is about’. The dispute – to which I also tried to contribute (Kállay 2012) – involves, in the main, ‘how to read Wittgenstein’ in order that his work may have a greater impact on our thinking and our desire to live a more meaningful life. As a teacher of primarily literature, especially Shakespeare, I am first and foremost concerned with what we may learn from Wittgenstein's lifelong struggle with the problem of any kind of representation and presentation: how the ‘media’ we like to refer to as ‘language’, ‘logic’, ‘thought’, ‘picture’, and, within language ‘sentence’, ‘simile’, and so on, i.e. units of significance working in a parallel fashion, have an effect on what we mean and what is actually meant. In this brief paper, confining myself largely to the *Tractatus*, I take my clue from the phrase: “that are performed by him on himself” in the Conant-Diamond quotation because I find that it captures a highly typical feature of Wittgenstein's way of thinking: self-reflexivity but in two senses: ‘returning to, and investigating what has just been said’, but also ‘wishing to learn about the very self who has just said what that self has just said’. I will concentrate on *perspectivism* in the *Tractatus*, ensuing, I wish to claim, because of self-reflexivity, finally arriving at some aspects of the ‘real’.

In the spirit of Conant's “mild mono-Wittgensteinianism” (Conant 2007), on which I unfortunately cannot elaborate here, I start with going to one of the several instances when self-reflexivity is reflected on in §412 of the *Philosophical Investigations* (Wittgenstein 2001, 105). “I turn” – Wittgenstein says – “my attention in a particular way on my own consciousness”. He compares this “turn” to the desire of “clutching my [own] forehead”, and he simultaneously also feels a “slight giddiness” (*Schwindel*), comparable to the feeling which occurs when performing a logical *Kunststück*, a “logical sleight-of-hand” (cf. Diamond's and Conant's “philosophical conjuring trick”). The word *Schwindel* also contains implications of ‘cheating’, as well

as of ‘vertigo’: a feeling I easily have when standing on the top of a high ladder and I look down. Besides dizziness, concentrating on one's own consciousness is, according to §412, accompanied by a “vacant gaze” or – and hence the title of my paper – “like that of someone admiring the illumination of the sky (*Himmel*, also ‘heaven’) and drinking in the light”.

As we may see, there are several means of representation at work in §412 of the *Investigations*: metaphors, similes, amounting almost to allegories to capture a particular feeling. As so many times, Wittgenstein is allowing various devices of representation – rather than opposing them – to ‘perform themselves’ in a parallel fashion. As a first step, none of them is taken to be an explanation of the other, and the initial goal is not to exclude a mode of presentation at the expense of the other. Rather, presentations should be taken to be putting on display phenomena simultaneously, and the point is that we are looking for similarities and differences (call these ‘(family) resemblances’ or ‘dis-similarities’) between presentations, supposing that they are about the *same* phenomenon, thereby obtaining more or less perspicuous views of the phenomenon. The perspective always contains, as the literal ‘producer’ of the perspective in play, the standpoint of the person (the ‘subject’) observing, perceiving, interpreting, etc.

It has always fascinated me that whereas the author of the *Investigations* presents himself, in the first paragraph, as a ‘Reader’, asking St Augustine to ‘dub his voice’, it is as if the author of the *Tractatus* were starting to talk from ‘a point of nowhere’; he is an unidentified speaker shrouding himself from being seen: he is only heard. In whose name is the first utterance “The world is all that is the case” (*TLP* 1)<sup>2</sup> made? As it has been widely discussed in the “resolute-standard reading” debate (cf. especially Diamond 2000, 150f), it is only in the penultimate “proposition” of the book, in 6.54, that we learn that proposition 1 can “eventually” be “recognized” as nonsensical, and we can finally also realize that all the other sentences of the book are nonsense, on condition that the reader has climbed out of the propositions, through them, getting over-above-beyond them. Yet since 6.54 is part of the *Tractatus*, it must be looked at as nonsense as well. In that case, 6.54 *performs* the act of nonsense (it *is* nonsense), while judging itself to be nonsense. I think 6.54, thus, brings about a radical turn not in spite of itself, but precisely in fulfilling, in, with, and

<sup>1</sup> From the several instances of this reading, I call attention to a recent one: Cavell 2005.

<sup>2</sup> I quote the *Tractatus* according to Wittgenstein (1961).



by, itself the goal it wishes to achieve at the cost of its own annihilation with respect to sense, i.e. on the plain of meaning. As it is so often in Shakespearean tragedy: e.g. the consummation of Othello's and Desdemona's marriage coincides with Desdemona's, and, later Othello's, death.

I think the tension (paradox?) in 6.54 can only be recognized, if we suppose that in this paragraph there are two perspectives in play, simultaneously. I would never have thought of this if Cora Diamond had not called attention to the appearance of the "I" (in the form of "my" and "me", in this passage: "My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands *me* eventually recognizes them as nonsensical" (cf. Diamond 2000, 150). I think 6.54 is formulated from the perspective of the speaking voice who also said proposition 1 of the *Tractatus*, and all its other sentences but 6.54 also thematizes a perspective, simultaneously recommending it to the Reader, which is the perspective of the "I" of Wittgenstein himself. I think here the "I" of Wittgenstein is not the "metaphysical subject", who can say, for example: "I am my world", or "*The limits of my language mean the limits of my world*" (cf. *TLP*, 5.6, 5.63, 5.641). The metaphysical subject is similar to an abstract 'position', a 'who', who could be marked by (referred to with) a pronoun on the greatest level of abstraction and it is the 'everyone' or 'anyone' 'in' a person (in a real human being) 'who' could fill this position. Nor is the "I" here (in the form of "my" and "mine") the 'omniscient narrator' of the *Tractatus*, the 'implied author', who is talking to us on its pages, and whose first sentence was: "The world is all that is the case". When Wittgenstein says "anyone who understands *me*", the word *understand* – as Cora Diamond very helpfully observes (cf. Diamond 2000, 105) – does not only imply a 'cognitive operation' but a certain amount of intimacy as well, in the sense of a great Hungarian poet, Attila József, a young contemporary of Wittgenstein's who wrote a few weeks before his death: "Only that one should read my poem / who knows me, and loves me well"<sup>3</sup>. The 'I'-perspective of Wittgenstein's, which assumes that I understand him, when I relate to him, on the level of intimacy, as to a "you", also assumes that I will take the omniscient narrator of the *Tractatus* to have been and right now also to be talking nonsense. This presupposes that he can also put himself into my (the Reader's) perspective and from there he can assume that I will see a 'continuity' between the 'two Wittgensteins': one who has been talking nonsense, also in 6.54, while simultaneously I am to identify 'another Wittgenstein' 'an I-Wittgenstein': the identification should coincide with my understanding *him*, (a 'me-him'), which is also the prerequisite of realizing that the 'Wittgenstein-as-omniscient-narrator' has been and is talking nonsense. Thus, I should, simultaneously keep three perspectives in mind: a 'First Person Wittgenstein', a 'Third Person Wittgenstein' (who has been, and is the narrator I can hear, talking to me from 'out there'), and, of course, my own.

There are several possible perspectives from which the sentences above may sound as sheer nonsense. In a way it is bound to be so because they wish to say something that is very hard to imagine, or give proper sense: how could anyone think, speak, judge, etc. from three perspectives, simultaneously? It seems to me that the necessary pre-requisite of understanding the *Tractatus* is the acknowledgement that we cannot understand the *Tractatus* as anything else but nonsense: the moment we understand it, we lose it, but we *must* lose it, in order to understand it. This is because the implication of 6.54 is precisely

that although I may introduce a 'fourth perspective' from which I approach the three I have described, it will bound to be, indeed, only a fourth *perspective*. To avoid this, I should understand the three perspectives simultaneously, somehow from their 'inside': I should not reflect on them again (and again) but I should say something about them from 'within', considering them, for a split second, as, for example, three forces working together, while I am standing 'within' them. However, my very desire of *saying* (something about them) will position me outside of them. The *Tractatus* does "set a limit to thought", as the "Author's Preface" describes the goal of the book (Wittgenstein 1961, 3). However, perhaps the limit should not be thought of in terms of a frontier-line, like an 'iron curtain' we cannot cross because there are obstacles in our way. The limits of thinking may be its very mechanism itself: that it moves along the lines of a circle, sending us back and forth between "I" and "he, she, it", and (when I address a Third Person): "you" (and the plural forms of these), as if these were the three dimensions we capture through the personal pronouns, i.e. the 'grammatical persons', without being able to even imagine – at least I cannot – what a "fourth grammatical person" would be. When the very means, the very possibility of representation is the obstacle of representation then the only option seems to be to *perform* this very scenario, or, more precisely: allow this scenario to perform *itself*; I think this is precisely what 6.54 is doing: by 'projecting' three perspectives onto one another; the conflict, the tension will be 'held up', 'shown', 'acted out' (not, for example, explained). This 'playing the scene out and even up' will have to stand for, 'take care of', will be 'answerable to', itself: it is the 'medial quality' of every performance that seems to be our last hope to 'convey' something about the scene. I mean 'medial' in the grammatical sense: medial verbs (like in this phrases: "the sky *darkened*", "this barrel *leaks*", "this cup cannot *hold* a gallon of water" do not express an activity but they describe events which, as if it were, 'turn back on themselves' and their content suggests that what is happening 'stops' when the event is over; as if the event, when it comes about, were 'enough for itself'.

I think, in the light of §412 of the *Investigations*, that what comes to full circle in 6.54 of the *Tractatus* is a description of how consciousness works. I could even say that the *Tractatus* starting out from 'I—World', i.e. a First Person (=I) -Third Person (=it – there) relationship and turning, in the end, the whole process back onto the "I", shows a 'slow motion picture' of reflecting on e.g. the world: it is 'out there', as I am experiencing it. This perspective will amount to a 'sense of reality', which, I wish to claim but cannot elaborate on, Wittgenstein identifies as "logical form" in the *Tractatus*: this is the most detached, most neutral perspective I have of the world. My consciousness, however, is 'too close to me' to be reflected on because it is the *means* of reflection itself and if I put it where, e.g. the world is, I am putting something somewhere where it does not belong, so I get that dizzying feeling: as if I tried to grasp myself with myself, as if a mirror wished to mirror itself. This is because the very movement of consciousness is always already moving from the First Person to the Third-Person-out-there, and then immediately back to the First Person: I cannot reflect on anything while simultaneously not 'having the I', myself: I have no choice, this *is* awareness, this *is* consciousness and when consciousness makes itself its own 'subject matter', I get that slight "*Schwindel*", that "slight giddiness". Because what is 'real' and 'how real something is' is also a matter of my perspective: what reality is also depends on the degree of closeness, of intimacy I am with the thing I observe, I feel, I sense.

<sup>3</sup> "Csak az olvassa versemet, / ki ismer engem és szeret" (May or June 1937, published posthumously, <http://mek.oszk.hu/00700/00707/html/vs193701.htm#18>, my translation.

I think from the Third Person perspective, from which the *Tractatus* also starts, the book makes perfect sense. Yet this is not, it cannot be, the whole story because I am necessarily sent back, according to the way my consciousness works, to the First Person Perspective, from which the book is uttered, sheer nonsense. The *Tractatus* making sense and nonsense simultaneously is *itself* a picture of how consciousness operates. The insight into this may easily result in a gaze, a glance, which is "*like* that of someone admiring the illumination of the sky and drinking in the light".

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# Scientific Realism, Approximate Truth and Contingency in Science

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## Abstract

This paper explores the implications of scientific realism for the debate over whether the results of successful science are contingent or inevitable. It argues that the core theses that constitute scientific realism as a philosophical doctrine do not imply inevitabilism. It also shows that the historical pictures of scientific development presented by scientific realists allow for some degree of contingency in science. Nevertheless, the type of contingency acknowledged by realists is very different from what social constructivists have in mind when speaking of contingency in the history of science. This paper concludes that there is a genuine conflict between realists and constructivists, but that this conflict is not about whether science is contingent, but rather about how contingent it is.

## 1. Introduction

Could the historical development of the sciences have led to the emergence of alternative theoretical approaches? Could we have come to rationally accept scientific theories radically different from, or even incompatible with our currently best confirmed theories? Are the results of successful science contingent? Ian Hacking poses brings up the issue of contingency in science when discussing social constructivism (Hacking 1999, 68-80). According to him, social constructivists view science as contingent, while scientific realists tend to argue that the results of successful science are inevitable (see also Hacking 2000, 61).

The alignment of scientific realism with “inevitabilism”, and of constructivism with “contingentism” has since been called into question. Léna Soler argues that although the issues of *realism* vs. *constructivism* and *inevitabilism* vs. *contingentism* may be psychologically connected, the two conflicts do not coincide (Soler 2008, 230-231). Howard Sankey shows that scientific realism does not necessarily go hand in hand with inevitabilism (Sankey 2008). And Gregory Radick claims that both *anti-realist inevitabilist* and *realist contingentist* interpretations of the history of science are conceivable (Radick 2005, 23-25).

In this paper, I continue the discussion, focusing on scientific realists’ conceptions of the historical development of science. In agreement with Sankey and Radick I argue that the core theses that constitute scientific realism as a philosophical doctrine do not imply a strong form of inevitabilism. However, as I will show, things get more complicated once we focus not only on the core theses, but also on the pictures of the history of science that realists present when justifying and defending their views. I argue that realists can acknowledge some degree of contingency in the history of science, but not the type of contingency that is typically embraced by the social constructivist. The realist can thus fall on either side of the *inevitability* vs. *contingency* conflict, but even when falling on the contingency side, she will disagree with the constructivist about how much and what type of contingency there is in science.

## 2. Mapping the debates

Scientific realism as a philosophical doctrine is often defined by reference to a set of core theses. It has meta-physical, semantic and epistemic components. The meta-physical component affirms the existence of a mind-independent reality. The semantic component holds that scientific theories are to be construed literally. And the

epistemic component states that the truth-values of scientific theories can be determined by ordinary scientific methods and that our best-confirmed scientific theories are typically (approximately) true. Each of the three components is controversial, but recent debates have come to focus primarily on the epistemic aspects of realism (For definitions of realism in terms of the epistemic status of theories, see Boyd 1990, Psillos 1999).

The contingency vs. inevitability debate, in contrast, is not a debate about the epistemic status of theories. Rather, it is a debate about the possibility of alternatives to current science and about the general patterns of scientific development (for definitions see Ben-Menahem 1997, Soler 2008).

For example, Steven Weinberg, one of the rare explicit defenders of inevitabilism, argues that research in physics progresses towards certain fixed points. According to him, science is teleologically driven towards the discovery of a final theory and different research trajectories starting from different initial conditions would, if successful, ultimately converge on this final theory (Weinberg 2001).

On the contingentist side, Andrew Pickering may serve as an example. He argues that at crucial points in the history of high energy physics – the discovery of the weak neutral current, the discovery of partons, the discovery of charm flavored quarks, etc. – events could have taken a different turn. Scientists could have decided to accept different experimental results and theoretical interpretations, and subsequent developments could have led to the emergence of a physical science radically different from the one we know today (Pickering 1984).

The fact that realism is a doctrine about the epistemic status of theories while the contingency debate focuses on the historical processes of science complicates the task of mapping the two issues. In the following, I pursue two strategies. First, I investigate whether the realist core theses, taken by themselves, have any implications for the contingency vs. inevitability debate. Second, I analyze how the historical pictures presented by realists relate to the contingency issue.

## 3. Core theses

Regarding the relations of implication that hold between the core theses of scientific realism and philosophical positions in the contingency vs. inevitability debate, there are two questions to ask. First, do the core theses imply inevitabilism? As Saakey shows, this is not the case. Inevita-

bilism, understood as the view that alternative successful sciences would inevitably converge on the same final theory, does not follow from the metaphysical, semantic and not even from the epistemic commitments of realism. The idea that scientific methods can determine which theories are true and that our best confirmed theories are typically approximately true, does not imply that the process of science will inevitably lead to the discovery of a final theory (Sankey 2008, 161).

Second and conversely, do the core theses of realism rule out contingency? Radick argues that they do not, because metaphysical realism is compatible with contingentism (Radick 2005, 25). But we might expect the epistemic component of realism to have stronger negative implications. If the truth values of scientific theories are determined by ordinary scientific methods, how much room is there for contingency? And if our actual theories are approximately true, would scientific method have allowed us to accept different theories?

Perhaps surprisingly, the answer is yes. We could have accepted different (although perhaps not radically different) theories. In order to show that this is the case, we have to cash out in more detail how the central terms of the epistemic thesis – terms like scientific method and approximate truth – are understood by realists. This is why in the next step, I turn to the historical pictures of science that realists have developed.

#### 4. Historical pictures

I discuss two examples, Richard Boyd's reliabilist conception of scientific methodology and Stathis Psillos' continuist vision of truth preservation. As I show, neither Boyd nor Psillos are inevitabilists. Rather, both allow for the contingentist view that the history of science could have led to the acceptance of alternative theories.

Boyd's justification of realism draws on a version of the no-miracles argument, according to which the best explanation for the success of science is the (approximate) truth of its theories (Putnam 1975, 73). Boyd argues that since scientific methodology is theory-laden its reliability can only be explained if we assume that the background theories which inform methodological principles are already approximately true (Boyd 1980, 618–21). But for Boyd the approximate truth of background theories ensures not only that science is instrumentally successful. It also enables scientific methodology to refine and correct existing theoretical knowledge, such that later theories "are successively more accurate and more comprehensive" (Boyd 1980, 623).

Although he speaks of successive approximation to the truth, Boyd is not an inevitabilist. For him, progress does not "have the exact truth as an asymptotic limit" (Boyd 1990, 355) and thus does not lead to the inevitable discovery of a final theory. There is no general measure of approximate truth. Determining whether and in which respects a theory is closer to the truth than its predecessor is always a contextual judgment.

Moreover, for Boyd contingency plays a significant role in the history of science. Since reliable methodology depends on true theories, at some point in the early history of science, an initial stock of approximately true theories needed to emerge. This emergence cannot be explained by reliable methodology. The historical origins of science are "logically, epistemically, and historically contingent" (Boyd 1990, 366).

Boyd's realist historical picture is thus compatible with a contingency claim. Since scientific progress as Boyd describes it does not lead towards convergence on a final theory, we could have ended up accepting different theories from the actual ones if the initial conditions of the scientific process had been different.

My second example for a realist view of history that allows for contingency is given by Psillos' defense of realism against Larry Laudan's pessimistic meta-induction. Laudan had argued that many past successful theories are now understood to be either non-referring or wrong. Measured against the historical record, the view that the empirical success of a theory provides warrant for its approximate truth is thus mistaken (Laudan 1981).

Attempting to reconcile the historical record with the idea that empirically successful theories are also typically approximately true, Psillos draws on a strategy of selective confirmation. He argues that that the confirmational import of successful prediction is selective: it warrants only those theoretical constituents that are responsible for the empirical success of the theory (Psillos 1999, 108f). Psillos then claims that success-generating parts of past theories are typically preserved in later stages of the scientific process, such that there is historical continuity in success-generating theoretical posits.

This argument is the basis for an optimistic induction about the development of science. According to Psillos, science is characterized by an accumulation of secured truths, reaching "a rather stable and well-supported network of theoretical assertions and posits which is our best account of what the world is like" (Psillos, 1999, 104).

Clearly, Psillos' vision does not commit to the inevitabilist view that science progresses towards a final theory. Stable truths accumulate according to Psillos, but they need not approximate a final and complete theory.

Psillos also allows for some degree of contingency in the history of science. His only constraint on theory creation is that truths are preserved. But in the continuist picture we could have contingently discovered different truths and accumulated a different set of "invariant and stable elements" (Psillos 1999, 109) disjointed from the accumulated results of our actual science.

#### 5. A conflict after all

We have seen that realism does not imply an inevitabilist convergence view. We have also seen that realism is compatible with an acknowledgement of contingency in the history of science. Realism can fall on either side of the "contingency" vs. "inevitability" conflict.

But what about the intuition that the contingency issue is one of the "sticking points" in debates between realists and social constructivists? In the remainder of this paper, I argue that there is indeed a type of contingency incompatible with realism and it is this type of contingency that is usually embraced by the constructivist.

Studies of scientific controversies in the sociology of scientific knowledge have been a central locus for contingency claims about science (Examples can be found in Barnes et al. 1996, Collins 1985, Pickering 1984, Pinch 1986). Controversy studies use situations of disagreement to highlight the role of contingent social factors in shaping the results of scientific research processes. A typical social constructivist argument is as follows.

In a conflict about which of competing scientific results to accept, methodology, rationality and evidence underdetermine the decision. Local and historically variable factors have to join for a decision to be reached. Which of the different results becomes accepted is therefore a context sensitive affair, shaped by local historical circumstances. And the outcomes of the decision process would have been different, if the contingent, local factors had been different.

We can generalize this argument into a historical picture. In this picture, situations of multiple rational acceptability recur repeatedly along the historical trajectory of scientific research. In each situation in which a decision about competing results is made, contingent local factors shape the course of research. As a result, scientific development is erratic, meandering and unpredictable. It does not follow a fixed, predetermined pattern.

We can now see why social constructivist contingency and the realist historical picture are incompatible. First, while in the realist view of the history of science we could have come to accept alternative theories, the demand that these alternatives be approximately true places some constraints on just how different they could have been. Presumably, the alternatives could not have been incompatible with our actual best-confirmed theories. The social constructivist is more radical in this regard. According to her, we could not only have come to accept different, but even radically different, incompatible theories.

Second, while realism allows some degree of contingency in the history of science, it also has to assume that there is a stable pattern of scientific change that favors truth-preserving continuities in science over discontinuities, or else the no-miracle argument breaks down. Social constructivist contingentism, in contrast, denies that there is a stable pattern of scientific development that would ensure continuity, accumulation and progress. To the extent that realism has to secure general patterns of scientific development, it is thus incompatible with the social constructivist view that scientific decision making is shaped by local, contingent factors and thus fundamentally unpredictable.

We can conclude that there is a genuine conflict between realism and social constructivism as regards the issue of contingency in science. But the realist and the

constructivist should not be seen as arguing over whether science is contingent or inevitable. Rather, they should be seen as arguing about how much and what type of contingency there is in the historical processes of science.

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# Scientific Pluralism Between Realism and Social Constructivism? Some Critical Comments

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## Abstract

Scientific pluralists oppose their views to scientific realism, especially in its monistic form. I sketch the problem context that has given rise to pluralisms. I critically discuss these views in terms of a number of questions: Is the monism they oppose not a straw-man? Are pluralists onlookers or philosophers? Are the claims of strong pluralism tenable? Do pluralists not have an unclear relation to truth? I conclude that scientific realists can accept the main point of pluralists, but need not and will not accept that there are ineliminable incompatibilities between scientific approaches to particular phenomena.

## 1. Introduction

There have been competing theories, like the phlogiston theory and the oxygen theory of combustion. The scientific realist is happy that one of the theories, the oxygen theory, won out and proved to be the correct one. There have also been non-competing theories concerning the same phenomena, raising problems about their relation. For instance, kinetic theory or statistical mechanics has created still unresolved problems in relation to phenomenological thermodynamics, the reversibility and recurrence problem. Further, there are theories developed for different phenomena which are patently hard to integrate in one theory, such as quantum theories and general relativity theory. Theories and models in the physical sciences also are replete with idealizations and approximations. Notice, however, that many of them, like the use of mass points for pendulum or planetary motion, can be proven as exactly valid.

Especially in the non-physical sciences, in psychology and the social sciences, there have been different, often competing, approaches and models regarding the same phenomena. For instance, there have been well-known nature versus nurture debates about the explanation of properties and traits of human beings. And it is especially in the face of the situations in such areas of research that philosophers have defended an explanatory or scientific pluralism. Helen Longino (2006, 2013) has done so in her extended studies of scientific approaches to two kinds of behavior, sexuality and aggressiveness.

This type of pluralism has been characterized as a position between “two extreme views”, namely between “a (monistic) metaphysical realism according to which there is in principle one true and complete theory of everything ... [and] ... a constructivist relativism according to which scientific claims about any reality beyond that of ordinary experience are merely social conventions” (Giere 2006, 26).

This characterization can be put in terms of constraints. For realists in general, the abstract overall constraint for acceptable scientific hypotheses is that they be true. “Constructivists admit an indefinite number of theories, the only constraint being human ingenuity.” (Kellert et al. 2006a, xiii). Pluralists hold that there are constraints, cognitive and pragmatic, “that limit the variety of acceptable classificatory or explanatory schemes”. (ibid.)

I shall critically discuss pluralist views in terms of a number of questions: Is the monism they oppose not a straw-man? Are pluralists onlookers or philosophers? Are the claims of strong pluralism tenable? Do pluralists not have

an unclear relation to truth? I conclude that scientific realists can accept the main point of pluralists, but need not and will not accept that there are ineliminable incompatibilities between scientific approaches to particular phenomena.

## 2. The Monist Straw-Man

One should note that, actually, pluralists oppose their view not so much to realism in general, but rather to scientific or explanatory monism, the view that the world or any investigated part of it can be described or explained by a single, complete and comprehensive account. For, clearly, there have been realists (me included) who are not monists. For instance, John Dupré (1996, 105) defended a “promiscuous realism”, by arguing that “individual things are objectively members of many individual kinds”, which all are real, but not reducible to one essential kind. Pluralists tend to reply that such a view “is hard to distinguish from radical relativism” (Kellert et al. 2006a, xiii).

One cannot help getting the impression that the monism pluralists are opposed to is a kind of straw-man. Of course, in the first half or the last century, there was the unified science movement. But this movement advanced the idea of a unity of scientific methods or, even more generally, promoted the scientific attitude as an antidote against metaphysics and ideologies. In its anti-metaphysical attitude, this movement was even similar to the pluralist movement.

Also of course, there is the recurring idea of a “theory of everything”. But up to now, the idea has remained very much a scientific phantasy.

Longino (2013, 138ff) argues by way of examples that researchers of human behavior who “engage in extended defenses” of their own approach or “expose the weaknesses of alternatives” actually “adopt a monist perspective”. This is dressing up the straw-man, for I doubt whether any of those researchers would claim that her/his approach gives the final, complete and comprehensive account of the behavior concerned.

## 3. Pluralist Philosophy or Spectatorship

The monist view that “the ultimate aim of a science is to establish a single, complete, and comprehensive account of the natural world” or the investigated parts of it is considered a metaphysical view since it is said to be based on the metaphysical assumption that “the world is such that it

can, at least in principle, be completely described or explained by such an account" (Kellert et al. 2006a, x). Logically, it would follow that the pluralist denial of this metaphysical view is itself also a metaphysical position.

Yet, pluralists do not want to defend a metaphysical position. They "do not assume that the natural

world cannot, in principle, be completely explained by a single tidy account", but rather "believe that whether it can be so explained is an open, empirical question" (ibid.). This is why they say that their "general thesis is epistemological" (ibid.). Here, 'empirical' seems to refer to what can "empirically" be observed in the development of the sciences. In this respect, then, the pluralist stance seems to degenerate into the position of a mere spectator, just watching and witnessing, possibly examining, what is happening in the sciences.

Giere places his form of pluralism, his "perspectival pluralism", in the framework of a scientific naturalism. He recommends to reformulate metaphysical doctrines, like monism, as methodological maxims and to consider naturalism also as a methodological stance. And as a methodological naturalist, "one can wait until success is achieved. And there are good naturalist standards for when this happens." (Giere 2006, 39) Thus, he also seems to advocate a wait-and-see attitude.

However, pluralists are not mere spectators of developments in the sciences, but philosophers at least inasmuch as they put forward arguments. For instance, they identify what they see as the various general sources of the plurality of approaches, theories, and models concerning the phenomena in particular areas of scientific inquiry. "These include (a) the complexity of the phenomena—whether associated with crossing levels of organization or multiple factors within the same level of organization; (b) the variety of explanatory interests; (c) the openness of constraints—whether from above or below; and (d) the limitations of particular explanatory strategies vis-à-vis the phenomena." (Kellert et al. 2006a, xvi-xvii)

Giere (2006, 38) argues that a scientific claim could only be "exactly true is if it uses a complete model that fits the world exactly in every respect." The underlying assumption is "that everything is causally connected with everything else" (ibid.). Thus, in the case of an incomplete theory, "there will be some influences on the subject matter not accounted for" by it (ibid.). The argument seems to invoke "a metaphysical assumption of connectedness in the universe" (ibid.). Yet, Giere restates that it "can be made less metaphysical by assuming only that we do not *know* the extent" of this connectedness (ibid.). He thinks that this "more modest conclusion is sufficient to support a robust (perspectival) pluralism" (ibid.).

In the next section, I shall briefly consider Longino's particular arguments for pluralism. She, too, wants to avoid metaphysical assumptions. She states (2013, 138): "Pluralism is best understood as an attitude to adopt with respect to the multiplicity of approaches in contemporary sciences." This pragmatic pluralistic attitude has been labeled "the pluralist stance" (Kellert et al. 2006a)

#### 4. Strong Pluralism

One can distinguish between weak, modest/moderate, strong/substantial, and even radical pluralism (Longino 2013, 137ff). Weak pluralists regard a plurality of approaches as temporary. Moderate pluralists hold "either that a plurality of questions supports different and nonre-

ducible, but still compatible approaches or that pluralism at the theoretical level resolves into an integrated account at the phenomenological level." (ibid., 137). Both weak and moderate pluralism are said to reduce to monism (Kellert et al. 2006a, xii). Strong pluralists, like Longino, hold that some areas of investigation are characterized by multiple "incompatible", "nonreconcilable" approaches, resulting in a "ineliminable" plurality of "incommensurable", "incongruent" theories or models, each representing only partial knowledge (Longino 2013). Finally, radical pluralists would claim that this holds for *all* areas of scientific investigation.

Longino (2013, Chs. 2-6) presents and discusses five particular types of approaches to understanding human behavior: quantitative behavioral genetics, social-environmental approaches, molecular behavioral genetics, neurobiological approaches, and several integrative approaches (developmental systems theory, the gene-environment-neurosystem interaction program, multifactorial path analysis); she subsequently (in Ch. 7) adds human-ecological approaches, which do not draw on the biology of individuals, but on the comparative study of populations.

One main argument of hers is that the different approaches parse the space of possible causes of behavior in noncongruent manners. Longino (2013, 125ff) characterizes this space in terms of the following categories of causes: (a) genotype: allele pairs; (b) genotype: whole genome; (c) intrauterine environment; (d) physiological and anatomical factors; (e) nonshared environment; (f) shared (intrafamily) environment; (g) socioeconomic status. For instance, molecular behavioral genetics takes into account or "measures" only (a) and (b), treating the remaining factors as environmental. Social-environmental approaches, on the other hand, consider (e), (f) and (g) as effective causes of variations, and the remaining factors as uniform. Thus, they consider (c) also as inactive, while quantitative behavioral genetics counts (c) as environmental or as noise. For such reasons she claims that those approaches are incompatible and cannot be integrated into a single complete account.

Another point put forward in support of this claim is that behavior, the object of investigation, is understood in different ways: "as a disposition or as an episode, as a dimension of variation in a population among populations, or as an individual characteristic" (Longino 2013, 102). In addition, concepts of specific behaviors, like aggression and sexuality, vary historically and culturally. (It is strange that Longino takes up the questions of definition of behavior *after* her discussion of the approaches to behavior.)

Longino is not clear about what integration into one complete account could mean; that is why it is not clear what she is rejecting (Driscoll 2014). The various approaches to study human behavior undoubtedly are in the process of development and incomplete. But the conclusion that integration is ruled out is not justified. Note that Longino nowhere calls the different approaches or their results 'contradictory'. Indeed, to the more moderate pluralist Giere (2006, 37), the approaches or perspectives concerned "seem to be largely complementary and nonoverlapping".

#### 5. Uncomfortable Truth

As mentioned, scientific realists will insist that theories, models, explanation should be checked and assessed for their truth. We saw Giere (2006, 38) arguing that a scientific claim could only be "exactly true is if it uses a complete

model that fits the world exactly in every respect." This is an exaggeration or else a confusion of '(exactly) true' with 'complete', or also a confusion of realism with monism. For a realist, a model can be (exactly) true in particular respects.

For Longino (2013, 147ff), the attitude of non-eliminative pluralism focusses on the "different kinds of knowledge" incommensurable approaches can offer, without "assuming that one, at most, is correct". Yet, what "can it mean to say that two or more [such] approaches are correct"? To answer this question, Longino has introduced the "umbrella concept" of conformation of a successful representation to its object, which is meant to cover truth at one extreme, but also homomorphism, approximation, etc. These other forms come in degrees and in terms of respects. To say, then, that two different representations "are equally correct is to say that for each there is a degree and respect in relation to which it can be said to conform to its subject matter".

No doubt that approximations etc. come in degrees and respects. Yet, truth is an unavoidable general concept. It is implicit in Longino's notion of correctness. And it cannot but figure in answers to questions such as: does this representation conform to this degree and in that respect to its object?

According to Longino (2013, 149), different kinds of conformation are mandated by different pragmatic aims. Thus, one cannot separate something like pure comprehensive knowledge from its application; rather, practical goals and associated constraints shape the choice of an approach and the evaluation of its results. In this sense, she advocates a "pragmatically inflected pluralism". Yet, one can side with the point she makes and still insist that there will always remain a purely epistemic evaluation of the truth of a result.

## 6. Conclusion

Pluralists have a good point when they insist that understanding the sciences includes understanding the plurality of scientific approaches, models etc. However, they do not need to set up monism as their opponent to make this point. Scientific realists not only easily accept this point, but have also been dealing with it extensively. They will of course take issue with strong and radical pluralists, who assert the ineliminability of certain incompatible models. Incompatibilities in the sciences, for realists, are strong invitations for further research.

For emergentist realists, in particular, there are autonomous causal and thus explanatory relations on higher levels, although not inconsistent with explanatory mechanisms on lower layers. For instance, "the mouse is dead because a snake bit it" is a sufficient explanation by itself, aside from possible further biological and molecular accounts. Emergence, then, leads to a natural plurality of accounts. It seems to me that pluralists tend to neglect this autonomy of accounts on different levels.

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# Edifying Non-Dualism: Richard Rorty Meets Josef Mitterer

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## Abstract

In this paper I argue that Josef Mitterer's non-dualizing mode of discourse and Richard Rorty's edifying philosophy should team up. My starting point in the first section is the central role anti-representationalism plays in Rorty's project. In the second part I argue that the non-dualizing mode of discourse is the best available way to express this anti-representationalism. In the third part I indicate how edifying philosophy provides a framework in which the non-dualizing mode of discourse is to be embedded fruitfully.

## 1. Anti-representationalism

Richard Rorty's philosophical work is as complex as it is far-fetched. He repositioned himself regularly through constant change of self-applied „Isms“. Nonetheless there was one idea against which he argued throughout which I call the „metaphysical picture“. According to this picture there are philosophical problems which arise as soon as one starts to reflect and the answers to such problems lie in the discovery of eternal truths equipped with which we can transcend our cultural limitations and get in touch with the world as it „really is“.

A central line of argument against this picture is what Rorty calls anti-representationalism. According to his anti-representationalism knowledge is not matter of getting reality right but a matter of finding better ways to cope with reality (see Rorty 1991, 2). As he argues the representationalism / anti-representationalism debate is distinct from the realism / anti-realism debate. The latter is about what kind of statements stand in relation to reality as it „really is“. A realist argues that the statements of theory T correspond to a „fact of the matter“, an anti-realist concerning T insists that those statements do not correspond to the way the world is. T does not represent the world as it *really* is.

Anti-representationalism generalizes this anti-realism and argues that no part of our language represents anything; language is better described as a tool humans employ among others. A hammer does not represent the nail, a brake lever does not represent the slowdown of the vehicle and likewise words do not represent the world, they are not a way of representing the world as it is but another way of coping with and modifying our environment. „The only difference between such interactions is that we call interactions 'linguistic' when we find it helpful to correlate the marks and noises being produced by other entities with the ones we ourselves make“ (Rorty 1998, 96). According to the anti-representationalist there is no ontological gap between descriptions and the world being described. Descriptions are part of the world like everything else.

## 2. An Argument against Representationalism

As an example of how an anti-representational way of talking would look like Rorty recommends that we understand everything we talk about as being modeled on numbers. Nobody, he argues, will be prone to investigate the true essence of the number seventeen and we have not found out anything essential about the seventeen if we learn, for example, to take its square root (see Rorty 1999, 47ff).

When it comes to numbers, nobody thinks that our descriptions represent the number as it *really* is. Most of us are anti-realists concerning numbers and we shall adopt this stance concerning every domain, this is, turn into anti-representationalists.

This way of talking runs counter to some of our most fundamental intuitions about language. Arguments will do a better job than hand-waving analogies if the aim is to persuade people to adopt an anti-representational stance. Rorty himself recognizes this and tries to underlay his view by arguments he mostly takes from Donald Davidson. Besides Davidson's famous critique of the scheme-content distinction there is a powerful argument for anti-representationalism readily available which comes with fewer controversial conditions - the non-dualizing mode of discourse developed by Josef Mitterer. His work provides us with both, an argument against representationalism and a proposal how to talk as anti-representationalists.

The latter is what Mitterer in his *The Beyond of Philosophy* calls a non-dualizing mode of discourse. He begins his project by discussing Wittgenstein's views on aspect seeing. Take the following triangle:



We can imagine that three different people see different aspects of it, A sees it as an arrow, B sees it as a body, C sees it as geometrical drawing. It seems intuitive to say that there is one thing, the triangle, which is there and can be seen under different aspects. This sounds harmless but leads into the heart of the matter since it imposes on us a specific view of how our language works. Namely that those different aspects all have their foundation in a *real* triangle which is then seen in a certain light (the light metaphor is instructive).

Let's change the focus. Which of the three descriptions of the triangle can be justified? How can something be part of such a justification at all? Here a dualist grants the undescribed, language-different object, such as the triangle itself, the central place. We are justified if our description matches with the undescribed, real object. But, as Mitterer points out, it is already a description if something is described as undescribed. Even the dualist has to provide us with a „rudimentary description“ of the triangle, a neutralistic starting point in a given situation to make justification possible.

Here then is the problem for the dualist: If the triangle shall be the part of the undescribed world which gives rise to different descriptions, the triangle is either already given as a rudimentary description (otherwise it cannot enter our justificatory practice) or it is a Kantian thing-in-itself (which can by definition never enter our justificatory practices). "The attempt to distinguish the indicated object from the rudimentary description releases an infinite regress that always leads to further rudimentary descriptions, but not to the object 'itself'." (Mitterer 2011, §57, my translation) This infinite regress bewitches every attempt of dualizing (and henceforth representational) speech (see Weber 2013). The language-independent object *must* remain unrecognized and cannot play any role in justification. The dualizing mode of discourse - and thus representationalism - slides into deep problems on its own terms.

As an alternative Mitterer proposes to replace the spatial metaphors surrounding our understanding of language with temporal metaphors. Where dualism uses the dichotomy between world and language he proposes to understand the "object of description" and the "description of the object" as an ever-changing ensemble: "The object of description is not description- or 'language-independent' but the part of the description that has been already carried out. *The description is not directed at the object but emanates from the object of description*; it continues the already made description, it is the continuation of the previously available description." (Mitterer 2011 §13, original emphasis, my translation) In the non-dualizing mode of discourse the term „object of description“ is replaced by the „description so far“ and the „description of the object“ by „description from now on“.

Imagine two people starting a discussion over how to proceed concerning the triangle given above. The description *so far* is relatively meager and consist of everything relevant that is in their shared space of descriptions, their starting basis, in this case /that triangle/. Both acknowledge this as the description *so far*, as a starting point for further inquiries. Then A says "That triangle is an arrow" and B says "No, that triangle is a body". Now we have two different descriptions *from now on*, the triangle as arrow or as body. A tries to mediate and says "But it can be both, a body and an arrow?" and B agrees. Structurally the following happened: At t1 we started with an agreement, a description *so far*, /x1/. At t2 this description *so far* was continued in two different ways in two different descriptions *from now on*, /Ax/ and /Bx/. Then, at t3, A and B both agreed to accept a mediatory description which turned into the new description *so far*, /x2/.

At this point a flabbergasted dualist will exclaim emphatically that this view has the absurd consequence that we cannot distinguish between our talk about things and the things as they are independent of our description. But we aren't driving to work with our description of a car but with the car itself! And dinosaurs dominated life on earth billions of years before the first human could describe them. Dinosaurs as well as apples and tables are causally independent of our descriptions; they are there *as they are* even if we do not describe them in any way! Therefore non-dualism (and henceforth anti-representationalism) is wrong because of such absurd consequences (for detailed discussion of this criticism see Neges 2013).

Let me here answer this criticism with a quotation:

Once you describe something as a dinosaur, its skin color and sex life are causally independent of your having so described it. But before you describe it as a dinosaur, or as anything else, there is no sense to the

claim that it is 'out there' having properties. *What* is out there? The thing-in-itself? The world? Tell us more. Describe it in more detail. Once you have done so, but only then, are we in a position to tell you which of its features are causally independent of having been described and which are not. If you describe it as a dinosaur, then we can tell you that the feature of being oviparous is causally independent of our description of it, but the feature of being an animal whose existence has been suspected only in recent centuries is not. (Rorty 1998, 87f, original emphasis)

Interestingly enough these are Rorty's words. Also Rorty emphasizes that to describe something as undescribed (as causally independent) is already a description (which is causally dependent on us). Only in a language game we can determine if it is part of the description of something to be causally independent. After we described it as such, but only then, it makes sense to say that dinosaurs or anything else is causally independent of our descriptions. This is how this game is played. Such passages occur quite often in his work and I take a non-dualizing mode of discourse as the best way to make sense of them.

### 3. The Limits of Argumentation

As we have seen we can reconstruct the dualist mode of speech in non-dualist terms. But why should we do so? Why abandon dualism and not try to eradicate problems like the cited infinite regress with auxiliary hypotheses? Why not dig in the heels and insist on a language independent world that is the reason for our language use?

Note that if we use such formulations the seed for doubt has already been planted. The language independent world is conceived as something which we must insist on if we want to continue to talk about it. Still, why shall we abandon our safe harbor of certainties and sail for vague promises? Mitterer himself gives a hint what could be the promise of a non-dualizing mode of speech: "Instead of a longing for invariance, truth, deadlock, maintenance of a status quo the non-dualizing mode of discourse longs for change and transformation. A 'pursuit of change' takes the place of a 'pursuit of truth'." (Mitterer 2011, §97, my translation) But why is a pursuit of change desirable? An answer to this question is not readily available and will involve a transformation of our whole world view. In other words, I think here we reached a point where arguments become unhelpful and I think Rorty's outlook is better suited to make such a far-reaching transformation seem desirable.

Rorty argues that our paradigm for philosophical practice should not be science but a conversation. When such a conversation concerns the most fundamental philosophical beliefs it will depend on what Rorty calls a person's "final vocabulary" what she can accept as description *so far*. "It is 'final' in the sense that if doubt is cast on the worth of these words, their user has no noncircular argumentative recourse. Those words are as far as he can go with language; beyond them there is only helpless passivity or a resort to force." (Rorty 1989, 73) Rorty's philosophical paragon at this point is what he calls the "ironist" or, as he called it earlier, the „edifying philosopher“ (see Rorty 1979, 360). An edifying philosopher has an ironic relationship to her final vocabulary in that she constantly puts it under scrutiny and tries to be open for change and growth. Her goal is not a match of the *real* world and her descriptions but to be as creative and open minded as possible. Her way to do so is not to use conversation stoppers such as "truth" but to engage in ongoing conversation. When

pressed hard enough she will respond by shrugging and saying something like “Well, I have exhausted the justifications; I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned” (see Wittgenstein 2009, §217). Dualists and representationalists have different final vocabularies which centrally include the idea of representing the world as it *really* is. Usually they are not ironic about it, although they stand on the same spade-turning bedrock as edifying non-dualists.

Of course both sides think that the other side should change their final vocabulary accordingly. In this stalemate, arguments lose most of their power because they presuppose a shared final vocabulary. This is why the back and forth between dualists and non-dualists seems so futile. Dualists cannot accommodate the non-dualistic description with their final vocabulary and insist that their final vocabulary is the only reasonable. The non-dualist tries to show that other options are available by showing that the problems of the dualist only arise given dualistic presuppositions (see Neges 2013). Here non-dualists try to be as argumentative as possible to pacify the dualist, but this approach has its limits at the limits of the final vocabulary. For the aim of changing a final vocabulary a broader outlook is necessary and here I only want to allude to one important move Rorty makes in his attempt to do so.

In the third part of the *Mirror of Nature* Rorty exclaims that his edifying anti-representationalist view *only* has its place in contrast to systematic philosophy. Systematic philosophers are interested in absolutizing a normal discourse (“normal” as in Kuhn’s “normal science”); their paradigm for philosophy is that of science. Edifying non-dualists try not to establish a normal discourse but try to add a revolutionary discourse (again in Kuhn’s sense of “revolutionary”) to the conversation; their paradigm is accordingly that of a conversation. Edifying non-dualists take their point of departure from well established, normalized ways of description and try to engage in arguments and persuasion in - from the systematic viewpoint - radical, revolutionary ways. Such an edifying view depends crucially on the systematic viewpoint since one cannot have a (sane) conversation all for oneself. Without systematic conversational partners the edifying critique would become useless and self-contradictory. Take away the systematic dualist and the

edifying non-dualist would sooner or later produce the same claim of absoluteness that she seeks to prevent (see Rorty 1979, 366ff). The edifying non-dualist hopes that no absolutization of a discourse will ever be successful and – this is the central point – she embodies her hope in her philosophical behavior, for example in her refusal to use argumentation stoppers such as truth or in laying her focus not on getting reality right but on possible future achievements.

In this spirit Rorty ends the *Mirror of Nature* by insisting that “philosophers’ moral concern should be with continuing the conversation of the West, rather than with insisting upon a place for the traditional problems of modern philosophy within that conversation” (Rorty 1979, 394). Mitterer’s non-dualistic approach is a capital contribution to this ongoing conversation.

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# Revisiting Wittgenstein's "Pictures" in the Nachlaß – The Arts and Sciences in a New Key

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## Abstract

This presentation explores something of the range of reasons why the time is especially ripe for revisiting Wittgenstein's work on 'pictures'. Emphasis falls on interfaces of insights of his *Nachlaß* with innovations in approaches to art and science's histories, which challenge hitherto predominant utopic and dystopic 'disenchantment' images of modernity, 'two cultures' traditions and polemic over "realism versus relativism" and "truth versus contingency" (IWS 2015) in philosophy.

## Rethinking Polemic

Not long ago, few Wittgenstein specialists might have seen his work on "pictures" as highly relevant for 'going beyond' apparently irresolvable polemic over "realism versus relativism" and "truth versus contingency" (e.g., IWS 2010; IWS 2015). Likewise few might have seen underestimated aspects of the *Nachlaß* as critical for "going beyond" polemic over continuity versus discontinuity interpretations of Wittgenstein's so called 'early' and 'late' work. *For over a half century after World War II, influentially opposed positions on these issues paralleled the splitting of the "goals [of] discipline after discipline... along the axis of autonomy and dependence" (Galison 2008, 112). In such contexts, it would have been difficult to imagine that rethinking Wittgenstein's work on 'pictures' might interface with efforts to rethink so-called 'standard accounts' of art, science and modernity.*

It would fool-hearty to embark on a detailed exploration of new insights of the *Nachlaß* importance for rethinking Wittgenstein's perspectives on the philosophical significance of pictures. It would be equally fool-hearty to attempt an exhaustive outline of the range of factors making it timely to revisit this critical aspect of his work. Fortunately IWS 2015 provides welcome warnings and occasion to explore new possibilities for revisiting Wittgenstein's 'pictures' in light of interfaces between:

- insights of implications of the *Nachlaß* for fresh perspectives on Wittgenstein's work on 'pictures' (Roser 1996; Nyíri 2001); and
- innovations in approaches to art and science's histories around such ideas as 'modelling the senses, modelling the world' (Crombie 1976) and 'picturing knowledge' (e.g., Biagre 1996; Jones/Galison 1998; Friedman, Richardson, Daston and Galison 2008).

The concluding section offers suggestions about implications for taking the arts and sciences equally seriously.

## Picturing and the Nachlaß

Few themes have figured more centrally in polemic over so-called 'early' and 'late Wittgenstein' than 'pictures.' Kristóf Nyíri (Nyíri 2001, 1) notes that while the "Tractatus is taken to argue for a picture theory of meaning, summed up by Wittgenstein's dictum: "The proposition is a picture of reality" - "later Wittgenstein is interpreted as holding a use theory of pictures, according to which pictures by themselves do not carry any meaning; they acquire meaning by being put to specific uses and by being applied in

specific contexts." The situation compares with the divisions John Hyman describes between 'resemblance' and 'illusion' theories of depiction:

The resemblance theory is the earlier of the two and was unchallenged by philosophers until Descartes. It says that a picture is a work of imitation and that the difference between a picture and a copy or replica is that a picture is a marked surface that imitates visible forms and colours of the kinds of objects it depicts but not their internal structures. The illusion theory, which was originally advanced by Descartes, says that a picture is a marked surface that produces the experience that is normally caused by seeing an object of the kind depicted – that is, that it imitates the effect of a visible object on the senses rather than the object itself (Hyman 2006, 60).

Both have roots in characterisations of images and art, which go back to such early horizons of western philosophy as Plato's definition of *mimesis* "as intentionally making an appearance (*phainomenon*, *phantasma*) that resembles something of a certain kind but is not something of that kind itself. His principle thought is that the appearance is like the original object but is less real" (Hyman 2006, 61).

Nyíri notes that "[b]eyond the boundaries of the imagery debate Wittgenstein's later philosophy of pictures has not received much attention" (Nyíri 2001, 1). For Nyíri and Andreas Roser (1996), key obstacles have been lack of access to his *Nachlaß* until the Bergen electronic edition; and the problems that printed works do not evidence the range of his ideas about pictures - and "fail to convey the significance of the later Wittgenstein's method of explaining philosophical points with the help of diagrams - his *Nachlaß* contains some 1300 of them. This method would have made no sense if he had really adhered to the position that images do not have a meaning unless interpreted verbally" (Nyíri 2001, 1). Efforts to address these problems do not reveal a unified philosophy. Nyíri (2001, 9) suggests that one reason why many of Wittgenstein's ideas have not gone into print might be that he may have abandoned ideas he thought would disinterest his contemporaries. And indeed, philosophers - as well as historians of science (and even may art historians) in his times prioritised linguistic representations in ways that created gaps between evaluation of texts and images (e.g., Biagre 1996).

## Interfaces

No attempt is made here to survey the range of factors that are creating favourable conditions for revisiting Wittgen-

stein on 'pictures.' Such a survey would need to explore far reaching change taking place in perspectives on the above noted patterns of 20th century. Instead, I focus on parallels between insights of the *Nachlaß*; and efforts to rethink art and science's histories that focus on 'modelling the senses, modelling the world' (Crombie 1996; Koerner 2014) and 'picturing knowledge - with attention to *Picturing Knowledge: Philosophical Problems Concerning the Use of Art and Science* (Biagre ed. 1996); *Picturing Science, Producing Art* (Jones/Galison 1998) and an essay collection by Michael Friedman, Alan Richardson, Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison (2008). All evidence the lasting impacts of Wittgenstein's emphasis on the "normative [social, ethical] character" of all forms of human expression and intentionality; "insistence on the normative character of language and intentionality"; and "pragmatist commitment" to understanding the efficacy of norms "in terms of practices" (Brandom 1994, 55). They also see the 'limits of language' as that which cannot be expressed in written or spoken language, but makes them possible: "In Wittgenstein's later philosophy the limits of language' are made explicit" - "the constitution of language as meaningful" is inseparable from forms of social life as continuing practices" (Giddens 1979, 4).

The first parallel is awareness of the embeddedness of 'realism and relativism' polemic in problematic characterisations of art and science's histories, and assumptions about:

- the historical roots of naturalistic (or realistic or lifelike) painting styles;
- the secularisation (or 'disenchantment' or 'rationalisation') of cosmology, the 'Scientific Revolution' and modernity's supposedly break with predecessors and 'other' cultures;
- utopic or dystopic options for interpreting history.

Svetlana Alpers and others stress the interdependence of such assumptions, raising questions - we need to ask, for example why: "It was argued that the problem solving nature of Italian Renaissance art made it the model for the progress in human knowledge that later became associated with science. Here is Gombrich" - "the artists work is like the scientist. His works exist not only for their own sake but also to demonstrate certain problems solutions" [Gombrich 1966, 7]. The immediate reference was what he and others took to be the scientific and demonstrable character of perspective (Alpers 2005, 416). There are complex connections between these ideas and Gombrich's perspectives on: realism and disenchantment; the 'artist' as modern 'individual'; contrasts between the 'norms' of pre-modern versus the 'freedom' of modern culture. Such connections help with rethinking complications in Wittgenstein's work on pictures, and amongst polemic responses to it.

A second parallel is the extent to which rethinking art and science's histories go against the grain of "notions that see science as revealed Truth, and art as 'mere' individual statement" (Jones/Galison 1998, 21) or as esoteric expression of subject experience or artistic 'genius.' Instead of debating "whether science and art are incommensurable realms of knowledge," scholars ask: "What are the conditions under which objects become visible in culture," and what have been the circumstances under which such "visibilities" have been "characterised as 'science' or 'art'?" (Jones/Galison 1998, 1). At the same time as the *Nachlaß* throws light on Wittgenstein's perspectives on pictures, scholars are exploring "viewing and knowing" in art and science "amongst many other kinds of cultural practices

and productions" (Jones/Galison 1998, 6f). Focusing on cultural practices of "modelling the senses, modelling the world" (Koerner 2014) illuminates the circumstances *under which* and the means *with which* people create pictures, diagrams, and material culture symbolic forms that enable them to understand, communication about, and intervene in the world.

*Philosophical Problems* (Biagre 1996) marked a turning point in these developments by shifting attention away from polemic disputes over whether images are important to science towards questions about the variety of images forms and roles. Parallel with efforts to revisit Wittgenstein on pictures, it tackles the premium placed on linguistic representation. We noted that Nyíri and Roser stress implications of the *Nachlaß* for Wittgenstein's use of diagrams. Similarly, David Topper's contribution to *Picturing Knowledge* (Topper 1996, 236) argues that, in order to address the problem that the category, 'scientific illustration' is conventionally restricted to "printed artefacts or drawn artefacts in their final form," we need to focus on "notebooks, workbooks, sketchbooks, and other artefacts - along with completed paintings." For Ronald Giere (Giere 1996, 272-275), scientific theories can be seen as a family of models of the things they are supposed to explain. Instead of trying to bridge gaps between 'word and image' by treating scientific pictures as visual *language*, we can treat theory itself as more like a picture, than the other way around - as something that is not rooted most fundamentally in language.

## History and Philosophy in a New Key

Such insights provide fresh perspectives on polemic over 'resemblance' and 'illusion' theories of images, "realism versus relativism" and "truth versus contingency" (IWS 2015), and utopic and dystopic interpretations of art, science and modernity. But what about implications for philosophy, and the dynamics of history and philosophy? My essay's title is inspired by Suzanne Langer's *Philosophy in a New Key* (Langer 1942), and the title of Friedman's contributions to a collection of four papers (Friedman 2008). For Friedman

it is simply a historical fact—and a particularly stubborn one—that modern science and philosophy first came into being as an inseparable unity (conceived, at the time, as a revolutionary new type of "natural philosophy" aiming definitively to replace Aristotelian-Scholastic natural philosophy), and they have continued to be inextricably entangled with one another ever since.... For example, the development of analytic philosophy itself played a very significant role in the rise of linguistics, computer science, and (more generally) the cognitive sciences in the second half of the twentieth century. (Friedman 2008, 129)

Daston's essay (Daston 2008, 97) is a "philosophical, and historical inquiry into the ontology of scientific observation: how expert observation discerns and stabilises scientific objects for a community of researchers." Richardson (Daston 2008, 89) explores the light "cultural history of science" can throw on "the scientific ambitions of logical empiricist (and other early twentieth century) philosophy of science." Galison's (Galison 2008) essay closely parallels work on the *Nachlaß*, and throws useful light on challenges of rethink images (or 'visual culture') in art and science's histories. There are no timeless unifying models. Galison stresses "Ten Problems in the History and Philosophy of Science" that show that much more needs to be learned, and "only an intense collaboration of effort can help us

move forward," including: "What is a context? How do visualization practices work? (Galison 2008, 112f, 116)? Baigre's study of "Descartes' Scientific Illustrations" illustrates the importance of context for addressing the later sort of question. For Baigre, we need alternatives to vexed options of either ignoring Descartes' illustrations altogether, or interpreting them as evidence that "he was a rationalist in name but not in practice". Such claims impede appreciating that

"if these illustrations have any value, it is to help us see what the world is like; that is, they must be perceptual resources in the context of Descartes's substantive theories. My own view is that the pictures in Descartes' science are not meant to depict a world but are designed to help us to conceive how it might work (in mechanical terms): that is, they are viewed by Descartes as resources that can enhance human cognition – the artifice of drawing enables natural philosophers to explore the plausibility of postulated mechanical arrangement of insensible particles; and thereby to grasp the workings of things that exceed our perception" (Baigre 1996, 87).

The direct bearing these insights have upon our concerns is brought into relief by the roles prints and print technologies have played "as early as the sixteenth century, as a powerful set of metaphors to explain the abstract workings of perception and cognition," and how sensations get recorded in the mind and retrieved from memory as discrete units of knowledge" (MacGregor 1999, 405). Revisiting Wittgenstein's perspectives on 'pictures' in light of the *Nachlaß* can take their philosophical significance very seriously: "the frequent references in Wittgenstein's later work to Plato - the first and foremost philosopher of literacy" might be seen as attempts to overcome the barriers of verbal language by working towards a philosophy of pictures" (Nyíri 2001, 12). The interfaces we have explored may provide only a glimpse of prospects for future interdisciplinary collaboration. But it is also a glimpse of contribu-

tions that such collaboration can make to taking the arts and sciences equally seriously.

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# Leonard Nelson and Metaphysical Knowledge

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## Abstract

Leonard Nelson's lecture *Die Unmöglichkeit der Erkenntnistheorie* is regarded primarily as a critique of the theory of knowledge. What has been rarely discussed in this context, however, is the problem of the possibility of metaphysics. By the impossibility of epistemology he means the possibility of metaphysical knowledge. I would like to devote this paper to the analysis of this problem.

The main rationale behind the theory of knowledge is to do philosophy according to a scientific method and explain old disputes in the strict context of science. Anti-metaphysical philosophy presumes that the metaphysical method of philosophizing is useless when compared to the epistemological reflection. Opposing that approach, Nelson verifies if the theory of knowledge is able to meet that objective, which is the basic intention of his lecture *Die Unmöglichkeit der Erkenntnistheorie* (Nelson 1912, 592; Glock 2011, 57; Haller 1979, 55; Waszczenko 1994, 89). There Nelson wanted not only to prove the impossibility of epistemology but also to demonstrate the positive consequences that can be drawn from this impossibility. Nelson believes that there is a third way between the philosophical science of dogmatic metaphysics and anti-metaphysical philosophy as a science.

As a result, Nelson calls for a new notion of proof that is not only to "serve to trace judgments back to other judgments" but, primarily, it should mean "back to intuition" (Nelson 1912, 605; Chisholm 1979, 39, 43). Accordingly, Nelson acts against the Kantian tradition that characterizes synthetic a priori knowledge as lying between analytic a priori and synthetic a posteriori (Nelson 1912, 606; Körner 1979, 2; Kleinknecht 1994, 27). Nelson calls for a return to the original problem of Hume, who first noticed that there are both non-analytic and non-intuitive judgments (Nelson 1908, 253–257). When Kant and his successors clearly saw the character of this "metaphysical" judgments and that they cannot be reduced to the known sources of knowledge such as concept and intuition, he tried nonetheless „Ermangelung einer ihnen zugrunde liegenden unmittelbaren Erkenntnis – durch Vergleichung mit dem Gegenstand, also erkenntnistheoretisch zu begründen“ (Nelson 1912, 606; Westermann 1994, 110; Schroth 1994, 129). There is a tradition of the third way of philosophy between empiricism and rationalism that started with Kant and was pursued by German idealism to neo-Kantianism. Nelson rejected this epistemological solution as an invalid misinterpretation and showed that this solution can only be found in psychology in the sense of the science of inner experience enabling the reasoning of metaphysical judgments and thus metaphysics as a science. Hence, in the background of Nelson's argument about the impossibility of epistemology we find the problem of the possibility of metaphysics. Nelson looks for and finds the psychological sources of metaphysical knowledge in inner experience. We cannot form metaphysical judgments directly from their source of knowledge in concepts and intuition. So there must be some kind of source of metaphysical knowledge that can show psychology as a science about inner experience.

The problem of the possibility of metaphysics, *resp.* the so-called metaphysical judgments, in fact, was tried to be solved by their reduction to known sources of knowledge.

If reflection is to be the source of knowledge of metaphysical judgments, we get metaphysical logicism and if it's intuition we have metaphysical intuitionism. The Third Way between logicism and intuitionism is a rejection of the two sources of knowledge for metaphysical judgments and recognition that metaphysical judgments have no source of knowledge, as argued by metaphysical empiricism. It is a generally accepted belief that apart from the positions of metaphysical logicism, intuitionism and empiricism there are no other possible solutions to the problem of the possibility of metaphysics. Nelson, however, tries to prove the logical incompleteness of the disjunction between intuition and reflection in order to show the possibility of a fourth solution to this problem. If we take intuition to be unreflected knowledge, it must mean, of course, that non-intuitive knowledge can only come from concepts through reflection and vice versa. But Nelson noticed the following opposite linguistic usage:

Nach dem allgemeinen Sprachgebrauch versteht man unter ‚Anschauung‘ eine unmittelbar bewußte Erkenntnis. Aber nicht jede unmittelbare Erkenntnis braucht eine unmittelbar bewußte Erkenntnis zu sein. Es liegt kein Widerspruch in der Annahme, daß eine Erkenntnis, die nicht aus der Reflexion entspringt, uns nur durch Vermittlung der Reflexion zu Bewußtsein kommt. Unmittelbarkeit der Erkenntnis und Unmittelbarkeit des Bewußtseins um die Erkenntnis ist nämlich logisch zweierlei. (Nelson 1912, 608)

So Nelson requires a distinction between the immediacy of knowledge and the immediacy of consciousness. They have a different meaning and, therefore, cannot be equated. If we make this separation, the disjunction between reflection and intuition must mean that sources of knowledge are incomplete.

Nelson was of the opinion that non-intuitive immediate knowledge extends the classical disjunction and thus logically justifies the disjunction in a new way. Following the adoption of this extension he, like Hume, asked the question about the accuracy of various logically possible psychological theories. This question goes beyond a purely logical criticism of classical transcendental philosophy, and is directed at the testimony of inner experience. If the sources of metaphysical judgments can be found neither in reflection nor in intuition, we have two possibilities for their refusal: either the anti-metaphysical empiricism of Hume and Mach (Nelson 1908, 287–291) or the exclusiveness of reflection and intuition as sources of knowledge and the assumption of the possibility of non-intuitive immediate knowledge. This first attempt at a solution failed and Hume, a metaphysical skeptic, answered in the negative. Instead of justifying metaphysical judgments, he took on a task of providing a psychological explanation of these judgments to answer the question of the possibility of their

being a product of a blind mechanism of association (Nelson 1912, 610). Nelson was of the opinion that Hume's judgments were reduced to the psychological principle of anticipation of similar cases, which opposed the laws of association (Nelson 1908, 257–261). Hume invoked Aristotle's primary association laws that explain associations during learning on the basis of space and temporal proximity (contiguity), equality and contrast between two events. This concept of association is based on the memory of learned connections and, therefore, is quite a problematic idea. In contrast, the anticipation of similar cases has an associative character and requires a kind of certainty or a minimum probability. Hume was aware of this difficulty and, therefore, tried to present it only as a gradation between problematic and assertoric notions, so that the two concepts are different only because of their intensity of clarity. Nelson has a different opinion: Hume's empirical hypothesis of gradation between the problematic and assertoric ideas is wrong because it contradicts the facts of self-observation. Nelson noticed the problem in the judgment about the necessary connection of things:

Allerdings muß sich jede Verknüpfung von Vorstellungen durch die Gesetze der Assoziation erklären lassen. Was es hier zu erklären gilt, ist aber nicht eine Verknüpfung von Vorstellungen, sondern die Vorstellung der Verknüpfung. (Nelson 1912, 612)

Nelson saw the association itself as relatively unproblematic and drew his attention to the imaginary idea about the connections between ideas. This idea of connection must arise beyond mere associations and, consequently, it requires a different type of knowledge source.

Nelson in his psychological critique of empiricism went further than the empirical critique of metaphysical logicism and metaphysical mysticism, towards the fourth theory of criticism. The consequence of criticism is, therefore, not a rejection of metaphysical knowledge, but the adoption of non-intuitive immediate knowledge that can form the basis of metaphysics. The logical criticism of possible decisions of the problem of metaphysics saved Nelson from a contradictory attempt at an epistemological solution of the problem and, on the other hand, from a hasty withdrawal from a seemingly impossible logical way. If we are to admit the possibility of metaphysics, still we need a criterion for verifying the correctness of metaphysical assertions, but we cannot find it in the theory of knowledge as it can lie neither in reflection nor in intuition. For this reason we try to find this criterion in metaphysics itself, which must mean a defeat, for

„da die Metaphysik den Grund der Rechtmäßigkeit ihrer Urteile offenbar ebensowenig in sich selbst enthalten kann wie irgendeine andere Wissenschaft, so mußte man diesen Grund in einer anderen, höheren Wissenschaft suchen, die aber freilich ihrerseits ihren Gehalt ebensowenig auf der bloßen Reflexion oder der Anschauung schöpfen durfte wie die Metaphysik selbst und von der es daher nicht verwunderlich ist, daß noch niemand ihrer Bearbeiter über ihre eigene Herkunft Aufschluß geben konnte“ (Nelson 1912, 614).

The essence of the problem is still in the confusing view of knowledge and judgment, so we are unsuccessfully looking for the justification of metaphysical judgments in non-metaphysical immediate knowledge. If the judgment of immediate knowledge is distinguished, the reason for the validity of metaphysical judgments should be sought not in metaphysical judgments but in immediate ones. Nelson tries to convince us that the basis of metaphysical judgments

is not in a higher science, but just in immediate metaphysical knowledge.

This immediate metaphysical knowledge, however, has a special non-intuitive and unconscious character that Nelson introduced in the following way:

Denn wenn uns auch der Grund der metaphysischen Urteile in einer unmittelbaren Erkenntnis gegeben ist, so kommt uns diese doch nicht unmittelbar zu Bewußtsein, derart, daß es möglich wäre, sie ohne weiteres mit den metaphysischen Urteilen zu vergleichen, um diese zu begründen. (Nelson 1912, 615; Kleinknecht 2011, 92)

Direct metaphysical knowledge, fundamental for metaphysics, is different from conscious perception in the nature of its psychological phenomenon. The difference has a methodological character as we need a special non-epistemological science to justify metaphysical judgments that could show the basis of metaphysical judgments. For this basic methodological reason, Nelson concluded about the science that is fundamental for metaphysics:

Eben darum ist auch der empirische und psychologische Charakter dieser Wissenschaft mit der rationalen und metaphysischen Natur der durch sie zu begründenden Sätze sehr wohl verträglich. Der Grund der metaphysischen Sätze liegt ja nicht in den Sätzen dieser psychologischen Kritik, sondern in der unmittelbaren metaphysischen Erkenntnis. (Nelson 1912, 615–616)

This science can be a kind of metaphysical psychology that will contain two opposing rational and empirical features in it. This opposition is possible only if we go beyond the dichotomy between reflection and intuition.

Nelson explained the relationship between metaphysical propositions and their psychological criticism by an analogy between the improbability of the parallel postulate and the parallel postulate itself. The parallel postulate is known as the fifth postulate of Euclid and its insolubility was first recognized by Carl Friedrich Gauss. On one hand, we have a true sentence from the system of geometry and, on the other hand, a true sentence from its criticism, which is not a basis of the parallel axiom itself, but has it only as its object. Nelson drew an analogy with the following example shown in the critique of metaphysical propositions:

Nehmen wir z. B. den Grundsatz der Kausalität; nennen wir ihn C. Dann beweist die psychologische Kritik den Satz D: Es existiert eine nicht-anschauliche unmittelbare Erkenntnis, die den Grund von C enthält. C ist ein Satz des Systems der Metaphysik und als solcher rationale, D ein Satz der psychologischen Kritik und als solcher empirisch. D enthält nicht den Grund von C, sondern hat ihn nur zum Gegenstand. (Nelson 1912, 616)

Nelson, thus, distinguished two relationships between sentences: a basic relationship and an object relationship and they cannot be equated. In Nelson's opinion a basic relationship is a link between non-intuitive immediate knowledge and the principle of causality, so that such the principle is justified only by this knowledge. These sentences about a basic relationship belong in a rational way to the system of metaphysics. Irrespective of that, psychological criticism uses the object relationship and determines the existence or solvability of sentences in the empirical way, so that it has this principle only as an object. If we draw a distinction between metaphysical propositions and their criticism, the critical finding of the impossibility of metaphysics will not deny the correctness of its principles.



As a consequence, Nelson, from a standpoint of criticism, underlines the positive and negative meaning of "psychology for the establishment of metaphysics". The positive meaning lies in the fact that psychology can detect the existence of non-intuitive immediate knowledge as the basis of metaphysical principles. We obtain principles of metaphysics from a general psychological criticism, by which we can at least exclude all those that are a priori contradictory with psychological facts (Nelson 1912, 616–617). This psychology can, therefore, compare metaphysical principles with facts because each metaphysic, usually unconsciously, presumes its sources of knowledge that can be verified or falsified by comparison with psychological facts. With this possibility of logical and psychological critique of metaphysical principles their scientific treatment becomes more accessible, which enables the "unanimous and fruitful scientific work" on common problems and by a common method "instead of haphazard and barren dogmatic disputes in philosophy".

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# Wittgenstein Theorist of the Commonwealth: Hardt/Negri's Wittgenstein

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## Abstract

In the paper I wish to bring some arguments in order to explain why, in my opinion, Hardt and Negri are interested in later Wittgenstein and how they read the Viennese philosopher in their last work "Commonwealth". I will be concentrating on the concept of immanence, which Hardt and Negri insist on repeatedly across the book. Immanence means rejection of a principle or any dispositive of power which can determine the life of singularities gathered in common from a transcendental space. The Common accepts immanence as space ruled by the creativity of people, which freely chooses or invents a way of life. In my opinion, a concept of immanence is deeply present in later Wittgenstein. Indeed, in *Philosophical Investigation*, Wittgenstein refuses the idea that a space exists above the relations between people, which gives meaning to language and gives shape to their life as well. According to Wittgenstein, meaning develops only through immanent and common relations within language games.

## 1

The concept of Commonwealth theorized by Hardt and Negri first of all implies the refusal of the plane of transcendence, and consequently the theorization of a social and immanent plane which is organized creatively. During its constitution, the Common rejects any transcendent principle which wishes to manipulate the shape that it can take. There is no vertical relationship which determines from a higher space how the form of life of those who reside in the lower space is organised. On the contrary, the production of the Common begins from horizontal relationships which creatively shape and organize the reality of singularities.

As a political space, the Commonwealth is characterized by the rejection of a transcendent plane: from a political point of view, transcendence theorizes a sovereignty which stands above the relationships of the multitude of singularities. Transcendence directs and determines the organization of the life of subjects which are below that transcendent principle. With all transcendence eliminated, the Common produces relationships on an immanent plane. Indeed the plane of immanence organization has to take its shape through organizational processes deriving from horizontal relations: "Our affirmation of immanence is not based on any faith in the immediate or spontaneous capacities of society. The social plane of immanence has to be organized politically. (...) The former in each case is an immediate response, whereas the latter results from a confrontation with reality and training of our political instincts and habits, our imagination and desires" (Hardt-Negri 2009, 15f). Deprived of transcendence, the Commonwealth has to be creatively organized by the singularities, which together inventively organize and shape desires and political instincts.

From a Spinozian perspective, once any transcendent principle is removed, the power of the body emerges. This power is no longer subsumed by a transcendent spiritual principle such as the soul, the State or financial value which organizes existence. Instead, it is free to organize itself creatively: "Biopolitics thus is the ultimate antidote to fundamentalism because it refuses the imposition of a transcendent, spiritual value or structure, refuses to let the bodies be eclipsed, and insists instead on their power" (Hardt-Negri 2009, 38). Deprived of a hetero-directed guide, productive bodies release all their power of exis-

tence and then organize themselves not according to a transcendent apparatus which subsumes their forces, desires and instincts, but give shape to their being by producing a new life: the Commonwealth.

In the interests of brevity, it can be said that the features of the Commonwealth fall into three categories:

- a) *immanence*: there is no place beyond the relationships of singularities that manages their life through principles. By removing every transcendent horizon, a freedom of movement of singularities emerges. Their productive power can no longer be withdrawn in favor of one or more transcendent principles.
- b) *Freedom*: deprived of transcendent principles, the bodies of singularities are liberated and can express their productive power. From this, a shaping of their desires and will is achievable.
- c) *Creativity*: the shaping of the productive power of bodies freed from transcendence is a creative process, which begins with horizontal relations of singularities together on common ground.

Starting from these ideas about the Commonwealth, Hardt and Negri introduce Wittgenstein considering language-games and forms of life. They say: "The emergence of the common, in fact, is what has attracted so many authors to the epistemological and political possibilities opened by Ludwig Wittgenstein's notions of language games and forms of life. "So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?" Wittgenstein asks himself rhetorically. And he responds: "It is what human beings say that is true and false; and they agree in the *language* they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life [*Lebensform*]." (PI 241) We should highlight two aspects of Wittgenstein's operation. First, by grounding truth in language and language games, he removes truth from any fixity in the transcendental and locates it on the fluid, changeable terrain of practice, shifting the terms of discussion from knowing to doing. Second, after destabilizing truth he restores to it a consistency. Linguistic practice is constituent of a truth that is organized in forms of life: "to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life." (PI 19) Wittgenstein's concepts manage to evade on one hand individual, haphazard experience and, on the other, transcendental identities and truths, revealing instead, between or beyond them, the common. Language

and language games, after all, are organizations and expressions of the common, as is the notion of a form of life. Wittgensteinian biopolitics moves from knowledge through collective practice to life, all on the terrain of the common" (Hardt-Negri 2009, 121f).

## 2

I would like to comment on this quotation by adding thoughts on the rejection of transcendence and the consequent theorizing on radical immanence in Wittgenstein's late philosophy. The three categories used earlier to set out the concept of the Commonwealth shall be used and adapted to the Wittgensteinian context.

a) *Immanence of meaning.* In *PI*, there is no privileged place from which it is possible to view and if necessary to determine meaning. There is no place above or beyond human relations which can determine the course of facts. Meaning is developed and manipulated only by and through human relations; in its evolution, it can neither be controlled, nor determined by something that is outside of language games. The immanence of meaning is the immanence of human relations through which there is play with meaning. Throughout *PI*, Wittgenstein argues with transcendent visions of meaning. For example, he challenges Frege, who places meaning in a Platonic realm; or the view that goes back to Russell, who in many ways encloses meaning in an individual psychological space, in which we possess psychological objects to which linguistic expressions are related.

Wittgenstein's position on the radical immanence of meaning can be also seen when he criticizes the original philosophical plan for the *TLP*. That plan aimed at giving order and clarification to language, it wanted to find an *a priori* order of language, both pure and crystalline. This order, common to language and the world, would have been prior to all experience, but always present in it and never contaminated by "empirical cloudiness or uncertainty" (*PI* 97). In later Wittgenstein, the search for a "super-order" collapses in the immanence of language games: "if the words 'language', 'experience', 'world' have a use, it must be as down to earth as that of the words 'table', 'lamp', 'door'" (*PI* 97). Wittgenstein limits any attempt to escape the immanence of human relationships that are expressed at the level of language games. The philosophical temptation of conceiving a place outside the world is systematically denounced and punished in *PI*. One may want to establish order in language, why not? However it will be — "one out of many possible orders" (*PI* 132) constructed for a particular purpose within a language game. The construction of an order is then unpredictable, contextualized within a game and never escapes immanence. It always remains anchored to the ground and open to the recombination which may occur in games (*PI* 132).

b) *Freedom of the use of the rule.* Wittgenstein's aversion to any form of transcendence can be seen better by reading his set of paragraphs on *following a rule*. It can be seen particularly where Wittgenstein takes the idea that rule can determine the development of events and compares this with the operation of a machine (see *PI* 193-194). In these paragraphs, Wittgenstein criticizes the idea that rule can determine events from an empyreal world as if a sequence of actions was already somehow metaphysically contained in the expression of the rule (see Budd 1984, McDowell 1984). The same metaphysical move

happens, says Wittgenstein, when we tend to think that all the workings of a machine are mysteriously contained in its image, even before they are carried out *de facto*. Wittgenstein criticizes the idea of the existence of a mysterious and privileged space which not only contains a sequence of events, but also determines real events. It is not enough that the movements are predetermined in a mysterious way, they must be already present (*PI* 193). Wittgenstein is criticizing the idea that there is a place beyond the world, the Platonic Hyperuranion, which contains paradigmatic patterns of sequences of events and determines empirical reality. Immanence consists in thinking that the expression of rule does not determine any reality. Rules are manipulated within the relational dynamics of the game (see *PI* 82). Immanence demands that contingent relationships are primary and these are developed within the dynamics of human interaction. There is no place above the level of human relationships which determines the reality of interactions.

And, again, let us consider the role that Wittgenstein assigns to philosophy. Disputing philosophical foundationalism, Wittgenstein says that Philosophy does not give an explanation for existence. Existence moves and develops in language games, in the ordinary activities of life. Wittgenstein denies the claim of metaphysics to give sense and an explanation to existence, as if from a privileged place, uncontaminated by ordinary reality, it could be possible to act on the world. Philosophy just describes language games which are under our gaze and only for contingent purposes (*PI* 126, 130). Only within language-games can you find the meanings and the semantics of existence. Beyond them, there is no language, there is no meaning, it is not possible to say anything. Outside of the games, there are only *possibilities of existence* seeking techniques and tools to express themselves. And you find the tools when you take part in language games, when you learn to play, and you play more and you improve. The learning dynamic in games follows an oscillation, which is expressed, on the one hand following the game rules, on the other by the desire to turn the game into something else, something different. There is therefore a sense of ambivalence towards the games; on the one hand, we learn to be part of existence by playing with others. On the other, while we play, we want something other than what is there. This leads to a creative process.

c) *Creativity of the form of life.* In *PI*, there is not then the metaphysical claim to build a place beyond the world that can determine existence. Forms of life organize themselves, through communitarian interaction, since it is the interaction in language games that produces and reproduces meaning (see Wright 1982, Hacker 2010). Due to this, language game is performative. One acts within the game, one does things with others there. And thus we come to the fundamental characteristics of life form: its performative and political character. In fact, the term political is understood here as the place for the construction and transformation of the existing. Speaking is performing and doing things with others. Collectively we act in form of life in order to reproduce it or change it. Form of life is thus a political concept, in the sense that in order to historicize itself and therefore find possible orders, it always has to move between the relationships which individuals establish. The political nature of the form of life is recognized in the fact that it assumes people entering relationships. Through these relationships, subjects change the background of the form of life and they themselves are changed through communitarian interaction.

## 3

In my opinion, in their comment on later Wittgenstein, Hardt and Negri have underlined the fact that in *PI* the level of semantics is the level of the contingency of human relationships, which develop within language games and forms of life. Relationships and practice are inserted in the irreversible flow of events, which develop by following a plot. This pattern of events is not controlled by an external and deterministic force. Therefore, in the matter of semantics, there is neither a psychological reified "inside" nor a metaphysical "outside". The meaningful reality of language games is what appears in communitarian interactions. It manifests itself in an immanent theatre which sees bodies interacting through semantic gestures and connecting with each other. No metaphysical order is below the language games, which are creative constructions of human life forms and strive to give an organization to life.

Immanence and political nature are the characteristics of language games and forms of life. Immanence consists in the fact that it is impossible to find a place beyond the world that allows determination of its events. Political nature consists in the fact that acting in the world means changing it through communitarian processes, by modifying it, moving it toward something else through common life. Thus, the events of the world are commonly established, because the players are involved with their actions in games. The games are not predetermined in their outcome. Neither are they determined by the rules of the game nor by any plan transcending the reality of human relationships.

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# Paradox and Relativism

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## Abstract

Since the time of Plato, relativism has been attacked as a self-refuting theory. Today, there are two basic kinds of argument that are used to show that global relativism is logically incoherent: first, a direct descendent of the argument Plato uses against Protagoras, called the peritrope; and, second, a more recent argument that relativism leads to an infinite regress. Although some relativist theories may be formulated in such a way as to be susceptible to these arguments, there are other versions of relativism that are impervious to these charges of incoherence. First the arguments against relativism will be stated. Next, a radical form of global relativism with assessment sensitivity is introduced, RR. Finally, it is shown how RR can be defended against the challenges of the peritrope and the regress. No attempt is made to defend RR as a plausible theory; however, the usual attempts to show the logical incoherence of radical forms of global relativism fail.

ING. In the *Theatetus*, Plato has Socrates refute the relativism of Protagoras. The argument is convoluted, and has been judged to be flawed by several commentators. In a justly famous reconstruction and defense of the Platonic argument against relativism, Miles Burnyeat (Burnyeat 1976) argues that the self-refutation argument (dubbed the *peritrope* by Sextus Empiricus) must be completed by a regress argument. In order to escape self-refutation, the relativist is forced into endless qualifications of his assertions as being true *for him*, and the thus qualified assertions are still only true *for him*, and likewise the doubly qualified assertions require further qualification without end. (Also see (Fine 2003, 194), where it is argued that although there is a regress argument that can be made against the position Plato attributes to Protagoras, that position is not global relativism, but infallibility.)

While Burnyeat sees the regress argument as constituting an essential, if only implicit, part of the self-refutation argument, others have claimed that relativism is susceptible to two independent challenges, one based on self-refutation and the other on an infinite regress.

Paul Boghossian provides a more recent rejection of relativism that considers both the self-refutation argument and the regress argument. Boghossian agrees with the traditional objection to relativism, that is, that it is incoherent; but he admits that the self-refutation argument is inconclusive. Instead, he charges relativism with absurdity because of the infinite regress to which it leads: "...it is absurd to propose that, in order for our utterances to have any prospect of being true, what we must mean by them are infinitary propositions that we could neither express nor understand." (Boghossian 2006, 56).

Other writers seem to concur with Boghossian that variations on the original turning of the tables against Protagoras does not quite clinch the argument (Fine 1998) and (Fine 2003). This leads many to suppose that the best strategy against relativism is to use some version of the regress argument; and, furthermore, many of these same writers explicitly state that their favored version of the regress argument shows that something goes wrong with assertion when relativism is accepted. A version of the regress argument against relativism seems to motivate Nagel's insistence on unqualified beliefs and assertions in (Nagel 1997). A more explicit regress argument is used against the relativist in (Williamson 2015, 29)

To this charge, one might respond that what is needed is a relativistic theory of assertion. This is exactly the response given by John MacFarlane:

Boghossian's relativist takes a speaker who utters "snow is white" to have asserted that according to her world-theory, snow is white. But the relativist need not, and should not, hold that to put *p* forward as true for oneself is to put forward the claim *that p is true for oneself*. The point of "for oneself" is not to characterize the content that is asserted, but to characterize what the relativist is *doing* in making her assertion: putting its content forward as *true for herself*. (MacFarlane 2014, 33)

By shifting from content to force, from what one is saying to what one is doing in a speech act, the regress in the analysis of content is avoided. The shift away from content relativism also enables MacFarlane to respond to another common objection to relativism: the charge that relativism makes disagreement impossible because there is no common content about which parties disagree.

A number of explanations have been offered show how disagreement retains its depth even when truth or assertion is taken to be relative to the contexts of assertion and assessment. Here, we restrict ourselves to few points about disagreement that will be useful when we consider how some varieties of radical relativism are immune from the peritrope and the regress arguments. First, MacFarlane distinguishes a number of different forms that disagreement can take that fall short of objective contradiction (MacFarlane 2014, Ch. 6). Karl Schafer builds on MacFarlane's work by considering aims of assertion and aims of conversation that can shape the norms governing speech acts and forms of discourse in various contexts (Schafer 2012). Finally, Lionel Shapiro considers how norms of assertion and retraction are governed by assumptions about the views of one's conversation partners (Shapiro 2014). All three writers, MacFarlane, Schafer, and Shapiro, defend forms of relativism that relativize truth or assertion to contexts of utterance and contexts of assessment. All three avoid relativism about content as found in indexical contextualism. MacFarlane and Schafer focus on non-monadic truth, that is, truth relative to a context of utterance and a context of assessment, while Shapiro considers how the norms governing assertion are relative to contexts of utterance and assessment regardless of one's position on non-monadic truth. In what follows, by *relativism* (unless otherwise indicated), I will mean some such

form of assessment relativism. Later we will consider an implausibly radical version of relativism, *RR*.

Most relativists moderate their relativism along two lines: (1) relativism is restricted to some specific areas of discourse, e.g., normative discourse; and (2) perspectives or conceptual frameworks are restricted to those that are coherent, although accounts of coherence vary. Contemporary assessment relativism emerges as a hypothesis to explain the norms governing various types of discourse. There is no *a priori* defense of a relativism that applies to all statements.

The first of the above lines of moderation is sometimes discussed as a move from *global* to *local* relativism. This distinction is not sufficient to remove all ambiguity. One might be a global relativist in the sense that one holds that all areas of discourse are governed by norms that are sensitive to contexts, but deny that these norms yield results that would differ from non-relative ones for some of the assertions made in any given area. Let's say that relativism is *global* when it covers all areas of discourse and that it is *general* when, in a given area of discourse, it holds that all assertions or their truth are governed by context sensitive norms or conditions.

Although the empirical basis of inferentialism would be receptive neither to global relativism nor to a completely general local relativism, if the peritrope or the regress argument are to have a chance at refuting relativism, it would be best to take relativism to be both global and general. So, even if contemporary relativists tend to favor some moderate form of relativism that is neither global nor general, we should begin with global general relativism in order to examine the logical point that there is something about the doctrine that causes it to defeat itself or to metastasize (Swoyer 2014) through some sort of infinite regress.

There are two more ways in which relativism might be moderated to avoid the peritrope and regress. First, sensitivity to a context or being relative to a perspective can be given two interpretations. Global relativism can only be self-refuting if it adheres to what I will call context contingency:

**The Context Contingency Thesis (CCT):** For all propositions, *p*, *p* is true relative to some contexts and is false for others.

(Compare Kölbel's (GR) in (Kölbel 2011 21))

CCT is formulated here for global general relativism. Restrictions could be placed on the universal quantifier to generate forms of CCT for local and non-general forms of relativism. CCT is to be distinguished from the claim that truth is not monadic because the parameters relative to which propositions are true or false must be taken into consideration. Context dependency may be defined as follows:

**The Context Dependency Thesis (CDT):** For all propositions, *p*, *p* is true only with respect to parameters.

CDT denies that truth is monadic, that it, it denies that it is proper to claim that *p* is true. One can only say that *p* is true relative to some parameters or contexts. CDT does not imply CCT, for even if truth is relative to contexts, the contexts might be such that for some range of propositions, those propositions are true relative to all possible contexts of utterance and assessment.

The most plausible forms of relativism will be local and will not be general. However, for the sake of investigating the logical point of whether relativism is a self-defeating

position and whether it involves a vicious regress, we will define radical relativism, *RR*, to be global and general. Relativisms that endorse CCT are also implausible; but, again, for the sake of argument, we will stipulate that *RR* endorses CCT. This is a very extreme form of relativism, and one that is not defended by even the most strident cultural relativists, and would certainly be dismissed immediately by those who seek to find evidence in linguistic practices for any sort of relativism, whether a kind of contextualism or a kind of assessment sensitivity. If the peritrope and the regress argument have a chance of refuting relativism, they should be able to refute this sort of radical relativism.

Finally, some writers consider it an essential feature of relativism that all contexts are equal. They hold that it is inconsistent with the entire tradition of moral relativism, for example, to hold that some moral perspectives are morally preferable to others. Contexts should be "metaphysically on a par" (Coliva/Moruzzi 2012), 57. Max Kölbel writes: "Again, privileging some perspectives ... goes against the basic commitments of the relativist." (Kölbel 2011 23). This is highly disputable; and it is precisely this disputable point that allows *RR* to be defended against the peritrope and the regress.

A common error made by many critics of relativism is that they assume that any privileging of perspectives is inconsistent with relativism. Once we understand how rankings of perspectives can be accommodated by even very radical relativists, such as those who might propound *RR*, it is not difficult to see how the charges of self-refutation and infinite regress can be deflected.

If one's moral relativism is general, and one affirms a context sensitive form of relativism, like that of MacFarlane, then assertions about the relative moral worth of different perspectives will be true or false only relative to a context of utterance and a context of assessment. There is nothing inconsistent with relativism about taking contexts or perspectives to be metaphysically or morally differentiated as long as the propositions through which the ranking is asserted are considered to be relatively true. What goes against the basic commitments of the relativist is the assignment of an *absolute* ranking to give some perspectives a privilege, not rankings relative to perspectives. Indeed, the claim that all contexts are absolutely equal, that is, that they are equal independent of any context, would be no less against the basic commitments of the general relativist than an absolute ranking, for the general relativist holds that any claim can only be true relative to some contexts, regardless whether the claim is used to assert the privilege of some perspectives or their equality. Under normal circumstances, beliefs are accepted and assertions are made from a context of assessment in which the assessor assumes her own perspective to be privileged. Indeed, without the privileging by the assessor of the context of assessment over the context of utterance, there could be no rationale for retraction of past assertions; and assessment sensitive relativism is founded on observations about norms of retraction. (MacFarlane 2014, 13, 108).

The key to MacFarlane's assessment sensitivity theory is that all perspectives are not treated as equals. Contexts of assessment trump contexts of assertion. Shapiro shows that assessment relativism can be seen as holding an intermediate position between absolutism and indexical contextualism. The absolutist position is that whatever is true from one perspective must be true from all perspectives. The indexical contextualist holds that truth from any given perspective is irrelevant to truth from another. Assessment relativism holds that the norms governing assertion deter-

mine that assertions have a force that is directed toward a select range of possible contexts of assessment. The relation between a context of assertion and a context of assessment toward which the assertion is directed,  $R$ , can be used in a manner analogous to the accessibility relation between possible worlds familiar from Kripke's semantics for modal logic. Steven Hales has shown that the peritrope can be wielded against radical forms of relativism in which  $R$  is reflexive, symmetrical, and transitive, as in S5. (See (Hales 1997) and the discussion in (MacFarlane 2014, 30)) Our relation  $R$ , however, need not be symmetrical or transitive (and one might even contemplate non-reflexive contexts of assertion). Hence, the peritrope will fail when directed against assessment sensitivity theories, even when such theories are coupled with extremely radical forms of relativism, like  $RR$ .

As for the regress argument, this depends upon the need to qualify one's assertions, with the assumption that without such qualifications they must be absolute. What Shapiro shows, however, is that unqualified assertions can be understood as having a limited scope of direction that is given implicitly through the context of the conversation in which the assertion is made and the norms governing assertion and retraction relative to that context. Endless qualifications are unnecessary because the norms governing assertion and assessment are implicit in their own contexts.

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# Let's Play "Make the Realist Foolish"!

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## Abstract

Why are there no established theories in the philosophical world? Is it because philosophical theories and problems are meaningless, like gibberish? The correct answer here is: we don't care. Philosophy does not have to establish widely accepted theories describing the unique reality. In that paper, I propose a game "Make the Realist foolish" in order to show why.

## What if Realism was the solution and also the puzzle ...

I want to start with a short and fictional story. Once upon a time, a guy, named Socrates, talked too much. He knew too much that he didn't know anything. As a bored kid, he walked around asking questions to people and never gave answers. He believed his work was useful. But he made some of them anxious, angry, and even mad. Then they accused him. He was condemned to die, and killed himself. Thus began the long and unfinished story of how philosophers try to find their place in societies. They were many Socrates in the history of Philosophy.

Socrates' death made the threatened philosophers think like this: "Can we make our job without being killed for that? The problem with Socrates was that he destroyed people's fundamental beliefs without replacing them. People do not like that at all. So, we have to give people answers too. And we will say that our knowledge is of a specific kind, better than any knowledge an ordinary man could find. We will tell that we, the philosophers, have a privileged access to the unique reality. That's how we will make us unavoidable."

Thus Realism appears to be a promising strategy to some of them for assuring the philosopher's survival and welfare in society. Philosophers began to preach, and some believed.

But time is running and, soon, everyone could see that promises were not held. Shame fell on philosophers. Some disagreements among them concerning the precious knowledge was the main cause of disenchantment. Moreover, the philosophical discourse was not alone on the market of "the will to meaning". Philosophers did not renounce, however. "We need to pursue the Realist strategy." So they go on preaching, and some go on believing.

But time is running... and everything still began, again and again.

One can reasonably see Realism as a disastrous strategy. I do not say Realism is false. I do not say that Philosophers were wrong by using the Realist strategy to get their place in societies. It might have been necessary, it has probably been fruitful (as a key element in the symmetrical relationship between members of the system). I just say that TODAY Realism is a hopeless purpose, an empty shell which, nevertheless, causes bad effects. I would like my reader to think of Realism not as a plausible or true theory, but as a package of beliefs which has a role in the philosophical ecosystem, as a piece of a game.

During history, the multiple bankruptcy of the Realists gave people reasons to some philosophers' reluctance. The pursuit of realism caused the rejection of philosophy,

as the rejection of philosophy caused the pursuit of realism. We have here a circular phenomenon. That is what I mean by: "Realism is the solution and the puzzle".

I believe this little story reflects the widely unconscious equilibrium of the form of life in which many philosophers live. On the one side, many philosophers from the analytic tradition (like e.g. Quine) have gradually accepted the idea that philosophy is useless for man's life. On the other side, people came to believe that philosophy is and will remain a useless battle field on which weared guys think about abstract things. As if the mind's theoretical activities were completely independent of the global web of life. But, as a practical philosopher can see, this could not be more wrong. That's why we need to change the game.

Defenders of Realism often argue that the bankruptcy of Realism will involve the bankrupt of Reason. No one would like to investigate reality if she were thinking that there is no unique and objective reality she could find. What if Realism was the main source of doubts about reason? What if Realism was the main source of demotivation?

## Ending the game? Playing a new game?

There are many ways to change a game. At first, one can make the old rules of the game explicit, which was the little story about. Secondly, one can provide a new insight, which will be done soon. Finally, one can encourage players to really engage themselves in the old game. It seems to me that no realist really tries to be a realist. More, no one has a map of the road to Reality City.

The game I am talking about needs two kinds of players: the realists and their anti-realist, or constructivist, opponents. The challenge of Realists is to play in coherence with their purpose, that is to build theories which reflect reality in itself, without any residue of subjectivity. The role of their opponents is to show them that they do not respect the rules of realism.

The realists will win whether they made their opponents silent. And, the anti-realists will win whether realists let things go and see the world sub specie aeterni or live what Paul Watzlawick called the Mystical Experience, that is, understanding the relative character of their worldview. Contrary to what the Realist thinks, experiencing the relativity of ones worldview frees us. It does not end into chaos.

How can the constructivist lead realists to this experience? By descriptions. Constructivists will have to describe the symptoms showing the realist failure to give a picture of reality in itself. I will briefly display a non-exhaustive list of them.



**The starting point of a theory is always widely arbitrary.** As Lynn Rudder Baker argued, each philosopher starts in the middle of things and there is no other way. This implies that in order to build or criticize a theory, one has to work with some belief, conceptual distinctions, definitions, one does not and/or cannot justify. Numerous alternatives are arbitrarily excluded, while others are arbitrarily accepted. Objective reality requires exhaustiveness.

**New and promising theoretical developments always open new plausible theoretical alternatives.** A recent example of this phenomenon is the concept of "possible worlds".

**Philosophical theories are affected by epistemological problems:** access problem, infinite regress, weak plausibility of premises or conclusions, incoherence, circularity.

**Philosophers frequently call for strange entities, relations, power, primitives which darken the initial problem.** Observing the practice of philosophy and describing these four types of symptoms and show Realists that their quest is hopeless, such is my purpose.

At the end of *The Matrix*, we understand that Neo and Smith are ontologically co-dependent from each other. We are in the same situation here. Both teams are co-dependent. This game is just a tool to make philosophers play another game.

## What does Philosophy free from Realism can look like ?

Pluralism in philosophy is not a shame. Pluralism is what makes philosophy so indispensable in man's life. Pluralism is what justifies the philosopher's place in societies. Pluralism means essentially that one can build philosophical theories for a wide range of reason, and not exclusively for telling the truth about an objective reality. Realism bridle philosophical creativity whilst departing it from human life. Once Realism is let aside, several other legitimate purposes can lead the philosopher's work. Without purposes, there are no criteria of correction for the regulation of theories. And as we have seen, Realism is absolutely not such a criteria. In Wittgenstein's words, Realism does not offer a rule with use. Many philosophers, like Nietzsche or James, saw that a worldview can facilitate life. Philosophy helps to do that. But one can pursue aesthetical, logical, naturalistic purposes. One could even want to produce the most paradoxical or original metaphysical systems. Why not? Do you know what could happen then? Philosophy, the Mother of all Sciences, is certainly the most amazing, surprising and creative discipline.

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# Everyone's at Fault or Nobody Disagrees? Challenging Boghossian's Argument against Alethic Relativism

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## Abstract

In his latest paper on relativism (2011), Boghossian challenges alethic relativism. He constructs a dilemma for the relativist, and allegedly shows that no disagreement is faultless.

In this paper we challenge Boghossian's dilemma. We seek to show, that faultless disagreement, put his way, misuses the idea of attributing mistakes and therefore cannot amount to the rejection of alethic relativism. We develop a distinction between perceived and genuine mistakes and show, that on the relativistic picture, only genuine mistakes are of interest. Moreover, the disagreement does not dissolve because alethic relativism offers options for maintaining it. Therefore, Boghossian's attack against alethic relativism is ineffective.

## 1. Introduction

§1 *Faultless disagreements* are scenarios in which there are two parties giving conflicting judgements regarding the same proposition  $p$ , and where neither of the two parties has made a mistake in coming to their judgements (Kölbel 2004, 53-54). The notion of faultless disagreement is often used to motivate alethic relativism and to set it apart from contextualism (60-61).<sup>1</sup> Alethic relativism holds that the truth of a proposition is relative to a context of utterance or assessment (60). The same proposition can be true relative to one context and false relative to another (60).

§2 *Terminology*. Quite a few terms seem to be appropriate to describe components of a relativistic thesis, e.g. frameworks, perspectives, standards, principles etc. Let us call *framework* that, which everything is related to as a whole. Let us call *principles* those individual things, which together make up a framework. For example, talking about epistemic relativism, the framework would be the sum of all relevant epistemic principles, which comprises e.g. logical principles.

Discussing Boghossian's argument requires adopting a framework, and to see things from within the perspective of a framework. We will use "F<sub>OWN</sub>" to refer to the adopted framework, and "F<sub>OPONENT</sub>" for the opposing one.

## 2. Boghossian's Argument from Immersion

§3 *Dilemma for Alethic Relativism*. Boghossian's Argument from Immersion [AfI] is directed against alethic relativism. It is part of the following dilemma: If [AfI] is sound, then the disagreement in question is not faultless and alethic relativism is destabilized, but if one rejects [AfI] then there is no genuine disagreement, so alethic relativism is destabilized (62-66).

§4 *The Argument from Immersion* looks like this (62): (P1) Given alethic relativism, a proposition  $p$  can only be true relative to a framework. (P2) Within the framework this proposition is disquotationally true. If I judge  $p$  validly relative to my framework, then it will be valid for me to judge that it is true that  $p$ . The two crucial premises for our purposes are:

**NONCONTRADICTION (P3):** On pain of incoherence, I must also judge that it's false that  $\neg p$ .

**MISTAKE (P4):** If I judge that *it's false that*  $\neg p$ , then I must, on pain of incoherence judge that anyone who judges  $\neg p$  is making a *mistake*.

Boghossian infers, (C1) that if I must judge that you are making a mistake, I cannot regard the disagreement as faultless. Therefore, (C2) the disagreement is not faultless.

§5 *Our Rejection* of Boghossian's Dilemma has to accomplish a cogent refutation of [AfI] without dissolving the disagreement. Boghossian himself discusses a similar line of refutation, which he regards as defective because of the alleged implication of dissolving the disagreement. We develop a similar argument, which surpasses this consequence.<sup>2</sup>

## 3. Boghossian's "Mistake"

§6 *On pain of incoherence?* If [AfI] were to be a success, then alethic relativism would be untenable. However, it is not, as we will argue in this section. We will start by discussing NONCONTRADICTION and MISTAKE. What does *on pain of incoherence* mean?

In NONCONTRADICTION it is suggested that on *pain of incoherence* means that given the law of noncontradiction, I cannot judge that  $p$  and  $\neg p$  are both true within the same framework. In MISTAKE it seems to follow that given NONCONTRADICTION, if I judge that  $p$  is true, I will also have to judge *on pain of incoherence* that every contradicting judgement is mistaken. Hence, it seems to follow from the law of noncontradiction that I must attribute a mistake to everyone who is giving a judgement concerning  $p$  that is in conflict with my own. But is it a logical implication of the law of noncontradiction, that everyone who judges that  $p$  is true must attribute a *mistake* to everyone who judges that  $\neg p$  is true? What does the attribution of a mistake on the relativist's picture amount to?

§7 *Mistaken Calculation*. Is a mistake of a judgement solely dependent on the final result? Consider a math student who has to perform some calculations. She indeed reaches the true result, but only because two wrong steps

<sup>1</sup> Paul Boghossian's "Three Kinds of Relativism" will be referenced just by giving the page number.

<sup>2</sup> Boghossian inherits [AfI] from Mark Richard (Richard 2008, 132). Our argument is similar to John MacFarlane's argument against Richard (MacFarlane 2012, 450-453).

in her calculation cancelled each other out. Though she is finally asserting the true result, her calculation is mistaken, because of incorrect use of mathematical principles.

§8 *Mistakes in Processes.* Judgements cannot only be evaluated with respect to their final result, but also with respect to the process bringing about that judgement. A judgement is mistaken then, if the process of that judgement fails to adhere to its guiding principles. To evaluate a conflicting judgement as mistaken, one has to look at the process that brought about that judgement, not just at the conclusion. While judgements are true or false, processes can be either correct or mistaken.

§9 *Perceived Mistake.* So, what is the kind of *mistake* that is attributed on Boghossian's picture? I evaluate your judgments as mistaken if they conflict with the judgements produced by adhering to the principles endorsed by  $F_{OWN}$ . So from a framework-internal point of view, I may perceive of you as making a mistake, but this mistake attribution is just relative to  $F_{OWN}$ . We could call this a *perceived mistake*. However, this kind of mistake attribution is perfectly compatible with your judgement being faultless in the sense that you have come to the correct conclusion regarding  $p$  with respect to principles of  $F_{OPPONENT}$ .

§10 *Genuine Mistake.* As described above, we can attribute mistakes not only to the final result, but also to the process producing that judgement. Regarding the conclusion of  $F_{OPPONENT}$  as mistaken relative to  $F_{OWN}$  seems strange, as that conclusion was arrived at by adhering to the principles of  $F_{OPPONENT}$ , and not  $F_{OWN}$ . Therefore, one should attribute mistakes relative to the framework that was responsible for bringing about that judgement. Granted that I have some understanding of the principles that guide your deliberation, I may be able to detect that your judgement is inconsistent with these principles. We might call this the attribution of a *genuine mistake*.

§11 *Mistaken Frameworks?* Could I attribute a mistake to  $F_{OPPONENT}$  itself? This is not possible because  $F_{OPPONENT}$  is on equal footing to  $F_{OWN}$ . Claims of superiority can only be supported with reference to one's own principles, hence being circular.

§12 *Counter Dilemma.* Given the considerations above, [Afl] now itself faces a dilemma: Either MISTAKE holds but then [Afl] does not amount to the rejection of alethic relativism, or MISTAKE does not hold. Let us first discuss why MISTAKE does not hold.

§13 *Dilemma's first horn.* If what Boghossian means with *mistake* is indeed a genuine mistake, then I can observe a false judgement (false relative to my own framework) without evaluating it as mistaken. The attribution of a mistake needs not focus on the final result, but can also involve the relevant judgement-process. In attributing a genuine mistake, we evaluate the judgement with respect to that process, with reference to the principles on which that judgement was based on. Investigating your judgement that way, all that matters is, whether or not you actually adhered to the principles prescribed by your framework, or whether you failed to do so. Thus, my verdict that relative to  $F_{OWN}$  your judgement regarding  $p$  is false does not imply that you actually committed a mistake. Which is to say that MISTAKE does not hold and therefore the conclusions [Afl] was meant to establish do not follow.

§14 *Dilemma's second horn.* Since [Afl] does not work if we understand the mistake in question as a genuine mistake, could the argument be made to work if we regard the mistake as a perceived mistake? While the attribution of a perceived mistake is sufficient for establishing MISTAKE, it

does not show that the disagreement in question is substantially faulty then. What follows from [Afl] is not that one of the parties involved must have *committed* a mistake, but only a rather restricted version of that original conclusion: If I must judge that you are making a mistake, I cannot *regard* the disagreement with you as faultless. Which is to say that only (C1) follows but not (C2). Then [Afl] is rendered powerless as an objection against alethic relativism.

§15 *Assessing [Afl].* The point of [Afl] was that no disagreement is faultless. But [Afl] cannot achieve this. Against the backdrop of the considerations above, it should become clear, that either [Afl] does not hold, or it is powerless as an objection. Therefore it cannot establish that *no disagreement is faultless*.

#### 4. No Genuine Disagreement?

§16 *Disagreement?* If the argument in the previous section holds, then the *faultlessness* of disagreements in alethic relativism does not dissolve by applying [Afl]. However, recall that [Afl] is part of a dilemma Boghossian confronted the alethic relativist with. The second horn of that dilemma was that rejecting [Afl] is tantamount to dissolving the disagreement. Here is Boghossian's account: Suppose you and I are involved in a disagreement, and we are now mutually aware, that we each apply different principles in making our seemingly contradictory judgements (66). Furthermore, you and me are each aware that with respect to the other's principles, the other's judgment is correct (66). In addition, I think that you are just as entitled to the use of your principles, as I am entitled to the use of mine, and the other way around. Finally, we both affirm that our judgements of the sort " $p$ " or " $\neg p$ " have relative truth-values, and not absolute truth-values (66). Now the issue arises, whether you and I still have a genuine disagreement on our hands, or whether there ever even was a disagreement to be had here. Since I held that  $p$  with respect to  $F_{OWN}$  and you held that  $\neg p$  with respect to  $F_{OPPONENT}$ , our judgements never really were in any conflict over the truth of  $p$ . The disagreement seems to dissolve once the truth-conditions for  $p$  are relativized. Boghossian suggests that once you and I have acknowledged that our judgements are true relative to different frameworks, we would not think of the other one as having meant the same thing. It seems you and I never were in disagreement, because our judgements concerned different propositions.

§17 *Propositions.* One could ask whether a proposition changes, once its truth-conditions change: Maybe if two sentences in two different contexts express the same proposition, they ought to have the same truth-conditions. However, this must not be the case even on a non-relativist's picture. To take a point from MacFarlane, if we think of truth-conditions for a sentence as the condition the context<sup>3</sup> must satisfy for the sentence to be true (MacFarlane 2014, 95), which should be fairly uncontroversial, then it does not follow, that sentences that express propositions with different truth-conditions, therefore express different propositions. Two sentences like (a) "I am here now" and (b) "He was there then" differ in their truth-conditions, but it still is possible, that (a) in one context expresses the same proposition as (b) in another (MacFarlane 2014, 95). Therefore, in the absence of a more conclusive argument, which would have to show positively that relativizing truth-conditions always amounts to changing the propositions expressed, the disagreement

<sup>3</sup> Although *context* has a specialized meaning in MacFarlane's discussion of relativism, here context does not have any specific relativistic import.

in question does not simply dissolve on the account of alethic relativism.

§18 *Truth-Conditions*. Perhaps Boghossian's considerations could also amount to something like that: The disagreement dissolves, not because we are dealing with different propositions, but because we are dealing with different truth-conditions. If you got it right with respect to  $F_{\text{OPPONENT}}$  and I got it right with respect to  $F_{\text{OWN}}$ , then we both got it equally right, since the truth-condition for  $p$  is not fixed to any absolute parameter. The two of us are dealing with different truth-conditions, and as there is no final say in the matter of who has chosen the *absolutely* right parameter, there is no argument between us (Hales 2014, 69).

Still, even on that reading, Boghossian's argument is far from being conclusive. While I might concede, that you were reasoning impeccably from your principles in concluding  $\neg p$ , evaluating from my adopted  $F_{\text{OWN}}$ , I could still find your reasoning unconvincing, and likewise evaluating from  $F_{\text{OPPONENT}}$ , you could find my reasoning unconvincing (Hales 2014, 70). Or as MacFarlane would put it, while I might concede that you are not at fault relative to the norms governing your beliefs and assertions, still I will regard your judgement  $\neg p$  as inaccurate, and I am right to do so with respect to the norms governing my beliefs and assertions (MacFarlane 2007, 70, and 2014, 132-135). Relativizing the truth-conditions does not amount to dissolving the disagreement.

§19 *Disagreement remains*. Since Boghossian cannot offer a more conclusive argument, he fails to show that rejecting [Afl] is tantamount to dissolving the disagreement.

## 5. Conclusion

§20 *Summary*. In this paper, we examined Boghossian's objection to alethic relativism. We argued, that observing a conflicting judgement of a foreign framework does not necessarily amount to an attribution of a mistake to that framework, and therefore the disagreement is not necessarily faulty (see §6–15 above). This is accomplished by attributing mistakes to a judgement not on pain of its perceived wrong outcome, but to the process that is faulty relative to the principles on which that judgement was based on (§6–11). We argued that the disagreement does not dissolve once we relativize the truth-conditions because two parties still can argue about the same proposition (§17) and relativizing the truth-conditions is not tantamount to dissolving the disagreement (§18). Therefore, [Afl] and the dilemma it is part of, cannot show that alethic relativism is false.

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# Truth as Communication

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## Abstract

Usually truth is problematized within an epistemological or onto-epistemological perspective. In this essay, I argue that truth is not an epistemological phenomenon. Following Niklas Luhmann's approach, I claim that truth is an exclusively social (communicational) phenomenon. My goal is to demonstrate that truth is produced by the operations of a communication system. Truth is not generated by subjects to maintain cognitive process nor is it stimulated by subjects, but is created by society in order to sustain communicational processes; to coordinate communication within a communication. From the proposed perspective, the key function of truth is not to verify effects of human cognition but to ignite and reduce communicational conflicts.

Typically, realists are considered to be proponents of an objective theory of truth and a correspondence theory of truth. Constructivists – on the other hand – are perceived as relativists and subjectivists. Both positions are founded on the same presumption: that the problem of truth is not socially shaped but naturally given; For, regardless of the fact if a philosopher applies a relativistic and/or subjectivist approach or absolutistic/objectivistic one, the very occurrence of truth goes unproblematic and is not given a social character. It is simply constructed as a relation between an object and a subject: An object that is externally given or an object, which is made by a subject. The communicational character of truth is rendered invisible and the social circumstances of its occurrence are rarely given much consideration in philosophically grounded discussions, with the exception of an occasional mention in the footnotes. In short, truth and society are linked together and form a specific relation, that is, society impacts (often distortedly) on truth. For truth to function as it functions, its socio-communicational character is made invisible and presented as onto-epistemological. Even when the consensus and “speaking the truth” takes place.

## Truth and social codes

From a communicational angle truth is to be observed mainly as a communicational code (Luhmann 1997) theme, and a generalized medium of communication. Most typically truth is constructed as binary code: true/false, truth/lie, truth/fiction, truth/error, truth/illusion, truth/manipulation. Truth is a topic researched mainly by the discipline of philosophy. Truth, then, is a symbolically generalised medium of communication for social systems of science. Crucial to grasping how truth is redistributed from philosophical discourse to communication, I will highlight that truth is not a “natural” relation between words and reality or even operationally achievable for a subject, but a social code, unattainable for a subject, feasible only in social relations, obtainable only through/for communicational process, and is thus socially emergent. In other words, I intend to demonstrate that truth does not coordinate human with world, but communication with communication. In other words, its accomplishment does not indicate that individuals recognize the ‘real’ nature of their problems, but instead allows for individuals to accomplish recognition with each other. This also implies that both – correspondence theory (in the extreme version construed as a natural relation between a sentence being independent from external reality and this external reality) and constructivist theory of truth (in the extreme version conceived as internal coherence of the subject) are evolutionary accom-

plishments of social/communicational systems. Truth understood epistemologically is only a mere trick – a communicational fact in relation to the compatibility or incompatibility of descriptions (communications). It is also, linked to the incompatibility problem of eventual rejection of communication, redirected to reality, to the projection of this reality, to the compatibility or incompatibility with reality. Communicational phenomena alter into epistemological ones. For, firstly the communicational code has been established which has constituted a specific (objectivistic, relativistic) epistemology. The code true/false is inextricably linked to any epistemology.

The foundation of the binary code might be demonstrated as a process of dissolving/resolving the problem of ‘ontological’ communication (referring to the fact dimension of communication). This problem emerges when the social system contradicts the fact expectations that emerge. (Luhmann 1995, 76)

## Naturalization of truth

Philosophers, regardless of the paradigm they represent, are inclined to the belief that the “natural” form of truth is epitomized by an epistemological equation in form of relation between sentences, propositions, thoughts and a reality world. This relation was employed to reflect operations between the (mainly psychic) system and the environment. Truth emerges/materializes when an actor faces the world. The society (communication) is merely redundant. The traces of social properties are visible within paradigms which link truth with speech acts, with verbalized actions but the act of speaking the truth serves here as an inner dialogue procedure that lacks time frame and social dimension. An actor when thinking about the world may think truly or falsely but in isolation. Onto-epistemological conceptions of truth function/ are founded on the presumption that a subject is left alone when facing the world.

How likely is this situation?

Is the psychic system able to independently produce the dichotomy true/false and put it into action?

What kinds of selection processes are being assumed here and which are possible?

In what circumstances does truth appear in, for instance, a correspondence framework? The answers are simple: when truth is predefined and preconfigured within a correspondence theoretical framework. But then the questions are wrongly posed because truth was/is always, now. Truth seems to be a natural/regular constituent of the rela-

tion between sentences, propositions, thoughts and the world/reality. Also within constructivist, relativist and subjectivist paradigms the crux of the matter does not change: truth is still conceived as a relation between a sentence, a thought or a proposition and someone's world. It is subjective belief about the (unattainable) world. It is the balance between internally constructed sentences and an internally constructed reality. It is finally a reflexive belief about self-description and an internal sign of assertion.

It must be noted that without the code, during social practices when Alter claims that A and Ego states that not-A, that nothing peculiar happens. One faces only the differences between descriptions. The question of "who is telling the truth" is not imposed on actors. Nothing has to be definitely decided. Both – Alter and Ego – may carry on with their descriptions, however in this moment the problem of truth enters the communicational domain and naturalized truth becomes the problem of Ego.

### Ego(subject) truth

Let's assume that a given psychic system has not been equipped with the binary code during its socialization. Would it be possible for this psychic system to independently generate the distinction true/false? Even if the differentiation true/false is implemented in the psychic system through socialization, it is hard to grasp that the psychic system could apply it to the "internal speech/communication", that the psychic system would categorize its thoughts as true or false unreflexively. What would be the purpose of it? How (and why) should the thought process be examined in terms of it being true/false and what procedures would/should be applied in doing so? Why formulate a sentence in internal speech/communication in accordance with perceptions? The question at hand is what can psychic system use the process of ascribing sentences to perception for? This operation (similar to adding subtitles to film) does not change the essence of any perception, does not have any motivational/cognitive value, it is just an empty selection that charges the psychic system with a process of dubious usefulness. The selection may be used (and it is in fact used) in order to inform or to convey a thing. Actors, cognitively, formulate sentences to present them to others. Selection invites/welcomes selection, to accept or reject a proposition to communicate. But now, the boundaries of psychic systems are being crossed and one enters the domain of society. Most theories of truth conceal/hide the fact that truth demands, as far as psychic systems are concerned, a few operations. Firstly, operations of experiencing and perceiving. Secondly, sentences have to be assigned to perceptions. Thirdly, the relation between perception and a sentence must be ascribed. Traditional conceptions of truth conceive truth as a relation between words and the world, which is inherently independent from the perceiving subject/actor.

Why and how can psychic systems produce redundancies and approach them with a binary code for only itself? "I see white snow." A sentence (1) is formulated: "Snow is white". "Snow is white" if and only if snow is white. "Yhm. True. I said truth to myself". Or (2): I see white snow. I formulate the sentence: "Snow is green. "Snow is green" if and only if it is green. Snow is white. Yhm false. I said false to myself. Or (3) "I see green snow. I formulate a sentence: "Snow is green". "Snow is green" if and only if snow is green. Yhm. True. I said truth to myself." First of all, it needs to be stressed that the operation of observation is needed for the binary code to be applied. Observations of what I said – are second order observations. From the

psychic system point of view, truth is not a feature of a sentence being verbalized, truth requests that one side of the dichotomy be assigned, which ultimately, saturate it with a particular feature of a sentence being said. Truth needs time.

But in epistemological perspective, time is being reversely reduced, forgotten to a degree that truth sometimes becomes an untimed sentence component. It clouds the coding. A sentence is true or false in the very moment of being said (or always, in potential), a code is being used although no one (consciously) is using it.

Second of all, sentences (1) and (3) are for psychic systems completely pararell.

How can psychic system employ the difference between the truth of an already articulated sentence, and acknowledged truth of an articulated sentence? For Ego (subject) truth and acknowledging truth is the same. It is still unknown why people say that snow is white and that it is true, especially when snow has always been perceived as white. Even if yesterday (being under influence of narcotics) snow was perceived as green nothing is forcing me to engage truth. Yesterday I applied one description, today I apply a different one and simply nothing changes/happens. Why should the assertion that it was true be "added"? Why should truthfulness be ascribed to the descriptions? Additionally, why underline my own acceptance of the descriptions instead to stop at having/disposing the description? For truth to be employed, doubt is needed. A doubt in terms of cognition usually does not appear in the process of cognition (as long as a binary code is not accessible). Doubts about cognition derive from Alter. (It needs to be stressed that socialization towards truth is not conducted as suggesting a true/false code hoping that a pupil will approach the world with it. Socialization may be described as a suggestion to employ the binary code when one faces communication and to initiate their own communications in order to test them out as true or false). However the discrepancy of descriptions does not entail the binary code, which was discussed above. Truth is an evolutionary phenomenon, it is a contingent occurrence, it is a product of social communication. Ego does not need truth.

### Truth in interaction systems

When does truth appear? When do actors talk about it? When they do not talk about it, then truth is not there (Mitterer 1996). Activation of the binary code does not start when I think about something, or during "inner speech." It occurs when someone says something and I hear it (read it). Is something that I hear/read true or false? In this primary sense, truth does not crop up in an epistemological context but in the social (communicational). Truth needs Alter. Actors assign the true/false dichotomy not to their own sentences or thoughts but to sentences or thoughts dwelling behind them, which are being said by another actor. One can assign the true/false dichotomy to one's own sentences or thoughts - but only when they are confronted with Alter's sentences. *Truth is not a relation between sword and the world, it is a relation between someone's words and mine.*

Basic motivation and assumptions that dictate this particular understanding of truth are rather unproblematic. Contrary to when truth is used in an onto-epistemic mode, in "inner speech." Assignment of true/false is a reason for accepting or rejecting someone's communication. Usually, truths are preferred and falsehoods (lies) are discrimi-

nated. A lie disrupts communication; truth serves as a point of reference. The employment of the binary code typically disturbs communication in a pre-existing fact dimension, but does not necessarily lead to the end of communication. (It is evident here that as far as communication is concerned, falseness and not truth may be a preferred side of the code because the statement of falseness stops/ends communication. Truth might be assumed on the basis of lack of objections). Truth is meta-communication that stimulates continuity of communication but on different terms. Acknowledgment and communication about falseness of someone's communication does not mean that communication stops and interaction ends (as it happens when communication is considered as insulting). Here, it is postulated to come back to what was said and established as false, with hope to correct, complement it, and to continue communication. When one actor says: "It is completely false what you have just said!" the communication flow is stopped because the call for the truth is difficult to ignore and encouragement to retrospectively replace at hand communication with a different one, is raised. In this sense, *truth is a tool to ignite conflicts*.

Most of all because truth shakes up codes that structure communicational space of trust. A witness caught lying loses credibility not only on the basis of what she/he said but also in terms of what he/she would say in the future. If an actor said something off topic and his communication was rejected, it may be assumed that his future communications will be accepted without taking into account the past awkwardness. The binary code, if it was negatively activated, impacts not only what was just falsely said, but it also impacts what had been said before the false sentence and finally, it impacts what will be said later. Although truth is related to a particular statement through attributions, it is entangled in the entirety of potential statements of an actor. *Truth is not only a machinery to ignite conflicts; it possesses an inherent mechanism to settle them*. When an actor faces a suspicion of falseness, he will not rest – the code entails it – until what is true has been established, even provisionally. It often means no more than that Alter needs to admit one's opinion, or Alter is forced to recognize someone else's opinion. It might then be plausible to think that truth is *merely a rhetorical tool*. For truth one might (or needs) to convince. Those are Mitterer's intuitions when he claims that truth is a theoretical legalization of 'the stronger wins'.

*It is worth highlighting a social interpretation of dominant epistemological perspectives. From the correspondence theory point of view it might be described as follows: if truth is singular and objective, then falseness is discriminated and opinions are homogenous, it leads to intolerance. From the second-order observer, it means that more conflicts are permissible in society (falseness has to be fought with, truthfulness fought for). Because of that, the possibility of successful communication increases (because everyone is armed with the same, true knowledge) – there is less communicational diversity but consensus is easier to be obtained. The constructivist's point of view may be described as follows: if truth is plural and subjective, it leads to pluralism of opinions, to tolerance (as many truths as*

*verses – Maturana). From a second-order observer it means that the society will be less conflicted but the probability of successful communication decreases – a wider communicational diversity is reached but consensus is more difficult to obtain.*

It is important to mention that within interacting systems a true/false coding is rarely noticeable. More popular is the mode of coding during interaction. Truth here is not an element of nature but it refers to assumed cognitive operations of Alter. The attribution of coding alters/changes. It takes place because, during interaction, among actors, the chances for doubts/discrepancies about the shape of the world are slim. Even if they appear ("this table is round", "no, this table is not round, it is oval!") they may be easily resolved by practice. Within interaction narrations are the dominant force and not descriptions. Subsequently, communication in the narrative form might be questioned not by referring to the reality being told/described (Alter and Ego does not have access to the reality), but by the fact that Alter's truthfulness is questioned. Truth/lie coding is amazingly conflict charged and trust destroying. That is why it is symbiotically related to morality, to communicating respect/contempt. Thee who lies is contemptible, thee who tells the truth is admirable. Considering possible noise in communication, various disturbances, a systematic operationalization of the true/false code would quickly turn out to be socially destructive. Hence communication is softened in the form of a: truth/mistake code (an actor who is mistaken, contrary to liar, is not automatically contemptible), truth/fiction coding, letting go on the basis of tact. It is clear that the usefulness of true/false coding within interaction systems is rather weak. It is rarely used in interactions (with exceptions like philosophical, scientific, legal interactions). I claim even more: similarly to the case of Ego, also within interaction systems true/false coding is unattainable, above all in the extreme, objectivistic version which rules out any kind of presence. I presume that epistemological, traditional coding of truthfulness might have appeared during the transition from interaction systems to social systems. Therefore the coding of truthfulness needs to be linked to the appearance of distribution media. True/false coding is related to the distribution of writing that needs protection because of its lack of presence in society. Writing and then print first recognized, and then produced and established objective truth. This assumption is legitimized by the fact that ethical guidelines for journalism even today use notions like: "truth", "objectivity", "confirmation", "reliability", "facts" – quite as if they were describing scientific practice.

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# Reason, Motive and Cause from a Wittgensteinian Perspective

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## Abstract

We can say of an intentional action that it has a reason or a motive; and in the same vein, such an action must have a cause. It is thus only a matter of terminology whether all species of intentionality can be restated in this way—as a relation between an action and its motive. I argue that the distinction between a reason and a cause is a special case of the distinction between internal and external relations. This distinction allows us to analyze a metaphysical haze which is produced by confusing empirical (i.e. external) and grammatical (i.e. internal) propositions. When an agent aims to justify their action, they have several options at their disposal: (1) to give the actual cause which is always hypothetical (2) to report their actual reason, and (3) to give a possible reason which might have led to the action.

This paper draws on Chapter 12 ‘Reason, Motive and Cause’ of my recent book *Wittgenstein on Internal and External Relations: Tracing All the Connections* (2015). In this book I look at Wittgenstein’s writings from the perspective that focuses on the distinction between internal and external relations. Seen from this perspective, this distinction appears to be one of the most fundamental distinctions that Wittgenstein drew in his writings. The main thesis that I am advancing in my book is that Wittgenstein’s method of analysis rests on the distinction between internal and external relations.

A relation is *internal* if it is unthinkable that its terms should not possess it, and it is *external* otherwise (TLP 4.123). In his later writings (from 1929 onwards), what Wittgenstein says is for the most part consistent with his earlier account of internal relations. What changes is merely his focus. Internal relations can be exhibited not only in tautologies, but also in grammatical propositions in general. Internal relations are relations that hold in virtue of grammar (VW, 237). Grammatical propositions are either explicit statements of the grammar of a language-game or also—in Wittgenstein’s final texts—implicit descriptions of our human form of life. Wittgenstein now insists resolutely that internal relations hold only between concepts and any talk of internal relations between objects has to be understood as referring to the internal relations between the concepts describing these objects (LFM, 73). With these definitions in mind let us now examine one concrete application of the distinction between internal and external relations in Wittgenstein writings.

We can say of an intentional action that it has a *reason* or a *motive*; and in the same vein, such an action must have a *cause*. Let us assume that I am about to perform an action *p* in order to achieve *q*; that is to say, *q* was my *reason* for doing *p*. Therefore, I am about to do *p* because of *q*; thus here, *q* was my *motive* for doing *p*. So, for instance, an order to do *p* can be a *reason* for doing *p*; or my fear of *q* is a *motive* for taking action in order to avoid *q*, etc. Independently of this, one may ask whether *q* was the *cause* of *p*—or in fact what sort of causality is operating in this example.

It is thus only a matter of terminology whether all species of intentionality can be restated in this way—as a relation between an action and its motive (as (Anscombe 1957) does). To be on safer ground, one could say that the relation of being a reason for doing or a motive for doing belongs to the family of intentional relations which Wittgenstein aims to conceive as internal relations. As he stresses, the words ‘reason’, ‘motive’ or ‘cause’ can be used in very many different ways (LA, 13 and 22; Ms112,

112v; BBB, 15; VW, 108–111. I think that Wittgenstein uses the expressions ‘reason’ [Grund] and ‘motive’ [Motiv] interchangeably (cf. BBB, 15)). The same is valid for the related expressions ‘because’ or ‘why’, etc. The diagnosis is, then, that the surface grammar of our everyday language confuses us about (or at least does not fully distinguish between) internal and external relations. In what follows I shall argue that the distinction between reasons and causes is an instance of the distinction between internal and external relations.

To begin with, let us consider the following examples from Wittgenstein’s *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics*:

‘Cause’ is used in very many different ways, e.g.

- (1) “What is the cause of unemployment?” “What is the cause of this expression?” [Experiment and statistics]
- (2) “What was the cause of your jumping?” “That noise.” [Reason]
- (3) “What was the cause of that wheel going round?” You trace a mechanism (LA, 13. The bracketed post-scripts are by James Taylor).

In order to avoid a misunderstanding Wittgenstein wants to reserve the expression ‘cause’ for a (relation of) mechanical causality between two events. A cause in this sense can be found statistically or by tracing the underlying mechanism. This is to say that what is the cause of a certain action is always a hypothesis based on past experience. Such experience may include the knowledge of certain physical processes in one’s brain which are typically not known to an agent. An important consequence is that one cannot be absolutely sure what exactly the cause of one’s action was. It should therefore be clear that causal relations are external: they are realized between events, not concepts; they are expressed in temporal propositions.

The most striking difference between a cause and a reason/motive for Wittgenstein is that an agent knows without any doubt the motive of their action: ‘we can only *conjecture* the cause but we *know* the motive.’ (BBB, 15) Wittgenstein takes this statement to be a grammatical one. The motive for an action or the reason for a belief is something constitutive of the very action or belief:

The causes of our belief in a proposition are indeed irrelevant to the question [of] what we believe. Not so the grounds, which are grammatically related to the proposition, and tell us what proposition it is. (Z §437)

Now, I want to address two interrelated points: The first one concerns what counts as a motive, or as a reason. A rational motive or a reason cannot be just anything that an



agent avows. The second point is the objection that a motive can be unconscious, i.e., unknown to an agent. One may later forget the original motive for one's action or be self-deceived or insincere about it. Both these points threaten my claim that the relation of being a motive or a reason is internal.

Now to the first point: a motive for an action or a reason for a belief is not arbitrary. If the *relation* between an action and its motive is not obvious, the agent has then to indicate a *rule* that has led them—step by step (cf. Ms 115, 136)—from the motive to the action. The motive can itself be an expression of this rule. In the 1930s, Wittgenstein pondered the idea that this rule must be a kind of calculation: 'Giving a reason is like giving a calculation by which you have arrived at a certain result.' (BBB, 15) This statement means that between an action and its motive there is the same kind of relation as between a mathematical equation and its result. This relation is internal.

A slightly different account of this relation is to be found in the second part of the *Philosophical Investigations*, and in subsequent writings (PI II, 224). The relation between an action and its motive is established here in the language-game of the judging of motives. All that is needed is a technique for the judging of a motive. A judgment within this language-game may resemble a calculation, but it does not need to. We can think of some simple instances of judgments and take these as sorts of measuring rods in order to judge cases that are more complicated (RPP I, §633). This later account of the relation of being a motive is, thus, the generalization of the calculation-model from the 1930s.

As to the second point: an agent might avow a different motive for their action than the real one (it may be a case of ignorance or self-deception or a lie). As argued above, knowledge of a cause is always *hypothetical*—as opposed to a motive/reason. But it seems now that a motive can also be hypothetical in the sense that it is determined by the agent's sincere avowal. There is a certain confusion lurking here, for 'motive' or 'reason' can be ambiguous here. A reason may mean the actual reason or may mean any possible, hypothetical reason:

sometimes what we say acts as a justification, not as a report of what was done, e.g. I *remember* the answer to a question; when asked why I give this answer, I gave a process leading to it, though I didn't go through this process. (LA, 22)

We have to distinguish between a *report* of an actual or past motive and a *justification* of the action. The point of a report is that it should be sincere. When someone is asked for their actual motive, they should report their motive truthfully and the answer depends on their sincerity (and on their memory). But something different goes on when the agent is asked for a justification. Then it does not matter what the past motive was. All they need to give is a rule of which the present action is an instance. It does not matter whether the agent had really followed this rule.<sup>1</sup>

Wittgenstein gives several examples of sentences that are ambiguous between expressing internal or external relations. The same is true of the following kind of sentences:

- (1) *p* is the motive for doing *q*.
- (2) *p* is the reason for believing *q*.

If these sentences are reports of an actual motive or reason, they can be restated as being explicitly temporal:

- (3) *p* was my motive for doing *q*.
- (4) *p* is the reason why I *now* believe that *q*.

These sentences are temporal and thus express external relations. Asking for a justification is something different. In this case, 0 and 0 are timeless and could be restated as:

- (5) *p* is a possible motive for doing *q*.
- (6) *p* is a possible reason for believing *q*.

These sentences are, however, timeless and thus they express internal relations. I would like to elucidate this matter further by Wittgenstein's analogy with a route:

The question 'Why do you believe that?' can be compared with the question 'How do you come to be here?'. (VW, 47)

Wittgenstein says that this question allows two answers. There are, in fact, however three answers to be found in Wittgenstein's lecture notes. (1) The first answer consists in giving the physical or psychological cause of one's being located here. This answer will have to describe various phenomena (e.g., stimuli, reflexes, connections of pathways in one's nervous system, etc.), the circumstances in which they occurred, and the causal laws operating here. (2) The second answer would be specifying the way I actually went here. (3) The third answer is by giving any route that I could have got here by.<sup>2</sup> The first answer corresponds to giving the actual cause, the second one to a report of the actual reason, and the third to a justification by giving a possible reason. The first answer expresses an external relation and the last one expresses an internal relation. In the second answer, there is expressed an external relation by means of an internal one.

Wittgenstein said famously that 'It is in language that an expectation and its fulfillment make contact' (PI §445 and PG, 140). This relation is the special case of the relation between an intentional state and its object, i.e. the 'thing' that is intended. I have argued that this relation is internal, although there may be some external causality at work as well. Seeing things retrospectively, we can justify our actions by giving a (physical, mechanical) cause, or by giving a reason for that action. The reason may be the actual one, i.e. the one that led to the action, or the reason may be a hypothetical one, i.e. any reason that logically justifies the action.

'Why did you do it?'

- I was excited and I had an urge in my mind to please her which was caused by a certain chemical or hormonal level in my brain.
- Because I felt that I had to make her happy.
- Because of the commandment 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' (Mark, 12:31).

The general lesson behind Wittgenstein's method of analysis is that two forms of expression are identified that look the same in ordinary language (recall, "Cause" is used in very many different ways.). The aim of analysis is to show, however, that they are different. To do so, firstly, one has to detect an ambiguity and, secondly, there has to be a rule or a test to resolve the ambiguity. This presupposes a generic logical distinction that makes it possible to detach the separate meanings. This distinction would be the key that allows us to say that a given expression

<sup>1</sup> See VW, 111: 'the reason is what he specifies. He answers with a *rule*. He could have also given this rule if he had not gone by it'.

<sup>2</sup> Wittgenstein employed this analogy several times. He considered the first and the second answer at (VW, 47) and the second and the third one at (LA, 22).

means this as opposed to that. In my approach, I examine one important distinction in Wittgenstein's works—namely, the distinction between internal and external relations.

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# Language-Games or Misleading Expedients for Philosophical Therapy

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## Abstract

In *Philosophical Investigations* (PI), Wittgenstein (2009) intends his well-known idea of “language-games” to be applicable for practising philosophical therapy. Some language-games serve as “objects of comparison” (PI §130), replacing unsound ideas with sound ones, as the game of §48 shows the unsoundness of a view presented in the *Theaetetus* (PI §46). Language games function as objects of therapy or detailed examination.

Is Wittgenstein’s method sufficient for treating philosophical diseases? The answer is both “yes” and “no”. The affirmative emphasizes the desirable effects of language-games, and the negative the undesirable ones. In this paper, I scrutinize both desirable and undesirable effects and attempt to reveal unreasonable grounds for the latter.

## 1. G. Baker’s Interpretation

G. Baker (2004) considers the nature of language-games in *Wittgenstein’s Method: Neglected Aspects*:

We may imagine a familiar use of symbols to be embedded in very unfamiliar or abnormal contexts (PI §142; BB9, 28, 49, 61-2). We may compare “our grammar” with various “clear and simple” language-games, noting respects of similarity or difference (PI §5, 130-1; TS 220 and 99). (Baker 2004, 41)

Baker argues that language-games serve “in very unfamiliar or abnormal contexts”, and enable us to study the way we make “a familiar use of symbols”. In this respect, Baker’s view agrees with Wittgenstein’s (cf. PI §130, §131), although Baker appears only to emphasize the contextual anomaly of language-games.

Let me add another characteristic of language-games, thus reinforcing Baker’s view, so that Baker can then be taken to hold that language-games are intermediaries between sound and unsound ideas. While language-games are unfamiliar to us as substitutes for objects of therapy, they show familiar features too, as we can imagine how to play a language-game and can actually play it out.

If this interpretation is correct, it is natural for us to ask some questions. How useful are language-games in philosophical therapy? Are they not misleading, especially for Wittgenstein’s patients (readers) since they somewhat partake of unsoundness, being more or less intermediate between sound and unsound conceptions? In the following sections, I examine both desirable and undesirable effects of language-games and argue against the effects of the latter.

## 2. The Import of Language-Games §48

Let us look at language-game §48 (see also §50) in *Philosophical Investigations*. Game 48 (so written for brevity) is a substitute for the Theaetetan view in §46, wherein Socrates cites an argument on “the primary elements”, along with a peculiar assumption.

[...] there is no explanation of the *primary elements*—so to speak—out of which we and everything else are composed; for everything that exists in and of itself can be *signified* only by names; no other determination is possible, either that it *is* or that it *is not* ... But what ex-

ists in and of itself has to be ... named without any other determination. [...] (PI §46)

Game 48 is devised to reveal the absurdity of this assumption.

In game 48, which presents one big square composed of nine small coloured (red, black, green or white) squares, the player forms sentences (e.g. “RRBGGRWW”) corresponding to arrangements of the small squares that are substitutes for “the primary elements”.

Game 48 has at least two favourable effects for philosophical therapy. First, it draws attention to misuses of words. In §48, Wittgenstein says:

The primary elements are the coloured squares. “But are these simple?”—I wouldn’t know what I could more naturally call a “simple” in this language-game. But under other circumstances, I’d call a monochrome square, consisting perhaps of two rectangles or of the elements colour and shape, “composite”. But the concept of compositeness might also be extended so that a smaller area was said to be “composed” of a greater area and another one subtracted from it. [...] But I do not know whether to say that the figure described by our sentence consists of four or of nine elements! [...] Does it matter which we say, so long as we avoid misunderstandings in any particular case? (PI §48)

Wittgenstein points out various ways of distinguishing between the primary elements and composites. When we do not play any particular game with any purpose in distinguishing between them, we never mind such distinction. Then, the squares are mere forms with no distinctive property, and we are willing to admit that “the primary elements” and “composites” of §46 belong nowhere in our language. Philosophers think up these words in so strange a way that we can hardly understand them.

Second, game 48 discloses a prejudice. In §50, Wittgenstein reflects on the peculiarity of the primary elements by referring to “the standard metre”, which, according to him, has a “peculiar role in the game of measuring with a metre-rule” (PI §50). Likewise, “a coloured square” (PI §48) is substituted with “the standard sepia” (PI §50). Wittgenstein says:

We can put it like this: This sample [the standard sepia] is an instrument of the language, by means of which we make colour statements. In this game, it is not something that is represented, but is a *means* of representa-

tion. —And the same applies to an element in language-game (48) when we give it a name by uttering the word “R”—in so doing we have given that object a role in our language-game; it is now a means of representation. And to say “If it did not exist, it could have no name” is to say as much and as little as: if this thing did not exist, we could not use it in our language-game. — What looks as if it *had* to exist is part of the language. It is a paradigm in our game; [...] (PI §50)

For Wittgenstein, to realize the role of the “sample” is to confirm “a means of representation” and “our mode of representation”. We can conceive that to recognize its role is mere confirmation, which his description renders useless—for, if we did not notice it, it would not matter in our language practice. Even if Wittgenstein said that it is “important”, he could say so only in an abstract and not practical context. “A means of representation” and “our mode of representation” seldom matter to people, just speaking, writing and uttering without such confirmation. We must acknowledge that it is a kind of prejudice to think that the primary elements “have to exist” for our use of language.

Games 48 and 50 play an important part in philosophical therapy and allow us to recognize how strange the Theaetetan view (PI §46) is.

### 3. The Undesirable Effects of Language-Games

Games 48 and 50 produce undesirable ones in addition to the two desirable effects noted. In this section, I state what the undesirable effects are and why they arise.

There are several patterns of misunderstanding. For example, someone might assume that game 48 is an alternative to the Theaetetan picture, saying: “Game 48 looks like a new image of language”, or “This offers a better model than the *Theaetetus*”. Another person might suppose that Wittgenstein inherits and optimizes a legacy from the *Theaetetus*, saying: “§50 is an indirect justification for the Theaetetan exposition”. These claims are hard to repress but are incompatible with philosophical therapy, which is not a philosophical claim or theory but a method.

There are two reasons for these misunderstandings. The first reason is that we are free to interpret language-games in any way we like. Wittgenstein excludes any theory (PI §109) or justification of the actual use of language (PI §124). He only presents ideas useful for therapy, such as language-games and the interlocutor’s suggestions as well as some peculiar concepts (“family resemblance”, “behaviour” and “custom”). How to interpret those ideas is never determined, and whether or not they are properly conceived depends on the reader’s will.

The second reason is given by the nature of language-games. We tend to overlook the fact that language-games comprise unsound ideas, which we have to abandon after completion of therapy. I have already argued that language-games are intermediaries between sound and unsound ideas. Game 48 is not only similar to the Theaetetan depiction but also intelligible and playable to us. When we observe both difference and similarity between language-games and abnormal ideas, we tend to ignore the contrast or likeness between language-games and our actual use of language. We might forget that language-games are just objects of comparison. We may say they are fictitious and imaginative (cf. Savickey 2011, 682).

### 4. Undoing the Undesirable Effects

To annihilate the undesirable effects of games 48 and 50, I will indicate their groundlessness in this section. I suggest that we compare language-games with our actual use of language and thus, as it were, find excess and shortage in language-games.

You might regard my suggestion as being similar to McGinn’s view. McGinn claims that “Wittgenstein’s grammatical method is one in which “we call to remind” the details of the distinctive patterns of employment—the grammar—of expressions, which constitutes their role in our life with language” (McGinn 2013, 16). Although I concede that my suggestion is not opposed to McGinn’s claim, I think that it is important to highlight the strangeness of language-games that are intermediate between sound and unsound ideas.

In §50, Wittgenstein presents “the standard metre” and “the standard sepia”, which are similar to “the coloured squares” (PI §48). Wittgenstein attempts a comparison that is useful for testing the Theaetetan statement: “Everything [i.e. the primary elements] that exists in and of itself can be *signified* only by names; no other determination is possible, either that it *is* or that it *is not* [...]” (PI §46).

[...] There is *one* thing of which one can state neither that it is one metre long, nor that it is not one metre long, and that is the standard metre in Paris. —But this is, of course, not to ascribe any remarkable property to it, but only to mark its peculiar role in the game of measuring with a metre-rule. — Suppose that samples of colour were preserved in Paris like the standard metre. So we explain that “sepia” means the colour of the standard sepia which is kept there hermetically sealed. Then it will make no sense to state of this sample either that it is of this colour or that it is not. [...] (PI §50)

The quoted passage contains two unsound ideas, one of which is found in Wittgenstein’s misleading statement: “Then it will make no sense to state of this sample either that it is of this colour or that it is not”. To the contrary, we can still imagine saying, “The standard sepia is not sepia”, or “The standard metre is not one metre”. The “standard metre” and “the standard sepia” are made of sensible materials (or visible in the spectrum). We can touch “the standard metre” or see “the standard sepia”. A destructive earthquake might break “the standard metre”, or exposure to strong sunlight might change the tone of “the standard sepia”, and in such cases we could say, “The standard sepia is not sepia”. Wittgenstein’s statement is extraordinary. It seems similar to saying “We *call* this the standard sepia” (indicating a sample), which, however, sounds better than his actual statement.

The other unsound idea is found in Wittgenstein’s phrase: “its peculiar role in *the* game of measuring with a metre-rule”. “The standard metre” and “the standard sepia” are absolute originals. They have no role in our act of measuring or asking about colours, say, in a quiz. Out of necessity, one might inquire into the original of metre-rules, which one might examine in Paris. However, such an inquiry is in no way required. This is to say that “[t]he standard metre” has no role in *all* games of measuring.

Recall our actual language or actual behaviour. When and why should we use a metre-rule? For example, a tailor uses a metre-rule for cutting cloth. An elementary school teacher uses a metre-rule in his geometry class. Each has his own purpose in using the ruler. The tailor has to cut cloth with precision. Without the ruler, he could not make suits that fit his customers and would lose his job. The

teacher has to show different lengths of different triangles" sides. Without the ruler, he could not do this in his class, and his pupils would then require more effort to master basic geometry than with other teachers. These are specific cases in which rulers have practical utility.

Now, compare §50 with these examples taken from our actual scenes of practice. Here I indicate three obscure points relevant to §50: it is unspecified (1) who uses "the standard metre", (2) when "the standard metre" is in effect, and (3) why "the standard metre" matters at all. What we can understand from §50 is just that "the standard metre" exists in Paris.

We have thus grasped both excess and shortage in §50. Excessive is the extraordinary expression: "Then it will make no sense to state of this sample either that it is of this colour or that it is not". It is superfluous, and we play the game without stating this. As regards shortage, §50 tells us nothing specific about when and why "the standard metre" is utilized and who needs it. We can see that §50 provides nothing but an object of comparison with which to examine the Theaetetan view. Moreover, we can hence understand that the Theaetetan view is as strange a construct of unsound ideas as what is provided in §50.

## 5. Conclusion

Language-games are useful for philosophical therapy. Game 48 draws attention to misuses of words and illustrates a prejudice. Meanwhile, language-games have unfavourable concomitants. One might wrongly suppose that games 48 and 50 are alternatives to the Theaetetan view,

or that Wittgenstein optimizes or inherits the legacy from the *Theaetetus*. Such misunderstandings are not only due to the special characteristics of games 48 and 50 but are also accounted for by the reader's intention and the general nature of language-games. Whether or not Wittgenstein's ideas are properly received depends on each reader.

In the face of these unfavourable results, the comparison of language-games with our actual language makes us aware of both excess and shortage in §50. Excessive is the extraordinary expression: "Then it will make no sense to state of this sample either that it is of this colour or that it is not". Elucidation falls short concerning when and why "the standard metre" is utilized and who needs it. We can recognize that the Theaetetan view is as strange a construct of unsound ideas as the description in §50.

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# A Cure for what Illness? The *Tractatus*' Target in the Therapeutic Reading

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## Abstract

How can a book that says nothing be responsible for an awareness experienced by its readers? If the *Tractatus* propositions are nonsensical, how are we supposed to understand the idea that they are capable of bringing about the realization of their nonsensicality? These questions display that which Marie McGinn considers to be a paradox derived from a reading of the *Tractatus* committed both to the idea of the nonsensicality of its propositions and to the notion that Wittgenstein wants to cure his readers from the tendency to talk nonsense – the so-called therapeutic reading. In this paper, I wish to show what lies at the basis of McGinn's paradox – something I believe to be a misconception of the therapeutic reading's account of what the *Tractatus*' target is. Exposing this misconception, I want to suggest that what McGinn sees as a paradox is actually an important theme present in Wittgenstein's early work.

## Introduction

Marie McGinn sees a paradox in the therapeutic reading, formulated by commentators such as Cora Diamond, regarding the effects the *Tractatus* is supposed to have in its readers. She says:

...it is one of the paradoxical features of the therapeutic reading that it regards the remarks of *TLP* as communicating nothing (because saying nothing), but as nevertheless bringing about the reader's realization that nothing is being communicated. The work is at the same time held to provide the insights necessary for its own self-destruction and to provide no genuine insight that is not ultimately obliterated in the final act of self-annihilation. (McGinn 1999)

As we know, one of the therapeutic reading's main moves is to take seriously Wittgenstein's remarks on paragraph 6.54 about the nonsensicality of his own propositions. Taking him seriously in this case means not only taking Wittgenstein for his word, but also avoiding the idea that the *Tractatus* conveys any special notion of what nonsense might be. To employ Diamond's terms, in saying that the *Tractatus*' propositions are nonsensical, Wittgenstein is just expressing "the ordinary idea of not meaning anything at all".

According to McGinn, the difficulty begins when we try to combine this reading of paragraph 6.54 with the *Tractatus*' therapeutic aspirations (as she interprets them). The book's goal is, as Diamond allegedly claim, to make its readers realize that, when trying to make metaphysical pronouncements, they are in fact engaging in nonsense. Instead of advancing positive doctrines about the fundamental structure of the world, the underlying connection between language and reality, Wittgenstein wishes to make us recognize that the result of this attempt would be nonsensical statements. Thus, the book should bring about a particular effect in someone who goes through its intricate organization of propositions: in following its paragraphs, one must not only see that they mean nothing, but also end up abandoning his own desires to produce metaphysical statements.

The paradox, then, would be the result of a book saying nothing (in the sense of "meaning nothing at all"), while being able to provoke a determined effect upon someone who reads it, i.e. seeing "that nothing is being communicated". But why should the combination of these two ideas

be paradoxical? Why should reading nonsensical statements and grasping that they are nonsensical be puzzling? Shouldn't the recognition of something as nonsense be the expected outcome of reading sentences that mean nothing at all? I wish to show that in order to arrive at the paradoxical outcome McGinn has to start from a particular interpretation of the therapeutic reading's take on what the *Tractatus*' target is. By describing this interpretation, and why I believe it is wrong, I intend to highlight a fundamental intuition present in Diamond's texts. Leaving behind McGinn's version of the therapeutic reading, we will be able to see that what she claims to be a paradox is actually one of the *Tractatus*' central themes.

## The *Tractatus*' Target

According to McGinn, Diamond and other "therapeutic readers" believe the *Tractatus*' main target to be a metaphysical account of our capacity to make sense, expressed in the well-known wittgensteinian distinction between what can be said and what can be shown.

Sense is precisely that which a proposition displays, i.e. not *what* it says about the world, but *how* it does this job. Language organizes all we can say about reality, which means that every account of the world is a symbolic arrangement we make of it. A statement about a tree, such as "The tree is green", talks about the world because in it we can see that something is being proposed about a given object and, at the same time, we understand what, in that particular sentence, counts as a tree and what counts as being green. From these established parameters, it is possible to recognize if, in fact, a certain tree answers to what is being predicated about it. The important point is that, although the proposition is explicitly predicating something about an object, nothing in it explains what counts as a tree or what criteria we should take in consideration to deliberate if in fact it is green. Moreover, it does not even describe which elements in the sentence should be taken as the object and which should be seen as the predicate. Even so, despite of this apparent lack of instructions on how to understand the proposition, we can see what it means without any problem (at least in cases where it is not problematic to state that a given tree is green). What is shown is, thus, precisely the way language organizes the categories allowing us to see what elements of reality are at issue when a given assertion is made.

However, in trying to address this fundamental logical structure responsible for the aforementioned organization, we find ourselves in trouble. A theory of meaning having as its object language's essential features cannot be developed in the same way as a theory about a given object within the world. The Logical structure shared by language and the world cannot be portrayed as an object within the world precisely because it is the condition itself for any talk about the world— it is its limits. Therefore, trying to describe it is an attempt to address something that is the foundation of any possible description. It would be an effort to produce a sentence that did not indicate the parameters allowing us to know what *in the world* is being referred to – a sentence incapable of showing any sense.

Read as a metaphysical book, the *Tractatus* would follow the description I presented, hanging on to the notion of a logical structure that could not be meaningfully described. Its propositions would constitute, thus, a failed attempt to express something inexpressible. Challenging this interpretation, the therapeutic reading would work to explain how the truth of the matter lies somewhere else. By taking seriously that which Wittgenstein states at proposition 6.54 – the nonsensicality of his own statements – Diamond would, according to McGinn, be trying to demonstrate how the *Tractatus*' efforts are placed not in the attempt to show something that cannot be said, but in the undermining of the idea of an essential structure to reality. As she puts it:

On this reading [the therapeutic one], the idea of an objective realm of necessity underlying our capacity to make sense, which cannot be described in language but which language necessarily mirrors, is Wittgenstein's principal target. (McGinn 1999)

If therapy is needed, that is because there is a precise disease that has to be cured. A disease Wittgenstein wants to describe and then treat.

The aim of *TLP* is not to get us to recognize something that is unsayably true of reality, but rather to cure us of any attempt to represent to ourselves something about reality that cannot be said. (McGinn 1999)

However, how could we be cured if the therapeutic treatment consists in the assemblage of sentences that do not have any meaning whatsoever? Wittgenstein is not telling us anything. His propositions are the nonsensical attempt to put into words the logical structure of reality – in a way, they are themselves the result, even if a deliberate result, of the disease they want to cure. What we get is, then, McGinn's paradox: a book that says nothing allegedly being capable to undermining a given metaphysical vision of the structure the world shares with language.

I want to suggest that in order to avoid the paradox the question we need to ask is if Diamond really sees the "idea of an objective realm of necessity underlying our capacity to make sense" as the *Tractatus*' target. If Diamond is certainly opposed to an interpretation of Wittgenstein's early work as an attempt to put forward a theory of the essential structure shared between language and world, it does not mean she considers this theory to be his elected adversary. That is to say, countering commentators that purport Wittgenstein to be formulating metaphysical thesis is different from defending the idea that Wittgenstein himself is worried to counter such thesis.

## A Piecemeal Approach

At the basis of the idea that the *Tractatus* has as its target the notion of fundamental logical propositions that can only be shown is the notion of what Diamond calls a "wholesale method" for determining the nonsensicality of philosophical propositions. The method itself may vary, but the main characteristic shared by its versions is the conception that, at the end of the *Tractatus*, one arrives at a general view about nonsensical propositions or philosophical statements. In other words, climbing the ladder amounts to finding an overall method allowing us to recognize which propositions really are nonsensical. McGinn is clearly expressing this view when she comments on the therapeutic reading:

The upshot of this journey [reading the *Tractatus*] is that we are no longer tempted to ask or answer philosophical questions, but willingly confine ourselves to the realm of what can be said, the propositions of natural science. (McGinn 1999)

"The realm of what can be said" is a way to formulate the idea of a given logical space within which meaningful discourse can be organized as opposed to the outer regions of nonsensicality. The *Tractatus*' intent, expressed in its preface, to establish the limits between the sayable and the unsayable amounts, through the "wholesale method", to the determination of a general principle capable of delimiting the bounds of sense. In the case of its own propositions and the group of other nonsensical statements to which they belong, their nonsensicality derives from the attempt to say what can only be shown. They are propositions of this kind and therefore they mean nothing. It is easy to see how the wholesale method is the source from which we inevitably arrive at McGinn's paradox: a general account of nonsensicality being deflated by a book that says nothing.

However, basing any version of the therapeutic reading on such a method is missing a deep point it is trying to make about nonsense. Diamond herself addresses the difficulties arriving from the attempt to understand the *Tractatus* as the proponent of an overall way to determine which propositions are meaningful. She points out that the main trouble comes from trying to accommodate the general approach to nonsensicality with the fregean understanding of a propositional sign inherited by Wittgenstein. A sign on its own does not have any determined meaning; it can be used in various ways. Therefore, if something looks like a propositional sign, nothing in principle can decide if it is being used to express a thought, name something or doing anything else. In order to establish any "wholesale approach" it is first necessary to determine how to take the proposition, since it can mean a great deal of different things. And doing so is necessarily a process of dealing with each proposition individually – if one wants to know whether a proposition is nonsensical, one must first engage in an attempt to determine if it has any meaning.

The devastating problem for a reading of that general type is this: to attempt to specify which way of taking the propositional sign makes it nonsensical, you have to make clear what use of the sign you have in mind. Any such clarification deals with the detail of the individual sentence; it is an essentially retail procedure. (Diamond 2004)

So, as I said in the beginning, Diamond is explicitly denying the presence of a technical explanation of nonsense present in the *Tractatus*. The upshot for the point I am trying to make is that the logical structure shared between language and reality, showable but unsayable, cannot be the main target the book is aiming at. It is not trying to demonstrate the nonsensicality of this theory because it would presuppose a general account of nonsense based on the saying-showing distinction. If anything, what Wittgenstein is doing is inviting us to search for the meaning of his propositions, to go along with him and try to find out if what he says – or what he wants to say – is meaningful. At the end, the realization that the *Tractatus*' propositions are nonsense arrives not through the “communication” (to employ McGinn's words) of some particular notion of what nonsense is, but through the awareness that we cannot find a use in which his statements would mean something. There is no paradox because the effect the book is supposed to cause in us is not derived from its undermining of a particular view about the logical structure of the world.

Nevertheless, even if what McGinn describes as a paradox is the result of her misreading the *Tractatus*' target, I believe there is an important question involved in her formulation about the book's reader. In order to see that the *Tractatus*' propositions are nonsensical, the reader must

engage in the piecemeal elucidatory process presented by the therapeutic reading. However, if he is previously gripped by the illusion of sense, as has to be the case in order for the *Tractatus* to have a job to perform, how is it that he will engage in the elucidatory process? How is it that someone involved in an illusion can start the path that will eventually dispel the illusion itself? (Especially since the “therapeutic cure” cannot be a general theory offered by someone else, i.e. “climbing the ladder” is a singular individual process). I do not see that question as a difficulty with the therapeutic reading, but rather as an important theme to which we arrive if we follow its premises.

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# Kann Einfühlung relativistisch sein? – Werte und Wertediskurs im Fremdsprachenunterricht

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## Abstract

Der Fremdsprachenunterricht beruht auf der Akzeptanz von Werten: einerseits jener der Ziel- und der Herkunftssprache, aber ebenso auf jenen Werten, welche in den Traditionen der Sprachen zur Evidenz kommen. Werte innerhalb dieser kulturellen Äußerungen sind nicht relativierbar, sondern müssen im Lern- und Lehrprozess als das grundsätzlich Gegebene zumindest für's Erste angenommen werden. Erst dann ist es möglich, nach dem Inhalt des Wertes – seinem ethischen, moralischen, etc., zu fragen. Insofern ist Fremdsprachenunterricht in Lehre und Forschung ein Gebiet, in welchem relativistische Ansätze nicht zielführend sind, weil solche auch den Eigenwert der Lernenden und Lehrenden und ihres persönlichen Hintergrundes relativieren würden.

„Das Werk hat seinen Ursprung in der Beschränkung.“  
(Schlee 2014, 25)

Der jener Aussage zugrundeliegende Werkbegriff ist als vielfältig zu verstehen, denn der österreichische Komponist, Musikwissenschaftler und Festspielintendant Thomas Daniel Schlee wendet diesen selbst auf seine unterscheidbaren Tätigkeiten als Künstler, Organisator und Forscher an. Ein Werk ist demnach als etwas zu verstehen, was an ein Ende kommt – wie eine Festspielsaison oder ein wissenschaftlicher Aufsatz –, nachdem es einen Prozess durchgemacht hat, welcher eben in einer Beschränkung seinen Ausgangspunkt genommen hat. Auf die Fremdsprachenvermittlung übertragen kann das heißen: jemand beschränkt sich darauf, Deutsch zu lernen und nicht Spanisch. Dieser beschränkenden freien Entscheidung liegt in diesem Falle keine Wertung zugrunde, dass etwa Deutsch wertvoller sei als Spanisch. Anders kann es sich im Falle einer Migration verhalten, wo jemand Deutsch lernt, weil im Land seiner Zuwanderung diese Sprache gesprochen wird und es daher einer individuellen Auswahl nicht bedarf. Der Wert des Deutschen als Zielsprache liegt der Tatsache der Migration zugrunde. In diesem Falle kann auch von einem Wert der Notwendigkeit gesprochen werden, welche sich im Unterricht als „Müssenskomponente“ darstellt (Mayer 2006, 66ff). In beiden Fällen ist jedoch eine Beschränkung als Grundlage des „Werkes Deutschvermittlung“ anzusehen, sei es nun durch Wunsch oder Müssen.

Diese Beschränkung ist freilich keine relative Leere, die im Lehr- und Lernprozess aufzufüllen ist; vielmehr offenbart sich in ihr nichts weniger als die Vorhandenheit von Werten, welche den Lernenden in deren Gegenwart der Lehrperson gegenüber als ein Wesen, geprägt von eigener Vergangenheit erkennbar werden lassen. Auf diese Gegebenheit hat Ludwig Wittgenstein mit seinem „Wörterbuch für Volksschulen“ besonders Rücksicht genommen, indem er in hohem Maße von der Vorstellungswelt von Kindern – zumal in jenen niederösterreichischen Dörfern, wo er als Volksschullehrer gewirkt hatte – ausging. (Mayer 2011, 191)

Die Rücksichtnahme auf Vorhandenheiten bei den Lernenden ist eine unverzichtbare Forderung an die Lehrenden. In dieser Rücksichtnahme erweist sich eine pädagogische Fähigkeit zur Einfühlung, welche im besten Falle die Einfühlung der Lernenden in die Zielsprache ermöglicht und damit eine Verwurzelung in derselben. Das „Vorhandene“ als die „Beschränkung“ erweist sich hier als nicht

zu umgehender Wert! Edith Stein spricht in diesen Zusammenhängen, welche solche des Erkennens sind, vom „Wertfühlen“ und führt aus: „Zwischen dem Wertfühlen und dem Fühlen des Werts seiner Realität (denn Realität eines Wertes ist selbst ein Wert) und ihrer Ichtiefe bestehen Wesenszusammenhänge.....Das Erfassen von Werten ist selbst ein positiver Wert. Um dieses Wertes inne zu werden, bedarf es aber eines Richtens auf dies Erfassen.“ (Stein 2010, 120f)

Aus dem Gesagten geht hervor, dass der Wert dieses Wertes und des Wertfühlens, sowie der Beschränkung als dessen Voraussetzung und Endziel – und sei es nur zunächst – nicht verhandelbar ist. Er muss als etwas Positives schlechthin von Lehrenden und Lernenden anerkannt und in diesem Sinne mit Notwendigkeit angewandt werden. Von besonderem Gewicht wird dieses Anerkennen des diesbezüglichen Wertes dann, wenn es um ein grundsätzliches erstes Miss- oder Nichtverstehen geht. Ein solches ist im Fremdsprachenunterricht ein Kontinuum, auf welches Lernende und Lehrende zu reagieren haben – die Lehrenden aus und mit Erfahrung, die Lernenden in Erfüllung ihres Lernwunsches oder aufgrund der Müssenskomponente.

Das Bedürfnis nach Einfühlung hat sich besonders dann in die Grundsichten individuellen kulturellen Verhaltens auszustrecken, wenn es im Unterricht um die Auseinandersetzung mit Phänomenen geht, welche eine lernende Person aus ihrer Vergangenheit und somit aus der Geschichte der Herkunftsgemeinschaft mit- und einbringt, also um die tradierten Mythen, in welche die lernende Person aufgrund ihrer Herkunft hineingewachsen ist. Gespräche darüber fördern das Einfühlen dann, wenn fürs Erste der Wert des Mythos' und seiner Wahrheit nicht infrage steht. „Denn,“ so Odo Marquard, „Mythen sind, wo sie nicht kontermythisch umfunktioniert werden, eben keine Vorstufen und Prothesen der Wahrheit, sondern die mythische Technik – das Erzählen von Geschichten – ist wesentlich etwas anderes, nämlich die Kunst, die (nicht etwa fehlende sondern) vorhandene Wahrheit in die Reichweite unserer Lebensbegabung zu bringen. Da ist nämlich die Wahrheit in der Regel noch nicht, wenn sie entweder – wie etwa die Resultate exakter Wissenschaft z.B. als Formeln – noch unbeziehbar abstrakt oder – wie etwa die Wahrheit über das Leben: der Tod – unlebbar grausam ist.“ (Marquard 2003, 49)

Der deutsche Philosoph spricht hier von einer grundsätzlichen Wahrheit, also von einer Gegebenheit, deren Wert

nicht anzweifelbar und nicht diskutierbar ist. Im Sinne eines eigenständigen Umganges kann aber das Staunen über eine solche Wahrheit im Fremdsprachenunterricht fruchtbar werden. Dieses Staunen entwickelt sich durch interkulturelle Kommunikation. Diese kann und darf sich – so Odo Marquard – nicht im idealen Diskurs à la Habermas erschöpfen. In einem solchen nämlich löscht

die Einheit des Diskursiven Konsens die Vielheit gerade aus, und es macht dort das Allgemeine das Besondere stumm: denn in diesem universalistischen Diskurs ist Vielheit – die Vielheit der Meinungen – nur als Ausgangskonstellation gestattet; Bewegung der Kommunikation ist nur als Abbau der Vielheit – der Vielheit der Meinungen – gerechtfertigt; und sein Endzustand – der universalistische Konsens – ist einer, bei dem niemand mehr anders denkt als die anderen, so dass dort die Vielheit der Teilnehmer geradezu überflüssig wird zugunsten eines einen Teilnehmers, der dann genügt, um jene Meinung zu hegen, die dann sowieso als einzige herrscht. (Marquard 2003, 218f)

Ein habermas'scher Idealdiskurs würde beispielsweise eine Auseinandersetzung mit Aussagen der Kunst nicht ermöglichen, etwa wenn es um den „unterschiedlichen Gehalt kultureller Symbole“ und deren Präsenz in einem Kunstwerk geht. Denn dabei geht es nicht um ein gemeinsames Ergebnis, sondern um den reflektierenden Umgang mit Unterschiedlichem, welches in seiner grundsätzlichen „Wertheit“ für's Erste nicht relativierbar ist. (vgl. Mayer 2005).

Eine Kröte ist eine Kröte! Aber: in Richard Wagners „Rheingold“ verwandelt sich der Zwerg Alberich, welcher die unteren Regionen der Welt bewohnt, in eine Kröte in der hochmütigen Hoffnung, damit die Götter Wotan und Loge listig zu beeindrucken. Er vollzieht die Verwandlung im Dialog mit den Himmlischen, welche von ihm das scheinbar Besondere fordern – nämlich sich klein zu machen:

„daß die kleinste Klinze dich fasse,  
wo bang die Kröte sich birgt.“

Alberich kommt dem Wunsch entgegen mit dem Spruch:

„Krumm und grau  
krieche Kröte.“

Soweit so wagnerisch. Im Deutschunterricht mit Musikstudentinnen aus China, welche sich gerade mit diesem Werk auseinandersetzen, kam es zu diesem angesprochenen fruchtbaren Staunen. Wieso ist nämlich die Kröte bei Wagner in den Tiefen der alberich'schen Unterwelt? Denn im chinesischen Mythos ist es gegenteilig: nach der dortigen Überlieferung hat der Krieger Hou ǎ das Lebenselixier bekommen, doch seine böse Frau trinkt es ihm weg und flieht danach auf den Mond. Dort wird sie zur Strafe in eine Kröte verwandelt. Bei Mondfinsternis tötet sie dieses Gestirn, indem sie es auffrisst.

Es hätte keinen Sinn gehabt, den beiden Mythen in ihren jeweiligen Wertgegebenheiten im Sinne eines universalistischen Diskurses nur die Bedeutung einer Ausgangskonstellation zuzugestehen. Die chinesischen Studentinnen wollten ja Wagners mythische Wahrheit begreifen – zumal auch als Musikerinnen – ohne dabei auf den Wert eigener Herkunft verzichten zu müssen.

Die Reflexion des Eigenen und der Wunsch nach dem Erkennen des bisher Unbekannten erfordern eine intensive Einfühlung, aufgrund derer jede einzelne Wertigkeit in dieser bestehen kann – eben als jeweilige ganz eigene „Beschränkung“. Denn, so Edith Stein, „nicht nur dem re-

flektierenden Blick erschließt sich dieser Wertbereich. Nicht nur die gewonnene, sondern (vielleicht noch in weiterem Umfange) die noch nicht reflektierte Erkenntnis ist als Wert gefühlt, und dieses Wertfühlen ist die Quelle des Erkenntnisstrebens.“ (Stein 2005, 125f) Gerade im Hinblick auf künstlerisches Denken und Handeln ist das Erfühlen eines noch nicht erkannten Wertes von grundlegender Bedeutung, zumal hier auch die emotionale Komponente des Künstlertums aufs Höchste angesprochen wird, was im Fremdsprachenunterricht als in höchstem Maße motivationsfördernd eingesetzt werden kann. Im Lerngeschehen mit den chinesischen Musikstudentinnen zeigte sich denn auch, dass ein künstlerisch grundgelegtes Werteinfühlen auch dort zum Tragen kommt, wo gerade durch die Kunst ein Symbol nochmals zu einer ganz anderen Evidenz führt. Aufgrund der Erfahrungen mit den Chinesischen und den wagner'schen Kröten wurden die Studentinnen vor einer Exkursion nach Wien nämlich gefragt, ob es im Stephansdom Abbilder dieser Tiere gäbe. Allgemeines und überzeugtes Verneinen war die Antwort. Und umso größer entwickelte sich das Staunen vor der Kanzel Meister Pilgrams, an deren Brüstung Kröten hinauf- und hinabwandern. Sie sind das Symbol des guten oder bösen Lebens – oben sitzt der Wächter, welcher die einen hineinlässt, die anderen aber wieder nach unten scheucht. In den Kröten evidiert sich hier der Wert des Lebens an sich und auch jener eines guten Lebens im christlichen Sinne. Das Staunen der Chinesinnen wuchs noch, als sie hörten, dass die Kröte in der mitteleuropäischen Tradition auf Grund einer gefühlten Ähnlichkeit Symbol für die Gebärmutter ist, welcher als Biotop des werdenden Lebens mit all seinem Wert wieder ein Eigenwert zukommt.

Wäre die Einfühlung in solchen Fällen einem Bedürfnis nach Relativierung verpflichtet, so würde damit die Verständnislosigkeit zur angestrebten Notwendigkeit. Dies hätte zumal in einer Auseinandersetzung mit Äußerungen der Kunst fatale Folgen, zumal für Menschen wie die Musikstudentinnen, welche als Künstlerinnen Kunst in deren jeweiligem Wert zu erkennen und zu vermitteln bestrebt sind.

Es ist an dieser Stelle – zur Vorbeugung von Missverständnissen – mit Nachdruck festzuhalten, dass die Feststellung eines Ausgangswertes noch keineswegs die Bewertung der Inhalte eines solchen beinhaltet. Einfühlung ist demnach noch keineswegs als ein Akt der Toleranz oder Akzeptanz zu begreifen. In diesem Sinne ist mit Edith Stein das Erfassen von Werten selbst als ein positiver Wert anzusehen. Das Beispiel der „Kröten“ kann natürlich als durchaus unproblematisch angesehen werden. Es gilt aber dennoch gerade hier: weder die wagner'sche, noch die chinesische, noch die pilgram'sche Kröte ist „relativ“ wertvoll; jede ist in ihrem Zusammenhang gleichsam „vollkommen wertvoll“, womit auch die Beschränkung dieser vollkommenen Wertheit evident ist.

Im Fremdsprachenunterricht, welcher das „kulturelle Bedürfnis nach der anderen Sprache“ anregen will geht es daher ganz gewiss darum, die einzelnen Beschränkungen als sie selbst bestehen zu lassen und somit eine individuelle Auseinandersetzung zu ermöglichen, welche dann eben in ein Verständnis der jeweiligen Beschränktheit mündet. Übereinstimmungen, welche über die rein lexikalische des Wortes „Kröte“ (chinesisch übrigens 蟾蜍 = [chánchú] hinausgehen – wobei diese lexikalische Übereinstimmung auch hinsichtlich ihrer Beschränkung zu befragen ist – kann im unterrichtlichen Geschehen, welches als Prozess angesehen wird, keine Bedeutung zukommen, denn sie wäre die endgültig-statische Beschränkung auf ausschließlich sie selbst und würde demnach einen prozessual-weiterführenden persönlichen Umgang mit den

individuellen Beschränkungen an ein unerwünschtes Ende bringen. Zudem ist mit Paul Feyerabend zu beobachten: „Übereinstimmung mit den Tatsachen, Kohärenz sind schließlich Dinge, die die Forschung produziert – also kann man sie nicht zu Voraussetzungen der Forschung machen.“ (Feyerabend 1984, 151) Im Falle der Lehre und Forschung im Bereich der Fremdsprachenvermittlung wäre zu ergänzen, dass Übereinstimmung ebenso nicht zum Endziel erhoben werden kann, weil die Frage, wer und was mit wem und womit übereinstimmen soll nicht individuell, also lernendenzentriert gestellt werden kann. Wenn Ausgangssprache und Zielsprache in ihrer jeweiligen Kultürlichkeit erhalten werden sollen –und auch dies ist ein unterrichtliches Ziel, keineswegs eine Art Kulturtransfusion – dann ist Übereinstimmung nicht das Ziel, sondern das individuelle Erlebnis von „Überschneidungsflächen“, auf welchen das lernende Subjekt ein hohes Maß an „Einfühlung“ an sich selbst wahrnimmt. Diese Einfühlung ist nicht messbar und trotzdem –oder gerade deswegen – nicht relativ. Sie ist nämlich durch das Individuum und dessen unvergleichlichen Wert bestimmt. In höchstem Maße ist daher Odo Marquard zuzustimmen, wenn er feststellt: „Die modernen Wissenschaften werden exakt, d.h. zu experimentellen Wissenschaften, durch Neutralisierung jener lebensweltlichen Traditionen, in denen ihre Wissenschaftler stehen, also durch methodischen Verzicht auf ihre geschichtlichen Herkunftswelten.“ (Marquard 2003, 175)

So mag es denn sein, dass die Wissenschaft von der Fremdsprachenvermittlung – sei's drum – keine moderne,

weil keine exakte Wissenschaft ist. Ihre Methoden in Lehre und Forschung gehen von jeweils unverwechselbaren Subjekten aus: dem lernenden und dem lehrenden Menschen. Demnach sind ihre Mittel und Ergebnisse auch nicht relativ, sondern in hohem Maße menschlich!

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# Bloß ein Ereignis seiner selbst oder doch eines des Lebens? Ludwig Wittgenstein und Ferdinand Ebner über den Tod. Eine Étude

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## Abstract

Steht der Tod als Nichtereignis eines Lebens einsam für sich, oder ist er aufgehoben in einer grundlegenden Ich-Du-Beziehung, welche das Leben des Menschen erst zum Menschenleben macht? Die Stellung zu diesem Fragenkomplex zeigt die Möglichkeiten von Ebners dialogphilosophischen Bemühungen und eines „solus ipse“ als Ausgangspunkt wittgenstein'schen Denkens. Es fragt sich, in wieweit die beiden Positionen zueinander geführt werden können und sollen.

„Media in vita morte sumus“. So lautet des Initium einer dem sanktgaller Dichtergelehrten Notker Balbulus (840-912) zugeschriebenen Antiphon. Um 1200 zitiert Hartmann von Aue diese Beginnzeile in seiner Verserzählung „Der arme Heinrich“, hinzufügend:

„daz diutet sich alsus,  
daz wir in dem tōde sweben,  
so wir aller beste wænen leben.“  
(Hartmann 1966, V 93ff)

In diesen Überlegungen erscheint das mit seiner eigenen Mitte im Tode schwebende Leben gleichsam als Ereignis dieses Todes, in dessen scheinbare Permanenz es eingebettet wird. Dies ist so ausweglos-tragisch nicht, wie es ein erster Eindruck vermittelt. Denn dieses „todesschwebende Leben“ ereilt ebendiesen Tod, sodass der Tod die Lebenden eben letztendlich nicht als Totalvernichter ereilen kann. Folgerichtig deutet Hartmann den anfänglich eingeführten Gedanken derart, indem er seine Erzählung letztendlich als einen Sieg der Liebe und damit des Lebens gestaltet.

Dieser selbstredend christlich gedachte Lebenstriumph steht im scharfen Gegensatz zu einer der wirkmächtigsten Beschreibungen des Verhältnisses zwischen Leben und Tod, nämlich jener des Epikouros, welcher auch dem Mittelalter gut bekannt war und der durchaus tröstlich meint: „Ὁ θάνατος οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς· τὸ γὰρ διαλυθὲν ἀναισθητεῖ, τὸ δ' ἀναισθητοῦν οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς.“ (Diogenes Laertius X, 139).

Der Grieche konstatiert bei jenen, welche anderer Ansicht sind und deshalb Todesfurcht empfinden ein falsches Götterverständnis.

Als deutliche Schärfung des epikouräischen Gedankens erscheint Ludwig Wittgensteins Feststellung: „Der Tod ist kein Ereignis des Lebens.“ (TLP 6.4311) Das Radikalere tritt zutage in einer grundlegenden Feststellung des Nichtseins zum Sein des Anderen. Diese Qualität eines Nichtseins mag dem Tod als dem Auslöscher alles Seins angemessen sein. Aber das Leben als Sein schlechthin, wie kann ihm, und sei es nur im Hinblick auf etwas scheinbar Gegensätzliches, eine Nichtseinsqualität zugesprochen werden? Hilft es, sich von Nicolaus Cusanus sagen zu lassen: „Mirabilis Deus, in quo non-esse est essendi necessitas.“ Dies deswegen, „nam non-esse cum possit esse per omnipotentem, utique et actu, quia absolutum posse est actu in omnipotente“ und „quia non-esse in tuo posse esse habeat.“ (Kues 2002, §25-29)

Nichtsein muss also sein können, um Nichtsein sein zu können. Die Differenz von Sein und Nichtsein wird im notwendigen Seinkönnen aufgehoben. Diese Vorstellung ist für's Erste wohl viel weniger tröstlich als jene des Epikouros, eben wegen dieser Differenzaufhebung. Denn im Sein durch das Könnensein sind Leben und Tod gleichermaßen ein Ereignis des seienden Menschen.

Nun denn ja: derart ist der cusanische Seinsnotwendigkeitsbegriff hilfreich, Epikouros' und Wittgensteins Standpunkte zu befragen, besonders des Österreichers weiteren Gedankenschritt: „Den Tod erlebt man nicht.“

Genügt das, um getröstet zu sein, zumal unter der Voraussetzung eines Todeswissens? Hinsichtlich des Erlebens „mag man die Frage aufwerfen, ob ein Individuum, das Bewusstsein hat, dadurch nichts anderes sei als ein ‚Zuschauer‘ beim Ablauf seines Lebens und auch des Weltgeschehens, in welches seine Existenz eingebettet und verflochten erscheint; ob nicht vielmehr die Tatsache des Bewusstseins die Aufforderung zum ‚Mittun‘ impliziere, eine Manifestation der ‚Freiheit‘ also sei. Ferner hat jedenfalls...der Mensch ein besonderes Erlebnis an seinesgleichen, das sich innerhalb seines Weiterlebens deutlich abhebt und in ihm nicht restlos aufgeht. Das Eigentliche dieses Erlebnisses ist nun,...daß der Mensch, der ein Wissen vom Tod hat, auch im Toten noch seinesgleichen erlebt.“ (Ebner 2009, 75f)

Wittgensteins österreichischer Zeitgenosse Ferdinand Ebner, wie jener Volksschullehrer in Niederösterreich, wiewohl bis zur Pensionierung, konstatiert beim Menschen eine grundsätzliche Möglichkeit ambivalenten Verhaltens bezüglich seines Umganges mit Leben und Tod. „Jeder hat die Gewißheit seines Sterbens, nur will nicht jeder vom Sterben wissen.“ (Ebner 2009, 178) Auf diese Weise kommt ihm das Verhältnis zu sich selbst und zu Gott abhanden und „er lebt ganz und gar in der Zeit und geht in der Zeitlichkeit dieses Lebens auf – und unter.“ Damit wird aber auch die vom Menschen eingemahnte Forderung nach Lebenssinn durch ihn selbst obsolet (Ebner 2009, 177f).

Ist dieses Obsoletwerdenlassen ein Akt, durch welchen sich ein Subjekt vor einem Erlebnis schützend zurückzieht, um der Seinshaftigkeit auch des Nichtseins und somit der Seinshaftigkeit von Leben und Tod nicht gewahr, von ihr nicht bedroht zu werden? Das wäre dann gemäß Ebner eine verhindernde Verweigerung eigener subjektiver Erlebnisfähigkeit durch Abwehr eines Erlebens. Denn: „Alles Erleben ist im erlebenden Subjekt...gleichsam ‚vorgebil-

det...Allem Erleben liegt im Subjekt ein Bedürfnis zugrunde, dem das Erlebnis selber – in seiner Objektivität und seinem Vonaußenkommen – entspricht oder auch nicht entspricht.“ (Ebner 2009, 56)

Verweigerung des Erlebens bedeutet aber eine Verweigerung einer Form des Seins. Denn gemäß Ebner gibt es eine Art des Seins als „Sein der Welt und der Dinge in ihr, das von der philosophischen Besonnenheit als Erlebtwerden erkannt wird.“ (Ebner 2009, 140)

Ist demnach von Erlebnisverweigerung zu sprechen, welche noch dadurch auf die Spitze getrieben ist, als der Ereignischarakter ja ausschließlich im Hinblick auf das Leben verneint wird und keineswegs auf jegliches Andere bezogen? Das ließe nämlich allenthalben die wiewohl seltsame Deutung zu, der Tod sei bloß ein Ereignis des Menschen, und dies lebensunabhängig. Wie könnte denn sonst ein Mensch über seinen Tod wissen – und dass er dies tut liegt auch für Wittgenstein schließlich auf der Hand.

„Daß...die Erscheinungen des Todes, der Geburt & des Geschlechtslebens. Kurz alles was der Mensch jahraus jahrein um sich wahrnimmt, in mannigfaltiger Weise mit einander verknüpft, in seinem Denken (seiner Philosophie) & seinen Gebräuchen *aufreten* <eine Rolle spielen> wird, ist selbstverständlich oder ist eben das was wir wirklich wissen & interessant ist.“ (Rothhaupt 2011, §133)

Hier wird demnach der Todesgewissheit keineswegs mit Wissensverweigerung begegnet. Aber ein solches Wissen scheint nicht fruchtbar werden zu können, da man „den eigenen Tod nur voraussehen und vorausschauend beschreiben nicht als Gleichzeitiger von ihm berichten kann.“ (Rothhaupt 2011, §82)

Diese gewiss einsichtige Bemerkung Wittgensteins belegt den lebensunabhängigen Ereignischarakter des Todes für den Menschen. Das vorausschauende Beschreiben ist jedoch letztendlich eine Fähigkeit, welche zu bestimmter Zeit sucht, was in dieser nur vorausgesehen werden kann. Dies wäre die Aufgabe der Epiker. Deren „Sprache der Voraussicht“ ist aber mit Notwendigkeit eine dunkle „und für die wenigsten verständlich.“ (Rothhaupt 2011, §82)

Wittgenstein setzt hier vergleichend die Beschreibung des Ganzen eines Menschenlebens mit jenem einer bestimmten Kultur und von deren Eigenständigkeit bis zum todbringenden Höhepunkt in Eines. Bemerkenswerterweise handelt es sich dabei um Themenkomplexe, welche gemäß Wittgenstein „der abendländischen Philosophie verloren“ sind (Rothhaupt 2011, §82). Staunen macht es, dass etwas von Wittgenstein als solches bezeichnetes Interessantes und von uns Gewußtes für ihn ein Gegensatz der Kunst ist, weil die Philosophie dergleichen nicht zu handhaben vermag. Staunen deshalb, weil Wittgenstein sein eigenes philosophisches Nichtkönnen im Können der Kunst – er macht es mit Beethoven und Goethe individuell benennbar – aufgehoben sieht. Und gibt ihm nicht Hartmann von Aue recht, wenn er zu Beginn seines „Armen Heinrich“ erklärt:

„Er nam im manige schouwe  
an miselichen buochen.  
daran begunde suochen  
ob er iht des vunde  
dâ mite er swære stunde senfter machen  
und sô gewanten sachen  
daz gotes êren töhte  
und dâ mite er sich möhte

gelieben den liuten.  
nu beginnet er in diuten  
nu rede die er schreiben vant.“  
(Hartmann 1966, V 6-17)

Beachtenswerter Weise baut der Dichter die Fiktion auf, dass er etwas vorgefundenes Geschriebenes nun selbst schreibend für die Lesenden „deutet“. Er spannt ein dialogisch-trialogisches Netz vom „Vorgefundenen“ zu sich, von sich zu den Lesenden und somit von den Lesenden zum „Vorgefundenen“. In diesem dialogisch-trialogischen Netz ist das Thema von Tod, Liebe und Leben abhandelbar.

Es kann gefragt werden, ob Wittgenstein nach einem dialogischen Netz Sehnsucht empfindet, welche er mit den Begriffen „Philosophie“ und „Epiker“ zwar objektiviert, aber sie durch seine Ansicht über Beethoven und Goethe ebenso als subjektiv-individuelle Ich-Du-Beziehung ausweist? Eine Bejahung dieser Frage würde ihn nahe an Ebner heranzuführen. Jener ist ja – noch vor Martin Buber – der Pionier einer dialogischen Ich-Du-Philosophie. Es ist diese ebner'sche philosophische Denkweise, welche zum Schluss kommt, dass der Mensch ein besonderes Erlebnis an seinesgleichen hat und demnach einen toten Menschen gleichermaßen als seinesgleichen erlebt. Sind Beethoven und Goethe als „Epiker“ für Wittgenstein in dieser Weise als Verstorbene in ihrem Menschsein, welches für ihn Besonderes darstellt, erlebbar? Ließe sich anhand der Unterschiedlichkeit zwischen der Feststellung im „Tractatus“ und der Gedanken im „Kringel-Buch“ jener oft beschworene Unterschied zwischen dem „frühen“ und dem „späten“ Wittgenstein manifest machen?

Es wäre möglich, die „Tractatus“-Aussage vom Nichtereignishaften des Todes weiter auf die Spitze zu treiben, indem gesagt werden könnte: auch der Tod eines Toten – Beethoven, Goethe – ist kein Ereignis des Lebens, denn ich erlebe die Beiden ja nicht als in ihrem Tod und Totsein, sondern als Lebender in deren lebendiger Vorhandenheit als „Epiker“. So überspitzt ist diese Ansicht als eine im Wesen des Religiösen verankerte Aussagemöglichkeit keineswegs. Der Religionshistoriker Mircea Eliade begründet sie darin, dass der Tod für einen Verstorbenen „sowohl als ontologische wie gesellschaftliche Veränderung der Lebensform“ begreifbar ist. (Eliade 1998, 160)

Philosophisch lässt sich diese einem religiösen Bewusstsein angemessene Sichtweise vielleicht mit einer sensiblen Anwendung eines „ontologischen Vergehens-Begriffs“ veranschaulichen, wie dies Christian Kanzian in seiner „Alltagsontologie“ tut, um am Ende die wahrhaftige „Merkwürdigkeit“ zu konstatieren, dass „die personale individuelle Form auch in Anwendung dieses ontologischen Vergehens-Begriffs nicht als vergänglich ausgewiesen werden kann.“ (Kanzian 2009, 329)

Demgemäß wäre der allen Tod vorausschauende Epiker als er selbst in seiner Individualität nicht als vergänglich auszuweisen. Dieser kanzian'schen „Merkwürdigkeit“ haftet auch das Wesen des Unvollendeten, weil ontologisch nicht Beschreibbaren an. „Die Kenntniß der Individuen läßt sich nicht vollenden. Jedes Individuum ist ein neues Wort für Universum“ heißt es dazu bei Friedrich Schlegel (Schlegel 1991, 101).

Was in unserem Erkennen sich als unvollendet im Sinne dieser unserer Erkenntnis erweist, das ist aber nun was? Vielleicht doch nicht „tot“ im Sinne eines Lebensereignisses? Wie können wir aber dann mit Wittgenstein „wirklich wissen“ um die „Erscheinungen des Todes, der Geburt...“? Und dies „jahraus jahrein“, also stets mitten im Leben? Ist demnach das Leben ein mit Hilfe des Epikers voraus-

schaubares Ereignis des jahraus jahrein „gewussten“ und „interessanten“ Todes? Und wäre umgekehrt dieses Todeswissen wie jedes andere Wissen nicht doch ein Jahraus-Jahre-in-Ereignis unseres Lebens? Lassen sich nicht die Negierung des Ereignishaften und die gesuchte Beziehung zum Epiker, welcher doch eigentlich nur ein Jahraus-Jahre-in-Vorausschauen artikuliert, auf einen „objektiven“ Ausgangspunkt des Denkens zurückführen und dort begründen, einen Ausgangspunkt, welchen Ferdinand Ebner als „Ich-Einsamkeit“ beschreibt? In ihr wird selbst, die Idee des Göttlichen“ zur bloßen „Projektion des Ichs“, des einsamen (Ebner 2009, 29).

Diese Projektion erkennt Gott selbstredend nicht in dessen Personalität eines „Du“ schlechthin. Und dieses – so wie jedes – „Du“ ist das, wonach das „Ich“ sich in seinem Erleben – auch jenem des Todes – auszurichten sehnt (Ebner 2009, 76). Aus dieser Sichtweise heraus kritisiert Ebner die mystische Setzung des Lebens Gottes durch mein „Ich“, wie sie etwa bei Angelus Silesius zutage tritt, welcher das Sein Gottes in aller Konsequenz – bis hin zum Zunichtwerden Gottes – vom Leben oder Zunichtwerden meines „Ich“ abhängig macht (Ebner 2009, 140).

Der von Ebner also kritisierte schlesische mystische Barockdichter gehört aber vielleicht doch bezeichnenderweise zu jenen Autoren, von denen Wittgenstein feststellt, dass man angesichts ihrer niemals eine Versuchung zur Anmaßung fühlen kann (Wittgenstein 2000, 41).

Das „solus ipse“ als Denkausgangspunkt sowie als Grundlage göttlichen Seins kann demnach wittgensteinisch gedacht bescheiden machen und somit weiterführend wirken. Dies umso mehr, als „Bescheidenheit eine religiöse Angelegenheit“ für Wittgenstein ist (Wittgenstein 2000, 35).

Diese Ansicht fände auch eine Zustimmung im ebner'schen Denken, in welchem die „rechte Demut des Geistes“, von welcher bei Wittgenstein hier unbedingt gesprochen werden kann, „in der Liebe“ liegt (Ebner 2009, 169).

Ist es im Falle Wittgensteins und hinsichtlich seines Denkens über den Tod eine zumindest im ebner'schen Sinne noch nicht fruchtbar gewordene Liebe, weil Demut und Bescheidenheit „in solo ipso“ gefangen bleiben? Denn, so Ebner, „wer sich selbst im Lichte einer Idee sieht – und mag er sie auch bis zur Idee des Göttlichen überspannen –, sieht sich noch lange nicht.“ Er kann sein „Ich“ nämlich in kein lebendiges Verhältnis zum „Du“ bringen (Ebner 2009, 169).

Für Sojemanden bleibt das icheinsame Leben todesereignislos, während für den Duschenden Leben und Tod die verschwisterten Gegebenheiten für den „Durchbruch“ in die Ewigkeit sind (Ebner 2009, 29).

Quid ergo? Lieben, Leben, Sterben ist eine trinitarisch-trialogische Kunst, die „ars amandi, vivendi et moriendi“, welche ein „Wissen darüber hervorbringt, daß alle Menschen gestern geboren wurden und morgen sterben werden, in der Zwischenzeit ihre Rolle im großen Spiel des Lebens möglichst gut, unaufdringlich spielen sollen“, wie es der österreichische Kulturhistoriker Friedrich Heer ausdrückt (Heer 1996, 114).

In wieweit ist diese Nonchalance im Wissen in Beziehung zu bringen mit Wittgensteins „selbstverständlichem wirklichem Wissen“ von Tod und Geburt? Bleibt dieses

letztendlich doch zurückgescheucht in die Ich-Einsamkeit, wo das Todesereignis unwahrgenommen bleibt? „Wie furchtbar ist das Sterben für viele Menschen, die in ihrem Leben nie gelernt, nie erfahren haben, ‚das Zeitliche zu segnen‘, da dieses ihr Leben ungereift blieb.“ (Heer 2003, 330) Ungereift in seiner Icheinsamkeit, so ist diese Aussage Friedrich Heers hier zu begreifen.

Also nochmals: quid ergo? Spricht Ferdinand Ebner ein endgültiges Urteil mit seiner Feststellung: „Ob das Ich in seiner Einsamkeit sich selbst im Auge behält und die Welt bewußt entwickelt oder umgekehrt bloß die Welt, praktisch oder theoretisch ins Auge faßt und unbewußt sich selbst dabei entwickelt, beides läuft auf ein- und dasselbe hinaus: auf den geistigen Tod des Menschen. Der ist freilich in Wirklichkeit kein eigentlicher Tod, sondern ein ewiges Sterben, in dem das Geistige im Menschen niemals mehr zum Leben kommt – und doch auch niemals sterben kann.“ (Ebner 2009, 123)

Als Wittgenstein von Dr. Bevan hörte, dass er nur mehr wenige Tage zu leben habe, erwiderte er: „Gut!“

War das die letzte Mitteilung des Ich-Einsamen, welcher sich damit bereit machte zum ebner'schen „Durchbruch“ in den ewigen Ich-Du-Dialog – wenn Wittgenstein der Frau seines Arztes als allerletztes die Bitte vortrug „sagen Sie allen, daß ich ein wundervolles Leben gehabt habe“, eine Bitte, welche zur Gewährung der Ich-Du-Bezogenheit bedarf? Dürfen wir vielleicht dann denken, dass das Leben ein Ereignis des Todes ist und der Tod damit zwar kein Ereignis des Lebens, aber durch das Seinkönnen seines Nichtseinkönnens doch Sein und Ereignis in unserem Leben *hat* und sich auf diese seine Weise mit dem Leben verbindet zum „Durchbruch“ des Menschen in die Ewigkeit?

„Media in vita morte sumus“? Sind wir mitten im Leben auf dem Aufbruch zum „Durchbruch“?

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# Reliabilism and Relativism

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## Abstract

The generality problem is one of the most pressing problems for process reliabilism. This paper proposes a broadly relativist solution to the generality problem. While the basic idea behind the solution is from Mark Heller (1995), the solution defended here departs from Heller on a crucial point. Because of this departure, my solution avoids a serious problem with Heller's solution.

Process reliabilism says that a belief is justified iff the belief-forming process that produced it is sufficiently reliable (see Goldman 1979). But *types* of belief-forming processes are reliable, not token belief-forming processes, and any token belief-forming process is a token of a number of different belief-forming process types. Take my belief that there is an oak tree in front of me. The process by which this belief was produced is a token of the following types: perception of a visual stimulus, perception of a visual stimulus in normal conditions, perception of an object shaped like an oak tree, and so on.<sup>1</sup> Which of these process types is the relevant process type? The question is important because, first, absent an answer to this question process reliabilism is an incomplete theory of justification and, second, it may be that some of the process types are reliable whereas others aren't. Call this the 'generality problem'.<sup>2</sup>

I will propose a broadly relativist solution to the problem. According to this solution, whether a given process type is relevant is relative to the context. This has the consequence that a belief may count as reliable and so as justified relative to one context but not relative to another. While Mark Heller (1995) defends a similar solution, the solution defended here differs in that it appeals to a far broader notion of context. As we will see, this means my solution avoids a serious problem with Heller's solution. I start by outlining the relativist solution. I then contrast my solution with Heller's.

## Relativism and Generality

Earl Conee and Richard Feldman (1998) argue that a reliabilist solution to the generality problem must provide a general principle we can use to identify the relevant belief-forming process type instantiated by each belief-forming process token. Consider one of their candidates (which they credit to Alston 1995 and Baergen 1995):

PRINCIPLE: The relevant type for any belief-forming process token *t* is the psychological kind that is part of the best psychological explanation of the belief that results from *t* (1998, 17).

It is plausible that PRINCIPLE will narrow down the set of relevant belief-forming process types. But, as Conee and Feldman argue, there will almost always be more than one actually operative psychologically real type for each belief-forming process token (12). For instance, the various be-

lief-forming process types instantiated by the process by which I formed my belief that there is an oak tree in front of me - perception of a visual stimulus, perception of a visual stimulus in normal conditions, perception of an object shaped like an oak tree - are all psychologically real. Because all of these types seem good candidates for explaining my belief, PRINCIPLE does not solve the generality problem.

There are two problems with Conee and Feldman's argument here. First, it is unclear why a reliabilist solution to the generality problem has to provide a general principle. Consider an example from Heller (1995, 503). My car is reliable. When I turn the key, it almost always starts. So the process by which my car started this morning is a reliable process. This token process is an instance of any number of process types: starting in normal conditions, starting after the key has been turned, starting in the morning, and so on. But this doesn't mean I can't distinguish my car from cars that don't start reliably. Similarly, the generality problem doesn't mean we can't distinguish reliable belief-forming processes from processes that are not reliable.

Second, whether a candidate explanation of some set of phenomena is the best explanation of that set of phenomena is plausibly a context-relative matter.<sup>3</sup> To see why, consider a mundane example (taken from Greco 2008, 420). A car has crashed at a roundabout. The driver of the car was fed up waiting for his chance to move, and got impatient. This isn't an isolated incident. Due to bad traffic, a lot of cars crash at this roundabout. Here are two candidate explanations of the crash. First, the car crashed because of the impatience of the driver. Second, the car crashed because of bad traffic. Which of these two explanations is the best? It seems obvious that it depends on what the explanation is *for*. A jury charged with determining who was responsible for the crash should find the first explanation far more important than the second. But someone charged with improving transport in the city should find the second far more important than the first. In short, which of our explanations is best depends on the context. I want to emphasise two features of the sorts of contexts I have in mind. I will call contexts with these two features 'broad contexts'.

The first feature is that these contexts are objective. What is at issue is whether a candidate explanation really is the best given the purposes for which it is needed, not whether anyone thinks it is the best. This is important because we can be wrong about whether, given our purposes, one candidate explanation is better than another. This is most obvious in cases where we are unaware of

<sup>1</sup> Adler and Levin (2002, 90-4) argue that these descriptions refer to the same process, but at different levels of generality, thereby solving the generality problem. I set aside this solution here, but see Comesaña (2006, 35-7) for criticism.

<sup>2</sup> While e.g. Goldman (1979, 11), recognises the problem, it is most forcefully stated in Conee and Feldman (1998).

<sup>3</sup> Further, causal explanation talk is generally taken to be context-sensitive (see e.g. Lewis 1986).

various candidate explanations. Whether the jury is aware that the driver behaved recklessly or not, the best explanation of the crash given their purposes is his reckless driving. It is because this is the best explanation that the jury should find the driver responsible for the crash.

Conee and Feldman say the reliabilist must provide a general principle for identifying the relevant belief-forming process type instantiated by each belief forming process token. The second feature is that broad contexts do not give us a complicated general principle which says, for each context, what the relevant belief-forming process type is in that context. If contexts were to give us such principles, it would have to be possible to identify some sort of 'function' from features of the context to the relevant belief-forming process type. Perhaps this can be done in simple cases, like our case of the car crash. But there is no reason to think it can be done in more complicated cases. Consider the financial crash in 2008. Whether a candidate explanation of why the financial crash happened is the best explanation depends on the context. In some contexts, an explanation that involves subprime mortgages will be the best. In other contexts, an explanation that involves the boom and bust cycles in contemporary capitalist economies will be the best. But it would be foolhardy to think there is a way of computing a function that will tell us which explanations will be best in which contexts. (Debates about what caused the financial crash can't be resolved just by figuring out what context we are in).

The picture that emerges is one on which whether a candidate explanation is the best explanation of some phenomenon is relative to the broad context. Applying this to the generality problem, the tentative solution is that the belief-forming process type instantiated by a given belief-forming process token is relative to the context.<sup>4</sup> This leads us to Heller, who defends a solution to the generality problem along these lines.

## Heller's Solution

Ravonda is looking through a window and has formed the belief that a postal worker is outside her front door (see Heller 1995, 509). Ravonda's belief-forming process instantiates a range of psychologically real belief-forming process types. What these types are depend on a combination of her internal mental processes and her external environment. For instance, if Ravonda is in normal conditions, her belief forming process instantiates the type 'visual perception of a postal worker-shaped object in normal conditions'. The reliabilist says that whether Ravonda's belief is justified depends on whether *the* belief forming process type that produced her belief is a reliable process. Heller points out that definite description phrases like "the belief forming process type" are, in general, context-sensitive (505). If I say "the cat is on the mat", the context in which I say this – the context of utterance – determines which cat is relevant. So Heller's view is that whether Ravonda's belief is justified depends on whether the belief-forming process type that is picked out by the context of utterance is reliable.

We can think of a conversational context as a concrete conversational situation in which the speakers make various conversational moves (see Lewis 1979). Those moves are made in order to further the speakers' perceived interests and purposes. At any point in the conversation, we can 'read off' various parameters from the context. One of these parameters will be the belief-forming process that the conversational participants have agreed to focus on. For instance, if the participants agree that Ravonda is in normal conditions, they may settle on the belief-forming process type 'visual perception of a postal worker-shaped object in normal conditions'. If this happens, then the phrase "the belief forming process that caused Ravonda's belief" refers to this belief-forming process type.

Conversational contexts, at least as they are usually understood, involve a mix of objective and subjective features. Some of the parameters that settle the reference of context-sensitive terms are clearly objective. For instance, if Saskia utters the sentence "I am tired", her context provides a 'speaker parameter' that determines the referent of "I" as Saskia. This doesn't change if Saskia is confused about her identity. In this sense, the speaker parameter is objective.

However, other parameters are clearly subjective. For instance, consider Ravonda again. Her belief-forming process instantiates various belief-forming process types that are psychologically real. Now imagine a conversational context in which the participants have a lot of false beliefs about how Ravonda formed her belief. While Ravonda is in normal conditions and has normally functioning perception, they take her to be in abnormal conditions, and to not have perceptual abilities that are suited to these abnormal conditions. Because of their false beliefs, the participants agree to focus on a belief-forming process type – say, 'visual perception of a postal worker-shaped object in abnormal conditions' – that is not instantiated by Ravonda's actual belief-forming process. If Heller's view is that the conversational context settles which belief-forming process type is relevant, he seems forced to say that the context provides a 'belief-forming process parameter' that determines the referent of "the belief-forming process that produced Ravonda's belief" as 'visual perception of a postal worker-shaped object in abnormal conditions'. There are no features of the *conversational* context that could determine any other belief-forming process type because, by stipulation, the conversational participants are wrong about how Ravonda formed her belief. Thus, this particular parameter is clearly subjective, in the sense that the value of the parameter depends on what the speakers think the world is like, not what it is actually like. Because, of this, Heller's view gets the wrong results. What we want to say is that the context selects one of the belief-forming process types actually instantiated by Ravonda's belief-forming process. But, if we focus on conversational contexts, we can't say that.

This problem disappears if we replace Heller's conversational contexts with my broad contexts. Given their purposes (evaluating Ravonda's belief), the best explanation why she has her belief is that she has had a visual perception of a postal worker-shaped object in normal conditions. That the conversational participants aren't aware that this is the best explanation is beside the point. The relevant belief-forming process type is the type the participants should be considering, given their purposes, not the type they actually consider. So the way to modify Heller's view to get the right results is to replace conversational contexts with broad contexts.

<sup>4</sup> The cognoscenti will wonder whether this solution is 'contextualist' or 'relativist'. Two comments. First, the usual way of distinguishing contextualism and relativism is at the level of semantics. But the view here is that whether a candidate explanation has the *property* of being the best explanation of a set of phenomena depends on the context. Second, I am neutral over whether these properties are best thought of as relational (explanation 1 has the property of being best relative to this purpose, explanation 2 the property of being best relative to that context) or genuinely relative. While making sense of the latter option takes work, for a clear exposition and defence see Einheuser (2008).



## Summing Up

I have argued that the generality problem can be solved if we say that whether the belief-forming process that produced a belief is a reliable process depends on the context. It follows that the belief may be reliable, and so justified, relative to one context, but not relative to another. Thus, this paper has provided an indirect argument for a sort of epistemic relativism on which whether a belief has the property of being justified is relative to the context. Insofar as process reliabilism is the best theory of justification, and insofar as this relativist solution is the best solution to the generality problem, we have reason to adopt this sort of epistemic relativism.

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# Epistemological Relativism, Transcended Perspectives and “Thick” Experiences

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## Abstract

Epistemological relativism seems to feature prominently in the so-called ‘Strong Programme’ in the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge, which is particularly associated with Barry Barnes and David Bloor. In their influential paper *Relativism, Rationalism and the Sociology of Knowledge* (1982), Barnes and Bloor make an important and fundamental argument for relativism, which was more recently criticised by Harvey Siegel (2011). This paper deals with the more constructive components of Siegel’s attempt to reject the Strong Programme’s relativism, revolving around the core idea of a ‘roomier’ perspective, which is supposed to yield non-relative judgements. Taking these considerations as a starting point, this paper aims to outline an account on the possibility of non-relative judgements, which draws substantially on the human being’s capacity to reflect and to have ‘thick’ experiences.

## 1. Introduction

In this paper I discuss the Strong Programme’s (SP) epistemological relativism as defended by Barry Barnes and David Bloor in their influential paper *Relativism, Rationalism and the Sociology of Knowledge* (1982). In the first part I will discuss Harvey Siegel’s attempt to reject SP’s relativistic position by refuting an argument he considers to be the source of SP’s relativism. On this basis, I will, in the second part, seek to offer an account on how to embrace the impossibility of achieving a ‘perspectiveless perspective’ and to hold onto the possibility of non-relative judgements. Reconciling these two claims, I will argue, requires taking into account the subject’s reflective capacities and ‘thick’ experiences, which render the adoption of different perspectives possible in the first place.

## 2. The Strong Programme’s ‘context-boundedness’ claim and Siegel’s NTTR-argument

The Strong Programme’s (SP) ‘context-boundedness’ claim (as I will call it) is considered to be the central passage expressing SP’s commitment to epistemological relativism. According to this claim, a relativist accepts that her evaluations are inevitably context-bound and that her preferences cannot be expressed in absolute, context-independent terms. Further, she embraces the fact that every justification eventually terminates at some principle or standard that only has local credibility (see Barnes and Bloor 1982, 27).

In giving an account of the precise argument underlying the SP’s ‘context-boundedness’-claim, Harvey Siegel (2011) puts forward the following argument:

No Transcendence:

- (1) Non-relative judgements require the possibility of getting outside of, freeing oneself from the influence of, or transcending one’s perspective, framework, or conceptual scheme.
- (2) It is not possible to escape or transcend one’s conceptual scheme. There is no ‘perspectiveless perspective’ from which one can judge.
- (3) Therefore, relativism. (Siegel 2011, 51)

This “No Transcendence, therefore Relativism” or NTTR-argument is supposed to reflect the SP’s denial of the pos-

sibility of context-independent evaluations. What is crucial to Siegel’s transformation of SP’s claim into the NTTR-argument is the shift of focus involved: from the context-boundedness of all and every judgement to the impossibility of adopting a ‘perspectiveless perspective’. This shift, in fact, results from Siegel’s usage of a metaphorically loaded notion of ‘perspective’, which helps to unravel and sharpen up SP’s epistemological relativism. However, what is further established by this reference to the notion of ‘perspective’ is a reconfigured statement of the initial problem, and as such it is also a statement of the solution: If the problem is that we cannot transcend our perspectives (see premise (2)), the solution is that we can. Or this is at least what Siegel’s proposed way of refuting the NTTR-argument, as we will see below, suggests. In this sense, introducing the notion of ‘perspective’ paves the way not only for Siegel’s refutation of the NTTR-argument but also for his general anti-relativistic proposal: the postulation of a ‘roomier’-perspective, which is supposed to be sufficient to grant non-relative judgements.

In order to assess Siegel’s attempt to refute the NTTR-argument, we need to clarify the precise meaning of the notion of ‘perspective’ both as employed in the NTTR-argument, as well as in Siegel’s proposed solution. For the notion of ‘perspective’ is – by virtue of various possible metaphorical exploitations – a semantically multi-faceted one. Its different semantic layers are to be located along a continuum between a rather literal sense of ‘perspective’ and a maximally metaphorically extended, or Kantian notion of the concept. The former is rooted in the realm of sensuous perception and, as such, involves the possibility of *freely altering* one’s perspective (see Conant 2005, 15). The latter, on the contrary, amounts to the Kantian notion of a transcendental cognitive framework providing the very conditions for the possibility of experience. The concept designates the perspective we are being thrown into due to the unchangeable and universally shared structure of the human mind and is, as such, *inescapable*.

Obviously, the notion of perspective as employed in the NTTR-argument – if it is to reflect SP’s ‘context-boundedness’ claim – cannot be identified with either of these two ends, but lies somewhere along the continuum. Just where exactly it is to be located seems to be largely determined by the extent to which one grants the perspective a certain authority upon the subject. This amounts to the question whether the SP’s notion of perspective involves *essential inescapability*. Answering this question will

be the aim of the next section, which deals with Siegel's attempt to refute SP's argument for relativism.

### 3. Siegel's alleged refutation of the NTTR-argument

In arguing against the NTTR-argument, Siegel denies that one cannot transcend one's conceptual scheme by citing cases in which people do change their perspectives and conceptual schemes. This argumentative move is made possible by a preceding distinction between (a) transcending *all* perspectives and (b) transcending *any given* perspective (see Siegel 2011, 51). By means of this distinction, one can grant the uncontroversial claim that we cannot reach a 'perspectiveless perspective' while making sure that one can nevertheless overcome one perspective in favour of another. Employing the latter, substantially weaker notion of transcendence then paves the way for various 'counter-examples' that serve as a touchstone for the possibility of changing one's perspective, e.g. the child's possibility of modifying its understanding of the nature of numbers (Siegel 2011, 52). This example, alongside with various others, is supposed to serve as evidence for the possibility of 'transcending' one's perspective *in favour of another* perspective. And this weak sense of 'transcendence' is sufficient to defeat the NTTR-argument (see Siegel 2011, 53).

It is not entirely clear to me, however, in which way Siegel takes this weak sense of 'transcendence' to account for the possibility of non-relative judgements. Why, one might ask, would a SP-proponent have to be bothered by the uncontroversial fact that children *do* enhance their understanding of the nature of numbers? What is established is the *mere* possibility of altering one's perspectives. However, nothing expressed in the SP's 'context-boundedness'-claim seems to prevent a SP-proponent to concede just that. For the validity of the relativist's argument does not hinge on the impossibility of changing particular perspectives. In fact, the SP-proponent might be said to be very much aware of the possibility of changing one's perspective *as the possibility to merely change perspectives for one another*. And this is precisely the SP's point: not particular perspectives, but perspectives *as such* are inescapable. And for *this* reason, all our judgements are only valid within their respective context.

In order to avoid the charge of merely begging the question against the SP-relativist, Siegel has to put forward an argument according to which changing one's perspectives is *sufficient* for the possibility of non-relative judgements. Taking the relativistic challenge seriously, then, requires one to give an account on how we can (1) embrace the impossibility of the 'perspectiveless perspective' and, simultaneously, (2) insist on the possibility of non-relative judgements. In fact, I take Siegel's conception of the 'roomier perspective', which is supposed to yield non-relative judgements, as a fruitful, although tentative attempt to reconcile (1) and (2).

### 4. 'Roomier' perspectives, reflexivity and 'thick' experiences

According to Siegel, non-relative judgements do not require the possibility of achieving a 'perspectiveless perspective'. Instead, judging from a 'roomier' perspective is sufficient for arriving at non-relative evaluations:

[...] we can and regularly do 'transcend' our frameworks from the perspective of other, 'roomier' ones, in which

can fit both our earlier one and relevant rivals to it – and in this way fair, non-relative evaluations of both our judgements and the frameworks/perspectives from which they are made are possible. (Siegel 2011, 54)

What Siegel fails to address, however, is the question just *what* it is about these 'roomier' perspectives that renders non-relative judgments possible. In order to approach this question, it is necessary to take a closer look at those conditions that make a given subject's transition from one perspective to another possible. I take these conditions to be (1) the subject's capacity to reflect and (2) the intersectedness of different perspectives.

Human beings share the capacity to reflect upon their experiences, to make them the object of one's attention and to think *about* those experiences (see Korsgaard 1996, 92f). In this sense, human beings can gain distance from their experiences, and adopt a critical stance towards them, as the following thoughts suggest: "I perceive, and I find myself with a powerful glimpse to believe. But I back up and bring that impulse into view and then I have a problem. Shall I believe? Is this perception really a *reason* to believe?" (Korsgaard 1996, 93) However, exercising one's reflective capacity is not confined to the realm of particular perceptual experiences. Instead, it enables one to objectify whole perspectives and think *about* them. In fact, even the most encompassing, i.e. the Kantian notion of 'perspective' allows for the adoption of a distanced stance and enables us to view our way of experience *just as a perspective*, a perspective that yields experiences peculiar to human beings. Hence, I take the human beings capacity to reflect to be a necessary, albeit not sufficient condition for the possibility of adopting different perspectives. What is further required in order to account for the possibility of a subject's transition to other perspectives is an (at least minimally given) *intersection* or *overlap* of perspectives. Obviously, the interesting question then is, what it is about these perspectives that renders such an intersection possible.

I suggest that providing a satisfying answer to this question requires one to take into consideration the relation between a subject's various experiences and the very perspectives from which these experiences are made. In doing so, I want to draw on a version of the scheme/content distinction defended by Baghramian (1998), which seeks to account for the widely shared intuition that "our dealings with the world, whether through our perceptual experiences, thoughts or feelings, are always from within a perspective and are permeated by our concepts, by our interests and are informed by our location within a specific culture, history and language." (Baghramian 1998, 304) On this account, the content of a conceptual scheme is not an uncontaminated world, but the 'thick' experiences of our lives, i.e. the rich variety of lived experiences (Baghramian 1998, 303). It is emphasised that the particular perspectives from which our 'thick' experiences are made, are the very means by which we make sense of them. They enable us to cope with 'the world' by conceptualizing our lived experiences differently. These different ways of conceptualisation, in turn, bear on the way people act and conduct their lives, as Baghramian points out (1998, 304). However, as I take it, the perspective in question does not only perform the function of subsequently conceptualizing its content, i.e. lived experiences. Experiences *as thick experiences*, i.e. as a (possibly inextricable) entanglement of descriptive, evaluative, imaginative and affective elements, can also be considered as the product of one's adopted perspective – at least to a certain extent. In this sense, a given perspective seems to carry out a double function: it shapes one's experience as a thick experience and provides means to cope with these experiences.

Given this notion of thick experiences, in which way could these considerations bear upon the possibility of overlapping perspectives? First of all, what is suggested by this rich notion of experience is its entanglement with the very perspective from which it is made: Perspectives, it might be said, express or manifest themselves by means of 'thick' experiences. As such, 'thick' experiences shed light on features constitutive of the very perspective, which gave rise to them. What remains to be established then, in order to grant the possibility of overlapping perspectives, is that 'thick' experiences *can* be shared between different experiencing subjects. I take the following two aspects to render this claim plausible: First, 'thick' experiences imply descriptive components, i.e. components directed towards 'the world', which can be shared with other, albeit different 'thick' experiences. Second, 'thick' experiences also imply affective, imaginative and evaluative features, which are (at least to some extent) provided by the perspective in question. As such, these features could be considered as expressions of more fundamental human interests and desires, which account for the intelligibility of 'thick' experiences to other experiencing subjects. These considerations suggest that perspectives are not totally disconnected from each other or incomprehensible to subjects embedded in different perspectives. Rather, they are within reach from an experiencing subject's current perspective.

At this point we might turn back to the initial problem, the SP's 'context-boundedness' claim and the denial of non-relative judgements. So far, my considerations on 'thick' experiences revolved around the practical dimensions of life, when pointing out Baghramian's claim that different ways of conceptualizing can bear on the way people act and conduct their lives (1993, 304). Different perspectives, however, can also affect the more theoretical aspects of life: they can influence the way we justify not only our acts, but also our beliefs. I take this theoretical dimension to be primarily addressed by the SP's 'context-boundedness' claim, according to which the validity of all and every justification necessarily terminates at some, only locally credible standard. However, what is left out by this relativistic picture is the very subject – with its reflective capacities

and various life-experiences – who performs the adoption of different perspectives. Due to our mind's reflective structure, we *can* take in a critical standpoint towards our experiences, may they concern practical or theoretical issues. This structure enables us to call into question not only our alleged reasons or justifications for certain beliefs or actions, but also the very standards of justification themselves. But there is more to this critical standpoint than previously suggested: For our reflective capacities also allow for bracketing one's experiences and perspectives, and – due to the possibility of shared 'thick' experiences – for hypothetically adopting another subject's perspective. What is established by this critical-reflective stance, then, is a space for communication and rational deliberation, open for each and every experiencing subject and, what is more, conducive to yield non-relative judgements. To be sure, there is much more work to be done, in order to give a full-fledged account of the possibility of non-relative judgements. However, acknowledging both one's reflective capacity and the possibility of shared 'thick' experiences might be considered as a proper starting point to cut one's way out of the relativistic predicament.

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# Wittgenstein against Frege on Cardinal Numbers

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## Abstract

This paper examines Wittgenstein's critique of Frege's claim that a numerical ascription is essentially an assertion about a concept, and tries to establish a relation between this criticism and the critical remarks about Frege's categories of "concept" and "object" found in *Philosophical Remarks*. I claim that a careful reading of some key passages in this work and in Wittgenstein's manuscripts can shed light on this relation. In fact, when Wittgenstein emphasizes that Frege's concept/object is not *one* logical form, but *many*, he is also indicating that Frege's theory—according to which an ascription of number is essentially a sentence about a concept—captures only the use of number in the "surface" of language, and does not constitute a logical analysis of the concept of number *per se*.

In *Philosophical Remarks* Wittgenstein writes extensively about the nature of cardinal numbers while criticizing Frege's theory and Frege's categories of "concept" and "object". However, the relation between these remarks about cardinal numbers and this criticism is not very clear. In this paper, I will try to shed light on this relation by considering some key passages in this work and in Wittgenstein's manuscripts. For brevity's sake, I will take for granted some points which certainly deserve a more detailed discussion, namely: i) there is, in *Philosophical Remarks*, a revocation of the (tractarian) ordinal view of number's privilege, thereby causing a need to establish a cardinal number arithmetic; ii) this change is necessary because, in some cases, number must characterize (contrary to what Wittgenstein believed at the time of the *Tractatus*) the sense of the proposition containing it.

The need for a cardinal theory led Wittgenstein to revisit Frege's view on this subject. In a passage from the beginning of MS 105, Wittgenstein writes:

[In Frege's theory of cardinal numbers], a bijective relation is *constructed*. This is illegitimate and presupposes a false conception of identity. Secondly, a class is constructed with a certain number of members and that is illegitimate for the same reason. This class would be, in my theory, the class of substantives in a certain correlation (and therefore *in extenso*). / On the other hand, it seems that one could formulate my theory in such a way that, like Frege says, the ascription of number is an assertion about a concept. (Wittgenstein 1999, 8; author's translation)

The first part of the passage above announces a point of disagreement that is tied to Wittgenstein's refusal to use identity to construct real relations (particularly the relation of equinumerosity between two concepts, fundamental to Frege's definition of number). However, the second part of the passage seems to introduce a common point between Frege's theory and the theory outlined at the beginning of manuscript 105: the idea that the ascription of number is an assertion about a concept, i.e. that the (cardinal) number is essentially attributed to a concept (and not to an aggregate of objects). This common point is soon abandoned by Wittgenstein: the conclusion of *Philosophical Remarks* is that not all numerical ascriptions are assertions about a concept. Before going to the reasons for this abandonment, I will make some remarks on its significance to the criticism of Frege's theory.

In general, commentators on Wittgenstein's critiques on logicism, made at the beginning of his middle period, focus

on showing (with the aid of Wittgenstein's remarks) that the "truth" or "validity" of a numerical equation cannot be obtained by investigating the tautological character of a propositional sign, since such an investigation always *presupposes* the knowledge of the correctness of the equation. It should be remembered, however, that Wittgenstein considered such criticism insufficient to show that the notions of "tautology" and "equation" are ultimately distinct. *Grosso modo*, the reasoning is as follows: even if a certain tautology is not the legitimate "translation" of an arithmetic equation, but only its application, if the tautology was its *unique* application, then the equation could not be "sold" separately from the tautology. In this case, it would be enough, for logic, to provide the most general form of the equation's application for the equation to be identified, in its applied form, to a proposition of logic, to a tautology.

To reject this conclusion, Wittgenstein uses some examples to show that the tautology commonly used as the "logical translation" of an arithmetical equation is not the unique application of the equation, that there are a multitude of applications for the equation that do not share the same logical form of this tautology.

In the manuscripts, immediately after observing that the tautological expression " $(3)_x \phi x \cdot (4)_x \psi x \cdot \neg(\exists x)\phi x \cdot \psi x \cdot \supset_{\phi\psi} (3+4)_x \phi x \vee \psi x$ " is not the same thing as the substitution rule  $3+4=7$ , Wittgenstein writes: "But the addition of cardinal numbers really appears only in this case? Is it its *unique* application? For in this case it would be senseless to treat addition isolated from its logical application. (Here I think, however, on the fact that the subject/predicate form determines no logical form.)" (Wittgenstein 1999, 68; author's translation). The beginning of the reasoning is the same as mentioned previously: if the tautology is the only application of the equation, then it is meaningless to introduce them separately. The new element that appears in this passage is the subject/predicate form. A careful reading of the manuscripts allows one to see clearly that Wittgenstein's criticism of the generality, in Frege's writings, of the categories of "concept" and "object" (which are, for Wittgenstein, the same as "predicate" and "subject") maintains a strong connection with his disapproval of Frege's theory of cardinal numbers. In fact, when he emphasizes that Frege's concept/object is not *one* logical form, but *many*, he is also pointing to the fact that Frege's theory—according to which an ascription of number is essentially a sentence about a concept—captures only the use of number in the "surface" of language, and does not constitute a logical analysis of the concept of number *per se*. This "generality" of the concept/object form, which allows the number to be attached essentially to a predicate (to a con-

cept), is only an “accidental” characteristic of ordinary language, and not the essential result of a process of analysis.

Wittgenstein, then, resorts to some examples to show that not all numerical ascriptions can be understood as a particular case of the form  $(\exists_n x) \phi x$ ; consequently, Frege's theory cannot be applied when it comes to the result of logical analysis (and not of a norm of representation of ordinary language). To this end, he first searches for a criterion to distinguish cases where the cardinal number can be applied (such as  $(\exists x, y) \phi x \cdot \phi y$ , which can be written as  $(\exists_2 x) \phi x$ ) from cases where the cardinal number cannot be applied (as in  $(\exists x, y) \phi x \cdot \psi y$ ). The criterion that Wittgenstein offers in the manuscripts (Cf. Wittgenstein 1999, 68), and which is applied in paragraph 99 of *Philosophical Remarks*, which I will consider *infra*, is the following: the propositional function inside the nested quantifiers must be symmetrical, in such a way that any permutation of its arguments results essentially in the same function and, consequently, in the same proposition.

It is easy to see that this criterion is always satisfied when, in a sum or logical product, there occur all permutations of arguments with regard to a function. It is precisely to ensure this criterion that all permutations (logically idles) are included in the example of paragraph 99 of *Philosophical Remarks*. The example is the following: the proposition  $(\exists x, y, z) aRx \cdot xRy \cdot yRz \cdot zRb \cdot \vee \cdot aRy \cdot yRx \cdot xRz \cdot zRb \cdot \vee$  etc. (where the “etc.” is only an abbreviation for all permutations of the argument places) may well be written as  $(\exists_3 x) aRxRb$ . Accordingly, it is perfectly possible to apply the number in this case, since the criterion is satisfied. It is even possible to construct the series of propositions obtained in this way:

$$\begin{aligned} (\exists_1 x) aRxRb &= (\exists x) \cdot aRx \cdot xRb \text{ Def.} \\ (\exists_2 x) aRxRb &= (\exists x, y) \cdot aRx \cdot xRy \cdot yRb \cdot \vee \cdot aRy \cdot yRx \cdot xRb \text{ Def.} \\ (\exists_3 x) aRxRb &= (\exists x, y, z) \cdot aRx \cdot xRy \cdot yRz \cdot zRb \cdot \vee \text{ etc.} \\ &\text{(all the permutations) Def.} \end{aligned}$$

However, it is impossible to define a concept  $\phi$  so that the series of propositions  $(\exists_n x) \phi x$  is materially equivalent to the series of propositions above. This is because, first, if the concept  $\phi$  is defined as

$$\phi(\xi) = aR\xi \cdot \xi Rb \cdot \vee \cdot (\exists x)(aRx \cdot xR\xi \cdot \xi Rb \cdot \vee \cdot aR\xi \cdot \xi Rx \cdot xRb) \cdot \vee \dots \text{ Def.,}$$

the proposition  $aRc \cdot cRb \cdot aRd \cdot dRb$  implies  $(\exists_2 x)\phi x$ , but does not imply  $(\exists_2 x)aRxRb$ . Second, if one tries an *ad hoc* “fix” in the above case using a clause in each term of the disjunction, say,

$$\phi(\xi) = aR\xi \cdot \xi Rb \cdot \neg(\exists x, y) aRx \cdot xRb \cdot aRy \cdot yRb \cdot \vee \dots \text{ Def.,}$$

this attempt also fails because, in this case, the same proposition  $aRc \cdot cRb \cdot aRd \cdot dRb$  implies  $(\exists_1 x)aRxRb$ , but does not imply  $(\exists_1 x)\phi x$ . Thus, the numerical statements above cannot be treated as assertions about a genuine concept. Wittgenstein says that, in this case, we *build* the concept “member between a and b” (thing between these walls). This “concept”, however, is not the result of a logi-

cal analysis, but only a norm of representation of ordinary language, in which all numerical ascriptions are allowed to be presented as assertions about a “concept”. The ordinary language acts, therefore, as a kind of Procrustean bed for the result of logical analysis, squeezing entirely different logical forms in the norm of representation concept/object. If one does not want to throw away the result of logical analysis, in the case of the example “members between a and b”, then it is better not to talk about a “concept”. Hence, when the symbolism  $(\exists_5 x) aRxRb$  is used to express the proposition “There are 5 members between a and b”, the “x” indicates a class of objects *in extenso* (i.e. they are not grouped in the proposition by a concept), which can be symbolized by a list whose cardinal number is, in Wittgenstein's theory, an internal property. Wittgenstein therefore rejects an intensional theory of classes (a theory in which every class is the extension of a concept), and defends an extensional theory of classes (a theory in which a class is represented by a list). And it is precisely in this way that the notions of “extension”, “number” and “propositional sense” are articulated in paragraph 105 of *Philosophical Remarks*: “And now—I believe—the relation between the extensional concept of classes and the concept of a number as a feature of a logical structure is clear: an extension is a characteristic of the sense of a proposition” (Wittgenstein 1975, 127f).

Another example can be found in paragraph 102, where the numerical statement once again does not refer to a concept: “Only 3 of the objects a, b, c, d have the property  $\phi$ . That can be expressed through a disjunction. Obviously another case where a numerical assertion doesn't refer to a concept (although you could make it look as though it did by using an ‘=’).” (Wittgenstein 1975, 125). The disjunction mentioned above is “ $\phi a \cdot \phi b \cdot \phi c \cdot \oplus \cdot \phi a \cdot \phi b \cdot \phi d \cdot \oplus \cdot \phi a \cdot \phi c \cdot \phi d \cdot \oplus \cdot \phi b \cdot \phi c \cdot \phi d$ ” (where the sign “ $\oplus$ ” is used for exclusive disjunction). The difficulty with using Frege's theory to deal with this example is that it is only possible to transform this proposition into the form  $(\exists_3 x) \phi x$  if there is a concept the extension of which is composed only of the objects a, b, c, d. Evidently, using the identity sign, the difficulty vanishes, since it would be possible to define this concept as:

$$\psi(\xi) = \phi(\xi) \cdot (\xi = a \vee \xi = b \vee \xi = c \vee \xi = d) \text{ Def.}$$

But once the use of identity as a legitimate propositional function is rejected, this strategy is no longer valid and, consequently, also in this case the numerical ascription is not (contrary to what Frege believed) an assertion about a concept.

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# Extended Epistemic Agents and an Acceptable Form of Relativism

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## Abstract

In this paper, we analyze scientific observations made by a research team equipped with some technical devices. Many parts of the universe are not observable by naked eyes. In other words, with naked eyes, we can observe only a limited part of the universe. By using technical devices, we can enhance our observation capacity in various directions. Nowadays, scientists are doing researches in different disciplines, such as physics, chemistry, and biology. In some disciplines, they have their own methodologies and technical devices. This certain amount of independency of scientific activities in different disciplines can be seen as a sign of relativism. In this paper, we examine what conditions are needed for relativism to be acceptable in science.

## 1. A Historical Reflection from Descartes to Wittgenstein

What are epistemic agents? There have been different answers to this question. Before we start with our discussion about epistemic agents, let us reflect on a history of interpretation about epistemic agents.

(1a) [Descartes: Mind as a substance] René Descartes (1596 - 1650) started his philosophical examinations from the viewpoint of an epistemic agent. He concluded through these examinations that the thinking activity of an epistemic agent provides an evidence for his own existence as a mind. It was also one of Descartes' consequences that the mind is a substance that is independent of things. Thus, the Cartesian mind has no location in the material world.

(1b) [Kant: Dualism of *Ding an sich* and the epistemic subject] According to Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804), an epistemic subject is equipped with the sensibility, which is our receptive capacity to be affected by objects that exist independent of us (Kant 1781/1787, A51/B75). Then, what is an epistemic subject? How can be an epistemic agent causally affected by objects? The relationship between the epistemic subject and *Ding an sich* is not very clear. This problem was one reason for Johann G. Fichte (1762 - 1814) to criticize the philosophy of Kant and to propose a monistic idealistic philosophy of the subject.

(1c) [The early Wittgenstein 1: Metaphysical realism] Ludwig J. J. Wittgenstein (1889 - 1951) published *Tractatus* in 1921. The first two of seven major propositions in *Tractatus* are the following (translated by Pears and McGuinness):

PROP 1. The world is all that is the case.

PROP 2. What is the case, a fact, is the existence of states of affairs.

These propositions express a metaphysical realism that is described without any presupposition of an epistemological position. Thus, epistemic agents have no place in this metaphysical realism. What can be thought is determined through the structure of the world (see Proposition 3 of *Tractatus*, namely: A logical picture of facts is a thought).

(1d) [The early Wittgenstein 2: Realism identified with solipsism] In PROP 5.62 of *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein talked about *my world*.

PROP 5.62 This remark provides the key to the problem, how much truth there is in solipsism.

For what the solipsist *means* is quite correct; only it cannot be *said*, but makes itself manifest.

The world is *my world*: this is manifest in the fact that the limits of *language* (of that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of *my world*. <End of PROP 5.62>

This proposition seems to state that the epistemic subject is identical with the bearer of the world.

(1e) [Heidegger: Hermeneutic approach] In *Being and Time* (1927), Martin Heidegger (1889 - 1976) proposed a methodology of philosophy, namely *hermeneutic phenomenology*. According to this methodology, a philosopher should explicate what we already understand. According to Heidegger, we know that we exist in the world and that we are surrounded by many tools. In other words, we understand ourselves as agents in the world. This expresses the concept of *Being-in-the-world*.

(1f) [The later Wittgenstein: Use of our language] The method of the later Wittgenstein is description. In many parts of *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), Wittgenstein emphasized the importance of descriptive method for philosophy.

One of our major questions in this paper is what the relationship between the world and an epistemic agent (or epistemic agents) is. In case of Descartes, the material world and the epistemic subject are independent. It was a central problem for Cartesian philosophy to provide a plausible explanation about the relationship between the both. In case of Kant, it is not clear how the epistemic subject can be affected by material objects. In case of the early Wittgenstein, the epistemic subject seems to have no place within the world. In contrast, according to Heidegger, agents live in the material world and deal with objects in the world. The causal relationship between agents and the world is secured by their positional relationship. The later Wittgenstein seems to agree in this point with Heidegger.

## 2. Epistemic Agents in the Universe

In this paper, we accept Heidegger's position (1e) and develop it further in section 3. As a starting point, we propose to accept the following meta-theoretical assumptions.

(2a) The (four-dimensional) universe exists.

(2b) The universe can be divided into (four-dimensional) parts.

(2c) An epistemic agent is a (four-dimensional) part of the universe.

These assumptions presuppose a version of four-dimensionalism, namely *four-dimensional mereology* proposed by Nakayama (1999, 2009). The reason for this choice of formalism is due to our convenience and we do not exclude other possibilities of formulation. About the four-dimensionalism and the mereology, you may consult Nakayama (1999), Sider (2001), and Varzi (2015). In this paper, we do not describe the formalism of four-dimensionalism in detail. Here, it will be enough to mention that a four-dimensionalist considers a physical entity as spatiotemporally extended and that this ontological view justifies for us to use the notion *temporal part* of (four-dimensional) objects.

### 3. Extended Epistemic Agents

In this section, following Nakayama (2011, 2013a, 2013b), we precisely characterize the notion of *extended agent* in a framework of four-dimensional mereology. We need this formalism in order to interpret *extended agents* as four-dimensional objects that exist only for certain amount of time, where we understand under *agent* an entity that can deliberately perform actions.

[Definition of *extended agent*]

(3a) [Atomic Agent] An atomic agent is an agent. Any spatial part of an atomic agent is no agent. Here, we simply presuppose that there are atomic agents.

(3b) [Agents and Tools] Let *temporal-part* ( $x, t$ ) denote the temporal part of object  $x$  in time  $t$ . Let  $A$  be an agent that uses (tool)  $B$  in time  $t$  to perform an action. Then, the (four-dimensional) mereological sum, *temporal-part* ( $A, t$ ) + *temporal-part* ( $B, t$ ), is an agent. By the way, we can easily prove within the four-dimensional mereology that *temporal-part* ( $A+B, t$ ) = *temporal-part* ( $A, t$ ) + *temporal-part* ( $B, t$ ).

(3c) [Collective Agent] If agents  $A_1, \dots, A_n$  perform a joint action, then  $A_1 + \dots + A_n$  is an agent (For the notion of *joint action*, see (Tuomela 2002)).

(3d) If an object satisfies neither (2a) nor (2b) nor (2c), then it is no agent.

(3e) [Extended Agent] An agent that is not atomic is called an *extended agent*.

According to Heidegger, tools definitely belong to the external world. In contrast, according to our view, a tool might be a part of an extended agent, even if it is no part of the original agent. Thus, tools are objects that can have two different kinds of the ontological status. On one hand, an agent deals with a tool as an object in the external world. On the other hand, an extended agent is performing an action by moving a tool as one of his parts, which is analogous to an action by moving his body parts.

N. R. Hanson (1958) pointed out that observations are theory laden. Especially, scientific observations supported by technical devices usually presuppose theories that are needed to interpret data provided by these devices. For an efficient use of a technical device  $B$ , an appropriate theory  $T$  must be available for a research team  $A$ . In this paper, extended agents who believe some appropriate mutually consistent theories are called *extended epistemic agents*. Thus, extended epistemic agents who believe some theories and can interpret data provided by technical devices are able to make some scientific observations.

### 4. Observation Capacity of Extended Epistemic Agents

A nearsighted person can recognize more objects with appropriate glasses than without them. Using the notion of *extended epistemic agent*, we can describe this situation as follows.

Let  $P1$  be the set of parts of the universe that person  $A$  can recognize in time interval  $t$  and  $P2$  be the set of parts of the universe that (*temporal-part* ( $A, t$ ) + *temporal-part* ( $B, t$ )) can recognize, where  $+$  is the mereological sum and  $B$  stands for glasses that  $A$  is wearing. Then,  $P2$  is not a subset of  $P1$ . In other words, there are parts of the universe that are included in  $P2$  but not in  $P1$ . We call such parts the *extended observation data for  $A+B$  in  $t$* . Here, (*temporal-part* ( $A, t$ ) + *temporal-part* ( $B, t$ )) is an extended epistemic agent according to the definition in sect. 3.

The situation described above is quite general. It is often the case: If an agent  $A$  uses an appropriate observation tool  $B$  in  $t$ , then there are *extended observation data for  $A+B$  in  $t$* . In successful cases, these extended observation data are quite large. Let us consider Galileo's use of a telescope as an example of successful cases.

In 1609, Galileo began his work with a telescope. (Galileo + telescope) made a lot of important discoveries. These discoveries are: Jupiter has four satellites, the moon has mountains, the Milky Way is made of a multitude of stars, and the sun has black spots and these spots move such that their movements support the hypothesis that the sun rotates on its axis. These findings would have been not possible without use of a telescope and they belong to the *extended observation data by (Galileo + telescope)*.

### 5. An Acceptable Form of Relativism and Segregation of Niche

We can describe an object from different viewpoints. For example, an apple can be described from a mechanical viewpoint or from a biological viewpoint. In the same way, we can describe the universe and parts of it from different viewpoints using different languages and frameworks. Our languages will be never perfect enough to describe all aspects of the whole universe. Today, we have many scientific languages, such as the language of quantum mechanics, the language of molecular biology, and so on. These languages are, in general, not mutually translatable. Today, there is also no unique fundamental language into which all true sentences of other languages can be properly translated. In this paper, we analyze the relationship among these multiple languages in order to answer questions about relativism.

In this paper, for the sake of simplicity, we identify a language with a set of well-formed first-order sentences (FO-sentences) with the vocabulary of the language. A framework is understood as a consistent set of FO-sentences in the given language. Let  $T1$  be a framework formulated in language  $L1$  and let  $T2$  be a framework formulated in  $L2$ . We sometimes have the following situation:  $T1$  describes  $P1$  more appropriately than  $T2$ . For example, the Keplerian astronomy describes the solar system more appropriately than the Ptolemaic astronomy. We have also the following situation:  $T1$  describes  $P1$  more appropriately than  $T2$  and  $T2$  describes  $P2$  more appropriately than  $T1$ . For example,



the modern biology describes living things more appropriately than quantum mechanics, while quantum mechanics describes elementary particles more appropriately than the modern biology. The first example describes a competitive case and the second one describes a case of *segregation of niche*. For the competitive case, we should abandon the relativism and prefer the Keplerian astronomy to the Ptolemaic astronomy. However, for the case of segregation of niche, we should accept a certain amount of relativism and accept both frameworks. Each of two frameworks describes the universe from its own viewpoint. In this case, we can consistently accept the biological framework and the framework of quantum mechanics. Both frameworks are not exclusive but complementary.

There are many (four-dimensional) parts of the (four-dimensional) universe. The biology makes investigations on living things which are parts of the universe. Research areas of some disciplines sometimes overlap. The chemistry makes investigation on chemical interactions and some of them take place within living things. In such a case, researchers in chemistry can make a contribution to explanation of biological phenomena.

A radical form of relativism that accepts even inconsistent theories in the same scientific discipline is not acceptable for scientific activities. Nakayama (2014) emphasizes the need of external coherence among neighboring disciplines. However, when two frameworks are externally coherent and they appropriately describe different parts of the universe, we should accept both frameworks. Especially, when we accept holism, we should do so, because our power for predication and explanation will be enhanced by doing so. As a conclusion, we obtain many frameworks in natural sciences. We consider that this situation shows an acceptable form of relativism. This kind of relativism is a modest one. It accepts only that parts of the universe can be described by different frameworks that can be mutually independent.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

Today, we have many scientific frameworks in different disciplines. Most of them are theories for different parts of the universe and they are mutually complementary. This can be seen as an acceptable form of relativism.

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# Nonsense Passing through Type Distinctions: Wittgenstein's Criticism to Russell in 1913 Revisited

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## Abstract

There was a dispute concerning the nature of propositions and judgments between Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein in 1913. As is well known, Russell was deeply shocked by Wittgenstein's criticism and was at last "paralyzed". But still the theoretical substance of the criticism has not been clear. Although many commentators tried to make it clear, I will examine in this paper the interpretations by S. Somerville and N. Griffin and try to show that one of their basic presuppositions is erroneous. By this task, we shall see that a problem lurks in non-standard features of Russell's theory of types that is brought to it by the young Russell's motif of anti-monism and that Wittgenstein's criticism shoots the problem unerringly.

## Introduction

There was a dispute concerning the nature of propositions and judgments between Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein in 1913. As is well known, Russell was deeply shocked by Wittgenstein's criticism and was at last "paralyzed". But still the theoretical substance of the criticism has not been clear. Although many commentators tried to make it clear, I will examine in this paper the interpretations by S. Somerville and N. Griffin and try to show that one of their basic presuppositions is erroneous. By this task, we shall see that a problem lurks in *non*-standard features of Russell's theory of types that is brought to it by the young Russell's motif of anti-monism and that Wittgenstein's criticism shoots the problem unerringly.

## 1. The dispute between Russell and Wittgenstein in 1913

After finishing *Principia Mathematica*, Russell proceeded to write the draft *Theory of Knowledge* in May 1913 for planned lectures in United States. Wittgenstein, who heard about that, visited Russell at least two times (May 20, 26, 1913 (TK, xxvii)) and criticized Russell's previous and at that time-being developed theories. Russell continued to write for a while after that, but the next month he abandoned the draft (TK, xxvi-xxviii).

The substance of Wittgenstein's criticism can be perceived by the following.

The correct explanation of the form of the proposition, "A makes the judgment *p*", must show that it is impossible for a judgment to be a piece of nonsense (Russell's theory does not satisfy this requirement). (TLP5.5422, cf., NB, 95, 103)

What is called "Russell's theory" is his so-called "multiple relation theory" of judgments, which is developed in *Principia* and *Problems of Philosophy* and so on. According to the Wittgenstein's criticism, the theory cannot block nonsensical judgments. If so, how do nonsensical judgments pass through Russell's theory?

Although it is the task of interpreters to identify the way in which nonsensical judgments arise, since Wittgenstein himself explains almost nothing, the task is not so easy. Besides that, not only we must show that Russell's theory cannot block nonsensical judgments, but also that must be just the point of Wittgenstein's criticism, and also the point must affect Russell deeply and at last make him abandon

the project of *Theory of Knowledge*. So far there were many attempts, but we have not had any agreed conclusion.

## 2. Somerville/Griffin interpretation

Among those, Somerville's and Griffin's may be called classical in a sense. They show how nonsensical judgments can pass through the multiple relation theory and we can distinguish the two ways in which nonsensical judgments arise with passing through the theory. The first is one that they surmise based on the January 1913 letter of Wittgenstein to Russell, and the second is one based on the June 1913 letter. According to their diagnosis, the second way is more serious for Russell, but it is pointed out that the way has a difficult problem.

The second way consists of a vicious circle that is formed by the theory of types and the multiple relation theory (Somerville 1980, 187, Griffin 1985, 242), but it seems that we can show the circle is in fact not vicious (contrary to their diagnosis) by preserving the distinction between the type- and order-parts of the ramified types (Stevens 2003, 23-24, 2005, 99-102, cf., Hanks 2007, 129).

Rather I think the first way is more serious for Russell, but it is not the case that this way has no problem. The first way is based on the January 1913 letter of Wittgenstein to Russell.

....For instance if I analyse the proposition Socrates is mortal into Socrates, mortality and  $(\exists xy)\epsilon_1(x, y)$  I want a theory of types to tell me that "mortality is Socrates" is nonsensical, because if I treat "mortality" as a proper name (as I did) there is nothing to prevent me to make the substitution the wrong way round. (Letter to Russell, June, 1913, NB, 122)

Although this is a self-criticism of Wittgenstein to his own previous view, Somerville and Griffin draw from here his criticism to the multiple relation theory. In the above letter he mentions "treat[ing] 'mortality' as a proper name" and Somerville, and also Griffin, regards this as overlapping with being treated of a predicate of a judgment content as an argument, i.e., a subject, of a judgment predicate in the multiple relation theory (Somerville 1980, 186, Griffin 1985, 230).

According to the multiple relation theory, when a subject *S* judges that *a* is in the relation *R* to *b* (i.e., " $R(a, b)$ "), this is analyzed, using a judgment predicate "*J*", into " $J(S, a,$

$R, b$ ". At this point, according to Somerville's (and Griffin's) Wittgenstein, a type distinction that should be preserved between things  $a, b$  and a binary relation  $R$  of " $R(a, b)$ " is "lost in claiming that, *qua* objects of acquaintance, they can be named" (Somerville 1980, 186), or "broken down" by treating " $R$ " as a proper name like " $a$ " and " $b$ " (Griffin 1985, 230). For, in *Principia*, whatever can be an argument to one and the same propositional function is regarded to belong to one and the same type (PM, \*9.14, 133, \*10.121, 140).

Thus, the first way of the Somerville's and Griffin's interpretation can be summarized by the following theses (A) – (C). (A) If type distinctions are fully deployed, nonsensical judgments of course can be blocked. However (B) the due type-distinctions are lost by the existence of type-crossing propositional functions. Therefore (C) nonsensical judgments arise.

### 3. Are the type distinctions lost?

But the first way has difficult problems, of which here I'd like to point out the two. First, this interpretation seems not to be able to explain why Russell was so deeply shocked. For the criticism of Somerville's (or Griffin's) Wittgenstein seems not to be so serious for Russell (In fact, this criticism is not seen to be decisive (e.g., Griffin 1985, 230f, 1986, 141)).

Although, in order for the multiple relation theory to work well, at least the type distinction between things  $a, b$  and a binary relation  $R$  needs to be preserved, such a distinction will be lost owing to the existence of type-crossing propositional functions. This is the gist of the criticism of Somerville's and Griffin's Wittgenstein. But, I think, Russell can treat with this criticism easily. How?

Type-crossing propositional functions occur also in semantical paradoxes. For example, " $x$  is false" and " $x$  is not namable in fewer than 19 syllables" are type-crossing propositional functions (PM, 62-65). When such functions bring about paradoxes, Russell, of course, copes with it by *dividing* such functions *into types* (ibid.). Excluding such type-crossing functions can be seen even as being equivalent with setting up a type hierarchy. Therefore, if the existence of type-crossing functions becomes an obstacle for developing the multiple relation theory, Russell can cope with it, say, by regarding such functions as those bundling many functions that are of various types, as he did in taking measures to semantical paradoxes in *Principia*. Thus it does not seem to me to be the case that the type distinctions are cancelled by developing the multiple relation theory, in particular, by treating a predicate of judgment content as an argument to judgment predicate " $J$ " of a par with things.

### 4. Do the type distinctions block the nonsense?

Secondly, Somerville / Griffin interpretation presupposes the above thesis (A) "If type distinctions are fully deployed, nonsensical judgments of course can be blocked", but this presupposition seems to me to be erroneous. This presupposition is held not only by Somerville's and Griffin's but also by many other interpretations (e.g., Hacker 1996, Glock 1996, Stevens 2003, Pears 2006, Hanks 2007), but in my opinion it is erroneous simply. It is only because the theory of (ramified) types that is relevant to the multiple relation theory is supposed tacitly to be a standard version of it that the presupposition is taken to be true.

Admittedly, within a standard theory of types, as is said by the above (A), there is no room for the nonsensical judgments that are mentioned by Wittgenstein. This is confirmed, for example, by P. Hanks (2007, 130). For instance, when a subject  $A$  judges that  $a$  is in the relation  $R$  to  $b$  ( $R(a, b)$ ), this is expressed by the formula " $J(S, a, R, b)$ " according to the multiple relation theory. Here, if  $S, a$  and  $b$  are all things and their types are all  $i$ , and  $R$  is a binary relation and its type is  $(i, i)$ , then the type of the predicate " $J$ " can be identified as  $(i, i, (i, i), i)$ .

Here, as what can supersede for  $R$  in " $R(a, b)$ " is only a binary relation and what can supersede for  $a$  and  $b$  in " $R(a, b)$ " are only things, so what can supersede for  $R$  in " $J(S, a, R, b)$ " is only a binary relation and what can supersede for  $a$  and  $b$  in " $J(S, a, R, b)$ " are only things. Therefore, since if the content of a judgment is nonsensical owing to a violation of type restrictions, then the result of analysis cannot but be nonsensical as well, there is no room for the nonsensical judgments.

### 5. Non-standard features of Russell's theory of types

However, Russell's theory of (ramified) types has *non-standard* features at some important points. And the non-standard features are directly connected to the nonsensical judgments that are mentioned by Wittgenstein. Then, what are the non-standard features of Russell's theory of types? The answer is given by reminding the definition of "individuals" in *Principia*. "Individuals" are defined to be "objects which are neither propositions nor functions" (PM, 51).

If *things* only are in our minds as "individuals", this definition may be regarded as saying only something trivial. However, it is very important that not only things but also *universals* come under this definition. While, in *Principia*, propositional functions are not regarded as constituents of propositions (PM, 55), universals are regarded as so (PM, 43), and since the latter are "neither propositions nor functions", we cannot but say that they are "individuals". Thus not merely things but also universals are supposed to be "individuals" in *Principia*. The same is true of the concept of "terms" in the *Principles* and "entities" in the substitutional theory (PoM, 44, 49, OSD, 155). Since the *Principles*, Russell continues to try to give to universals as much reality as he gives to things, by pushing both into a most basic ontological category, such as "individuals", "terms" and "entities".

Thus, according to Russell's theory of types, (i) not merely ordinary individuals, i.e., things, but also universals are seen as members of "individuals", i.e., as values of unrestricted "individual" variables (semantical non-standard feature). And, (ii) an "individual" that occurs as a subject can be replaced by any "individual", whether a thing or a universal (semi-syntactical non-standard feature). For example, since a thing can occur only as a subject, it can be replaced by any "individual" in general. And a universal that occurs as a subject can be replaced not only by a universal of a different type but also even by a thing.

From a viewpoint of universals, while a universal that occurs as a predicate can be replaced only by one that is of the same type, a universal that occurs as a subject can be replaced by any "individual" of any type. The non-standard features like these, of course, don't appear in, say, A. Church's formulation of the ramified type theory (Church 1976). Therefore, if only a standard formulation of type

theory is in our minds, such non-standard features of Russell's type theory are easily missed.

## 6. The multiple relation theory revisited

Re-examining the multiple relation theory with the above preparations will bring us an interesting result. On one hand, the binary relation  $R$  of " $R(a, b)$ ", since it occurs as a predicate, can be replaced only by binary relations (This is true also in a standard type theory). On the other, the  $R$  of " $J(S, a, R, b)$ ", since it occurs as a subject, can be replaced by any "individual" of any type, whether a thing or a universal. In other words, a variable that can be substituted for " $R$ " of " $J(S, a, R, b)$ " is an unrestricted "individual" variable, in whose range both of things and universals of any types are contained. For example, if we replace a binary relation  $R$  of " $J(S, a, R, b)$ " with a unary relation  $F$ , then we will obtain a *significant* formula " $J(S, a, F, b)$ ". It follows that we can judge the nonsense that "this table penholders the book" (NB, 103). For, in Russell's type theory, while the formula "*Penholder(this table, the book)*" is of course *not* significant (because of *Penholder's* being a unary relation), but "*J(S, this table, Penholder, the book)*" is significant, because this is an instance of the above *significant* formula " $J(S, a, F, b)$ ".

Thus it will be seen that if we try to develop the multiple relation theory within the Russell's type theory, we cannot block the nonsensical judgments because of the latter's non-standard features. As far as it's against the background of Russell's type theory, even if type distinctions are fully deployed, the nonsensical judgments cannot be evaded. Thus it seems to be shown that the thesis (A) "If type distinctions are fully deployed, nonsensical judgments of course can be blocked" is erroneous.

## 7. The rights and wrongs of Russell's "paralysis"

How do the nonsensical judgments that are mentioned by Wittgenstein arise with passing through Russell's theory of judgments? When the multiple relation theory is developed within Russell's type theory, into which non-standard treatments concerning universals are built, since a predicate of judgment content cannot but occur as an argument, i.e., a subject, of the judgment predicate " $J$ ", nonsensical judgments arise. The nonsensical judgments that are mentioned by Wittgenstein arise, not because, as many interpreters think, the type distinctions go out of force for some reason or other, but rather they arise just in the midst of fully functioning of the whole edifice composed of Russell's type theory and the multiple relation theory.

If so, we may think that Russell should adopt a standard version of type theory instead of his own non-standard version (Indeed later than the second edition of *Principia* he will do so). However, there is a reason for him to be unable to do so. This peculiar treatment concerning universals in his type theory stems historically from young Russell's motif of anti-monism against Hegelianism. We should think that the conception of universals as "individu-

als" connects directly to his very important issue of reality of "external" relation as anti-thesis to the theory of "internal" relation that Russell supposed to be a principle of monism (PoM, 221-226).

Thus I think that Russell was so deeply shocked by Wittgenstein's criticism. Developing the multiple relation theory within the Russell's non-standard type theory conflict straightforwardly with his long-termed important conception of universals as "individuals" (or as "terms", as "entities"). We seem to be able to think that Russell was thus "paralyzed" and made abandon the project of *Theory of knowledge*.

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# A Reinterpretation of Limits in the *Philosophical Investigations*. An Essay on Wittgenstein's Linguistic Turn

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## Abstract

Wittgenstein's philosophy has two main periods represented by two works: *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and *Philosophical Investigations*. While the former defends that language and world share a common logical structure, the latter criticises that view by arguing that language is a game whose rules mirror practices and habits. I contend that Wittgenstein's turn is a change in the notion of the limit of language. While in early Wittgenstein language has a sharp metaphysical limit given by logic; in later works, language has fuzzy limits which are drawn by the rules with which we use words in ordinary life.

Wittgenstein's linguistic turn has been studied from different perspectives (Stiers 2000; Kuusela 2005; Rorty 2010). Although the *Investigations* is a radical turn regarding his early ideas, we might find common links which would show not a systematic unity of his thinking, but, at least, a minimal continuity in Wittgenstein's philosophy. I propose that the concept of 'sense' has a main incidence in both philosophical periods and it is key to understanding his turn. Simultaneously, sense uncovers a genuine philosophical concern that runs throughout all Wittgenstein's philosophy: the problem of the limits of language. Thus, my thesis is as follows: the turn of Wittgenstein's philosophy is the outcome of a reinterpretation of the limits of language; a transition from strict and clear metaphysical limits drawn in logical space toward fuzzy limits drawn in game's spaces of everyday life.

Sense, in the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations*, warrants the meaningfulness of our use of words. However, whereas in early work meaning is given by the logical rules of syntax (TLP, 3.326-3.328), language in later works is sunk in the rules of the activity of playing games: the meaning of words is found in language-games and their frameworks of habits and traditions. According to the late Wittgenstein, we use words as we use tools (PI, 811). The sense of words is their use in games. Language is an interweaving of rules which are applied in everyday life. We use words as we use them just because we do. The only limits of use are those given by rules; and the limit of a rule is the rule itself. 'Why do we use a rule?' is a nonsensical question. Trying to go further of the application of rules leads to try to go further of the transparent activity of the everyday use of words. While propositions in the *Tractatus* are pictures that depict the logical form of reality (TLP, 4.01), language-games in the *Investigations* mirror the form of life of the communities that use them (PI, 819, 23, 58).

Logical atomism argued that world and language can be reduced from complex structures into basic elements. Wittgenstein calls 'objects' those logical atoms that compose atomic facts; these elementary metaphysical entities are undivided, unchangeable and make up the substance of the world (TLP, 2.02-2.027). Objects are an *a priori* necessity of logical analysis: an indestructible limit of *Tractatus*' ontology. The only unbreakable limit in the *Investigations* is not a metaphysical one, but ordinary life itself. The limit of language is the activity of speaking itself; there no more explanation about the way we speak following rules. The limit has this form: we just use the language in that way and that's it. Therefore, "if I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned.

Then I am inclined to say: 'This is simply what I do'" (PI, 8217). Thus, the applied rule is the *limit* of language as a game.<sup>1</sup>

Early Wittgenstein thought metaphysical ideas are only linguistic misunderstandings of logical laws; philosophy then has to clarify and dissolve them. In later works, a philosophical problem is a confusion of game's rules. To dissolve it means to describe and identify uses and rules in order to determine the game of language to which each word belongs. This meta-philosophical change entails a reformulation of concepts of sense and limit. Sense, in the *Tractatus*, is already *a priori* determined by proposition's bipolarity: "A proposition must restrict reality to two alternatives: yes or no" (TLP, 4.023); "Every proposition must *already* have a sense" (TLP, 4.064). Both affirmation and negation determine the possibility of truth and falsity in logical space, but language is more complex than logical bipolarity and its sense in game's space does not have a predefined requirement.

Late Wittgenstein dialogs about this point as follows: "An indeterminate sense -that would really not be a sense *at all*.- This is similar to: a boundary which is not sharply defined is not really a boundary at all. [...] An enclosure with a hole in it is as good as *none*.- But is that really true?" (PI, 899). A blurred limit can be legitimately called 'limit'? According to the tractarian idea of limit: no. A non-rigid limit is not a limit at all; a proper limit can be only understood as a sharp demarcation between what can be said and what cannot. Therefore, there *must* be a predetermined sense for any logically clarified language. On the other hand, in the *Investigations* there are no *a priori* limits; any limit is given by the contingency of language-games in ordinary life. A vague limit is still a limit because draws a line that separates things, but it is a limit that may be modified anytime (as geographical frontiers). Words are used according to rules which are limits rooted in the contingency of everyday life.

<sup>1</sup> I suggest that 'limit' and 'rule' are interchangeable concepts. I think that 'rule' has a quantitative meaning. This notion of limit is not a sharp distinction between what is allowed and what is forbidden. The application of a rule is a matter of degree according to agreements and disagreements between speakers. I would say that if a game's rule cannot be changed, then it is not a rule, but an axiom; therefore, it would not be a game, but a doctrine. I argue for an equivalence between 'rule' and 'limit' insofar as, according to Wittgenstein, the explanation of *how* we use words is we do it by following rules, but the question about *why* we follow rules as we do is a meaningless question: we follow a rule just because we do. That is the *limit* of explanations. Rules are the furthest point to which we can get in order to understand our use of words. Rules are not fixed principles, but blurred limits in several degrees of use.

If game's rules are not enough clear, can we say that it is not a game at all? Wittgenstein's answer: "We misunderstand the role played by the ideal in our language. That is to say: we too would call it a game only we are dazzled by the ideal, and therefore fail to see the actual application of the word 'game' clearly" (PI, 8100). The ideal that dazzles us is that one of sharpness imposed by logicism and pictorial theory: a sublimation of strict logical limit as the only guarantee of sense in language (PI, 838, 81, 89). Limits now are vague because game's rules change according to the infinite daily circumstances and also because rules may change as we speak (PI, 883). If a rule may be found out as we speak and not *a priori* to language, then: "We don't know the boundaries because none have been drawn. To repeat, we can draw a boundary -for a special purpose" (PI, 869).

Just like any game, language has limits which may be considered as vague. The ideal of an unchangeable and fixed limit in the *Tractatus* is the search for an essence: the *general propositional form* (TLP, 5.471-5.472). However, we will not find that metaphysical aspiration in the *Investigations*. Language has no essence: there is nothing in common between language-games, but only *family resemblances* (PI, 8 66) which, according to Glock (1996, 120), is crucial to understand Wittgenstein's attack on metaphysics and essentialisms. Thus, limits are blurred because they resist any metaphysical attempt to fix them. Vagueness of words in everyday life goes against that desire to seek the common to all. As Wittgenstein says: "Seeing life as a weave, this pattern (pretence, say) is not always complete and is varied in a multiplicity of ways. But we, in our conceptual world, keep on seeing the same, recurring with variations" (Z, 8568).

According to late Wittgenstein, everything in language is visible: there are no hidden essences. Limits are not drawn on logical space, but they arise from the space of life as we use words and their rules built in a community. Limits are fuzzy because we always have the chance of erasing and drawing them either further or closer: "[...] words have those meanings which we have given them [...]. Many words in this sense then don't have a strict meaning. But this is not a defect. To think it is would be like saying that the light of my reading lamp is no real light at all because it has no sharp boundary" (BB: 27). If words come to life insofar as they are used, then the limits of language cannot be domesticated by any metaphysical story. A rigid limit in language brings a strict sense that distinguishes between what can be spoken and what must be passed over in silence (TLP: 7). Contrarily, there are no forbidden zones in the *Investigations*: no restrictions with sharp boundaries. Games can be adapted to any rule and the dynamic sense of language-games depends on limits drawn by humans in different and unexpected ways.

Concepts of 'rule' and 'use' were also thought by Wittgenstein throughout his early works. In the *Tractatus*, rules determine the use of signs in a linguistic system according to accurate logico-syntactical employments. That system *must* be able to be translated to logical symbols and, therefore, to any language or system of representation (TLP, 3.326-328). Words have sense insofar as they are used according to sharp rules which are *a priori* determined by logic and syntax. The *Investigations* reinterprets those concepts: the use of words is not ruled by logical syntax, but by ordinary activities that support language-games and their many *forms of life*. This change is the outcome of Wittgenstein's turn about the limits of language. A sharp logical limit lays down rigid sense between meaningfulness and meaninglessness. However, fuzzy limits do not draw any sharp and predefined distinction

because sense in language is permeable to social and daily practices.

Late Wittgenstein tried to get rid of any kind of metaphysics in language. Philosophy does not need to postulate 'the essence of language' or 'the ultimate structure of language and world'. There are no mysteries in philosophy. Language is a social *institution* with open and transparent rules in which utterances are a *collective performance* (Bloor, 1996). Thus, as Wittgenstein says: "What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use" (PI, 8116). There no philosophical theories to explain the world because sciences do that; philosophy is not a theoretical knowledge, but an *therapeutic activity* through language. As Friedlander (2001) argues, that view is permanent in all his thought and can be discerned in the *Tractatus*. While the only role of philosophy in early works is the logical clarification of language to make expedite scientific progress, in the *Investigations* philosophy has to *describe* (not explain) by looking how words are used in ordinary life.

The *Tractatus* contends that "Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts. Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity" (TLP, 4.112), whereas in the *Investigations* "philosophy just puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything" (PI, 8126). Both Wittgenstein's periods rejected the aspiration of philosophy to become science; that is its main illness. He always understood philosophy as an activity of clarification and dissolution of pseudo-problems. However, whereas in the *Tractatus* philosophy clarifies thoughts to "make them clear and to give them sharp boundaries" (TLP, 4.112), in the *Investigations*, philosophy does not draw any boundary; rather, it describes the fuzzy limits of language-games and their daily habits.

Later Wittgenstein carries language toward a new sense which cannot be veiled by strict logical limits, namely: *common sense*. For Wittgenstein, regardless his philosophical period, ordinary language has always been in perfect order (TLP, 5.5563; PI, 898); however, metaphysics disturbs the daily functioning of words. The overcoming of metaphysics, as Nietzsche and Heidegger did it, starts in Wittgenstein's case with a new attitude to language: neither essentialism nor sharp boundaries are accepted in ordinary life. This needs an unprejudiced philosopher looking common life directly, but, as Wittgenstein says, "The language used by philosophers is already deformed, as though by shoes that are too tight" (CV, 47). Philosophy has to dive under language of ordinary life, since "only in the stream of thought and life do words have meaning" (Z, 8173). Sense in the space of games is a new blurred and volatile limit that is *shown* through the ordinary use of words: "You must bear in mind that the language-game is so to say something unpredictable. I mean: it is not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or unreasonable). It is there- like our life" (OC, 8559).

Sense in the *Investigations* does not warrant anything; it just *shows* what is happening in language in common life. From this view, Wittgenstein's turn can be understood from a logical search for the general form of language toward an approach focused on the diversity of language-games. The fundamental concept that explains that change is the concept of 'limit'. A new limit of language which places sense not in logical space, but in the space of everyday life. Everything happens so fast in life and in so many different ways that it is impossible to grab an essence. Wittgenstein's philosophy transits from a sharp logical limit toward the fuzziness of a limit that cannot be 'essentialized'. Nevertheless, we may say that Wittgenstein always

faced a fundamental philosophical question: What are the limits of language?

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# Is Wittgenstein a Moral Relativist? Wittgenstein, Relativism and Ethical Objectivity

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## Abstract

It is a moot question whether Wittgenstein can be considered a moral relativist. In this paper I argue that he is not. According to moral relativism we can only describe moral differences, withholding judgement on the question whether a moral stance is righter or more wrong than another, because no standpoint can be proved objectively truer than any other. A relativist, therefore, assumes moral disagreement as a conclusion of this argument, whereas I argue that for Wittgenstein this is a starting point, insofar as I claim that he holds moral disagreement as a condition of ethics. On the basis of textual evidences, I argue that Wittgenstein is not a relativist and he can be viewed as suggesting a conception of ethical objectivity. Far from being neutral, this conception requires calling ourselves and our own prejudices into question as a condition for any claim of morality to objectivity.

## 1. Ethical Relativism and Objectivity: a View From a Dichotomous Perspective

In a conversation with Rhees from 1945 Wittgenstein says: "Suppose someone says, 'One of the ethical systems might be the right one, or near to the right one [...] then I am making a judgment of value. It is not like saying that one of these physical theories must be the right one. The way in which the same reality corresponds, or conflicts, with a physical theory has no counterpart here'" (Rhees 1970, 101). This passage first establishes that moral judgments cannot be justified on the same grounds of factual statements, so they cannot be objective in the same sense empirical and scientific propositions can be. This is similar to what Wittgenstein also argues in 1929 in the *Lecture on Ethics* and in the *Tractatus* (cf. Wittgenstein 1993, 39f and Wittgenstein 1961 6.41). To state a moral judgment amounts to take a stance on something, holding an attitude which drives our evaluations and thereby underlies our actions. In this sense moral judgements have a personal character whereby there cannot be justifications in ethics: moral judgments cannot be justified by the same reasons which support factual statement. As Wittgenstein writes: "An ethical sentence is a personal action. Not a statement of fact [...] when considering a moral judgement] there is nothing to deserve the name of justification" (MS 183, 76). And in the same conversation with Rhees he goes on saying that "[in making a moral judgment] that could only mean that each judges as it does".

One might claim that Wittgenstein is a moral relativist only if ascribing him the view that moral judgments consist of subjective responses, which are all equally right (insofar as relative to individuals) in opposition to an objective reality of solid facts, against which we verify and falsify true or false descriptions of it. This view seems to hold a subjective-objective dichotomy whereby moral attitudes are considered either as subjective responses relative to individuals or as fitting in patterns which we take to be there independently from us and our evaluations. Mackie's error theory invites this thought when at the beginning of *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* he writes that values are "part of the fabric of the world" (Mackie 1977, 15). McDowell comments on this statement saying that "Mackie treats the thesis that value is in the world as interchangeable with the thesis that value is *objective* [...] this is not an innocuous variation of terminology [...] it insinuates [...] a specific and disputable philosophical conception of the world (or the real, or the factual) [...] What is objective, in the relevant

sense, is what is not subjective" (McDowell 1998, 113). I take McDowell's remark as being similar to what Wittgenstein also remarks in the conversation with Rhees: "People have had the notion of ethical theory, the idea of finding the true nature of goodness or of duty. Plato wanted to do this, to set an ethical enquiry in the direction of finding the true nature of goodness, so as to achieve objectivity and avoid relativity. He thought relativity must be avoided at all costs, since it would destroy the *imperative* in morality" (Rhees 1970, 100). This comes close to what also McDowell says, to the effect that both Wittgenstein and McDowell bring out two relevant considerations regarding the consequences of a certain conception of objectivity on morality: first, any idea of objectivity advanced in ethics aims to "avoid relativity at all costs"; second, any conception of objectivity is modelled on factual criteria, i.e., on the idea that value is objective as the description of an empirical fact can be (or the world as it is described by scientific theories). This conception, therefore, holds what is objective in opposition to what is subjective in the way of the subjective-objective dichotomy.

From the perspective of this dichotomy, relativism assumes moral disagreement as the empirical evidence to conclude that moral judgments only state substantial claims relative to different moral outlooks. This is the conclusion which supports the relativist claim to respect and tolerate moral differences. On the other hand, this might sound like a threat for any philosophical ambition to the idea of ethical objectivity. In this sense objectivism, at least in its Platonist version described by Wittgenstein, can be viewed as a philosophical reaction to relativism and to its claim to tolerance.

## 2. Moral Disagreement as Condition of Morality

At any rate, nor the subjectivist neither the objectivist side capture the sense of later Wittgenstein's philosophy as a therapy consisting in a conceptual clarification, which aims precisely to undo dichotomies of this kind. It is the very idea of the existence of a subjective-objective dichotomy that should be discarded as an illusory schematism, that we impose on our moral attitudes and evaluations. Such schematism limits any understanding of our attitudes. I believe that to recognise it as illusory is a gesture very much in the sense in which Wittgenstein thinks of philosophy: as a therapy that aims to dispel questions and pictures which hold us captive (Wittgenstein 1958 §115); this



is just like throwing away the ladder or, more precisely, like the case of recognising the picture of ideally rigid rails when applying a rule as one of our inmost illusion, i.e., just like “a mythological description of the use of a rule” (Wittgenstein 1958 §218, 221).

Continuing from the same conversation Wittgenstein states that “if you say ‘there are various systems of ethics’ you are not saying they are all equally right. *That means nothing* [emphasis added]. Just as it would have no meaning to say that each was right from his own standpoint”. This remark clearly supports the claim that Wittgenstein is not a moral relativist. If so, then in what sense can Wittgenstein suggest a different conception of ethical objectivity? By rejecting the subjective-objective dichotomy we are also asked to reject the underlying prejudice that our sensitivities are an insufficient foundation for any objective assessment of our moral attitudes. To reconsider moral disagreement from a different perspective would help to explain this point. As I have said before, relativism takes moral disagreement to conclude that we must respect and tolerate moral differences. This is indeed a valuable conclusion, based on the relativist’s assumption that we cannot say that a moral perspective is wrong because relative to moral standards which are intrinsically different from ours. I think that Wittgenstein would have no problem in accepting the relativist conclusion if it were based, however, on a different assumption. In fact, on the relativist’s assumption this conclusion becomes problematic when confronted with hard cases. In that conversation Rhees says: “When I mentioned Goering’s *Recht ist das, was uns gefällt*, ‘Right is whatever we want it to be’, Wittgenstein said that ‘even that is a kind of ethics. It is helpful in silencing objections to a certain attitude. It should be considered along with other ethical judgments and discussions, in the anthropological study of ethical discussions which we may have to conduct” (Rhees 1970, 102).

However, it would be problematic to accept Goering’s pronouncement as a justification of moral relativism. From a relativist point of view moral attitudes consist of substantial claims and subjective responses which are all on the same level and it is precisely this consideration that informs a judgment like “Right is whatever we want it to be”. But then the relativist is faced with the problem of holding her judgment true even when pronounced by someone like Goering. So it seems that if, on one hand, relativism can be viewed as an ethical account which promotes tolerance, on the other it might concede too much, for in hard cases it ought to tolerate morally unacceptable positions like Goering’s one. As the Goering’s case shows, it would be difficult for an extreme relativist to provide an argument to justify what we can and what we cannot tolerate, and on what bases this could be established.

In the face of this view, however, I suggest that we can objectively assess moral attitudes if (and only if) we stop thinking of objectivity in terms of factual criteria, or to put it with Putnam’s words, to stop “equat[ing] objectivity with description” (Putnam 2002, 40). Moral disagreement comes with positions which sometimes are impossible to reconcile, precisely because there are no criteria which can ensure us what position is objectively right or wrong *in the same sense* this can be established in empirical and factual cases. Thus moral disagreement cannot always be resolved and, I think, Wittgenstein would agree on this too (see for instance Rhees 1970, 101). However, while an extreme relativist only describes differences withholding judgment on hard cases, Wittgenstein strives to understand them, endeavouring to go deeply through them. In this sense disagreement constitutes a conclusion for the relativist, whereas it is a starting point for Wittgenstein, i.e.,

an internal and necessary condition of morality. In this way we can read Wittgenstein’s statement whereby it is nonsense to say that “all ethical systems are equally right”, just as it is meaningless to say that “each is right from his own point of view”.

### 3. Wittgenstein and Ethical Objectivity: Leaving Morality Open to Repudiation

To assess others’ attitudes as well as judging different perspectives cannot be done, however, without calling into question ourselves and our own attitudes in relation to others. We cannot understand others without calling into question what we too hold as most important for us: our hopes, interests, desires and so forth. Hence, in order to see what is right we also need to see what we might not be aware of: our own prejudices, fears, concerns, etc. In this regard, Wittgenstein’s later idea of clarification can be seen as an implementation of his early conception of ethics, considered as a clarification of the relation of the subject’s will to the world whereby “the question [as Wittgenstein’s writes in his *Notebooks*] seems to boil down to *how one wants*” (Wittgenstein 1979, 78). Later he writes that “the principal difficulty of philosophy” is “facing concepts without prejudices” (Wittgenstein 1982 §87). In this assumption lies the therapeutic character of later Wittgenstein’s philosophy which must be taken into account if we are to reformulate ethical objectivity on different bases. When coming to ethics this can be illustrated by the following remark: “As in philosophy so in life one is [we are] led astray by seeming analogies (to what others do or are permitted to do). And here, too, there is only one remedy against this seduction: to listen to the soft voices which tell us that things here are not the same as there” (Wittgenstein 2003, 97).

Thus, by following up on this idea, I think it is possible to read Wittgenstein’s comment on Goering in this way: Wittgenstein includes Goering’s position as ethical precisely in order to reject it. That is because Goering’s attitude represents a concrete possibility which must be taken into account to the extent that it challenges the very idea of morality. Thus, it must be taken into account as an instance of what we must reject as morally unacceptable. In this way, once we understand a given attitude like Goering’s we do not need any resolution by argument to explain why it must be rejected. It simply must be so. This reading provides inclusiveness for moral attitudes, as Wittgenstein does by considering Goering’s position along with other ethical judgments and discussions, without however relapsing into relativism. In this sense I read Wittgenstein’s comment that Goering’s ethics “it is helpful in silencing objections to certain attitude”.

In conclusion, it is important to remind that the conception of ethical objectivity which I think can be derived from Wittgenstein’s idea of therapy, by no means defines any true or correct position in any absolute sense. This conception has nothing to do with claims to objectivity based on factual criteria. In this sense it resemblances Cavell’s conception of perfectionism whereby moral claims determine “what position one is taking responsibility for” in order to “challenge the position itself”, and to determine “whether it is one I can respect” (Cavell 1979, 268). A corollary of this conception of objectivity is the following: “*Morality must leave itself open to repudiation* [emphasis added]; it provides one possibility of settling conflict [...] against the hard and apparently inevitable fact of misunderstanding, mutually incompatible wishes, commitments, loyalties, interests and needs” (Cavell 1979, 269). Thus, without adopting any

relativist assumption, we can conclude that “we do not have to agree with one another in order to live in the same moral world, but we do have to know and respect one another’s differences”, to put it with Cavell’s words. This as a necessary condition for any claim of morality to objectivity.

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# Wittgenstein, the Aphorist. The Place of Literary Quality in G. H. von Wright's Understanding of Wittgenstein as a Great Philosopher

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## Abstract

My talk examines a very specific feature of Georg Henrik von Wright's understanding of Wittgenstein, namely his tendency to associate Wittgenstein with great writers and artists. As such, it may also be seen as rather peculiar. Wouldn't a philosopher firmly rooted in the logical-analytical tradition like von Wright be expected to endorse analytical virtues such as clarity and stringency, rather than literary quality, in philosophy? Based on some of the culturally oriented essays von Wright published in Swedish I will, on the contrary, argue that von Wright, in fact, saw an intimate connection between literary quality and what he called philosophy in a deeper sense. Furthermore, I will claim that this connection, in particular, also applies to his view of Wittgenstein.

## 1. Introduction

Georg Henrik von Wright was the Finnish member of the group of three literary executors Ludwig Wittgenstein appointed as heirs and publishers of his *Nachlass* in his will (the other two were Elizabeth Anscombe and Rush Rhees). Besides von Wright's own career as a prominent philosopher within the logical-analytical tradition, his work with the publishing and editing of Wittgenstein's posthumous works came to last for more than 50 years.

My present talk will focus on a very specific feature of von Wright's understanding of Wittgenstein, namely his tendency to associate Wittgenstein with great writers and artists. Interestingly, the artistic qualities von Wright sees in Wittgenstein seem to go beyond mere stylistic or personal traits - in fact, they appear to form part of what makes Wittgenstein great as a *philosopher* in the eyes of von Wright, or so I will argue. Since von Wright, never, to my knowledge, explicitly made the connection between literary quality and philosophical merit in relation to Wittgenstein, my argument will be based on what von Wright elsewhere has written about the relation between literature and philosophy. It also involves an extension to extend what he says about the philosophical dimension of novels to include also aphorisms, a literary form more congenial to Wittgenstein.

I will start by presenting textual evidence for the fact that von Wright was inclined to put Wittgenstein on a par with the great writers. From this I will move to show that writers like Dostoyevsky, indeed, according to von Wright, could be counted as philosophers - albeit very special ones. My argument for a possible philosophical significance of aphorisms, in particular, is based on a similarity I find between what von Wright has to say about the philosophical significance of Dostoyevsky's novels and a very illuminating passage John Stuart Mill has written on aphorisms. Finally, I will form a connection to Wittgenstein by suggesting that my discussion may, indeed, add something important to our understanding of *Culture and Value* (germ. *Vermischte Bemerkungen*), or the selection of general remarks by Wittgenstein made by von Wright.

## 2. "It would be surprising if he were not one day ranked among the classic writers of German prose"

Georg Henrik von Wright's probably most well-known writing on Wittgenstein is the biographical sketch that originally was published in the *Philosophical Review* 1955, and later was included in Norman Malcolm's *Ludwig Wittgenstein: a memoir* 1958. Whereas Malcolm's recollections are highly personal, and sometimes anecdotal, von Wright's account forms a more objective exposition of the different periods of Wittgenstein's life, together with an outline of the stages his philosophy went through. As such it provides an excellent background to the story Malcolm is telling. von Wright's personal relation to Wittgenstein, however, is kept almost totally out of the picture. It is only when von Wright turns to the question of Wittgenstein's *language* that we encounter a phrasing that may to rest on a more strongly experienced personal view:

It would be surprising if he were not one day ranked among the classic writers of German prose. The literary merits of the *Tractatus* have not gone unnoticed. The language of the *Philosophical Investigations* is equally remarkable. The style is simple and perspicuous, the constructions of the sentences firm and free, the rhythm flows easily. The form is sometimes that of a dialogue, with questions and replies; sometimes, as in the *Tractatus*, it condenses to aphorisms." (von Wright 1958, 21).

I think this is a quite remarkable passage. A philosopher in the logical-analytical tradition, as von Wright certainly was, would not seem to be likely to admire the literary qualities of a philosopher's writings. Rather, such a philosopher would be expected to endorse analytical virtues such as *clarity* and *stringency*. For, after all, what would be so good about producing *philosophy* with an "easily flowing rhythm"? Or is von Wright simply trying to say that "Wittgenstein was a great philosopher, and you know what, he could write a very enjoyable prose, as well!" (as compared to, for instance, Kant, we may assume).

Now, as already indicated, there is an argument to be made for a more intimate connection between literary quality and philosophical merit in von Wright's thinking, which is likely to apply also to Wittgenstein. To see this, we have to turn to some of the many essays on cultural matters von Wright wrote in his native language Swedish.

### 3. On sincere attempts to determine the place of man in the order of things

There are early signs of the fact that there was a tension in von Wright's view of what philosophy could be expected to achieve. On the one hand, he believed that philosophy, in the early 20th century finally had reached the stage of science, or "den sicheren Gang einer Wissenschaft (von Wright 2001, 56). With this he meant the emerging logical-analytical tradition, and there is no doubt that he was excited about the fact. On the other hand, he also came to realize that work within this tradition was specialized and "non-visionary". In particular, there did not seem to be any room for a philosophy oriented towards *life* (cf. von Wright 1989, 18). Still, von Wright did not totally confirm to the view that there could be no room for an existentially relevant philosophy. He did, however, certainly not find this space in the philosophical existentialism of Heidegger or Sartre (see von Wright 1955a, 125). Instead, the existential dimension of philosophy was to be found in the works of the great writers.

Thus, in an early review of Bertrand Russell's *In Praise of Idleness* in *Studentbladet* 1937, he already points out that he sees Russell's writings on social issues as vastly inferior to the works of, for instance, writers like Aldous Huxley and George Bernard Shaw - adding that "intelligent persons may only be excused for concerning themselves theoretically with society if they are *artists*" (von Wright 1937, 276, my translation and italics). At this stage, however, there still is no explicit connection made between *philosophy* and *artistry*. But later, in the 50's, he could, for instance, compare Sartre's philosophy with his novels and plays, greatly favouring the latter "in which the existential ideas have received their most convincing expressions" (von Wright 1955a, 125, my translation). The clearest statement to the fact that great writers, indeed, could be viewed as philosophers on existential issues, is, however, to be found in his essays on Dostoyevsky that originally appeared in 1949 in the journal *Nya Argus*, and later were included in the collection *Tanke och förkunnelse* (1955b). Here von Wright, for instance, writes the following:

In these essays we shall try to speak of Dostoyevsky as a *philosopher*. Not perhaps in the academic sense ... but in the *deeper sense*, which covers all *serious* attempts to determine the place of man in the order of things, independently of whether they use scientific or artistic ways of expression". (von Wright 1955b, 71-72, my translation and italics).

From this it certainly becomes clear that literature may be *deeply philosophical*. Simultaneously, however, von Wright, seems to want to say that philosophy "in a deeper sense", could be achieved by using a scientific expression, as well. This, rather annoyingly, is done without giving us any indication of how such a "scientific expression" might look - not to mention that he also appears to make a distinction between the "academic sense" of philosophy and something like "scientific philosophy in a deeper sense". So what are we to make out of this?

Well, of course, it is possible that it is, precisely, Wittgenstein, who was very much present in von Wright's life when the essays originally were written in 1949, von Wright has in mind in indicating the possibility of a scientifically expressed "deep philosophy". Still, this might seem rather strange, given the fact that von Wright only a few years later would underline the *literary qualities* in Wittgenstein. To me, a more reasonable interpretation of the passage would be that von Wright, on personal grounds, wanted to keep the option of an existentially relevant "scien-

tific philosophy" open. I will, however, not pursue this question in this connection.

Instead, I will whole-heartedly submit to the temptation to draw a connection between what von Wright 1949 says about the philosopher Dostoyevsky with what he 1955 says about the literary qualities of Wittgenstein in his biographical sketch.

### 4. The philosophical significance of aphorisms

As we have seen, Dostoyevsky, to von Wright's view, may be seen as a philosopher "in a deeper sense". But what is it that qualifies his writings as "serious attempts" to determine existence? The following passage by von Wright seems clarifying in this respect:

The spiritual reality of Man is much too complex to be captured unequivocally by the networks of distinctions and deductions of abstract thought ... it is not a weakness, but a strength in [Dostoyevsky] that his philosophical ideas are of a complex nature, approaching the contradictory, and the paradox. Analytical thought can never clarify them completely without any loss. They have a substance of living reality, which no scholastic interpretation can avoid killing." (von Wright 1955b, 74, my translation).

Although not much is said about how Dostoyevsky actually achieves to capture something of the essence of "the spiritual reality of Man", it seems safe to assume that it has to do with the *form* of his writings, which works differently from the ways of abstract, analytical thought. Most importantly, this difference should not be thought of as mere variations in the mode of presentation. There is simply no way in which a novel of Dostoyevsky's could be explicated in terms of an analytical treatise without a substantial loss. Thus, we may see that there is an intimate connection between philosophy in a "deeper sense" and the *inexhaustibility* of its expression.

Now, naturally, Wittgenstein was not a novelist like Dostoyevsky. Still, the literary forms von Wright emphasizes in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* - *dialogue* and *aphorism* - are, clearly, interesting in relation to what has been said about Dostoyevsky. In this connection I will focus only on the latter.

Aphorisms are generally described as *tersely phrased general truths*. They are often characterized as "clever" or "witty", but also as connected with *wisdom*. (cf. *The Free Dictionary*). Furthermore, good aphorisms cannot, evidently, be totally *trivial*. What von Wright says about Dostoyevsky is also interesting to compare with what another philosopher firmly rooted in an Anglo-Saxon tradition, John Stuart Mill, has written in an early article on aphorisms. Here Mill draws a distinction between, on the one hand, the systematic treatises of philosophy which "deliver truths which grow out of one another" and, on the other hand, unsystematic expressions like aphorisms, which may be seen as a kind of "detached truths" resting on "specific experiment" (i.e. experience) (Mill 1981, 421-422). Obviously, this is all fairly close to von Wright's separation between the "networks of distinctions and deductions" and complex philosophical ideas with a "substance of living reality".

## 5. Wittgenstein, the Aphorist

So far, I have shown three things. First, von Wright was a great admirer of the literary qualities of Wittgenstein. Second, for him, the works of great writers like Dostoyevsky had a philosophical depth that may not be achievable by an analytical approach. Third, it may be argued that, besides novels, also aphorisms may have a particular philosophical significance, owing to their literary quality. To complete the link to Wittgenstein it remains to be shown that von Wright saw a specific philosophical significance *precisely* in the most aphoristic passages of Wittgenstein's writings.

The most obvious indication of this is, of course, the collection of cuttings from Wittgenstein *Nachlass* von Wright edited and published as *Culture and Value* (*Vermischte Bemerkungen*) with the help of Heikki Nyman - a work that, in effect, created the very idea of Wittgenstein as an *aphorist*. Now, there is much to be said about the motives behind von Wright's work with collecting these "remarks of a general nature" that were scattered around in Wittgenstein's *Nachlass* in a single, chronologically ordered edition. He was, for instance, certainly attempting to revise the restricted portrait of Wittgenstein as a "culturally illiterate", which still prevailed in the 70's, by publishing a collection of Wittgenstein's remarks on religion, music, literature, history and culture (von Wright 1982, 2-3). As Christian Erbacher recently has shown, von Wright's work on Wittgenstein's general remarks also mirrors the developments his own view of philosophy were undergoing during the late 1960's and 1970's (Erbacher 2015, 19), an aspect closely connected with the question of a philosopher's relation to his times.

It may, however, also be of some interest to take a closer look on the way von Wright is inclined to characterize Wittgenstein's general remarks. Thus, in the preface to *Culture and Value* he writes as follows:

Some of the notes are ephemeral; others on the other hand - the majority - are of great interest. *Sometimes they are strikingly beautiful and profound* (Preface to Wittgenstein 1980, my italics).

Now, in the light of what has been said above, it is certainly tempting to relate the last sentence, with its reference to *profoundness*, to what von Wright earlier had written about Dostoyevsky. Thus, as a conclusion of my paper, I want to suggest that *Culture and Value* is not only to be seen as a manifestation of Wittgenstein relation to his times, or as valuable clue to his philosophy. It may also be seen as the edition of Wittgenstein's *Nachlass* in which Wittgenstein most clearly is presented as a thinker confirming to von Wright's vision of a philosopher in the *deeper* sense. And, as we have seen, to von Wright such depth was intimately related to literary quality.

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# The Unity of Wittgenstein's "Logics of our Language" in Igbo-African Tonal Languages

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## Abstract

Wittgenstein begins the *Tractatus* by claiming that philosophical problems can largely be resolved by understanding the "Logic of our language.". The implication is that those problems are essentially linguistic, and depend more on the manner of presentation (*Fragestellung der Probleme*) than on anything else; and as soon as one is capable of explaining the logic of the functioning of our language, philosophical problems will vanish. Identifying two logics in Wittgenstein's entire language discourse, the author believes that a good grasp and exposition of those logics can be a worthwhile venture, particularly as he argues that the said logics are operative or has a place in an Igbo-African tonal language. His argumentation is the novelty in the paper, constituting, as it were, the contribution of the paper to the symposium.

## Introduction

Wittgenstein readers generally classify his philosophical thoughts into two tendencies: 'Wittgenstein I, deriving from *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*,' and 'Wittgenstein II, emerging from *Philosophical Investigations*'. The two tendencies are often looked upon as opposed to each other. However, it is from these tendencies that one wishes to speak about the two "logics of our language" in Wittgenstein, albeit Wittgenstein explicitly used the expression in the *Tractatus*.

This paper aims at exposing the two logics, their mode of functioning and significance. As part of its contribution to this year's 38<sup>th</sup> Symposium titled "Realism, Relativism, Constructivism", the paper further argues that the said logics are jointly operative in a certain tonal language of Igbo-African people. To demonstrate this, the paper follows this trend of discussion: meaning of the expression, "the logic of our language", summary presentation of the two logics, and finally, the nature and functionality of Igbo tonal language where 'propositional' and 'use' dimensions (logics) of language get united in tonality.

## The Expression: "Logic of our language": Its meaning and Significance

The expression - "logic of our language" - was coined by Wittgenstein in the second paragraph of his preface to the *Tractatus*, where he states that the book deals with philosophical problems arising due to the manner of 'question-presentation of the problems' (*Fragestellung der Probleme*). He thinks that problems are not well presented because of the 'misunderstanding we have about the logic of our language'. It should be recalled, firstly, that logic, in general, 'is the procedure of correct reasoning'.

Therefore, Wittgenstein's use of the word 'logic' in his discourse suggests that clarity of thought and articulation are indispensable in solving philosophical problems. Thus, 'logic of our language' amounts to saying that 'language has a certain correct pattern of its articulation'. Grayling (1944, 27) explains the expression better thus: „Für den *Tractatus* is der Gedanke Zentral, dass der Sprache eine logische Struktur zugrunde liegt und dass ein Verständnis dieser Struktur uns die Grenzen zeigt, was wir klar und sinnvoll sagen können. Die Bedeutung dieses Gedankens liegt darin, dass nach Wittgenstein das, was *gesagt* werden kann, dasselbe ist wie das, was *gedacht* werden

kann.“ This excerpt underlines the point that language does not only exhibit a logical structure, but also shows the limit of what can be meaningfully expressed: 'what can be expressed is what is thinkable'. Therefore, language seems to limit our thinking. In the later part of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein categorically affirms "the limits of language mean the limits of my world," which largely implies that philosophical problems are but pseudo-problems insofar as they are problems which have been badly formulated; hence linguistic in nature more than anything else.

In his contribution to the logical structure of language, Bertrand Russell explains the *Tractatus* as a book that deals essentially with the 'principles of symbolism'; he goes further to outline four major problems that it raises in the context of language: psychological, epistemological, the special sciences and the logical problems. About the fourth, Russell (*Tractatus*, 'Introduction') writes:

'Fourthly, there is the question: what relation must one fact (such as a sentence) have to another in order to be *capable* of being a *symbol* for that other? *This last is a logical question*, and is the one with which Mr. Wittgenstein is concerned. He is concerned with the conditions for the *accurate Symbolism*, i.e. for *Symbolism* in which a sentence "means" something quite definite.'

The cited passage is significant for the following reasons: First, it captures some salient issues on Wittgenstein's central position in the *Tractatus*, and to some extent, in the *Investigations*. Second, it underlines symbolization as the focus of the *Tractatus*. Third, it identifies symbol as a logical operation (logic being a kind of symbol). The word 'symbol' bespeaks of representation; and representation is to be understood in terms of a relationship between one thing and another. Furthermore, the operative concept, "logic of our language", can have a foundation in the *Investigations*. Grayling's contribution is helpful because it opines that under the title 'logic of our language', the early and later Wittgenstein can be discussed though with completely different understandings (Grayling 1944, 25f). Grayling, thus, presents the appropriateness of employing the expression 'logic of our language' for the two tendencies in Wittgenstein. Additionally, he makes it clear that the later work, in some respects, rejects some central views of the *Tractatus*, a fact that Wittgenstein confesses, acknowledging that the criticisms of Ramsey 'forced him to recognize grave mistakes in his earlier work to an extent that he never imagined'. In order to understand the two logics well, the following elaboration is necessary.

## The Logic of Propositions as the first "Logic of our Language"

Wittgenstein opens his *Tractatus* by discussing the subject matter – "world," implying that the horizon of human discourse and knowledge is the world; his synthetic definition of the world seems to justify this view: "*the world is everything that is the case*". As it is usual with synthetic explanations, there is the need for explication. Such an explication can be given with clues from sub-paragraphs to §1 of the *Tractatus* where Wittgenstein seems to present the world in two modes: *constructive and realistic*. As a construction, the world is perceived as "the totality of facts", but facts that are not to be understood as "things". Given that a fact in a logical space includes the actual and the possible; he says that nothing is accidental in logic. But from another perspective, he presents the world as real because it is constituted of atomic facts, and "an atomic fact is a combination of objects (entities, things)".

An understanding of the foregoing helps one to appreciate what Wittgenstein truly means when he asserts that "the picture is a model of reality", a phrase that introduces the famous picture theory for which the *Tractatus* is best known (Hacker 1972, 56). For Wittgenstein, "the picture is a fact", but not an empirical fact, otherwise Wittgenstein would not have said that "we make to ourselves pictures of fact." Therefore, 'picture' is to be understood in terms of mental representation as he clearly asserts: "*the totality of true thoughts is a picture of the world*". What this amounts to is that the litmus test for the truth or falsity of a picture lies in its comparison with reality'.

To understand 'facts' (i.e. constituents of the world) to be pictorial and representational is to understand them as 'propositions'. This is why Wittgenstein uses the term 'propositions' in picturing reality: "propositions can be true or false only by being pictures of the reality". Therefore, 'a proposition aims at saying something clearly about reality, and thereby about the world.

## The Logic of Contextual "Use" as the second "Logic of our Language"

The theory of language game is among the principal themes discussed in the *Investigations*. In this work, Wittgenstein uses the art of playing game to demonstrate the way we construct meaning. By 'games' he means "moving objects on a surface according to certain rules". This explanation portrays a game as an activity which is possible only by learning how others play it or how others 'use' the game-objects in accordance with stipulated rules. Applying this understanding to language, Wittgenstein likens 'the whole process of using words to one of those games by means of which children learn their native language. He calls such linguistic practices, "*language-games*" and some of the examples he gives include the following: giving orders and obeying them; reporting an event, etc. Worthy of note in language-games is the fact that we learn the meaning of words by reference to contexts in which they are used. He is very emphatic about it when he said that 'meaning is found in its use in the language'. Even in a case of linguistic dispute, one should always ask the following questions: 'how did we learn the meaning of the word, "good" for instance? Or in what language-games does it belong?'

Commenting further on 'language-game', Schulte (1992, 103f) observes that "the concept of language games simply serves to emphasize the importance of taking context into account when trying to understand or explain the

meaning of linguistic expressions". In addition to paying attention to contexts of use, Schulte opines that Wittgenstein's use of 'language game' is to stress the need that "we have to learn linguistic expressions" as well as *how* we have to learn it. Nevertheless, he observes that the doctrine of language-game is not novel in Wittgenstein's thought. For, in his writings of early 30s, he (Wittgenstein) had indicated, for instance, that "a name has meaning only in the context of a proposition". By and large, the new thesis of language game marks a considerable shift from Wittgenstein's earlier thinking. For instance, he had held in the *Tractatus* and other earlier writings that the structure and logic of language can be presented with perfect or near perfect clarity. But in the *Investigations* (107f), this is not the case: "...what we call 'sentence' and 'language' has not the formal unity I imagined, but is the family of structures more or less related to one another..." Given the foregoing stress on the concept 'language game' which is tied to family resemblances, and in one word, "use-context", this paper employs the expression - "logic of contextual use".

At this juncture, a basic question emerges: how can we argue for the unity of the x-rayed logics? One way is to argue for it theoretically. This paper, however, wishes to take another way, namely, to argue for it in the trend of Wittgenstein's idea of 'family resemblance' i.e. the trend of the relation of his discourse with another language. This other language is the tonal language of the Igbo-African people.

## The Igbo-Tonal Language Exemplar and the Unity of Wittgenstein's two logics of language

The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria in Africa have a tonal language that is also called Igbo language. To explain Igbo language better, Edeh (1985, 45) clarifies: "It is a tonal language in which both grammar and speech tones play an essential role. The stress on syllables of a word, regardless of whether they are high, intermediate or low is determinative of meaning. Thus, many words that have the same orthography do not have the same tone [hence do not have the same meaning]".

In the excerpt, Edeh underlines the fact that the correct pronunciation of Igbo words and expressions is paramount in determining the meaning of a linguistic expression. To substantiate Edeh's position, a few examples can be given with regard to simple words and sentence formation.

Simple Words with same letters, but different meanings according to tone

ákwá means Cry/Tears  
ákwa means Cloth  
ākṽ means Bed  
ākwá means Egg

Sentence formation or compound words

Even in the formation of sentences or compound words, the tone still determines the meaning. Examples could be given as follows:

- (a) Ona ākwá ákwá = he is crying.
- (b) Ona ākwá ákwā = he is sewing cloth.

In order to cultivate the habit of differentiating tones and hence assigning meanings, the Igbo language constructs complex expressions that help the learners of the language. The following expressions are some examples:

(i) Nwanyi na ákwá ákwá na ákwá ákwá n'elu ákwá ákwá ákwá di n'elu ákwá = a crying woman is crying on top of a cloth that is sewn and placed on a bed.

(ii) Anya ike nke ike dara na ukwu osisi ike di na mbara ezi ike = Ike's axe fell on the foot of the tree that is found in Ike's palace.

## The Two logics unite in Tonality

Given the above x-ray of the operation of Igbo tonal language, it is hereby argued that it is a language that incorporates Wittgenstein's two logics of language. The two logics, simply stated, are "*propositions*" intended to represent reality as clearly as possible, and "*contextual-use*" that has to be learnt from its language-users. How these logics are effected in a tonal language is this: inasmuch as an Igbo word or sentence can be understood only if the tonality is preserved, making it possible for an Igbo expression to either assert or deny something, it is propositional. For, in logic, a proposition is basically a statement that has subject and predicate which either asserts or negates something. Again, insofar as the Igbo word-tone is contextual i.e. something that can only be learnt from its users, the Igbo-language also has a contextual use or is use-based for its meaningfulness. Let us consider some sentences as examples:

i. The Igbo sentence, "*Chukwu nwērē íké*" means "God has power". It is propositional insofar as it affirms something i.e. God's power. The affirmation is possible because of proper intonation, and the intonation itself is an art that can only be learnt from the owners.

ii. But the same sentence, when badly intoned like "*Chúkwu nwéré íké*", does not make any meaning at all

in Igbo language, but an example of 'insignificant or nonsensical' sentence.

From the above examples, one sees that in the first sentence, the logic of proposition and the logic of use coincide into one: tonality. Therefore, tonality has two inseparable functions: logical and use functions.

This paper has tried to explain the origin and novelty of Wittgenstein's famous expression, "Logic of our language", identifying not just one logic, but two logics of language in the overall efforts of Wittgenstein to describe the nature of language. Since the two logics often appear to oppose each other, the paper attempted to find a unity in Igbo-tonal language that is explained as both propositional and contextual. Therefore, as far as the tonal language is propositional and contextual at the same time, therein can we speak of unity of Wittgenstein's proposed logics for an understanding of language.

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# Relative but Real and Binding: How “Family Resemblance” and “Normative Use” have Found their Way into Translation Studies (TS)

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## Abstract

Wittgenstein's later philosophy is sometimes quoted but seldom really understood in current Translation Studies (TS). Nevertheless, the ideas of family resemblance and normative use have found a place in this specialized academic area, mainly due to the influential work of Gideon Toury. In philosophy, there is a trend to handle translation in a way alien to TS. This paper suggests that both fields could learn from each other.

“If the essence of human communication is its intentionality, then human action is the ultimate source of its meaning.”  
(Michael Tomasello)

## 1. Translation as praxis vs. philosophical concept

In recent Translation Studies (TS) as an autonomous academic area, the opposition *realism* vs. *relativism* is akin to the dispute between essentialist and deconstructivist approaches, while empirical research associated with descriptive and sociological approaches bear some kind of *constructivism*. The first opposition entails a clear philosophical discussion on the nature of language and translation itself, which is largely left aside in the third way. For over a decade now, I have been advocating the thesis that a Wittgensteinian understanding of language and translation can provide an alternative to the first opposition and a philosophical dimension to the third way, filling gaps and establishing relations that the methodologies of the area prevent us from seeing. I shall here explore further aspects on these topics, pointing out how some central concepts of Wittgenstein's later philosophy have found their way into TS, even though his actual work remains very little known in the area.

First, a brief comment on the discussion of the topic *translation* in philosophy proper seems necessary. There is a trend to use the term as an *operational concept* akin to equivalence and set commensurability as logical precondition for translation. Quine does this with his thesis of the radical translation, as does Davidson with his principle of charity, but also Wittgenstein's commentators sometimes follow the same path (e.g. Glock 2008, Kusch 2012). Such discussions have very little to do with the actual *praxis* of translation in the various modalities we accept as valid and put under this general label. When doing so, philosophers go on “thinking” instead of “looking” at the real praxis, in short: they do not follow Wittgenstein's advice in the discussion of family resemblance (IF 66) – if we assume they are really talking about translation as a human *activity*.

Paul Ricœur (2011) has suggested we should invert the logical precedence with his idea that, in the very act of translating, we are in fact *constructing the comparable* (68). His reasoning is that language kinship, as a product of long lasting cultural exchanges, actually masks the real nature of equivalence, that is more properly constructed than given (66). This obviously changes the whole picture

and is not only a very plausible thesis, but also one which is largely compatible with Wittgenstein's later conception of language as activity driven (IF 43).

I shall here sketch how the concepts of family resemblance and normative use have acquired a distinct position in contemporary TS. My focus is on the praxis and the philosophical dimensions it entails. The talk is thus about philosophy in translation, not the other way around.

## 2. Family resemblance and normative use in TS

Some salient features of Wittgenstein's work make a suitable reception of his thought in other fields rather difficult. One of them is the much-discussed thematic unity under the different treatments of the various periods. The multiplicity of voices in his later writings is also a major hurdle, especially in combination with the lack of explicit references to the authors or positions implicit in the therapeutic dialogue. Consequently, the usual way of bringing Wittgenstein to TS is to quote some well-known excerpts and generalize them in an inappropriate fashion, mostly bringing him close to a major, already known position, instead of looking at the very implications of his thought to the questions in debate.

A similar problem occurs with the reception of Gideon Toury, to my knowledge the translation theorist who best understood Wittgenstein's conception of language so far – the longer study of Dinda Gorlé (2012) being a case apart, as it takes a *semiotic* stance and has not yet been really discussed in TS. As Susan Bassnet and Andre Lefevere (1990) noted, “the concept[s] of norms and rules” and “of the function of a translated text (...) were introduced (...) [in the eighties] by Israeli translation scholar Gideon Toury” (5). However, according to the authors, Toury's “somewhat more than hermetic style” and “the relative inaccessibility of his book (...) tended to obstruct, rather than facilitate the spread of his ideas” (6). I think the second argument is valid, but the first one is inaccurate. Toury's style is not “hermetic”, on the contrary: his text is very easy to read, if one understands his basic assumptions. Those are in a significant way inspired by or at least compatible with a Wittgensteinian perspective. To the extent that people are not acquainted with this perspective in TS, the argument can be perceived as hermetic.

Yet Toury's stance became, at last, a central position in contemporary TS, and it is no exaggeration to state that his main work, now in a new and revised edition (Toury

2012), enjoys the status of a textbook. When it comes to understanding the philosophical dimensions of his writings, however, one is still far away from grasping the degree of his indebtedness to Wittgenstein, the most evident concerning the notion of family resemblance, which Toury explicitly mentions, although he states that he did not develop the topic due to his “shaky background in philosophy” (2012 69). The paradigmatic case of his use of family resemblance in TS is the account of 27 translations of a single Japanese haiku into English over nearly a century (203-211), constituting what one could call the history of this gender in the English-speaking West.

More recently, the same concept of family resemblance appears as an organizing principle in a book where Lenita Esteves (2014) focuses on translation as an *act*, taking thus a *performative* viewpoint that draws directly from Austin’s speech act theory but somehow also benefits from the diffuse echoes of Wittgenstein in pragmatic linguistics and TS. Interestingly, in his preface to the book (13-15), Kanavillil Rajagopalan points out that “the much commented impossibility of the radical translation and also its correlate about the impossible anthropological encounter of civilization and barbarism” show that “any sign of universalism (...) is to be reached [through founding acts] instead of being simply presupposed” (15) – which is another way of posing Ricœur’s thesis of translation as construction of the comparable.

Rajagopalan (1992) had already shown that the efforts of mainstream linguistic pragmatics to classify the illocutionary act in some universalistic way shared a basis of blindly assumed ethnocentrism (118) and failed due to the *emic*, culture specific character of illocution (114-116). The author also reminds that Austin himself had considered mobilizing Wittgenstein’s notion of family resemblance but did not take it to the last consequences, which would make such universal classifications untenable (117), as they leave aside actual linguistic practices.

To understand these practices according to Wittgenstein’s call to go “back to the rough ground!” (IF 107), one needs to grasp how our general rules and conventions arise, i.e. how much translation is also regulated by normative behavior and the like. Pointing out the normative dimension in a way apart from the pure *prescriptivist* stance of the tradition is one of the main contributions by Gideon Toury to TS, taking social psychology –not linguistics or philosophy– as a reference. The author links stability and regularity to an underlying system of agreed standards, which regulate our social practices (62), with a clear focus on the *act*, meaning the way people behave, how they actually *do* things. According to this stance, such standards are not simply “given”, being instead a result of long and complex negotiations and disputes of hegemony. However, they eventually come to be seen as “natural”, in a similar way as explained by Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* (68). The task of the translation scholar is thus to *describe* how people translate in a given context and elicit regularities that might point to underlying translational norms. The proximity of such a norm concept to Wittgenstein’s hinges and bedrock propositions (IF 655; OC 93-99), and of Toury’s descriptive method to the practice-based advice to “look” instead of “thinking” (with preconceived *hypotheses*; IF 66) is evident.

Toury acknowledges two dimensions to translations, as “production of a text in a particular language/culture, which is designed to occupy a certain position, to fill a certain slot, in the host culture”, and, at the same time, to constitute a “representation in that language/culture of a text already existing in some other language, belonging to a dif-

ferent culture and occupying a definable position within it” (69). His main concern lies, however, in the first dimension, the so-called target function. Anyhow, the two dimensions lead necessarily to a tension between acceptability (regarding the target system) and adequacy (regarding the source system), “any concrete case involving an *ad hoc* compromise between the two” (70). An important feature of translation norms is that they are not monolithic, building instead a system with a mainstream center surrounded by older norms in decay and candidates to future mainstream norms (70). A good example Toury gives of changing norms are the Hebrew translations of Hemingway’s short story *The Killers* (97-98), but any account of the different translations of classical works over larger periods surely confirms his thesis.

Considering that a deeper discussion shall be available soon (cf. Oliveira 2014), I hope this short and somewhat reducing description suffices, for now, to make a correlation to Wittgenstein’s concept of hinges and bedrock propositions at least plausible, even if Toury never did this approximation himself. Translational norms surely don’t have the same stability as mathematical or even scientific propositions, but they do set the limits of the acceptable in a given context, building certainly a good counterweight to the looser fluidity advocated by post-modern relativisms currently in vogue in TS.

### 3. Back to philosophy

To close our remarks, let us turn our attention to some eminent Wittgenstein commentators (Glock 2008; Kusch 2012; Schulte 2012) and try to isolate the main features of their discussion on translation regarding our own. Lack of familiarity with the work is arguably one of the last restrictions one could possibly raise against the authors at stake, and yet there is no general agreement when it comes to defining the key concepts for extracting a translation theory from Wittgenstein’s writings, or even on how to translate certain terms or passages. One could say, with Toury, that their views amount to a system of tenets disputing the central, mainstream position, and sharing some aspects that link them more to the past or eventually to the future.

Hans-Johann Glock’s very scholarly text certainly points out many interesting questions that we could tackle on the basis of current TS, but he treats them in a way more akin to the discussions of the 1970s, mostly those from a linguistic perspective. The main problem here is to handle translation at the level of the structure, or linguistic systems. Translation, however, as derived from praxis, regards not structure, but texts, utterances and, in a certain way, discourses. It is not truth, in a scientific manner, what matters here, but sense. Translation tries to convey meaning, to make alien symbolic production meaningful in a different context, for a different audience. Glock’s real issue (mainly against Davidson), on the other hand, “is an epistemological one”, as he states himself (44).

In a replay to Glock, partially in defense of Davidson, Martin Kusch begins his argument also classifying different kinds of (in)commensurability at the level of the linguistic system, treating translation most of the time in terms of equivalence and its bare (im)possibility. In the following, however, dimensions much closer to real practice are brought into play, such as interpretation, understanding and language learning. The presentation itself is more detailed and less apodictic, aiming to build a “more nuanced” picture of Wittgenstein’s position (72). The most salient feature of the discussed examples from Wittgenstein’s work is that people in different cultures have not only dif-

ferent *practices* but also different *attitudes* towards them. Should we nonetheless stick to sole semantic (if not referential) dimension when discussing translation? Would language game not be a better choice? Moreover, we can take the questions on learning and expanding one’s own language in translation to remember that real people and especially translators move along different languages and cultures, so that their understanding and linguistic articulation cannot be explained on the sole ground of diverting structures or schemes – a feature very much in evidence in contemporary research on hybridity, multilingualism and phenomena as code switching. Some of Kusch’s points could be tackled under this perspective, as a complement to the translation question. Nevertheless, his own discussion, as a direct response to Glock, also remains mostly an epistemic one.

Joachim Schulte’s contribution to the same volume as Kusch’s takes a completely different stance, as it builds on the real practice of translation. His questions are thus very similar to those from the specialists in TS (cf. my own in Oliveira 2012, also for references and discussions I had to abridge here). Important aspects in Schulte’s argument are: 1) the questioning of the quest for terminological precision and invariance in translating some of Wittgenstein’s key concepts, as *übersichtliche Darstellung*; 2) the inevitable *interpretative* character of translation, also involving negotiation with peers, available models and alternatives; 3) Wittgenstein’s somewhat idiosyncratic language use, as in the case of German *Meinung* in the sense of English *meaning* – which is a good example of linguistic hybridity. Overall, Schulte shows, from inside out, that one can take the real translational praxis seriously without losing philosophical strength.

TS can surely benefit from Wittgenstein’s later philosophy of language. However, it would also be good if philosophers gave the real practice more weight in their considerations about translation. A glance at what specialists are doing in current TS would not harm, especially if they are already somehow committed to a compatible position, as is the case of Gideon Toury and the late Wittgenstein.

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# Faith in Belief: Why Life is not Based on Knowledge

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## Abstract

It is a well-known philosophical investigation that religious sentences should be based on knowledge in a certain way. Alvin Plantinga tries to defend religious knowledge as justified true belief for decades. Mostly scientists and religion-critiques suppose that religion is irrational and hence dangerous.

The critiques as well as the defenders imply a non-linguistic world. The critiques concern a difference between empirical evidences and corresponding formulas, which can explain the world. Hence human cognition would be the result of evolution just to recognise the laws of the world that lie within nature.

The defenders instead react to the critiques by defending the religious language against an empirical approach. While doing this, they accept the critiques approach as true. This would mean that the meaning lies within the objects – a position, which Kant rejected.

It is the thesis of my paper that Wittgenstein uses the example of the religious language-game for describing that every language-game grounds on an unexplainable foundation like faith in God. The impossibility of explaining God is quite similar to the unexplainability of the Big Bang. Instead, God can be described as well as the Big Bang. Playing a language-game means to trust in a certain foundation with certainty, but not necessarily with God. Playing a language-game then is based on faith, but without revelation.

## 1. A World without Language

Although no religious spots, God genes, or modules have been found, most of the naturalist approaches to the origins of religion claim that religion is a by-product of human evolution. In his book *God Delusion*, the biologist Richard Dawkins concludes that religion is dangerous because of the irrationality of faith. Thus, religion is a product of, or supported by, an ordinary cognitive mechanism. In Dawkins' point of view, these ordinary cognitive mechanisms are the "tendency to believe whatever their parents or tribal elders tell them" (Dawkins 2006, 205). In other words, a young believer does not use her mind to pass judgement on an occasion. Instead, she believes in judgements made by her parents or tribal elders, who perhaps have their knowledge from their own parents or tribal elders. But how is a broadening of knowledge to create something new possible, if every human ancestor receives her knowledge for judgement from her parents or tribal elders? Dawkins probably would answer that the individual who broaden her knowledge via mutation, selection, and recombination, becomes an atheist because she starts thinking, and does not believe any longer.

The New Atheists' claim contains the approach that belief of every description is dangerous because of faith, which in itself lacks empirical evidence. Religious descriptions are irrational and hence have no possibility to explain anything. That means in the New Atheist's interpretation that the sciences in general, and physics and biology in particular, have the ability to explain every human phenomenon. That's why religion for Daniel Dennett is a natural phenomenon and why Richard Dawkins looks for ultimate Darwinian explanations.

The summary of this first section is that most of the naturalistic explanations of religion seem to be a project of atheism, and as such lead to atheism (Visala 2011, 153).

## 2. Belief in Faith

Alvin Plantinga wrote a philosophical defence. In "Where the Conflict Really Lies", (Plantinga 2011) Plantinga argues that belief in God is a basal conviction, which he calls

"basic proper beliefs". Belief is basic, because it does not assume other premises; and it is proper, because it is the result of a function that is considered reliable. If "belief in" something is reliable, it constitutes knowledge. Plantinga argues that this "belief in" is a topic in Christian thought, which is the distinction between reason and faith as two different sources of knowledge (Plantinga 2011, 178f). Reason, on the one hand, includes such faculties as perception, memory, and induction. In contrast, faith is knowledge by deliverance:

"Faith, on the other hand, is a wholly different kettle of fish: according to the Christian tradition (including both Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin), faith is a special gift from God, not part of our ordinary epistemic equipment. Faith is a source of belief, a source that goes beyond the faculties included in reason. It is not that the deliverances of faith are to be contrasted with *knowledge*; according to John Calvin, faith 'is a firm and certain *knowledge* of God's benevolence toward us.' So a proposition I believe by faith can [...] nonetheless be something I know." (Plantinga 2011, 178f, emphasis in original, TP)

While Plantinga confesses to a possibility that some items of faith can be known by way of reason, it is his aim to elaborate faith as a source of knowledge that is given by God. According to this assumption, humans have a sixth sense, a *sensus divinitatis*, which is innate. This means that every human is equipped with a sense from God that enables her to believe in God and to recognise his creation. However some people are still tainted with the original sin (Plantinga 2000). People who do not believe in the Christian God illustrate this. Therefore, faith is, in Plantinga's point of view, a source of knowledge in addition to reason.

Although it seems that Plantinga and the New Atheists have little in common, they in fact have quite a few commonalities: Both obviously tend to represent opposite directions, but they overlap based on their mutual rejection of each other, and their justifications of their respective approaches. Whereas each justifies his own approach, he takes the other seriously. Otherwise there is no reason for reciprocal rejection. The New Atheists assume that there is

no room for God and faith in God in scientific realism, and Plantinga assumes that there is no need to justify faith in God within epistemic propositions. Nevertheless, because these arguments work with such issues as God and nature, they start from the premise that they exist. Hence, both approaches overlap in the assumption that epistemic belief exists as well as faith. Each defends his approach in a variety of ways. The difference is in their manner of rejecting each other: While Dennett and Dawkins try to find ultimate Darwinian explanations within human origins; Plantinga tries to illustrate his opinion with an elaboration of analytical epistemology.

If "faith" is basically a deep trust in something that distinguishes one's self-confidence, the New Atheists and Alvin Plantinga have faith in belief. Nonetheless, both have no empirical proof of the existence or inexistence of God or believing as a cognitive by-product. While the New Atheists refer to a non-linguistic world of facts, Plantinga refers to a world of language, which is given by God. Humans are not the creators of their own language. According to Plantinga, it is God who "has created us in his image, which includes our being able, like God himself, to have knowledge of ourselves and our world" (Plantinga 2011, xiv).

### 3. A world in virtue of language

How do we have access to the world? The New Atheists are entitled to claim the application exclusively: Solely by way of the sciences we can recognise the world. That assumption implies the essence of an object within that object. The recognition of the world then would depend on one's cognitive faculties. Every human who does not have cognitive interference is able to recognise the essence of an object while perceiving the object. Everyone who perceives the little green round thing *knows* that this is an apple. That means being an apple is inherent to an apple. This sounds like Aristotle's teleology: Every object has within it its inherent purpose. If it is like that, we have no ability to refer to the world, because the real world is outside of our range. But Immanuel Kant and his Copernican Revolution rejected this assumption. Following Kant's account, meaning does not lie within the object, but perceiving humans attribute purpose to the object. Hence, language does not mirror reality. The rejection is quite simple: If language could mirror reality, then one language would be sufficient for all humans. However, we have different languages, with different denominations for one and the same object.

It is Ludwig Wittgenstein, who rejects the concept of an ideal language that mirrors reality and thinking more precisely than ordinary language does. Wittgenstein's concept of a language-game is the language-internal relatedness of language and the world. If there is something like an external reality outside of one's range of perception, we have no access to that reality, because it is independent from humans. Hence, language is not a set of icons that identifies reality and the semantic system of icons idealistically. To the contrary, language creates our world in the first place.

I'd like to introduce Wittgenstein's approach briefly (following Glock 1997)

1. Grammar is coherent and hence not accountable to an extra-linguistic reality.

Wittgenstein wants to reject the concept of a meaningful body behind the icon, corresponding to a non-linguistic entity. There is no essence of an icon that

designates the proper application of the icon. Grammatical rules do not result from that kind of meaning; instead they partly constitute the meaning of the icons. Icons as such do not have meaning by themselves. Instead, by using and explaining icons in a certain way, one can give them meaning.<sup>1</sup>

2. Logical rules of inference cannot be justified by model-theoretical proofs.

3. There is no real essence of a thing. Instead one changes the criteria for the application of words. One needs to differentiate between the understanding of the phrase and expert knowledge.

Wittgenstein urges a quasi-Kantian argument that we cannot use facts to refer to grammatical rules without expressing the facts linguistically. Every sentence is expressed in a certain language and hence presupposes a grammatical frame. There is no non-linguistic or pre-conceptual perspective beyond grammar. The grammatical frame is susceptible to change. Sometimes we change the criteria of application, but Wittgenstein's autonomy of language is not a matter of 'anything goes', because language is embedded in a certain form of life. Language then is in Wittgenstein's point of view an activity. That means that there is no metaphysical right or wrong, but grammatical rules can be used in a right or wrong way.

To use language as an activity and to follow rules that define what's right and useful, means, according to Wittgenstein, to play a language-game. The object does not define the meaning of a word. Rather, meaning arises by way of the rules that designate its function. People learn words by learning how to use them. The diversity of language-games does not allow the reduction to one essential language-game or even to criteria of identification. That does not mean, however, that the sum of language-games have nothing mutually in common: Language-games are similar, but they do not have one single definable move. All games share Wittgenstein's "family resemblance" (*family resemblance* appears for the first time in Nietzsche's "Beyond Good and Evil"). Instead of reducing all games to one element, they can be defined by way of a complex network of overlapping and crossing similarities. Wittgenstein's illustration is the different members of a family, who are similar in a certain way, but who have more than one element in common.

### 4. Faith in Belief

Following Wittgenstein, playing a language-game means to decide on a certain form of life. A form of life is a composition of personal language, culture, and worldview. The grammar of the language we share is the regularity of concrete actions. That implies the use of a certain set of linguistic patterns in certain contexts. It is necessary to know the function of language within the language-game, and its differences. Language-games as such are coherent systems that refer to the world in a normative way, because the reference concerns actions that are taken for granted intersubjectively. On that note, language-games are interpretations of the world. And to play a language-game then means to interpret the world. Causality and reason have an effect within the language-game, but not outside it.

<sup>1</sup> Ostensible definition in empiricism and TLP: a word and the non linguistically meaning forges a nexus that bases language in reality. Wittgenstein argues that the patterns of the ostensible definition belong to grammar, because they act as standards for validity, e.g. colour pattern for colour words.

To conclude, it follows that the proposition “to believe in God” is a religious language-game based on subjective conviction. Contrary to objective convictions, which are the unimaginability of disbelief, the subjective conviction is, according to Wittgenstein, a feeling of unswerving conviction, and this seems to be faith.

The unswerving conviction – faith – is in Wittgenstein’s point of view the foundation of the complete language-games. In a conversation with Drury, Wittgenstein says:

“I’m not a religious man but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view” (Malcom 1994, 7)

Well, what does he mean by this? Wittgenstein considers that explaining the religious belief, the reasoning as the justification of evidence, will come to an end at a certain point. What follows is not faith, but action (PI §217; OC 204). Wittgenstein would obviously agree that faith is the necessary foundation for reasoning within the religious language-game. Well, it is my hypothesis that using this example, Wittgenstein wants to show that every language-game has its foundation in faith as an unswerving conviction without empirical evidence. The believer has explanations about God within the religious language-game. Analogously the physicist, who is convinced that the earth has been created by the Big Bang, may explain a lot of facts within the physical language-game that she had learned by experiences. But she will have no empirical evidences about it at all. She has faith in the Big Bang, but without revelation.

People tend to assume that their own approach is the right one, because she knows the reasons. With Wittgenstein in mind it is to be seen that the foundation of every language-game is faith. Faith, in the manner described, is

the necessary foundation for action, and hence for reasoning. Based on the foundation of faith – with or without revelation – she is able to play a language-game, wherein such categories as right/wrong, good/bad can be evolved. The participants of that language-game have the ability to proof or even to revise the practice.

To belief in the parents or tribal elders is part of our social development since we were born. Even Wittgenstein says that we learn the right usage of words by pointing to an object – a conception that is pretty much equivalent with current approaches in developmental psychology.

Well, obviously there is no need for reductionists to be afraid of faith, if faith is conceived as an unswerving conviction without the necessity of revelation, but as a necessary condition for action.

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# “It’s Not Silent and Dark Within”. Murdoch, Wittgenstein, and the Inner Life

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## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explain how Murdoch’s can, on the one hand, accept Wittgenstein’s criticism of inner objects and, on the other hand, embrace a picture of moral life that gives a central place to the notions of privacy and interiority.

In “The Idea of Perfection,” the first essay of *The Sovereignty of Good*, Iris Murdoch takes as her target a kind of moral psychology that she characterizes as existentialist-behaviorist by putting into question what she identifies as its “keystone,” namely, the argument according to which mental concepts require a “genetic analysis:” we understand all there is to understand about mental concepts in terms of the publicly observable circumstances that allow us to acquire them in the first place, because any picture connecting them to something inner is flawed. Murdoch presents this argument as a “special case,” or better as a (problematic) development, of a more general one, influentially presented by Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations*, which rejects the idea that concepts, whether mental or physical, can be made intelligible in terms of private objects to which the subject has a privileged and exclusive access. This line of thought, she argues, has proved very successful in dealing with sensation concepts and the traditional philosophical problems involving them. This has been taken to lend support to the genetic analysis and the picture of moral life associated with it: one in which inner life is deemed non-existent or, at least, irrelevant and overt action is the only thing that matters. Murdoch emphasizes that this picture, which she urges us to resist, is not something Wittgenstein himself takes to follow from his treatment of inner objects. The aim of this paper is to explain how Murdoch’s can, on the one hand, accept Wittgenstein’s criticism of inner objects and, on the other hand, embrace a picture of moral life that gives a central place to the notions of privacy and interiority.

## I.

Murdoch schematically presents the general line of reasoning that supports the rejection of inner objects through the following two claims: (a) that such inner objects cannot be appealed to in applying checking procedures for distinguishing good applications of a concept from bad ones (i.e. they are useless) and (b) that they cannot be introspectively discovered (i.e. are not there). The second claim has been defended by appeal to both empirical and logical considerations. It has been maintained that what introspection makes available is pretty scarce and hazy and also that there are logical problems involved in the identification of such introspected materials.

Murdoch does not explicitly attribute the argument so summarized to Wittgenstein and, for our purposes, we don’t need to settle the matter. At this general level, the line of reasoning is not problematic in her view. What Murdoch is interested in is rather what can (and what cannot) be attributed to Wittgenstein specifically in connection with mental concepts. She argues that Wittgenstein has simply observed that a first-personal use of a mental concept verb

is not a report about a private object because, lacking a checking procedure, it does not make sense to say that one is right or wrong in registering its purported presence. Murdoch endorses the criticism of the object/report model of inner life; her position on the idea that there is no intelligible distinction between being right and being wrong when all one has is appearances is more nuanced and I will address it below. The main point here is a contrast between this observation by Wittgenstein, on the one hand, and an argument (the “special case” or problematic development mentioned above) various versions of which she finds in Hampshire, Hare, Ayer, Ryle, and others and that goes beyond this observation. It consists in deriving from the consideration that it does not make sense to take these uses of mental concepts to be reports about inner objects the conclusion that, by acquiring the capacity to apply such concepts (e.g. that of decision) in ordinary public contexts, “I learn the essence of the matter” (Murdoch 1970, 12). In other words, the view is that mental concepts lack any structure over and above their outer structure and, therefore, there is no room for the idea of progress in the understanding of them once this is grasped. There are no further steps for me to take in the understanding of a given concept once I have hit the threshold of ordinary competence in the use of the word corresponding to it. There is no transition from a concept I acquire in learning to use a word in ordinary contexts to one capturing an inner experience of a specific sort.

## II.

Murdoch argues that this use of the line of thought concerning putative inner objects is misguided. She characterizes the mistake she takes it to involve as follows: “[b]ecause something is no use it has been too hastily assumed that something else isn’t there” (Murdoch 1970, 10). This remark occurs at the beginning of a long discussion and it is not immediately obvious what is the “something else” whose existence has been denied, on the ground that putative inner objects have no role in the practice of concept application. What we know is that the “something else” is a phenomenon that Murdoch illustrates through the example of M—a mother in law trying to look justly and lovingly to D, her daughter in law, after having realized that she has been prejudiced toward her (Murdoch 1970, 16)—and also the one about the man who tries to establish, privately, whether what he feels is repentance (Murdoch 1970, 25). Murdoch characterizes this kind of phenomenon (1) as a specific kind of activity, (2) as something that is not hazy, but rather something that we find very familiar and (3) something that is also essentially one’s own and, in that sense, private but not for that reason infallible.

Before discussing these three aspects of the kind of example exploited by Murdoch in some detail, I need to point out that she focuses on this sort of examples because of the specific aims of her paper that is motivated, specifically, by her interest in the philosophical understanding of moral personality. This leads her to choose a strategy for challenging the "no-inner-life-view" centered on a particularly interesting and important form inner life can take: one in which the idea of perfection plays a crucial role. She writes: "[t]he entry into a mental concepts of the notion of an ideal limit destroys the genetic analysis of its meaning" (28). That said, there is no reason to saddle her with the view that any concept application, or even any application of a mental concept, is necessarily governed by the effort of progressing toward an ideal limit. Her view is perfectly compatible not only with the claim that sometimes all there is to a mental concept application is the obtaining of certain public circumstances, but also with the claim that pretty mundane inner experiences, such as that of suddenly remembering one has an errand to run before going to work, are part of one's inner life too.

### III.

Let me now examine the three elements that differentiate Murdoch's characterization of inner life from the picture of interiority rejected by Wittgenstein. The first one is Murdoch's view on how the notion of activity has to be understood in connection with inner life. She writes:

I am now inclined to think that it is pointless, when confronted with the existentialist-behaviorist picture of the mind, to go on endlessly fretting about the identification of particular inner events, and attempting to defend an account of M as 'active' by producing, as it were, a series of indubitably objective little things. 'Not a report' need not entail 'not an activity' (Murdoch 1970, 23).

I read this passage as suggesting that the absence of items objectively there and subject to interpersonal observation prevents us from speaking meaningfully of first-personal uses of mental concepts as reports. But the fact that there are no such objects to report about does not exclude that there is *activity* inside, since we need not understand the notion of activity as constituted by a set of such objects. From the perspective of the genetic analysis' advocate, to be sure, this does not bring about much progress. The problem with what is inner, from this perspective, has nothing specifically to do with the categories in terms of which one characterizes it, but with the absence of public criteria that can establish its presence/occurrence inside a person. Objects and activities are on a par in this respect. Murdoch's defense of inner life has to do with the specific *kind* of activity she takes it to be. The main point is that inner life is something we engage in not something we witness; what goes on inside does not go on independently from our awareness of it. The idea that it should go on this way in order to count as genuine activity amounts to exaggerating the role of public criteria for the application of mental concepts and is the result of a conception of facts as fixed by the rigid web constituted by the rules of public language (Murdoch 1970, 24).

This brings me to the second (related) element of her characterization, namely, that if we drop the idea that the only thing inner life could be is some sort of parade of inner items for our inner eye to contemplate, the inner "scene" turns out to be way less elusive than that model leads us to think. Murdoch brings this out by drawing our attention on one familiar form inner life can take, that is, the sort of reflection, frequently described in novels, of "re-

assessing" and "redefining" one's own mental concepts and the way in which one applies them (Murdoch 1970 22; see also Murdoch 1951, 30f). This activity is difficult to engage in and difficult to follow in another person—far more difficult than acquiring competence in the application of a concept for purposes of ordinary communication—because the understanding of concepts it is after is a never-ending pursuit. Its difficulty, then, is not that of a weird attempt to register "purely inner data". As Murdoch says: "M's activity is hard to characterize not because it is hazy, but *precisely because it is moral*" (Murdoch 1970, 22).

The third point is an observation that re-claims a notion of privacy different from the one which the picture targeted by Wittgenstein tries (and fails) to make sense of. Murdoch claims that the activity of reassessing and redefining one's mental concepts and the way one applies them "often suggests and demands a checking procedure which is a function of an individual history" (Murdoch 1970, 25). M's effort to establish whether D is refreshingly youthful or tiresomely juvenile or one's effort to understand whether what one feels is really repentance is not governed by standards that are public in any straightforward sense. The kind of competence in the use of these concepts that public tests can ascertain is not in question in the two examples, but it is far from sufficient to accomplish this sort of tasks. This is nothing but a very ordinary fact of life, namely, the fact that, even if we do acquire our mental concepts in public contexts, they undergo a process of transformation. The way in which we understand concepts like courage and repentance, in fact, is not the same in different phases of life. Moreover, we are invited or pressured toward a change in our concepts, or in the way we apply them, by the specific objects of attention that are our own. This brings in a perfectly ordinary and non-mysterious sense in which our inner lives, where these transformations take place, are private. It entails no more than the compelling thought that what one really means in applying a mental concept can only be understood under certain conditions:

Human beings are obscure to each other, in certain respects which are particularly relevant to morality, unless they are mutual objects of attention or have common objects of attention, since this affects the degree of elaboration of a common vocabulary (Murdoch 1970, 32).

The privacy of inner life Murdoch works to vindicate, then, has nothing to do with the questionable idea of items that we can observe but not show to each other; it is simply a consequence of our historical nature of human individuals. The activity that characterizes inner life, furthermore, far from being "privileged", in the sense of infallible, is necessarily imperfect. As mentioned above, the example of M and D illustrates not just any stretch of inner life but a specific variety of it. M tries to look at D "justly" or "lovingly", that is, she tries to *really* look at her and come to *know* her. These notions (justice, love, reality, knowledge) are all used by Murdoch to point at an unattainable ideal limit for our moral activity. And now, even if one accepts that, in the morally interesting contexts, the use of mental concepts is governed by the idea of perfection and not by the ordinary, impersonal, and public criteria, it might still be questioned how exactly we can talk, in these contexts, of checking procedures: procedures, that is, that can support a distinction being right and being mistaken in the application of a concept. I think Murdoch considers this worry in the following passage:

Philosophical difficulties may arise if we try to give any single organized background sense to the normative



word 'reality'. But this word may be used as a philosophical term provided its limitations are understood. [...] In particular situations 'reality' as that which is revealed to the patient eye of love is an idea entirely comprehensible to the ordinary person. M knows what she is doing when she tries to be just to D, and we know what she is doing too (Murdoch 1970, 39).

The worry is resisted rather than addressed on the ground of a confidence in the immediate intelligibility of what counts as success (genuine grasp of, or progress toward, reality) in the kind of inner activity Murdoch's focuses on. This notion is understood not in terms of an external structure of rules, but rather in terms of an attitude ("the patient eye of love") that keeps in check the distorting effects of selfishness by directing attention away from the self and toward other individual realities.

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# Private Language Argument: A Wittgensteinian Approach

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## Abstract

Wittgenstein develops an argument to refute the argument of the private linguists in support of a private language in his *Philosophical Investigations*. He, in course of his argument, shows that a private language is not possible because if possible, it would be a meaningless one. We cannot account for its meaning as a rule-governed phenomenon. For Wittgenstein, a private language means: "The individual words of this language are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language." (Wittgenstein, Ludwig 1953, §243)

This language has words, which stand for the immediate private sensations of the speaker and besides, nobody else can use these words. Thus the aim of this paper is to discuss the mistake of the nature of private sense experience and critically evaluate experience is also not private in a strict sense.

Wittgenstein develops an argument to refute the argument of the private linguists in support of a private language in his *Philosophical Investigations*. He, in course of his argument, shows that a private language is not possible because if possible, it would be a meaningless one. We cannot account for its meaning as a rule-governed phenomenon. For Wittgenstein, a private language means:

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## I.

The mistake is about the idea of private experience as such. For Wittgenstein, the very notion of private experience is a misnomer. Do such experiences really exist or is their existence only an imagination? If something exists but we cannot say or show it, then how can we say that they exist for the private linguist only? Then how can their existence be proved? If private experiences exist, they can only exist in the subject's mind. But what is this mind which contains these experiences? Wittgenstein goes into the nature of the mind itself to ascertain whether private experiences exist.

The private linguists argue that the subjective experiences are private, but the so-called subjective experiences are not private at all. Others can also have these experiences, the way it is experienced by the agent. And they are also understandable by others, even if they do not actually have these experiences. For example, if 'X' suffers from headache then 'Y' can sympathize with him and try to remove his suffering. This shows that 'Y' can understand 'X's mental experience. Similarly, when 'Y' has the experience of headache, he can be understood by 'X'.

As all the inner experiences are conceived in our language, and are expressed in it, Wittgenstein asks: How can the inner be private? Others will know when the inner experiences are expressed in language. Because whatever one experiences one cannot separate it from its ex-

pression in the language. So, if not from other sources but from the expressions only, others come to know about the inner experiences. Experiencing something is accompanied with the expression. Thus, the so-called inner experiences need not be private at all, i.e., it is intelligible to only one person, that is, one who is experiencing them.

Wittgenstein's refutation of the notion of private language is given in the following passage of the *Philosophical Investigations* where he asks:

How do words *refer* to sensations? – There doesn't seem to be any problem here; don't we talk about sensations every day, and give them names? But how is the connection between the name and the thing named set up? This question is the same as: how does a human being learn the meaning of the names of sensations? – of the word "pain" for example. Here is one possibility: words are connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensation and used in their place. (Wittgenstein 1953, §665)

Here, a basic question is raised as to how the sensations are given names, i.e., toothache, headache, etc. the private linguist talks about naming the sensation inwardly and remembering. He solves the problem by recognizing a private inward process of naming. Wittgenstein rejects this whole idea of naming a sensation inwardly. How does a private linguist give name to the sensation privately? Since it is private, it is unknown to others. For example, one associates the name 'S' with the occurrence of the sensation S. Now the question is, how is one certain that one will recognize S when it occurs again? What is the method by which one identifies and re-identifies S in all cases of its occurrences? In our ordinary language, this problem does not arise because we are trained from early childhood how to identify and re-identify sensations in all cases.

The private linguists argue that they can name the sensation privately by forming a new concept for that sensation. That is, they can give a definition to the word sensation by mental ostension. When we give a definition, the meaning of that word must be clear which will help us to use the same in future cases. But how can it be possible in case of private linguists, as they don't have any concept of sensation at all, and if there is no concept what will they define? According to Wittgenstein:

Making sure that you know what 'seeing red' means, is good only if you can make use of this knowledge in a future case. Now what if I see a colour again, can I say I made sure I knew what 'red' was, so now I shall know

that I recognise it correctly? In what sense is having said the words 'this is red' before a guarantee that I now see the same colour when I say again I see red? (Wittgenstein 1968, 289)

Therefore, there is no guarantee that the 'same sign' or 'the same symbol' can be used in future. If one is referring to sensations in a private language, then the private linguist fails to explain how he is able to recognize the same colour or same pain in all future cases. The private language by its nature is incapable of providing any guarantee on the issue.

When we see red colour, we say 'It is red.' How does we say this? We say it because we have learnt the word red, which is a name for a particular colour. Similar is the case sensation. When the same sensation occurs, I can say it occurs as if occurred earlier. The word 'same' has regular use in our language, and this is not possible in case of private language. In our ordinary language the sensation-words are used regularly. Here we are trained to use them according to rules. These words are not description of the behaviour of the agents. They express sensations.

The private linguists only think that they can know 'the same sensation' which they had in the past. But how they are able to know or identify that 'this is the same sensation' is not fully argued about. They, in fact, cannot tell us because their language has no such provision. But in our language, we have the concept so that we can give names to our sensations in accordance with the linguistic rule. We can invent names for our sensations because we speak a language in which we have already names for sensations. But this is not possible in case of the private linguist. And the word 'same' comes from the language where it has a regular use. That's why we can differentiate between our sensations and can recognize which is the 'same sensation' and which is not. That is, our language has a fixed use and it has meaning which is commonly understood by the speakers. Hence, when one says 'I am in pain' he is understood by others.

In a private language, referring to one's sensations may not be possible at all as there is no rule which can constitute such a referring to sensations. However, a private linguist may argue that I might forget that "S" is connected with S, but when I later use "S" I believe that reference is to the sensation S. But is it possible that, one's belief will be true? One may believe so many things inwardly but that is not the belief which we are talking about. To think, 'one is believing' is not the same as believing. Believing requires more than the inward feeling of believing. As Hacker puts it:

For in order to believe that reference is being made to S, one must possess the concept of S, but this is precisely what the private linguist so far lacks. (Hacker 1972, 235)

Thus, without any certainty, without any concrete evidence, how can one say I believe this is the same S as I had in my past? Similar is the case with all the sensations which have been, without reason, called private. Even our so-called private sensations need public criteria. They must be expressed in our public language.

## II.

The private linguist argues that I know that I am in pain because I am in pain and if anybody wants to know it, then the only way for him is to feel my pain. Since nobody can feel my pain, so it implies that nobody knows about my

pain. But, according Wittgenstein, 'I know' can be used only when one is in doubt, i.e., when one does not know anything about something which one doubts and when the doubt is clear, then he can say 'I know...' But to doubt whether really I am in pain or not, is nonsense. So, it is nonsense to say that 'I doubt whether I am in pain'. If this is nonsense, then to say 'I only know that I am in pain and nobody else knows it', is also nonsense. So in case of my own pain, the question of doubt does not arise, because one cannot logically doubt one's own pain. One may have doubt about other's pain but one cannot entertain doubts about himself. Therefore, saying that I only know my pain will be a senseless talk. So, the question cannot be asked, because,

For a doubt can exist only when a question exists, a question only where an answer exists, and an answer only where something *can be said*. (Wittgenstein 1961, 6.51)

When there is a possibility of doubt, the statement 'I know that P makes sense. Otherwise, it is superfluous. According to Wittgenstein, the superfluity occurs in the expression "I know that I am in pain."

The private linguist holds that it is only from my own case that I know what the word 'pain' means. But that is proved to be a meaningless exercise because we actually learn the word 'pain' from our grammatical training and not from our own case. If everybody has his own 'pain', there would not be a common concept of pain. Hence, there would be no public language of pain. Wittgenstein explains this in the following passage:

Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call it a "beetle". No one can look into anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at his beetle. – Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box. One might even imagine such a thing constantly changing. – But suppose the word "beetle" had a use in these people's language? – If so it would not be used as the name of a thing. The thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all; not even as a something: for box might even be empty. – No, one can 'divide through' by the thing in the box; it cancels out, whatever it is.

That is to say: if we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of 'object and designation' the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant. (Wittgenstein 1953, §293)

Here, the private sensations, like the beetle in the box, cannot be experienced by all. Because everybody knows what is there inside the box by looking into his box only. But the box may be empty, because everybody may be in illusion that the sensation exists.

The statement 'No one else can have my pains' may have two different implications. First, the very statement suggests the awareness of pains of others to whom he/she (speaker of the sentence) refers as 'no one else'. The statement also provides privacy to the speaker's pains and sufferings when he/she attributes the pains only to himself or herself. By confining or restricting it to himself/herself, the speaker makes his/her pains a private trait. This, otherwise, puts forth that if the speaker's pain can be private, then others' pains can also be private. This proves that pains are private experiences and restricted to the agent only. If this is so, then the statement of the speaker 'No one else can have my pains' which shows the speaker's awareness of pains of others may not hold true as pains are private and attributed to the agent only.

Secondly, the statement also implies that the speaker of the sentence "No one else can have my pains" declares that his/her pain is different from that of others. This, otherwise, means that the intensity of pains of the speaker, here, may either be more or less than that of others. However, as pains are proved to be private, the speaker cannot talk of the intensity of pain in comparative terms. When the speaker is unable to explore into the privacy of others' pains, there is no justification in characterizing pains as 'more' or 'less'. Hence, the statement 'No one else can have my pain' can stand meaningless.

Besides, when we say that 'No one else can have my pains' it indicates that we are talking about the use of word 'pain', which is a matter of common practice. Thus from this we conclude that there is no use in the sense of private linguists, then talking of 'No one else can have my pains' may be proved false and meaningless. The very notion of the use of any particular word or sign goes along with the conception of rule-following in practice.

Therefore, according to Wittgenstein, language use is a matter of practice. Speaking and other linguist activities are a matter of common agreement and sharing. But in case of private linguist, there is no rule-governed use, since there is nothing called common practice. Sometimes,

the private linguist takes the protocol language, which consists of words like "Blue now", "cold now", etc., as a private language. But, according to Wittgenstein, even the so-called protocol language is a part of natural language and cannot be considered as private language.

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# The Objectivity of Meaning in Contextualism

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## Abstract

Meaning can be considered objective when it extends, independently of our judgements, to unconsidered cases. Both Wittgenstein's family resemblance concepts and the defence of an Underdeterminacy Thesis in Contextualism might threaten this kind of objectivity, which is necessary for the objectivity of truth. In this essay I will present the threat and analyse how Contextualism can account for the extension of meaning to unconsidered cases.

## 1. The objectivity of meaning

Many of our judgements and utterances aim to objectively describe how things are. Judgements like 'The Earth revolves around the Sun', 'Water is colourless' or, in more mundane examples, 'There is a chair in the living-room', 'The leaves are green', etc., seem to reflect how things are independently of us—of our best opinion or the state of our investigation. As Wright has noted (Wright 2001a), investigation-independence characterises objectivity: the objectivity of decidable statements consists in the possession of investigation-independent truth-values. However, as Wright has argued, possession of objective truth-values requires possession of objective meaning (Wright 1984). Therefore, the objectivity of the previous examples requires the objectivity of the meaning of the terms 'water', 'revolves', 'chair', 'green', etc.

What is the objectivity of meaning? According to Wright (Wright 2001a), objective meaning can be conceived as a pattern that determines correct uses in unconsidered cases, independently of our opinion. "The pattern is thus thought to of as an extending *of itself* to cases which we have yet to confront" (34). Objective meaning is meaning that extends of itself to unconsidered cases. Since it extends of itself, it is independent of our opinion or the state of our investigation. It is judgement-independent. An example: let's assume that the meaning of 'chair' is objective. If so, then whether this word can be correctly applied to an object in room 4010 of the Faculty of Philosophy — whether 'That is a chair', used to describe that object is true or false— is independent of our opinion. We might never enter that room and be unaware of the objects inside. Nonetheless, if meaning is objective, then it extends to this case. Meaning determines application conditions independently of us.

The identification of meaning with functions provides a good model for this. It is common, in semantics, to identify the meaning of a predicate with a function from objects to truth-values. Thus, the meaning of 'is a chair' maps objects onto the truth-value True (those that are chairs) of the truth-value False (those that are, e. g., tables, couches, people...). It covers past and future uses alike, considered and unconsidered cases. For every object in the domain, it yields one, and only one, verdict.

The connection between the objectivity of meaning and the objectivity of descriptive statements is established through the meaning-truth platitude: the idea that the truth-value of a statement S is determined by the meaning of S and the relevant state of affairs. If the meaning of S were non-objective, then the resulting truth-value would be non-objective either. To make the point clear: let's suppose that the word 'chair' refers to whatever object I apply the word

to. In this case, the pattern does not extend of itself to unconsidered cases. Whether something can be rightly called a chair depends on whether I apply the word to it or not. The same goes for the statement 'There is a chair in the living-room'. But, then, how could its truth-value be objective? It partially depends on whether I call the object 'chair' or not.

## 2. Extending meaning to unconsidered cases

As showed in the previous paragraphs, objective meaning extends, of itself, to unconsidered cases. The function model guarantees the objectivity of meaning. Nonetheless, this model has been criticised by Wittgenstein, first, and by some authors whose views are usually called Contextualism. In this section I will consider one of Wittgenstein's ideas against the function model. In the next section I will focus on contextualism. Although the critiques are not identical, they lead to a similar point: it is not obvious that meaning extends, of itself, to unconsidered cases, be it because meaning is not as fixed as the function model suggests (Wittgenstein) or because it underdetermines satisfaction conditions (Contextualism). Moreover, if extension requires something else, then, depending on how this 'something else' is constructed, objectivity might be threatened.

In the *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein made some remarks pointing towards the idea that meaning is not fixed. I will briefly comment on a passage where this idea is salient: family resemblance concepts.

According to Wittgenstein, some concepts (such as 'game', 'number', 'language') compose a family, that is, their instances do not share a single feature (or a complex feature) but have family resemblances. There are two important notions connected to the idea of family resemblance. The first is the idea that some concepts don't have sharp boundaries, that is, that they are not absolutely regulated. They are in this sense analogous to vague terms. Their meaning can leave indeterminate whether some objects fall under their extensions. The second is similarity, and its role in extending meaning. There are, among instances of family resemblance concepts, relationships. Their features overlap. What is important is that, in order to extend the concept (does this new activity count as a game?), similarities are crucial. But it seems that their role cannot be played completely independently of us: which (similar) features must be taken into account depends on why are we comparing situations, on what matters. Imagine some children engaged in an activity involving cards. The activity has several features: it involves hand-painted cards, there is a winner, each child is al-

lowed to choose three cards, three children are using cards and three are watching, etc. Is it a game? It depends on it sharing certain similarities with other activities, but not any similarity. For instance, it is irrelevant that there are three children watching, even though this happens in many games. Some philosophers (Putnam 1975, Austin 1950) have claimed that similarity is an interest-relative notion. But then, the meaning of 'game' does not extend by itself to unconsidered cases—our interests and practices must be taken into account.

The general point is stated in the *Philosophical Investigations*, I, 79: we use words without a fixed meaning. At least for some expressions, we don't have a set of conditions (a definition) that determines the correct use of those expressions. We might have some definitions, but nonetheless we might change them as we go along. Now, it remains an open question whether only some of our concepts are family resemblance concepts. It might be the case that lacking a fixed meaning is a general feature of natural language, or that it affects most expressions. Contextualists avoid talking about fixed meanings but allow application conditions to vary across contexts, depending on the speakers' intentions or other contextual parameters. Anyway, arguing that the application conditions of 'is a chair' vary across contexts is a way of arguing that the meaning of this predicate is not fixed.

### 3. Contextualism

Briefly put, contextualism is a view (or a family of views) that generalizes context-dependence, understood in a broad sense. The mark of this view is that what is said with an utterance, or its truth-conditions, depend on the context, even in the absence of classical indexicals. Although different theories explain context-dependence in different ways, there is a common idea in different versions of contextualism—what I call 'Underdeterminacy Thesis':

**Underdeterminacy Thesis:** The conventional meaning of (all/most) sentences underdetermines their truth-conditions in an occasion of use.

This thesis, although not always explicit, is present in important contributions to contextualism (Carston 2002, Recanati 2004, Travis 2008). Take 'John is ready' as an example. Let's suppose that John is ready to have dinner, but not ready to go out with friends. If we are discussing about having dinner, then an utterance of 'John is ready' will be true. If we are waiting for John to go out, then it will be false. Therefore, the truth conditions of the utterances are different. The same applies to 'The leaves are green'. Let's imagine that the salient leaves are brown but painted green. If we want to take a picture of a tree with green leaves, the utterance will be true. But if we want to do some scientific research, it will be false.

As a consequence of the Underdeterminacy Thesis, it must be explained how conventional meaning extends of itself to unconsidered cases, for Underdeterminacy and objectivity seem to be incompatible. The meaning of the expressions 'is ready' or 'is green' does not decide, alone, whether certain objects count as being ready or as being green—it depends on the context of use. This is, as family resemblance concepts, a rejection of the function model. Contrary to this model, the Underdeterminacy Thesis establishes that, without a context of use, expressions don't have satisfaction conditions. Of itself, it is not determined to which objects the expression applies. A question arises: how does meaning extend to unconsidered cases? If not meaning itself, what decides that in certain contexts certain

leaves count as green? We need to pay attention to other things — for instance, the circumstance of use, similarities with other uses, purposes.

I will consider two possible movements to warrant that meaning extends to unconsidered cases and, with it, that it is objective. The first movement maintains that we have here context relative meanings. The meaning of 'green' splits in various meaning, so to speak. One of these could be a rule such as "In decorative contexts, only superficially green objects count as green". This is equivalent to maintaining that the meaning of 'green' is enriched, in certain contexts, to mean 'superficially green'. This kind of meaning—following Recanati we could call it 'modulated meaning' or simply 'contextual meaning'—would be objective. Apparently, it extends to unconsidered cases, independently of our judgement. If the context is decorative, and the object is superficially green, then 'green' applies to it. The problem is that this won't do, for it does not avoid underdeterminacy. 'Superficially green' is as underdetermined as 'green'. For instance: How much of the surface must be green? In some cases, only a relevant part. In others, maybe all of it.

The second possibility is to understand what is correct on the basis of what a normal speaker would do. This possibility explains what makes it the case that some people count in some contexts as 'ready'. Normal speakers, in normal circumstances (well informed about the purposes of the conversation, the activity in place, etc.) will understand that an utterance of 'John is ready' when discussing about having dinner says that John is ready to have dinner. One can express this idea by saying that the content of the utterance in an occasion of use is what is available to normal speakers (Recanati 2004). Thus, John, being as he is, counts as being ready in some contexts partially because normal speakers take him to count as being ready. And, in unconsidered cases, someone counts as 'is ready' if and only if, in normal circumstances, normal speakers interpret the relevant sense of being ready as one in which he is in fact ready. But which is the relevant sense will depend on normal speakers. This option can be considered judgement-dependent, for it is the judgement of normal speakers (plus how things are) that partially determines (and not merely tracks) what counts as 'green'. It determines *partially*, because the conventional meaning and how things are also play a role. However, it is possible to draw an analogy with secondary qualities. Wright (Wright 2001b) establishes a contrast between extension-determining and extension-reflecting judgements and applies it to meaning in relation to the rule-following considerations. Colours are qualities that respond to some aspects of our phenomenology, so it is plausible to consider some colour judgements as extension-determining judgements. From this, we can propose a definition along the following lines: An object is red if and only if in normal circumstances it looks red to normal observers. Since looking red in normal circumstances to normal observers is an objective matter, being red is objective as well. Therefore, it seems that extension-determining judgement does not preclude objectivity. We can apply the same idea to the role of normal speakers in determining the extension of some expression E: An object O is E if and only if in normal circumstances normal speakers take the relevant sense of 'E' to be one that O in fact satisfies.

The problem with this option is that we need to include a context. To determine whether an expression E applies to an object O we need to situate the normal speaker in a context of use. Without a context (including, among others, a topic of the conversation or a purpose) a normal speaker wouldn't be able to say whether John is ready or not. And

'relevant senses' are relative to contexts. That's the point of the Underdeterminacy Thesis: truth-conditions can only be obtained by taking into account features of the context. Thus, we need a relativized version: An object *O* is *E* in context *C* if and only if in normal circumstances normal speakers take the relevant sense of '*E*' in *C* to be one that *O* in fact satisfies. If this works, then it is contextual meaning that extends to unconsidered cases. It is worth noting two points. First, the meaning (the relevant sense in *C*) does not extend to other contexts. Where, for instance, the topic of the conversation is different, the relevant sense is different. Second, the context is non-eliminable: we cannot replace context variables with descriptions of kinds contexts, or 'relevant sense in *C*' by a specification of the sense. If we did so, we would have the problem of the first possibility.

As a conclusion, according to this second possibility, meaning extends of itself only within a context. Contextual meanings can therefore be considered objective, but this might motivate a revision of the notion of objectivity and/or a distinction between absolute objectivity and context relative objectivity.

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# Kripke's Paradox and the Normativity of Actions

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## Abstract

Saul Kripke contends that Wittgenstein discovered a new form of philosophical scepticism. He believes that Wittgenstein first created the so-called philosophical paradox and then resolved it. The sceptical paradox is resolved by scepticism towards rules. Things like following a rule, acting in accordance with it, or indeed the meaning itself do not exist for the individual. They do exist and have meaning only in the social context. Kripke's paradox only occurs when we think about rules as something „apart from” or „beyond” actions. Rules seem to be a quasi-transcendental basis for action. The situation is radically different when we start thinking about rules as actions or, to be more precise, self-justifying actions. Rejecting scepticism towards rules is strictly related to abandoning the rule/action dualism. Kripke's scepticism towards the relevance of using the notion of a rule do not hold if we refer to the normative character of actions.

## 1.

In his *Wittgenstein on Rules and Language* (Kripke 1980), Saul Kripke contends that Wittgenstein discovered a new form of philosophical scepticism. He believes that Wittgenstein, just like David Hume, first created the so-called philosophical paradox in the *Investigations* and then resolved it. Kripke's point of departure is proposition 201 from the *Investigations*: „This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule” (Wittgenstein 1986, §201)<sup>1</sup>. The paradox, for Kripke, is that there is nothing which would guarantee the semantic stability of words. Namely, we can never be sure that by saying „plus” we mean what we did in the past when we used the word „plus”, i.e. that we meant „plus” and not, for example „quus”. If we do not have this certainty – which Kripke believes to be the case as there is no instance or any other fact or rule to justify words and actions – then the result of adding 68 to 57 may be 125 or 5. The former results from the addition of two figures which is based on the rules of using the word „plus”, whereas the latter is obtained from adding the two by the rules of using the word „quus”. Obviously, the sceptical paradox may be extended onto the entire practice of using language.

The sceptical paradox is resolved by scepticism towards rules. Things like following a rule, acting in accordance with it, or indeed the meaning itself do not exist for the individual. They do exist and have meaning only in the social context. An individual user of language can never be sure whether what he says makes sense and it understandable until he ascertains that his speech is or is not based on the social usage<sup>2</sup>. It is not quite evident what Kripke means here. He seems to believe that we cannot have single-person games. You cannot follow a rule on your own.

<sup>1</sup> For some commentators, the paragraph is a point where Wittgenstein's philosophy meets Jacques Derrida's deconstruction. According to those who underline the similarity between the two philosophers, Wittgenstein in a way anticipated Derrida's project in the places where he emphasised the arbitrary nature of grammar and the multitude and instability of interpretations or where he criticised the notions of identity, identicality and the mind. See: H. Staten (Staten 1984) 1984 and M. Stone (Stone 2000).

<sup>2</sup> The literature on Kripke's book runs into hundreds of books and articles. Since the book was published (1982), commentators have been engaged in an on-going debate over how to interpret Kripke. Some such interpretations are fraught with „scholastic” disputes over words. The disputes are based on the treatment of Wittgenstein's late philosophy as anti-realistic as opposed to the realism of the *Tractatus*.

It is worthwhile pointing out the differences between the first edition of Peter Hacker's book *Insight and Illusion* where Wittgenstein's philosophy is approached from the realism-antirealism perspective and the second edition where the two notions are no longer mentioned and are treated as inadequate for Wittgenstein's thought.

However, Kripke is wrong in considering this to be an empirical fact or a comment on the knowledge of rules. In fact, the comment concerns the way in which the concept of the rule is used. A rule is such if and only if it is inter-subjective or, in other words, social. Rules presuppose a certain regularity and recurrence thanks to which they can be recognised by another person. From this perspective, Kripke is wrong when he talks about scepticism towards rules: the rule as such is social. The grammar of the word precludes its private usage<sup>3</sup>. But Kripke's sceptic may be very determined and answer that he does not care whether rules are used by an individual or a community. We can still never be sure if our present usage of a notion is the equivalent of any given usage from the past.

## 2.

There is a gap in Kripke's argument. Peter Hacker and Gordon Backer pointed out that Wittgenstein's reflections on the meaning of expressions and grammatical rules and the relationship they have with actions are based not on causative and associative relations, not on habits or testimonials, but on the so-called internal or grammatical relations (Baker, Hacker 1984). These relations are indispensable. The relationship between a rule and its application is definitional – such as such is the rule, and such as such is its application. There cannot be a mistake because the relationship between a rule and its usage is precisely indispensable instead of empirical and accidental. Wittgenstein says: when you tell someone „Do such-and-such”, he understands the order immediately and does not need to search the surrounding reality or his mind for an action constituting its execution. The order, we could say, knows in advance what its execution will be like. „If an order runs „Do such-and-such” then executing the order is called „doing such-and-such” (Wittgenstein 1986, §458; 2000, §90). It follows that our present use of the word „plus” is not in conflict with our use from the past which, the sceptic would say, could turn out to be the use of „quus”. There is no conflict because the meaning of these two concepts is determined by grammar which, in itself, does not require any external justification. If we used the notion of „quus” before and are now using the notion of „plus”, we have either used two completely different words or replaced the meaning of one word with that of the other.

<sup>3</sup> We can cite here Wittgenstein's reflections on the so-called argument from the private language. They are analogous to our investigation.



In proposition 202 from *Investigations*, Wittgenstein writes, having disclosed the „alleged” paradox: „And to think one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule” as rules are not something that can be interpreted, every interpretation establishing a different rule, as it were: “we ought to restrict the term “interpretation” to the substitution of one expression of the rule for another” (Wittgenstein 1986, §201). Hence, you obey either such-and-such rule or another and which one you obey will be *seen* in action.

### 3.

Kripke's paradox only occurs when we think about rules as something „apart from” or „beyond” actions. Rules seem to be a quasi-transcendental basis for action. Their role is to found action and make it possible, whereas actions ensure that rules are not dead and abstract. Kripke's scepticism is based on this dualism. When we think about the relationship between a rule and its application, we are indeed in doubt as to whether we can really act in accordance with rules as it seems that actions and rules are separated by a gulf which, in the words of Wittgenstein, should be filled by an interpretation, just like in the case of legal provisions which are also interpreted. The situation is radically different when we start thinking about rules as actions or, to be more precise, self-justifying actions. Rejecting scepticism towards rules is strictly related to abandoning the rule/action dualism.

By saying “Pass me that brick” I already establish a norm which will find its application or performance in the situation when I am given the brick. I know that the person handing over the brick understands the instruction if he gives me the object. At the same time, the situation of giving the instruction and acting upon it is a series of actions which sanction the legitimacy of norms. A norm is a norm as long as it is performed. We will never consider the instruction “Pass me that house” to be normative. Observing masons at work, I, as it were, see the normativity of their practice. What I mean here is that in some situations actions constitute themselves. They become normative. This can be interpreted in two ways:

1) action is one of the elements in the pragmatic process of looking for and providing reasons. Sellars says that it is not possible to clearly separate inferential and non-inferential knowledge and that the latter rests upon the former (Sellars 1997). In this approach, actions are a discursive element just as the rules determining them. Hence, they are a fragment of a person's belief system. At this point, it is worthwhile to refer back to Ryle's distinction into *knowledge-how* and *knowledge-that*. *Knowledge-that* is purely propositional and strictly related to the semantic dimension of the language. Sellars argues that it is inferred from *knowledge-how* which is pragmatic. It does not mean it is not propositional<sup>4</sup>, but that it is related directly to the domain of actions. This approach cancels the sceptical reservations made by Kripke as it refers to the holistic concept of language based on chains of inferences which are material, that is based on the semantic properties of expressions (Brandom 1994). Without feeling absurd, a sceptic cannot doubt the existence of language as a system of signs joined up by logical and inferential relations.

2) action is normative in the sense that it becomes the source of a norm. By performing such-and-such action, I establish a norm which someone else may apply to his own actions. For example, a child will learn how to pro-

nounce sentences in Polish from his parents or elder siblings whilst at the same time *recognising* some recurrent structures in what is being said, structures we call the grammar of a given language. Seated at the table in the presence of other diners, a child also acquires table manners – learns how to hold a knife or cup, address others or behave in a culturally accepted way (avoiding lip smacking for example). These are the elements one can see. They can of course be explained and communicated discursively, but, more often than not, *showing* them is an easier and more efficient way of teaching. How to explain to a child the proper way of holding a knife without resorting to *showing*? What we have here are actions of a normative nature. Another example of normative actions are virtuous deeds which some ethicists call supererogatory acts. By performing such a deed, the agent sets a new standard of action. By saving someone's life in a situation when my own life is in danger, I perform an action which may be an example for others to follow. This does not mean, however, that I do not act in accordance with a norm when I save the person's life because the action of saving life is congruent with what is known as “saving life”. What it does mean is that it is not the rule which will make someone follow my example, but precisely the action itself. With this understanding of the relationship between rules and actions, Kripke's paradox is no longer valid.

### 4.

To conclude: Kripke's scepticism towards the relevance of using the notion of a rule and the related position of semantic relativism and the so-called non-factualism do not hold if we refer to the normative character of actions. As long as we acknowledge that there is a gap between a norm and its application, regardless of whether we deal with the philosophy of language or the theory of action, we are forced to defend our position (unsuccessfully) from the paradox identified by Kripke. The concept of action normativity may offer a way out. Yet, the concept has a weak point – if we adopt inferentialism, in the holistic perspective, action loses its specific character and the intention behind it cannot be separated from the person's belief system. As for understanding actions as examples for others to follow, an inferentialist may object that you cannot talk of action disregarding inferential chains, i.e. Sellars's actions of looking for and providing reasons. Hence, the concept of normative actions faces two challenges: to defend itself against Kripke's paradox and to maintain action integrity in the face of linguistically sanctioned inferences.

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# A Reassessment of Wittgenstein's Position on the Meaning and Truth of Negative Propositions

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## Abstract

In this paper I present and critically examine the standard interpretation (SI) of Wittgenstein's position on the questions of the meaning and the truth of negative propositions. I then present Guido Bonino's interpretation of these issues as an alternative to SI. I however challenge one important aspect of Bonino's interpretation, namely the idea of negation as some kind of assertive force; I argue that negation is part of the meaning of the negative proposition. Thus, I arrive at an interpretation that leaves room for negation within the proposition's meaning and within facts, without rejecting SI's most fundamental premises.

## 1. Introduction

If one thinks of a proposition's meaning in terms of something *wordly*, e.g. a state of affairs, and of its truth in terms of its correspondence with reality, then one is confronted with the following dilemma: either one holds to a more literal account of the meaning and truth of negative propositions and agrees to admit such undesirable entities as possible negative states of affairs and negative facts, or one refrains from doing so and tries to come up with less literal accounts that are nonetheless correct and are, above all, non-committing. On this issue, Wittgenstein is usually considered to have chosen the latter course in the *Tractatus*<sup>1</sup>. But did he really? It is the purpose of the present paper to examine this question. In order to do so, I shall first quickly present the generally held interpretation (2) and point out the difficulties that it faces (3). After that, I want to draw attention to Guido Bonino's case for negative facts and his account of the truth of negative propositions in terms of correspondence to such facts (4). I shall however criticize one aspect of Bonino's account, namely the idea that negation is not part of the content of a proposition, but rather some kind of assertive force (5). Finally, I end up with an account that makes room for negative situations and facts without rejecting the basic principles of the standard interpretation.

## 2. The standard interpretation

There is a widespread reading of the *Tractatus* concerning the issues of meaning and truth of negative propositions which I shall refer to as 'the standard interpretation' (SI). According to it:

SI<sub>1</sub> All molecular propositions are truth-functions of elementary propositions (5.)

and

SI<sub>2</sub> The meaning of every proposition that is a truth-function of some propositions  $p, q, r, \dots$  is a function of the meaning of  $p, q, r, \dots$  (5.2341) and consists of its agreement and its disagreement with the truth-possibilities of these propositions (4.2, 4.4).

Thus, given SI<sub>1</sub>, SI<sub>2</sub> and the truth-table of  $\sim p$ :

SI<sub>3</sub> The meaning of  $\sim p$  consists of  $\sim p$  agreeing with the truth-possibility F for  $p$  and disagreeing with the truth-possibility T for  $p$ .

That this is the meaning of a negative proposition  $\sim p$  may be further explained by the nature of the operation of negation, which consists in reversing the sense or meaning of  $p$  (5.2341).

Moreover, the expressions of the agreement and disagreement with the truth-possibilities of the constitutive elementary propositions of some molecular proposition constitute this proposition's truth-condition (4.431). Thus,  $\sim p$ 's truth may be accounted for as follows:

SI<sub>4</sub>  $\sim p$ 's truth-condition is  $p$ 's falsity and it is therefore sufficient for  $\sim p$  to be true that  $p$  does not correspond to reality (4.25).

In other words, all that is required on the ontological level for  $\sim p$  to be true is that the corresponding state of affairs does not exist, i.e. no negative fact is required.

Indeed, a negative fact would not only be unnecessary, but would be ruled out by Wittgenstein, since, according to his fundamental idea:

SI<sub>5</sub> Logical constants do not denote (4.0312).

As a logical constant itself, the symbol of negation is no exception to SI<sub>5</sub>: "nothing corresponds to the sign of negation in reality" (4.0621). From this, specialists usually come to the conclusion that:

SI<sub>6</sub> There can be no such thing as a negative fact, i.e. something in the realm of reference with such a constituent as the would-be referent of the negation sign ' $\sim$ '.

This gives us what is usually taken to be Wittgenstein's position on the issues of the meaning and the truth of  $\sim p$ .

## 3. Difficulties with SI

There are however at least three important difficulties with SI. The first one is that Wittgenstein does talk about negative facts and he even talks about them as constitutive of reality:

"The subsistence and non-subsistence of states of affairs is reality.

<sup>1</sup> TLP. All further references to this text shall be to remark numbers indicated in brackets in the text.

(We call the subsistence of states of affairs a positive fact, and their non-subsistence a negative fact.) (2.06. cf., 4.063 and 5.5151 and Simons 1993).

But if SI is correct, there should be no need for negative facts. Such entities are even ruled out by SI<sub>6</sub>.

The second difficulty concerns SI<sub>4</sub> and the thesis that it is sufficient for  $p$  to be false if it does not correspond to reality and therefore, that no negative fact is necessary in order to account for the truth of  $\sim p$ . According to Wittgenstein, much more is required for a proposition  $p$  to be false and its falsity is not understood in terms of its lack of correspondence to reality. It is indeed required that the names of the proposition stand for some simple objects (2.131, 3.22) and that the proposition represents its meaning (2.221), a possible situation (4.031), and ' $p$  being false' is understood in terms of  $p$ 's meaning disagreeing with reality (2.222), i.e. in terms of depicting reality incorrectly (2.17, 2.18, cf. Plourde forthcoming). Now,  $p$ 's meaning is bound to disagree with reality depending on how the simple objects concerned stand to one another in reality. Thus, in the case of an elementary proposition such as  $aRb$ , if it represents the possible situation consisting of the subsistence of the state of affairs  $a$  standing in  $R$  to  $b$  and if its falsity is understood in terms of depicting reality incorrectly, it may only be false if that which is the case in reality is the fact consisting of the non-subsistence of the state of affairs  $a$  standing in the relation  $R$  to  $b$ . Now, regarding this last issue, defenders of SI usually claim that what corresponds to "the non-subsistence of the state of affairs  $a$  not standing in the relation  $R$  to  $b$ " is not a negative fact. It is just the objects  $a$  and  $b$  not standing in relation  $R$  to one another (cf. Glock 1996, 184-85). But is it? After all, if Wittgenstein says that a negative fact is the non-subsistence of a state of affairs, why would he not say here that  $aRb$  is false because that which it represents, the subsistence of the state of affairs  $a$  in the relation  $R$  to  $b$ , disagrees with what is the case, i.e. the non-subsistence of  $a$  in the relation  $R$  to  $b$ ?

The third difficulty has to do with the reading that is made of SI<sub>3</sub>. Accordingly, it should be interpreted as reductive analysis: the only admissible meaning for  $\sim p$  is that it agrees with  $p$ 's falsity and disagrees with  $p$ 's truth. Since this does not involve anything like a possible negative situation, nothing of that sort would be involved in Wittgenstein's account of  $\sim p$ 's meaning. In opposition to this, Ray Bradley pointed out the fact that, for Wittgenstein, truth-possibilities are not mere symbols (Bradley 1992, 19). In fact Wittgenstein tells us that "the truth-possibilities of elementary propositions denote the possibilities of subsistence and non-subsistence of states of affairs" (4.3). Thus, even if Wittgenstein defines  $\sim p$  truth-functionally, it is debatable that his account of its meaning does not involve something like a negative situation.

#### 4. Guido Bonino on meaning and truth of negative propositions

In *The Arrow and the Point* (Bonino 2008), Guido Bonino defends an interesting interpretation of Wittgenstein's solution based on original accounts of the notion of *Bedeutung*, the sense of a proposition and negative fact in that it offers a solution to the difficulties I just raised without abandoning the fundamental theses of SI. I sum it up as follows:

B<sub>1</sub> Every proposition has a linguistic content, its *Bedeutung*, which it represents independently of its being true or false and which is a state of affairs "beyond being and non being". (Bonino 2008, 110)

B<sub>2</sub> A state of affairs is never negative. Therefore a proposition  $p$  and its negation  $\sim p$  have the same state of affairs as descriptive content.

B<sub>3</sub> A proposition  $p$  and its negation  $\sim p$  are opposite in sense:  $p$  says in the positive what  $\sim p$  says in the negative. In other words,  $p$  says of its state of affairs that it is the case or that it subsists (propositions being like arrows, we may say that  $p$  points in the direction of subsistence of its content ' $\uparrow p$ ') whereas  $\sim p$  says of that very same state of affairs that it isn't the case or that it doesn't subsist ( $\sim p$  points in the direction of non-subsistence of its content ' $\downarrow p$ ').

B<sub>4</sub> What makes a proposition true is simply the subsistence of its state of affairs, and what makes a negative proposition true is the non-subsistence of that very same state of affairs. The subsistence of the state of affairs is a positive fact and its non-subsistence a negative one.

Thus, according to Bonino, Wittgenstein would hold that negative propositions describe reality. However, this would not require one to understand the meaning of negative propositions in terms of some *negative* situation. Instead, all that is required is the concept of *Bedeutung*, the sense of these propositions consisting of their pointing, respectively, towards subsistence and non-subsistence of the *Bedeutung* and the idea that negation is an operation consisting in the reversal of the sense. Moreover, according to that reading, Wittgenstein would also support the thesis that there are positive and negative facts and that the truth of negative propositions is to be accounted for in terms of negative facts. These facts are however conceived in such a way that they are not obscure and do not contradict Wittgenstein's fundamental idea that logical constants do not denote (cf. Bonino 2008, 68-90).

#### 5. Negation as a kind of assertive force or as part of the meaning content

However, there is one aspect of Bonino's interpretation of the *Tractatus* that is more debatable. According to Bonino:

... $p$  and  $\sim p$  have something in common (...) which might be called their descriptive content. Such a descriptive content corresponds to what in *NL* Wittgenstein calls the meaning of  $p$  and  $\sim p$ , i.e. that whose subsistence would make  $p$  true and  $\sim p$  false, and whose non-subsistence would make  $p$  false and  $\sim p$  true. It is plain that  $p$  and  $\sim p$  are not the same proposition: they have the same meaning, but opposite senses. What distinguishes  $p$  and  $\sim p$  (i.e. their different senses) is not part of their descriptive content (...). What distinguishes  $p$  and  $\sim p$  is what they do with their common descriptive content: the former affirms it, the latter denies it. (Bonino 2008, 74. My emphasis)

For Bonino, negation is not part of the descriptive content of a proposition, but rather, a kind of assertive force. The descriptive content would be neutral and the sense the arrow is bestowing on it would be either one of the two assertive forces: affirming and denying.

The question concerning whether negation is part of the content or is rather some kind of assertive force has been heavily debated within Austrian philosophy. (cf. Mulligan 1988). Now, regarding Wittgenstein's position on that issue, there is one argument for the thesis that negation is part of the content and there are two arguments against the thesis that it is a kind of assertive force. The first one

goes like this: What a proposition is said to represent in the *Tractatus*, its meaning (2.21), is a *Sachlage* (2.11, 2.201, 2.202, 2.203, 4.021, 4.03, 4.031, 4.04, 4.1, 4.124, 4.125, 4.462) and not a *Sachverhalt* (the sole exceptions are 3.0321, 4.0311, 4.122). Furthermore, *Sachlagen* are said to consist of the possibility of subsistence and the possibility of non-subsistence of *Sachverhalten* (2.11, 2.201, 2.202). But if the proposition's meaning is a possibility of subsistence or a possibility of non-subsistence of *Sachverhalten*, then negation is part of the content.

Concerning the second argument, Wittgenstein holds that all propositions have in common a general form. This is considered to be that they *all* say that some possible situation is the case (4.022, 4.5). Now, if all propositions have in common that they say that such and such is the case, then there cannot be two assertive modes, but only the positive one.

Finally, Wittgenstein rejects the idea of a negative mode. As a matter of fact, he states that we cannot understand ourselves with a false proposition *p* provided we know it is meant to be false (i.e. we take it not to be the case), since such a proposition wouldn't be false, but true: in saying that *p* is false we imply that  $\sim p$  is the case (4.062). Thus, in this scenario, we are asserting that something is the case and not denying that something is the case.

## 6. Concluding remarks

If what has been put forward here is correct, then Wittgenstein's position on the questions of the meaning and the truth of negative propositions has certainly not been settled by SI. It is also defensible that Wittgenstein agreed with the notions of a negative propositional content and a

negative fact and accounted for the meaning and truth of negative propositions on that basis. Such an interpretation has to be further developed in order to fully validate it, but there are already interesting arguments for it and, contrary to popular belief, it is fully compatible with the most important premises of SI. As a matter of fact, if negative situations and negative facts are understood in terms of possibility of the *non-subsistence* and the (actual) *non-subsistence* of some state of affairs, they would not be constituted by the would-be referent of the negation sign, i.e. it agrees with SI<sub>5</sub>. Furthermore, if the possible negative situations that are constitutive of  $\sim p$ 's meaning are that which the truth-possibilities denote, then the admission of these does not contradict SI<sub>3</sub>, SI<sub>2</sub>, and SI<sub>1</sub>.

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# Moral Disagreement, Anti-Realism, and the Worry about Overgeneralization

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## Abstract

According to the classical argument from moral disagreement, the existence of widespread or persistent moral disagreement is best explained by, and thus inductively supports the view that there are no objective moral facts. One of the most common charges against this argument is that it “overgeneralizes”: it implausibly forces its proponents to deny the existence of objective facts about certain matters of physics, history, philosophy, etc. as well (companions in guilt), or even about its own conclusion or its own soundness (self-defeat). Is this overgeneralization charge justified? In this paper I argue that both of the overgeneralization objections are rather weak. The companions in guilt version very likely fails, and the self-defeat version more likely fails than not. This result gives us reason to consider the argument from moral disagreement more seriously than has recently been done.

According to the classical argument from moral disagreement (e.g., Mackie 2011, 36f), the existence of widespread or persistent moral disagreement is best explained by, and thus inductively supports moral anti-realism, i.e., the claim that there are no objective moral facts.<sup>1</sup> Suppose there were objective moral facts. This would entail that in each case of moral disagreement, one of the disagreeing parties must be wrong. Either the Aztecs or currently living people would be wrong about the permissibility of sacrificing humans. Either those who claim or those who deny that euthanasia is permissible would be wrong, and so on.<sup>2</sup> Moral errors should of course occasionally be expected. However, proponents of the argument from moral disagreement object, it would be very mysterious how so many people, *many of who have even engaged in rational reflection and argument about the subject matters at issue*, can fail to grasp the objective moral truths about them. There would be strong reason to believe that objective moral truths are epistemically inaccessible. And this implication is widely considered to cast doubt upon realism (e.g., Brink 1989, 155; Shafer-Landau 2012, 1).

Recently, many philosophers have rejected the argument from moral disagreement on grounds of its “overgeneralizing”. If widespread or persistent moral disagreement really forced us to deny the existence of objective moral facts, then, it is claimed, proponents of the argument from moral disagreement would have to deny the existence of objective facts about certain matters of physics, history, philosophy, etc. as well (companions in guilt), or even about the argument’s own conclusion or its own soundness (self-defeat) — which is both deemed problematic. In this paper I defend the argument from moral disagreement against this overgeneralization charge. I will show that the objection’s companions in guilt version likely fails, and that its self-defeat version more likely fails than not.

## 1. Companions in Guilt

Realists have often pointed out that much or persistent disagreement cannot only be found with regard to morality, but with regard to various non-moral matters too. Common examples include scientific disciplines such as history or physics, particular debates within these disciplines (such as the debate about whether the Reformation in 16<sup>th</sup>-century England was a top-down or bottom-up process, or whether string theory is true), or also philosophy and particular philosophical debates (see, e.g., Brink 1989, 198; Huemer 2005, 135; Pigden 2010; Shafer-Landau 2006, 220; Wedgwood 2010). If proponents of the argument from moral disagreement were correct that widespread or persistent moral disagreement forces us to become anti-realists about morality, then, it seems, we would have to become anti-realists about the above non-moral matters as well. We would have to acknowledge that there is no objective fact of the matter about the causes of the Reformation in 16<sup>th</sup>-century England, that there is no objective fact of the matter about whether string theory is true, that there is no objective fact of the matter about whether people have free will, and so on. But this implication, critics of the argument from moral disagreement have objected, is absurd. Objective facts about these matters clearly exist. With regard to the argument from moral disagreement’s implications for philosophy, Russ Shafer-Landau, for example, notes:

Disagreements in core (and peripheral) philosophical areas are apparently intractable. [...] If intractable disagreement about verdicts and methods is enough to warrant an antirealist diagnosis of an area, then the whole of philosophy must be demoted. That simply is implausible: there really is (or isn’t) such a thing as probabilistic causation, numbers without spatio-temporal location, actions that are both free and determined, etc. (Shafer-Landau 2006, 220)

The plausibility of this companions in guilt objection against the argument from moral disagreement strongly depends on the particular non-moral matters that it appeals to. Even in its strongest versions, however, the objection is likely rather weak. A first problem with the objection is that it is difficult to tell how widely or persistently people really disagree about certain matters of physics, history, philosophy, etc. With regard to many such matters, we do not have enough reliable evidence about the involved parties’ judgements to assess the level of (persistent) disagreement, and it is often justifiable to interpret

<sup>1</sup> Various other (less prominent) metaethical arguments from moral disagreement have been proposed as well. For overviews see, e.g., Enoch 2009; Tersman 2006.

<sup>2</sup> These are only examples. I do not mean to imply that the Aztecs’ and currently living people’s differing judgements about the permissibility of human sacrifices, or currently living people’s differing judgements about the permissibility of euthanasia actually qualify as cases of genuine moral disagreement.

some judgements both as constituting disagreement and as constituting agreement.

Another, even more serious problem with the companions in guilt objection arises from the fact that, following the logic of the argument from moral disagreement, widespread or persistent disagreement about a non-moral matter does not by itself force us to become anti-realists about that matter. It only does so if this disagreement is *best explained* by anti-realism. However, it may well be that widespread or persistent disagreement about some non-moral matter is best explained by realism, while equally or even less widespread or persistent disagreement about morality is best explained by anti-realism. In fact, differences of this kind are quite likely. For realist explanations of non-moral disagreements tend to be superior to realist explanations of moral disagreement in various respects. Often, for example, the errors that realists about a non-moral matter must ascribe to one of the parties of a disagreement can be explained by factors other than a (potentially realism-undermining) inaccessibility of the objective truths about this matter. Historians, for example, disagree about whether the Reformation in 16<sup>th</sup>-century England was a top-down or bottom-up process simply because they lack the relevant historical evidence. Physicists disagree about the truth of string theory simply because they lack the technical equipment to test the predictions of this theory (see Leiter 2010b).

Not all errors about contested non-moral matters can be explained by a lack of relevant evidence, partiality, irrationality, or other shortcomings on the side of those who make these errors. Sometimes the widespread or persistent disagreement about a non-moral matter may indeed suggest that if there is an objective truth about the matter, then this truth is difficult, or even impossible to grasp. Contrary to what is assumed by proponents of the companions in guilt objection, however, it is not clear whether this epistemological implication must always be taken to force the recognition that there actually *is* no objective truth about the matter. There is a much stronger temptation to give up on inaccessible objective facts that are “practical” than on “theoretical” such facts. If we cannot know what is right, wrong, good, bad, etc., and thus cannot have our actions guided by these properties, it does not seem attractive to postulate them. But suppose what we are unable to determine is, say, whether there are abstract objects, or what knowledge essentially is. Would it be so odd to hold on to the idea that there are nevertheless objective facts of the matter about these issues?

A further way in which many realist explanations of non-moral disagreement are at an advantage over some realist explanations of moral disagreement concerns ontological parsimony and concision. Explanations in terms of objective facts about the drivers of Reformation in 16<sup>th</sup>-century England or about string theory do not commit us to kinds of facts that we do not already accept, and these facts also explain many other kinds of facts. Some explanations that appeal to objective moral facts, in contrast, force us to acknowledge the existence of an additional kind of facts that also seem to lack in explanatory power, namely irreducible moral facts. *Ceteris paribus*, realist explanations of most non-moral disagreements are thus better than these particular realist explanations of widespread or persistent moral disagreement.

Finally, suppose it turns out that anti-realism is the best explanation of the widespread or persistent disagreement about some non-moral matter, and proponents of the argument from moral disagreement must therefore adopt anti-realism concerning that matter as well. In order for the

companions in guilt objection to succeed, it would still have to be shown that this implication is problematic, that is, that anti-realism about that matter really is implausible. Often this may seem like an easy task. However, we should be open to the possibility that some matters that seem obviously objective may not in fact be so. For example, it does not seem unlikely that at least some of the claims that are discussed by philosophers are not objectively true or false, but rather only subjectively so, or are even only expressions of desires (see Leiter 2010a). In cases such as these the fact that the argument from moral disagreement “generalizes” cannot be held against that argument at all.

## 2. Self-Defeat

Some critics of the argument from moral disagreement have tried to show that this argument does not only have implications for the metaphysical status of debates within physics, history, or philosophy, but also for the status of the moral realism/anti-realism debate (e.g., Enoch 2009, 67-68; Huemer 2005, 146), or for the debate about the argument from moral disagreement’s own soundness (e.g., Enoch 2009, 67-68; Huemer 2005, 146). Philosophers widely and persistently disagree about whether there are objective moral facts and about whether the argument from moral disagreement is sound, the objection goes. So if widespread or persistent moral disagreement really grounded anti-realism about morality, then widespread or persistent disagreement about whether there are objective moral facts or about whether the argument from moral disagreement is sound would ground anti-realism about these matters as well. Proponents of the argument from moral disagreement would be committed to the views that there is no objective truth about whether there are objective moral truths (“meta-metaethical anti-realism”), or that there is no objective truth about whether the argument from moral disagreement is sound (anti-realism about the soundness of the argument from moral disagreement). But these implications render the argument from moral disagreement self-defeating, for the argument is clearly supposed to show that it is *objectively* true that there are no objective moral truths, and the argument is supposed to be *objectively* sound. Michael Huemer puts the worry thus:

[...] if the argument from disagreement is sound, then it refutes itself, since many people do not agree with the argument from disagreement. The argument would likewise refute any metaethical position, due to the nature of disagreement in metaethics. (Huemer 2005, 146)

This self-defeat objection against the argument from moral disagreement is more promising than the companions in guilt objection. One aspect with regard to which it is superior to many versions of the latter is its basis in more uncontroversial empirical hypotheses. Philosophers indeed widely and persistently disagree about the existence of objective moral properties (see, e.g., Philpapers 2012). They also widely and with at least some persistence disagree about the soundness of the argument from moral disagreement (compare, e.g., Mackie 2011, 36f to Enoch 2009, 21-29). Moreover, unlike in the companions in guilt case, proponents of the argument from moral disagreement also cannot bite the bullet and acknowledge that anti-realism is actually true about the non-moral matters that their argument is claimed to generalize to. For the argument from moral disagreement indeed purports to establish that anti-realism is objectively true, and the argument is indeed accompanied by the assumption that it is objectively true that it is sound.

Despite these advantages, however, it is not clear whether the self-defeat objection works either. As in the companions of guilt case, proponents of the argument from moral disagreement would only be forced to acknowledge that there are no objective truths about the existence of objective moral truths and about the soundness of the argument from moral disagreement if widespread or persistent disagreement about these issues was *best explained* by anti-realism. But this does not seem obvious. Some proponents of the argument from moral disagreement have recently suggested that the error that realists make in debates concerning the existence of objective moral truths and the soundness of the argument from moral disagreement is to be explained by appeal to irrationality or partiality rather than the (potentially realism-undermining) inaccessibility of objective truths about these matters. According to Brian Leiter (2010a), for example, realists fail to see the objective truth of anti-realism and of the soundness of the argument from moral disagreement because they are driven by a strong irrational desire to ground their first-order moral convictions in some external reality. Such bold empirical hypotheses should of course not be accepted without strong evidence, and I doubt that they will turn out to play more than a minor role in the explanation of the widespread or persistent disagreement about the existence of objective moral facts and the soundness of the argument from moral disagreement. Even if proponents of the argument from moral disagreement must admit that the objective truth about the existence of objective moral facts and the soundness of the argument from moral disagreement are epistemically inaccessible to us, however, this need not force them to become anti-realists about these issues.

First, in contrast to at least some realist explanations of widespread or persistent moral disagreement, the realist explanation of widespread and persistent disagreement about the existence of objective moral facts and about the soundness of the argument from moral disagreement does not commit one to the existence of additional kinds of facts, and it does explain various kinds of facts. These advantages in terms of ontological parsimony and consilience may outweigh the lack of coherence that realist explanations of widespread and persistent disagreement about these non-moral matters suffer from due to their implication of epistemic inaccessibility.

Second, and finally, as the existence of objective moral truths and the soundness of the argument from moral disagreement are rather theoretical issues, it is not clear whether our being unable to acquire knowledge about these matters would force us to interpret them according to anti-realism anyway. It does not seem odd to claim that there is an objective truth about which metaethical position is true, and about whether the argument from moral disagreement is sound, but we just cannot grasp this truth.

### 3. Conclusion

Does the argument from moral disagreement implausibly generalize to certain matters of physics, history, philosophy, etc., or even to this argument's own conclusion or its own soundness? Our above considerations clearly do not provide any definitive answer to this question. The overgeneralization objection's convincingness significantly depends on vexed and at least partly unexplored empirical issues as well as on controversial philosophical assumptions. That said, we did find grounds for believing that the objection has been exaggerated. Starting from widely shared and plausible assumptions, the objection's companions in guilt version very likely fails, and its self-defeat version more likely fails than not. This result gives us reason to consider the argument from moral disagreement more seriously than has recently been done.

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# Philosophy as Constitution of Worlds

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## Abstract

Understood by the linguistic turn is reality is nominal, creating a crisis in philosophy as the study of reality. There being no one world which exists, however, philosophers map out possible worlds which can exist.

## Philosophy as Constitution of Worlds

Basic to the linguistic turn is assuming, "we still derive our inventory of what is real from what we find it convenient to talk about" (Earle 1992, 100). This occurs within a language definitionally constituting at least a syntactical sequencing of elements. Hereby, an object's existence is constituted by experiential conformity to a defined sequence.

Sequential conformity depends on accepting or rejecting a private language. Rejecting possibility of a private language, sequential conformity is decidable only communally. Analytic philosophers consider this manifested in the scientific method. But, every observation ultimately being phenomenal, communal understanding is impossible without a private language. Considering this, a public language arises among humans because of a common logical space, and sensory experience constitutive of what is identified as human reason. People may not agree on how to relate sensory experiences into complex objects, but can understand how one another does this, all sharing the experiences and the ways these can be related.

Now a crisis of rationality is thought occurring in philosophy. Presuming nominalism of the linguistic turn, is reason simply another nominal concept, or is it a universal regulating formation of nominal concepts? An earlier debate between I. C. Jarvie and Peter Winch focuses the issues relevant to this question. Winch assumes an emergent world within which rules appear spontaneously; Jarvie assumes a supervenient world within which rules follow successively.

Disputed is whether human understanding is limited, Winch thinking no and Jarvie yes. Human understanding is prolific for Winch, every concept presuming another endlessly. It is confined for Jarvie, every concept presuming an ultimate concept. Winch begins assuming every rule follows from a more general rule, there being no ultimate rule. Jarvie responds how is it known every rule follows from a more general rule, unless this follows from a most general rule, the scientific method? Winch retorts a most general rule is self-contradictory. Following from an even more general rule, it is not the most general rule. Jarvie replies how is this known unless there is a most general rule, etc., the dispute being a futile infinite regress.

Resolution depends on whether taking other worlds seriously, reason being contextual if doing so, and universal if not. There is good reason for taking other worlds seriously. Whether one or many worlds exist is irrelevant. Experience is like that of many worlds, and is most accurately explained as such. Different worlds is not relativism. Relativism is different foci within a common world. Different worlds are uncommon worlds. Appearing spontaneously, worlds are shared fortuitously.

Constitutive are *a priori* existents self-evident within a world, requiring clarification only when occurring within another world. There is no truth in a world unless some truth is self-evident in that world, and what is self-evident in one world need not be so in another world. Self-evident truth can exhaust a world's content, or a world can contain a self-evident truth identifying conditional truth.

An imaginable world is nonexistent either self-evidently, or a dimension by relation with another world. Only assuming related worlds need otherwise self-evident truth be derived from other self-evident truth to be veridical. Still self-evident if conjunctively incorporated in another world, it is conditional if implicatively incorporated.

Containing different objects and logic, different awareness is understandable as different worlds. Certainly experiential differences might be thought a product of psychological rather than ontological differences. Different beings experience a common world differently. Yet, knowing whether the different experiences of beings are a function of psychological or ontological differences is impossible. Whether one or the other, though, the implication is the same, different beings aware of different realities.

Experience composes metaphysically different worlds which, at least ordinarily, seamlessly transition from one to another. Seamless transition evinces unity of all these different states. But, unity requires the complication of a common substrate underlying the different states, and enigma of how one can manifest many. Other worlds might be denied as inconceivable or incredible. If the theoretical is conceivable, though, then the metaphysical is not inconceivable. Both unobservable abstractions, they differ in location, not substance.

Philosophy constitutes analytic understanding of such realities. Sensory states constitute empiricism which identifies the dual worlds of appearance and reality, and phenomenology which identifies the monal world of appearance. Imaginative states constitute reverie which may or may not identify the dual worlds of appearance and reality, and abstract thought which identifies the monal world of ineffability. Immediate states constitute realism which identifies the monal world of actuality. This is the most common state of awareness, all experience within it having being.

Any state can be analytic or non-analytic, distinguished by occurrence or non-occurrence of self-consciousness. And self-consciousness can be phenomenal or real, a qualia or experience. Apparent is a self (analyst) analyzing. Whether self-consciousness is a phenomenal or epistemological event is indeterminate. Against, "Thinking, or rather thoughts, constitute a datum; but the 'I' is not a datum" (Copleston 1963, 105), is Aristotle's divine thought in thinking of itself, is thinking on thinking. Self-consciousness can be consciousness of self or not, either

being a matter of acceptance. Whichever, self-consciousness demarcates analytic consciousness from non-analytic consciousness.

There are perhaps two general states of conscious being. Appearance and reality, which is an analytic state, and appearance as reality, which can be a non-analytic or an analytic state. Distinguishing these is consciousness without self-consciousness, or consciousness with self-consciousness. Perhaps the most common state is consciousness without self-consciousness. All constituent of this state is real. Constituency is emphasized to incorporate not only perception, but preconception—viz., propositional attitudes, if such are allowed.

Phenomenology composes all conscious elements constituent of consciousness as a distinct concept. Abstraction composes all conscious elements not constituent of consciousness as a distinct concept. All constituent of phenomenology and abstraction is real.

Only in the state of appearance and reality can experience be unreal—viz., not constituent of an environment designated “reality” supposed independent of consciousness. Confusion can occur because the word “reality” can be used in at least two different senses. “Real” can be an adjective descriptive of states of being, or a noun naming a state of being.

Knowing whether experiential difference manifests psychological or ontological difference being impossible, any account of reality expresses a normative preference, different implications following from preferences. Ontologically assuming different worlds, rationality exists within a world, composing what is consistent with the substantive and formal content of a world. Such content even need not be conceivable, imagining worlds with substance and form beyond human comprehension being possible. An infinity of worlds, objects, and logics, are possible within the universe. And each world can be entirely autonomous, a self-contained whole presuming no other world.

Rationality is possible inside a world, not outside, unless a world is incorporated within another world where it can be judged according to the encompassing world’s standard. There is no standard of rationality within the universe, only within a world. Any rule for the universal set being self-contradictory, the set is self-evident, although not occurring within a world without complexes.

A single standard of rationality is possible within the universe only if the universe contains one world. Otherwise there are multiple standards of rationality. And, because of many possible worlds, a universe of only one world is only if any other world is considered mistaken.

Thus, whether rationality is relative or universal depends on whether existence of different worlds is taken seriously. Rationality being a property of worlds, and not the universe of worlds, there are two kinds of rational worlds. A world is integrated with its properties deducible from one principle, or unintegrated with its properties deducible from more than one principle. Unintegrated, it is a parallel world of unrelated segments. These can overlap, as when films appear concurrently on a screen.

An unintegrated world might be thought irrational, but need not be, any order being rational. Even the wholly unintegrated world of chaos is rational. Relevantly,

[‘a world in which induction would fail as often as lead to truth] would not be disorder, but the simplest order; it would not be unintelligible, but, on the contrary, every-

thing conceivable would be found in it with equal frequency’ (Murphey 345).

A reason for something is a principle from which it follows. An integrated world follows from one principle. An unintegrated world follows from more than one principle. Whether integrated or unintegrated, a world is rational if everything within it follows from a principle. A world is irrational if something within it follows from two or more principles, the thing being ambiguous and the principles vague. Such a world is irrational because it is only integrated arbitrarily.

Integrated and unintegrated worlds are asymmetric. An integrated world need be determinate, and an unintegrated world need not be determinate. Indeterminacy is a product of ignorance or error within an integrated world, and a product of freedom within an unintegrated world. Order is explained by the coherent structure encompassed within the one principle of an integrated world. Disorder is explained by the incoherent structure encompassed within the more than one principle of an unintegrated world.

An object can be unchanging or changing, differentiated by how it is understood. Basic is an unchanging object, a changing object being a sequence of unchanging objects. Change is a limited incomplete implicative sequence of instances of the same thing. Such a sequence must contain at least one member related to only one other member, constituting a beginning, or at most two members forming limits, constituting a beginning and an ending.

Sequencing must also be discontinuous, containing at least two noncontiguous instances within the succession. Incorporating no noncontiguous instances within the succession, nothing separates any instance from its immediate neighbor or neighbors. Having nothing intervening itself and its immediate neighbor or neighbors, each intermediate instance is indistinguishable from its neighbor or neighbors, forming a single instance with it or them. Reiterated for each instance, the entire succession becomes a single unchanging object.

Changing or not, although an object can be linked to something else by a sequence immediately interrupted at the limits of the object, it cannot be linked by an uninterrupted sequence of instances. Thus it is emergent, coming from nothing at its beginning and going to nothing at its end. Emergence is tied to identity this way, everything extended in time appearing and disappearing spontaneously.

Being so, these things are free, their occurrence ungoverned by a rule. This is not to assert occurrence of this *kind* of thing is ungoverned by a rule, but occurrence of this *particular* thing is ungoverned by a rule. Why a *B* follows an *A* can be explained by inclusion in a rule, but not why this *B* follows this *A*. Conditionals express the indeterminacy of emergent objects.

A causal rule is a specification of sequencing. A determinate causal rule specifies only one thing following another thing. An indeterminate causal rule specifies a limited set of things following another thing. An arbitrary causal rule identifies an unlimited set of things following another thing.

Whether a causal rule is indeterminate or arbitrary, a probability is assignable to each possible outcome, every outcome being rational because calculable. As shown, even an arbitrary causal rule is rational, since every possible outcome is equally probable. An irrational causal rule identifies one thing following any one of a set of undiscoverable things.

Eliminating indeterminacy by providing an explanation for every particular occurrence requires identifying a complete unbroken transition of instances. Doing this eliminates change, transforming it into an unchanging object, constituents losing identity in such a continuum, all fused into a static Parmenidean one. Certainty is gained at the price of change, and change at the price of certainty. This occurs in the clarification process of an infinite set theoretic reduction, identifying the "power set" containing every set member intervening every two other members.

Whether reason is contextual or universal depends on other worlds being taken seriously. It is contextual if they are, and universal if they are not, neither alternative being more "real" than the other. Reality being nominal on the linguistic turn, and reason being part of reality, reality's universality is necessarily nominal. As such, it is self-evident rather than definitional within a world, avoiding the fatal regress of an infinite proof.

Reality is no longer fixed when assuming contextual reason, integrating appearance and reality. Heralded is either the "end of philosophy" or the "transformation of philosophy," self-making solipsists being end-of-philosophy thinkers, and self-understanding analysts or communal-transformation prescriptivists being transformation-of-philosophy thinkers. Although arbitrary, acceptance of universal reason evades the philosophical crisis arising from contextual reason.

Universal reason avoids other worlds by severely limiting the content of reality. Alternatives are dismissed simply by ad hominum ridicule, definitionally setting the limits of existence. Arbitrary as such, the vision of universal reason is normative, a prescription for, rather than description of, what is.

Intuition is fundamental to this enterprise, determining the limit of the rational. Not demarcating the limit to imagination, which is limitless since unimaginable worlds are imaginable, intuition demarcates the limit to what is real, to what actually exists, not to what could exist. Ad hominum argument distinguishes intuition, identifying not the unimaginable, but the unreal.

Unable to prove a negative, all that can be done is dismiss its reality, which is a matter of credulity. It is impossi-

ble to prove what is, because proof is circular, requiring truth conditions, which require identifying what is among all that can be, which presupposes truth. What is only is identifiable intuitively, which is primitive because it cannot be known whether intuition is sensation or imagination.

Universal and contextual reason being nominal assuming the linguistic turn, how is philosophy to be understood? Is philosophy in crisis or not? An answer emerges considering diversity of philosophical views constitutes a crisis only under the influence of the Enlightenment. Overlooked in despair of the philosophical enterprise is abandonment of the Enlightenment ideal over the last two centuries.

Substituted is the nominal creation of internally consistent systems which only incompletely encompass human experience. Hereby concerning,

the world of experience (i.e., the sense perceptions of the individual, or the 'real world' – depending upon one's choice of epistemology) ... Once we have granted that any physical theory is essentially only a model for the world of experience, we must renounce all hope of finding anything like 'the correct theory' (Everett 1973, 133f).

Correspondingly, philosophy generates internally consistent worlds, whose mapping explains philosophers disagreeing, masked by believing identifying a real world.

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# Holmes Rolston III's Theory of Natural Values

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## Abstract

As regards the problem of values, Rolston claims that values may exist without the beholder; expressing such opinion he opposes the prevailing contemporary views in this respect. It is also shown how Rolston tries to work out a provisional intuitive scale of values characteristic of particular organisms.

Next the concept of systemic values is presented and discussed. It appears that such values are ultimately life-generating processes, and as such definitely deserve man's respect. Such phenomena constitute the essence of holistic environmental philosophy of Holmes Rolston III.

Nowadays the conviction prevails among philosophers that there can be no value without an experiencing valuer, without a beholder. In reference to values it is usually assumed that value may be of a double character: either *instrumental* or *intrinsic* (*inner, inherent*). The former requires somebody to make use of it, whereas in case of the latter the situation is not so clear. It seems that the majority of thinkers insist that without the presence of subjective life, values do not appear in the world. For example, Ralph Barton Perry formulates such opinion writing: "The silence of the desert is without value, until some wanderer finds it lonely and terrifying; the cataract, until some human sensibility finds it sublime (...). Any object, whatever it be, acquires value when any interest, whatever it be, is taken in it." (Perry 1926, 125) The representative of pragmatism, William James reasons in a similar way: "Conceive yourself, if possible, suddenly stripped of all emotions with which your world now inspires you, and try to imagine it as it exists, purely by itself (...). No one portion of the universe would then have importance beyond another (...). Whatever of value, interest or meaning our respective worlds are endowed with are thus pure gifts of the spectator's mind." (James 1935, 150) J. Baird Callicot, in turn, writes: "There can be no value apart from the evaluator (...) all value is as it were in the eye of the beholder" (Callicot 1980, 325) But, quite unexpectedly, one can find a shift in his analysis, when the author writes about a 'truncated sense' of value: "The *source* of all value is human consciousness, but it by no means follows that the *locus* of all value is consciousness itself. An intrinsically valuable thing on this reading is valuable for its own sake, for itself, but it is not valuable in itself, i.e., completely independently of any consciousness, since no value can in principle (...) be altogether independent of a valuing consciousness (...). Value is, as it were, projected onto natural objects or events by the subjective feelings of observers." (Callicot 1984, 300-301) According to Callicot there is some inherent value, especially in a biotic nature, which becomes activated when human consciousness becomes engaged.

Holmes Rolston III goes even further than Callicot in this respect. A very important aspect of his holistic thinking is that the objective life constitutes the basis for the subjective life and as such is an indispensable part of the *life-generating processes*, and has value. According to Rolston: "The value-generating event is something like the light in a refrigerator – only on when the door is opened." (Rolston 1994, 159) It is therefore obvious that values are "in there" all the time, disregarding whether there is light thrown upon them or not. Rolston, however, opposes the view that all living beings should be treated with the same amount of respect. Such a position in axiology, and sub-

sequently in (applied) ethics makes it hardly possible to give one's verdict on moral matters, especially when a conflict of interests arises between human and non-human beings. One can hardly defend the thesis that the interests of plants, animals and humans should have equal consideration. In this context Rolston, considering the category of intrinsic value, suggests a temporary solution assuming that there exist different degrees of values. He writes: "The tiger, valued for what it is in itself, is at the top of a thropic food pyramid that moves downward through gazelles, grass, microbes, and which requires the rainfall, meteorological, geomorphic, and erosional cycles that produce the soil, and so on. The inquiry about value connections never stops." (Rolston 1994, 175) In this context the American author proposes a temporary scale of values which are highest in humans, descend across animal life in a rough proportion to phylogenetic or neural complexity, and are still lower in plant life and certainly least in microbes. Rolston then suggests that it is only an intuitive scale which with time can be corrected by reference to the detailed descriptions of biological sciences. Problems posed by environmental ethics are so novel that the answers supplied may only be, for the time being at least, approximate and temporary.

In addition to *instrumental* and *inner* values Rolston distinguishes also the so-called *systemic values*, which are a kind of a novelty to the readers. Introducing the notion "systemic values" he underlines that organisms are selective systems. Such selectivity refers also to species and ecosystems about which the author writes: "The system has no self, but it is nevertheless self-organizing. Spontaneously, of itself, it organizes natural history, and it fills that natural history with organismic selves, each also self-organizing (...). This is what we call its systemic value." (Rolston 1994, 181) In this context the author notices that organisms value the resources instrumentally because they value themselves intrinsically. The valuations of such kind appeared in the world long before mankind appeared on the scene; therefore one can say that both instrumental and intrinsic values are present in ecosystems. In opposition to organisms that defend their own survival mainly, ecosystems promote new appearances, they increase kinds, not only their own kind – as particular organisms do. An ecosystem as such has intrinsic value, it generates different forms of life, and therefore is a value producer. It produces different forms of life, selecting for such characteristics as individuality, diversification, quality and quantity. It also employs certain instruments in order to do this efficiently, like conflict, decentralization, probability, succession, spontaneous generation of order.

Concerning systemic values Rolston notices that they are not the sum of all values included in the ecosystem, not even a structure of some kind, but something more. Rolston proposes the following description: "The system is a value transformer where form and being, process and reality, fact and value are inseparably joined (...). Every good is in community. So we have to keep intrinsic values networked; they are not absolute but exist as points of focus within relation. The 'for what it is in itself' emphasis, the self-actualizing character of such value cannot forget relatedness." (Rolston 1994, 174) Then the author suggests that the values described above should be called *projective nature*. Man has appeared in history as a product of systemic values, therefore he has some duties to ecosystems, notices Rolston.

Some theoreticians will not accept the above opinion. According to the reigning philosophical paradigms duties concern entities with subjectivity, primarily organisms with central nervous systems, entities having psychological life; one does not even dare mentioning ecosystems in such a context. But when one takes seriously ecological sciences into consideration, one must admit that it is a category mistake to value only subjective life which appeared so late in natural history. Therefore Rolston writes: "Even the most valuable of the parts is less valuable than the whole (...). The system creates life, selects for adaptive fit, constructs increasingly richer life in quantity and quality, supports myriads of species, escalates individuality, autonomy, and even subjectivity within the limits of decentralized community." (Rolston 1988, 191) That is why such a community deserves man's respect, insists the author.

Nature as a whole is a vast energetic system that began some fifteen to twenty billion years ago. Then it expanded, grew, developed. Earth is one of its products, especially interesting because of life which evolved on it some three billion years ago. After different stages of development, lasting millions of years, the ecosystemic nature produced its most advanced creature, *Homo sapiens*. In addition to this there are also several million other species, too. One may have no doubts that we live in a universe that produces different forms of life. In connection with this Rolston notices: "Valuing the product but not the system able to produce these products is like finding a goose that lays golden eggs and valuing eggs but not the goose." (Rolston 1994 177)

Man is a latecomer as far as the projective system of nature is considered, and therefore should not be arrogant when he approaches such a life-fertile system creating anew more and more different forms of life. According to the American author wherever there is creativity there is also value. In this context Rolston refers critically to David Hume's opinion who claims that nature "has no more regard to good above ill than to heat above cold, or to drought above moisture, or to light above heavy." (Hume 1947, 79) Such a view may seem to be true in the short range, but when one looks at nature from a wider perspective, one notices that the conditions described by Hume were eventually extremely important for the appearance of life on Earth. Probably Hume had not enough biological, and especially ecological knowledge to be aware of that. The process of valuing nature, especially after taking ecology into consideration, seems to be quite an intricate and complicated one.

The contemporary philosophers are definitely more aware of such intricacies. John Dewey, for example, when discussing the problems of epistemology notices: "experience is of as well as in nature". (Dewey 1958, 4) Following Dewey one may observe that the same refers to valuing,

which is both *of*, as well as *in* nature. At this point Rolston tries to examine the structural process of such valuing. He comes out of the natural object in the field (waterfall, mountain), which by its beauty draws man's attention and influences his consciousness. Such consciousness responds with interest, and eventually valuation, which makes the whole encounter relational. The whole encounter is therefore an interactive event. It seems that value appears in the relation of a subject and an object, that it does not exist in the polar parts of the relation, but in the relation as such, and that it is therefore a dialectical value. But when one takes ecology into consideration, one must admit that the relation as a whole is ecological, too. It means that it is set within nature, that it cannot be extrapolated from her. A valuing human being has, of course, evolved from nature, together with a body, senses, brains, feelings, will, etc., all of which somehow mediate values. Therefore, everything which exists is enveloped in the evolutionary process and inevitably rooted in a particular, evolutionary ecosystem of which we are an inseparable part.

The essence of holistic thinking is closely connected with the category of the *transformation of values*. Such transformation is based on two opposing categories: *conflict* and *complementarity*. Objectively there is no doubt that nature is a vast resource. Writes Rolston: "Everything is making a resource of something else, so far as it can, except when it is resisting being made a resource of. The jumping spider eats the fly, the worms the opossum, the coyote the ground squirrel, which eats the grass and its seeds, which grow in the rotting humus. The salamander is making a resource of the mosquito; the mosquito of me." (Rolston 1989, 129) In the light of such an opinion one should remember that there are some conversions of resources from one life stream to another, and another, and another... Considering this it is very difficult to say whether particular values are lost forever. On statistical average, organisms seem to gain values not only in their genes but also from their competitors, and their prey, too. For example: particular rabbits are losers when they are caught by the coyotes, but it refers usually to the surplus of the young which get eaten. There remain rabbits which, statistically, are smarter, faster and more efficient, and which as a result reproduce, supplying better and still better rabbits. It seems that collectively rabbits gain from their pains and this in turn makes greater demands on coyotes; in such a way the coevolutionary race continues. Concluding, the author is inclined to talk about the so-called *systemic evolution of values*, pointing to the fact that values evolve in ecosystems historically. He writes about the surviving species: "They embody evolutionary achievements that have been tested over time and result from long struggles for life. These kinds are winners and deserve admiring respect." (Rolston 1988, 221) Such a *pro-life tendency* of nature is an amazing phenomenon, indeed. Producing new kinds of life means producing new values, claims Rolston.

At some point of his history man used to tame nature which sometimes threatened his existence, but nowadays, as Rolston puts it, "Civilization needs to be tamed as well as nature." And then he continues: "The land ethic rests upon the discovery of certain values – integrity, projective creativity, life support, community – already present in ecosystems, and it imposes an obligation to act so as to maintain these. This is not (...) an ethic concerning culture, not an interhuman ethic. We will continue to need the Ten Commandments, categorical imperatives, the Golden Rule, concepts of justice, and the utilitarian calculus. But we are developing an extension of ethics into environmental attitudes, a new commandment about landscapes

and ecosystems.” (Rolston 1988, 228) As far as ecosystem is considered, value as such is not simply imposed on the ecosystem, it is rather discovered there. But it is discovered in such a way that nobody knows which one appears first: description or evaluation. Therefore *ought* is not so much derived from *is* but it is rather discovered simultaneously with it. Such standpoint in ethics was presented by Rolston in most of his publications. (Pyra 2004, 211f) Both facts and values seem to be properties of the system, claims Rolston, and it is worthy of notice that another well known representative of environmental philosophy, Mary Midgley, approaches this problem in a similar way. (Midgely 2002, 169-191).

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# Answering O'Neill: What Wittgenstein's Invocations of a "Form of Life" Actually Amount To

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## Abstract

In *Toward Justice and Virtue*, Onora O'Neill takes Wittgenstein's rule-following remarks to leave us with two serious repercussions for ethics and practical reasoning. Insofar as Wittgenstein has shown that rules alone do not guide action, and instead that our ability to follow rules correctly depends on our sharing a form of life, (1) where a form of life isn't shared there seems to be no way left open to us to resolve disagreements about what to do in response to a particular situation; and (2) even where a form of life is shared, if rules don't guide action, there seems to be no way to ensure agreement on what to do in response to a particular situation, even if we agree on all of its relevant features. In this paper, I argue that O'Neill has misunderstood what the invocation of 'forms of life' amounts to for Wittgenstein. Far from being a rigid, culturally specific practice that must be assumed by those who share it in their dealings with one another, a form of life is that in virtue of which we are able to follow one another's words. Our ability to understand one another, learn and speak a language, disagree, or even challenge practices, is all a matter of sharing a form of life. Insofar as O'Neill has misunderstood what the notion of a form of life amounts to for Wittgenstein, I argue that her worries might be alleviated if not wholly dispelled.

Wittgenstein's rule-following remarks in the *Philosophical Investigations* invite us to reconsider what it means to understand and follow rules. For Wittgenstein, our acting in accordance with a rule is not a matter of the rule itself mandating to us what to do apart from a history and practice of using and following it in particular ways. In understanding a rule the future is not mysteriously determined or laid out for us. Indeed, following a rule correctly is not a matter of the rule itself churning out correct behavior from us. Instead, Wittgenstein invites us to see that our ability to follow rules correctly or in ways that are expected of us is a matter of our occupying a place within what he has called a 'form of life.'

Onora O'Neill has worried that serious problems arise in light of the rule-following remarks for the possibility of resolving disagreements and for practical reasoning. For O'Neill, if a shared form of life is the grounds for understanding one another (one another's words, or what kind of behavior is expected in response to an instruction), then where a form of life is not shared it is not clear that reaching any sort of agreement about what to do in light of an instruction or a given situation remains a viable possibility. Further, if the idea that rules determine or specify how to go on (independently from a history and practice of using and following them) has been exposed as illusory, it is not even clear that where a form of life *is* shared there will be any possibility for reaching an agreement on what course of action or type of response a given situation calls for.

Both of O'Neill's concerns hang on what she understands the notion of a 'form of life' to consist in and require. What exactly a form of life is and what it allows for in terms of mutual intelligibility and our ability to reason and interact meaningfully with one another is the topic of this paper. I will propose that, for Wittgenstein, our ability to follow one another's words (whether they express a rule, a question, assertion, and so on), and to participate in a linguistic practice, is all a matter of our sharing a form of life. Insofar as O'Neill has misunderstood what the invocation of a 'form of life' amounts to for Wittgenstein, I argue that her worries with respect to agreement and practical reasoning might be at least alleviated if not wholly dispelled.

For O'Neill, we bring rules into our lives to help organize our interactions with one another – we are not ruled by

rules. That is, O'Neill agrees that rules do not bear on action mechanically and that to some extent rules and principles are of our own invention. However, she writes, "if rules are always indeterminate, much will depend on the strategies of judgment by which agents move from principles to action" (O'Neill 1996, 83). It is not entirely clear what O'Neill means by a rule being "indeterminate" but I take her to mean that our behavior in following rules is indeterminate, or that the rule itself does not demand relentless uniformity. In any case, it is precisely this move from judgment to action (i.e. from judging that a particular case falls under a certain description to knowing or deciding what to do in response to it) that O'Neill is most worried about given what she thinks Wittgenstein's rule-following remarks are meant to show. Specifically, O'Neill is most worried not that rules are indeterminate, but that they are wholly *non-determinate* on Wittgenstein's picture.

As mentioned earlier, O'Neill is particularly critical of Wittgenstein's notion of a form of life as the basis of our ability to follow rules correctly or at all. The rule-following remarks are meant to show, she writes, that nothing in the rule itself determines or indicates to us how to go on. Instead, all that we seem able to rely on for Wittgenstein, as far as she can tell, is a shared background of at least partial agreement about how to interpret concepts, project predicates, or how to implement or follow rules. For O'Neill, the problem with insisting that a form of life is what enables us to follow rules correctly, is that it's not clear that where a form of life isn't shared there is any way left open to us to reach agreements about what to do. Worse, she thinks, is that insofar as agreements of this kind are out of reach, it is not clear that we should feel any obligation on Wittgenstein's picture to appeal to others who do not share our form of life – after all, the possibility of agreement is out of reach (O'Neill 1996, 86).

O'Neill worries that the problem of deciding (or reaching an agreement about) what to do in light of a particular situation remains just as problematic given Wittgenstein's rule-following remarks even where a form of life *is* shared. Even if we agree on all the relevant features of a case and see it as falling under a particular description (so, presumably, share a form of life), there is no guarantee that we will agree about what to do in light of it. If rules do not determine (i.e. specify) what to do when following them,

then they can serve no real purpose for practical reasoning or in helping us decide what to do (i.e. in helping us move from descriptions to actions). These worries may persist given some interpretations of Wittgenstein's (even McDowell's interpretation in "Virtue and Reason" of which O'Neill is particularly, and perhaps rightly, critical). However, Wittgenstein's own invocations of the terms suggest an altogether different picture.

Wittgenstein invokes the notion of a form of life five times throughout the *Philosophical Investigations*. In every case, the notion of a form of life appears in the context of passages on language learning, understanding, and the possibility of mutual intelligibility (PI §19, §23, §241; PoP §1, §345). Similarly, Cavell invokes the notion of a 'form of life' following Wittgenstein in the context of discussions on mutual intelligibility, and language acquisition. A preliminary look at these invocations in the contexts they occur suggests that a form of life is essentially a matter of our ability to understand one another, or to follow one another's words.

Wittgenstein writes, "But how many kinds of sentences are there? Say assertions, questions, and commands? – There are *countless* kinds; countless different kinds of things we call "signs", "words", "sentences" (PI §23). If speaking a language is "part of an activity, or of a form of life," then knowing which things are which – i.e. which things signs, which words, which commands, questions, assertions, and so on – means sharing or having been at least partially initiated into a form of life (PI §23). Without a form of life the difference between a question and command, say, would be unintelligible.

Following Wittgenstein, a form of life for Cavell is a matter of, he says:

"...our sharing routes of interest and feeling, modes of response, sense of humor and of significance and of fulfillment, of what is outrageous, of what is similar to what else, what a rebuke, what forgiveness, of when an utterance is an assertion, when an appeal, when an explanation" (Cavell 1969, 52)

and so on. To be part of a form of life involves having a robust sense of what particular utterances or gestures mean to others. It involves a rich understanding of the dynamic between language speakers such that what is said and done can be seen as meaningful, or as meaning certain things in certain contexts. To share a form of life, then, is much more than merely inheriting what O'Neill calls a "given grid of intelligible categories" as a result of sharing a certain background with others (as O'Neill thought) (O'Neill 1996, 88). It is the ground on which such categories might be shared or communicable at all.

So, it seems that O'Neill's first concern – that where a form of life isn't shared, there's no possibility for resolving differences or disagreements – assumes a notion of 'forms of life' that appears far more rigid and exclusive than Wittgenstein's (or Cavell's Wittgenstein's) notion of a form of life. For O'Neill, a form of life was just some shared background in virtue of which we were given a set of concepts or categories that itself represented the indisputable ground floor of all dealings between people in a particular community. For Wittgenstein and Cavell, a form of life is not reducible to a shared background, set of experiences, categories and concepts, nor is sharing a form of life simply a matter of sharing it as opposed to not sharing it. It is insofar as we share a form of life that we are able to understand one another. And yet, Wittgenstein gives us no reason to think that becoming initiated into a form of life is a process we complete at which point there is no way to

become familiar with and even initiated into other forms of life. It may be the case that we are constantly involved in adjusting to and becoming familiar with new ways of using language so that the process of initiation is in some ways ongoing.

Where a form of life is utterly unshared, then, there is no disagreement contrary to what O'Neill thought. At best, there is a misunderstanding about what the instruction means, or requires, or what one means by invoking it. Resolving misunderstandings – that is, getting someone to see what one means – will require perhaps a great deal of work, but the possibility is not out of reach. There is no reason to think that we could not appeal to the student who begins behaving differently (or incorrectly) in light of the instruction (i.e. adding four instead of two) much like we would appeal to a child learning to speak – for example, "no, that's not what 'add 2' means, it means *this*"...or, "No, that's not a 'dog', *this* is a dog." That is, there is no reason to think (at least no obvious reason) that we could not learn what, as Cavell explained, someone considered "a rebuke, what forgiveness, of when an utterance is an assertion, when an appeal" and so on (Cavell 1969 52).

O'Neill's second concern – that even where a form of life is shared, if rules and principles don't guide action, it doesn't seem that we could ever determine or decide upon how to respond to a given situation – also suffers from a misunderstanding of what exactly a shared form of life enables or consists in. We need not, for Wittgenstein nor for Cavell's Wittgenstein, dispense with the notion of correctness in going on (or the idea that there is a right way to respond) when following a rule altogether – even if correctness is just a matter of what we in this particular place (according to these customs and practices) do.

At §54 Wittgenstein writes about our ability to recognize correct or incorrect play in a game is much like our ability to recognize that someone was, he writes, "correcting a slip of the tongue" – and we could recognize this even where a language isn't shared. That rules don't determine correct going on for us apart from a history and practice of using and following them need not suggest that just any behavior in response to a rule will be acceptable or correct. The idea of correctness plays an important role in our ordinary, everyday dealings with one another, one that we need not dispense with. We may think that someone has misspoken or gone on wrong, and there is no obvious reason to believe that we are not entitled to think this on Wittgenstein's picture.

Assuming we share a form of life to some extent – that is, understand one another's words – we may want to challenge a practice. This would amount to a genuine disagreement. Cavell admits of this possibility when he writes, "I may take occasion to throw myself back upon my culture, and ask why we do what we do, judge as we judge, how we have arrived at these crossroads. What is the natural ground of our conventions, to what are they in service?" (Cavell 1979, 125). We might think, along with Peter Singer, that what is commonly taken to be an acceptable response to the call to 'be generous' is in fact far less than we are capable of and so not actually a correct response to at all (Singer 1971). This kind of disagreement presupposes a shared form of life insofar as it presupposes that we understand what people take themselves to be doing when responding to an instruction or participating in a practice, but doesn't preclude us from disagreeing about what correctly going on consists in.

Though it is true that the rule-following remarks expose the idea that rules determine behavior for us as illusory,



this need not be thought to indicate that just any way of going on will do. The possibility of going on correctly, disagreeing, challenging practices, and resolving disagreements all remain within our reach.

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# Die Irrealität der Zeit – Argumente und Implikationen

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## Abstract

Im vorliegenden Artikel möchte ich mich der Irrealität der Zeit in drei Schritten annähern und dabei die Bedeutung von Zeit für das Konzept der Freiheit herausstellen. Anfangen werde ich bei den Stoikern, ihrer Haltung zum Konzept der Zeit und einem daraus folgenden Fatalismus. Daran anschließend werde ich anhand McTaggarts "Proof of Unreality of Time" darstellen, dass wenn eine sogenannte A-Reihe oder gegenwartsbezogene Position der Zeit verneint wird, auch keine statische Zeit aufrecht erhalten werden kann. Schlussendlich werde ich mit Verweis auf die Relativitätstheorie die Frage nach der Irrealität der Zeit in einen aktuellen Bezug einbetten und im Ausblick eine mögliche Kritik an den Argumenten andeuten.

## 1. Zeit, Freiheit und Fatalismus

Auf den ersten Blick mag nicht klar sein, wie die Frage nach dem ontologischen Status der Zeit mit der Frage nach der Freiheit des menschlichen Willens verknüpft ist, doch nimmt man zur Minimalvoraussetzung die Möglichkeit sich zwischen zwei Handlungsalternativen zu entscheiden, wird schnell deutlich: Die Existenz von Zeit ist eine notwendige Bedingung für Freiheit. Denn ohne ein 'Vergehen' von Zeit blieben Handlungsalternativen gleichberechtigt und doch nicht realisiert nebeneinander bestehen. Willensfreiheit setzt eine Asymmetrie zwischen Handlung und Handlungsalternativen voraus.

Wie eng die Haltung gegenüber der Zeit mit der Haltung zur Willensfreiheit verknüpft ist, mag schon das Beispiel der Stoiker lehren. Die Stoiker, die glaubten erkannt zu haben, dass die Welt der Wahrnehmung nicht der Realität entspräche, predigten eine "Ataraxie" bzw. Seelenruhe gegenüber der Notwendigkeit der Natur. Diese Verbindung zwischen Stoizismus und Skeptizismus hebt Hegel in seinem Artikel "Verhältnis des Skeptizismus zur Philosophie, Darstellung seiner verschiedenen Modifikationen und Vergleichung des neuesten mit dem alten", wenn er vom Pyrrho erzählt, der seinen Gefährten bei heftigstem Sturm nahelegt, so ruhig zu sein, wie ein im Schiff fressendes Schwein, über das er sagte: "Der Weise müsse in solcher Ataraxie stehen." Damit spricht er dem Skeptizismus die positive Seite der "[...]vollkommenen Gleichgültigkeit gegen die Notwendigkeit der Natur" zu. (Hegel 1802, 111)

Eine wichtige Säule einer derartigen Ataraxie besteht gerade in der Skepsis gegenüber dem Zeitlichen, wie sie sich in den Paradoxien des Zenon widerspiegelt. Dabei sind diese nicht nur in Bezug auf die Vernetzung von Zeit und Freiheit, sondern auch in Bezug auf die Verbindung von Zeit, Raum und Veränderung äußerst lehrreich. Denn obgleich sich zwei seiner drei Paradoxien – das der zur erreichenden Stadt und das des Wettrennens zwischen Achilles und einer Schildkröte – auf die mit der Vorstellung des Raumes als einer dyadischen Vorgänger-Nachfolger-Relation und der Möglichkeit eine unendliche Anzahl von Zwischengliedern einzuführen richten, somit eher auf Schwierigkeiten in Bezug auf den Raum deuten; greifen beide als auch das Paradoxon des sich bewegenden Pfeils – welches anders als die ersten beiden Paradoxien darauf abzielt zu sagen, ob ein Gegenstand in Bewegung ist muss eine gegenwärtige Tatsache sein, und weder die Vergangenheit noch die Zukunft zu der der Gegenstand irgendwo anders war bzw. sein wird betreffen, jeder mögliche Zeitpunkt aber nur einen Gegenstand – der einen seiner Größe entsprechenden Platz einnehme und daraus folgend in Ruhe sei – festhalten kann, folglich Bewegung

eine Illusion sei – über das Konzept der Bewegung Veränderung an und weisen mit dem Hinweis Veränderung existiere nicht, Zeit als illusorisch zurück.

Der mit der Auflösung der Zeit verbundene Gedanke einer Unveränderlichkeit des nur subjektiv Zukünftigen und einer Akzeptanz dieser Notwendigkeit, wie sie von den Stoikern vertreten wird, fußt – und dies möchte ich an dieser Stelle herausheben – nicht auf einem angenommenen Determinismus, sondern auf einem Fatalismus. Der Unterschied ist hierbei, dass der propagierte Fatalismus auf die Annahme gestützt ist, dass die Unterteilung in vergangene und zukünftige Ereignisse eine rein Subjektive sei und das wahre Wesen der Welt ein sich ewig gleiches, qua zeitloses, wäre. Ein Determinismus indes wäre auf die Annahme gestützt, dass die Ereignisse durch ein bestimmtes Prinzip, wie dem der Kausalität, notwendig in einer vorherbestimmten, zumeist vorhersagbaren Reihenfolge geschehen müssten. Insofern hat ein Fatalismus notwendigerweise einen größeren Gegenstand bzw. Ereignisbereich als ein bloßer Determinismus, da er auch aufeinanderfolgende Ereignisse, welche den Naturgesetzen zuwiderlaufen, als notwendige oder im 'göttlichen Ratsschluß' vorgesehene erfassen kann.

Auch die etymologische Herkunft des Fatalismus aus dem Wort 'Fatum', lateinisch für Götterspruch, ist nicht sonderlich überraschend, denn gerade die Vorstellung eines allwissenden göttlichen Wesens scheint es notwendig zu machen, dieses als außerhalb des Flusses der Zeit stehend zu begreifen. Ihm also einen überzeitlichen Standpunkt zu zuweisen, von welchem aus es alle vergangenen gegenwärtigen und zukünftigen Ereignisse auf einen Blick, also zeitlos nebeneinander existierend, wahrnehmen kann. Existiert dieser Standpunkt, so steht fest, dass Fragen nach kontradiktorischen Ereignissen, welche aus unserer beschränkten Sicht mit gleicher Wahrscheinlichkeit eintreten können, bereits jetzt einen definiten Wahrheitswert haben.

Ein exzellentes Beispiel dafür liefert Aristoteles mit seiner Reflektion über zwei Propositionen eine zukünftige Seeschlacht und die Rolle des *Tertium non Datur* betreffend:

'Es wird morgen eine Seeschlacht geben.'  
'Es wird morgen keine Seeschlacht geben.'

Geht man vom *Tertium non datur* aus, so scheint es, dass eine der beiden Aussagen heute schon wahr und die andere Aussage falsch sein müsse. Dies jedoch führt zu dem bereits besprochenen Fatalismus. Aristoteles umgeht einen solchen, indem er argumentiert, dass keine von beiden Aussagen heute schon notwendig wahr sein kann,

denn das *Tertium non datur*, obwohl es für vergangene und gegenwärtige Aussagen sehr wohl gilt, nicht für zukünftige Aussagen gelten kann. Mit dieser Verneinung des *Tertium non datur* wird nun jedoch die göttliche Allwissenheit problematisch, denn wie Richard von Lavenham festhält:

The third opinion, which was Aristotele's opinion, opposes the Christian faith in so far as this opinion presupposes that God does not know more determinately that Antichrist will be than that Antichrist will not be; and that He does not know more determinately that the resurrection of the dead will be than that the resurrection of the dead will not be. (Lavenham [zitiert nach Hasle / Øhrstrøm 1995, 12])

Somit haben wir hier das Dilemma um die Frage nach der Willensfreiheit der Menschen und der Allwissenheit Gottes um die Frage nach der Existenz oder Nichtexistenz einer realen Zeitlichkeit erweitert.

Was reale Zeitlichkeit an dieser Stelle bedeuten soll, muss natürlich erst noch geklärt werden. Ein göttliches Wesen mag auf die Zeitreihe blicken wie auf eine Landkarte und sehen, welche Ereignisse früher und welcher Ereignisse später eintreten. Demnach wäre der immer fortlaufende Fixpunkt, der auf dieser Reihe voranschreitet und den wir das 'Jetzt' nennen, ein rein subjektives Phänomen, welches sich aus unserem Standpunkt ergibt und somit kein Teil der Realität. Eine dyadische Früher-Später-Reihe auf welcher die Gegenstände eine feste Ordnung haben indess wäre Teil der Realität und somit wäre eine gewisse Form der 'Zeitlichkeit' doch mit einem göttlichen Intellekt vereinbar.

Folgt man McTaggarts Argument gegen die Zeit, so ist auch diese Position nicht haltbar.

## 2. McTaggarts "Proof of Unreality of Time"

Während es vor McTaggart schon zahlreiche Bestrebungen gab, zu beweisen, dass Zeit irreal sei, verdient doch McTaggarts Beweis besondere Beachtung, denn wie Arthur Prior festhält:

For in spite of what seems to me the outrageousness of his conclusion, and the fallaciousness of the reasoning which leads up to it, McTaggart presented what might be broadly called the phenomenology of time with singular accuracy, and drew attention to a body of facts about time which we shall be adventing to frequently in what follows. (Prior 1967, 1)

Die Beschäftigung mit McTaggarts Werk fördert viele Ideen über die Stellung der Zeit und über die Implikationen gewisser Zeitmodelle zu Tage. So weist McTaggart auf zwei unterschiedliche Einteilungen der Zeit hin: einer Früher-Später-Relation, die Ereignissen einen fixen Platz zuweist, der sogenannten B-Reihe, und einer A-Reihe, die die Bewegung indexikalischer Zeitausdrücke anhand der Begriffe *Vergangenheit*, *Gegenwart* und *Zukunft* beschreibt. Diese Modi entsprechen den soeben benannten Positionen des außer der Zeit stehenden göttlichen Wesens, sowie der menschlichen indexikalischen, qua gegenwartsfixierten, Position.

McTaggarts Argumentation basiert darauf, dass beide Modi nur zusammen das Wesen der Zeit erfassen können, denn die statische B-Reihe, welche Ereignisse in frühere und spätere ordnet, ist nur dadurch als dyadische Vorgänger-Nachfolger-Reihe von anderen ihrer Art unterscheidbar, dass die sogenannte A-Reihe mit ihrem Fixpunkt, der

Gegenwart, an dieser entlangläuft. Sollte indes die A-Reihe einen Widerspruch enthalten, so kann eine alleinige B-Reihe keine zeitliche Reihe genannt werden, da Zeit nach McTaggart von Veränderung abhängig ist und die Mitglieder einer dyadischen Früher-Später-Reihe ihre Position innerhalb dieser niemals ändern.

Die A-Reihe weist nun nach McTaggart tatsächlich einen Widerspruch auf, den Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft sind inkompatible Bestimmung, aber jeder Gegenstand der A-Reihe weist alle drei Bestimmungen auf. Ein Versuch, die Gegenstandsbereiche für die Vergangenheit, die Gegenwart und die Zukunft zu definieren, bringt diese zum Kollabieren:

But 'has been' is only distinguished from 'is' by being existence in the past and not in the present, and 'will be' is only distinguished from both by being existence in the future. Thus our statement comes to this -- that the event in question is present in the present, future in the past, past in the future. And it is clear that there is a vicious circle if we endeavor to assign the characteristics of present, future and past by the criterion of the characteristics of present, past and future. (McTaggart 1908, 468f)

Somit folgt also aus McTaggarts Argumentation, dass eine A-Reihe notwendig ist um aus einer dyadischen Reihe wie der B-Reihe eine tatsächliche Zeitreihe machen zu können. Diese A-Reihe jedoch ist widerspruchsvoll und somit ist Zeit als Ganzes kein Teil unserer Realität.

## 3. Das Blockuniversum und die Relativitätstheorie

Was übrig bleibt, ist ein sogenanntes Blockuniversum, in dem Zeit einen raumähnlichen Stellenwert erhält. Bei einer solchen Annahme kollabiert die Unterscheidung zwischen Raum und Zeit. Ein ähnlicher Kollaps lässt sich in der Relativitätstheorie beobachten.

Nach der Relativitätstheorie gibt es weder eine objektiven Raum, noch eine objektive Zeit, die für alle Beobachter gleich ist. Objektivität wird indes dadurch bewahrt, dass man Raum und Zeit nicht getrennt voneinander, sondern zusammengefasst als Raum-Zeit betrachtet. Das Raum-Zeit-Modell stellt hierbei das Universum als vierdimensionalen Block dar, welcher sich, abhängig vom jeweiligen Referenzrahmen, in verschiedene kleine Einheiten, die entweder räumlich oder zeitlich voneinander getrennt sind, zerlegen lässt. Damit ist Zeit jedoch keine eigenständige Variable mehr und die Tempora verkommen zu rein subjektiven, bzw. zu vom Referenzrahmen abhängigen Erscheinungen. Ereignisse, die in einem gewählten Referenzrahmen Vergangenheit sind, mögen in einem Anderen in der Zukunft liegen.

Dies bedeutet natürlich, dass es keine tatsächliche Unterscheidung in vergangene und zukünftige Ereignisse geben kann, den es gibt keinen ausgezeichneten Punkt, der für alle Beobachter „Jetzt“ ist und vor allen vergangenen Ereignissen liegt, vielmehr liegen alle Ereignisse gleichermaßen in einem zeitlosen Raum.

Zu einem solchen Schluss gelangt auch Einstein, wenn er in einem Brief an Besso festhält:

There is no irreversibility in the basic laws of physics. You have to accept the idea that subjective time with its emphasis on the now has no objective meaning. (Hasle/Øhrstrøm 1995, 199)

## 4. Ausblick

Wie sich zeigt, ist die Idee, dass Zeit unreal sei, eine sich durch die Jahrhunderte durchziehende Vorstellung, welche mit der Relativitätstheorie einen aktuellen Bezug erhält. Ist dabei, wie ich eingangs angeführt habe, Zeit eine notwendige Bedingung um überhaupt erst über Willensfreiheit sprechen zu können, so fällt das Konzept Zeit nicht alleine, sondern reißt die Willensfreiheit mit sich. Ich glaube jedoch, dass trotz allem höchste Vorsicht geboten ist, bevor man zwei so stark im 'Common Sense' verankerte Vorstellungen als reine Täuschungen abtut. Alle die von mir vorgestellten Konzeptionen beinhalten einen Schritt, den man nicht ohne weiteres teilen muss: Die Annäherung der Zeit an den Raum. So geht zum Beispiel McTaggart von vornherein davon aus, dass eine sogenannte A-Reihe nur dann realisierbar ist, wenn es bereits eine B-Reihe, also eine statische Vorgänger-Nachfolger-Reihe, gibt, welche über festgelegte Glieder verfügt. Dies enthält jedoch schon längst die Idee einer möglichen Perspektive auf die Zeit von außerhalb und löst die Zeit noch vor dem eigentlichen Argument in etwas Zeitloses auf. Die Frage ist vielmehr, ob wir uns nicht eines weiteren Konzeptes der Zeit bedienen müssen, welches sich weniger an dem räumlichen bzw. physikalischen orientiert. In diesem Sinne sei auf eine Bemerkung Wittgensteins aus dem "WWK" verwiesen:

Zeit hat zwei verschiedene Bedeutungen:

- a) Zeit der Erinnerung
- b) Zeit der Physik

Wo verschiedene Verifikationen vorliegen, liegen auch verschiedene Bedeutungen vor. Wenn ich eine zeitliche Angabe – z.B. das und das war früher als das und das – nur durch das Gedächtnis verifizieren kann, muss „Zeit“ eine andere Bedeutung haben als dort, wo ich eine solche Angabe auch durch andere Mittel verifizieren kann. (Waismann 1967, 53)

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# „L’homme qui marche“ – Karl und Ludwig Wittgenstein, Auguste Rodin, Rainer Maria Rilke, Ivan Meštrović

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## Abstract

Der Philosoph Ludwig Wittgenstein war auf dem Gebiet moderne, zeitgenössische Skulptur, Plastik, Bildhauerei sehr gut bewandert. Er war vertraut mit Werken von Künstlern allerersten Ranges – etwa von Auguste Rodin und Ivan Meštrović. Exemplarisch werden herausragende Arbeiten, die sich zum Teil sogar in der Kunstsammlung von Karl Wittgenstein befanden, konkret vorgestellt, so etwa die Skulpturen *L’homme qui marche*, *La Pensée*, *Le Christ et la Madeleine* von Rodin und die Skulpturen *Quelle des Lebens*, *Portrait Mme Wittgenstein* von Meštrović. Diese Skulpturenvertrautheit hatte bei Wittgenstein auch Einfluss auf sein Philosophieren.

## A) Karl und Ludwig Wittgenstein, Auguste Rodin und Rainer Maria Rilke

Am 6. August 1911 schrieb Henri Marcel in einem Brief an Auguste Rodin:

Mein Sekretariat in Rom hat mich darüber informiert, dass Sie den „L’homme qui marche“ auf die Bitte von Herrn Mestrovicz hin für 14.000 FFs an Herrn Wittgenstein in Wien verkauft hatten. Dieser hat übrigens die erste Hälfte des Kaufpreises und außerdem die vom italienischen Ausschuss erhobenen 10% an meinen Hauptsekretär geschickt. Der Verkauf scheint definitiv zu sein. Nun habe ich dann aber in einem Pressebericht gesehen, dass derselbe „L’homme qui marche“ auf Unterschriften von Freunden und Kunstliebhabern hin dem Staat angeboten werden sollte, um das Palais Farnèse zu dekorieren. Ich nehme an, dass es sich hierbei um einen Irrtum handelt, und ich möchte Sie deshalb herzlich bitten, mir zu sagen, was ich davon halten soll. [...] (Beausire 1986, III, 158f)<sup>1</sup>

Und in einem bereits am 16. Juni 1911 verfassten Brief von Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) an Karl Wittgenstein (1847-1913), den Vater von Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), kann man lesen<sup>2</sup>:

Sehr geehrter Herr Wittgenstein,  
Ihr Brief vom 12. Juni 1911 ist ein weiterer Beweis für Ihre aufrichtige Freundschaft. Ich bin gerührt und danke Ihnen von ganzem Herzen, dass Sie daran gedacht haben, den „L’homme qui marche“ zu kaufen und diesen, sollte er für Ihre Wohnungen zu groß sein, der Modernen Galerie in Wien zu geben.  
Es wird mir in unvergesslicher Erinnerung bleiben, dass Sie auf Ihren rechtmäßigen Anspruch auf diese Bronze verzichtet haben und es mir so ermöglicht haben, den „L’homme qui marche“ bald im Farnèse Palast sehen zu können. [...] Ich bin Ihnen, sehr geehrter Herr Wittgenstein, sehr dankbar und verbleibe mit herzlichen Grüßen in tiefer freundschaftlicher Verbundenheit. (Beausir 1986, III, 147)

Wittgenstein der Ältere hatte also den ersten, 1911 entstandenen, Bronze-guss dieser berühmten monumentalen

Skulptur (223.2 x 74.9 x 134.9 cm) von Rodin zuerst gekauft, aber dann wieder zurückgegeben. Er hatte geplant diesen *L’homme qui marche* entweder im Palais Wittgenstein in der damaligen Alleegasse im 4. Wiener Gemeindebezirk aufzustellen oder sie der Modernen Galerie in Wien, seit 1912 dann Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, zukommen zu lassen. Insgesamt 12 Bronze-güsse existieren heutzutage weltweit davon.<sup>3</sup> Der *L’homme qui marche* war und ist eine der bedeutendsten und bekanntesten Skulpturen der Moderne, die nicht nur immensen Einfluss auf die nachfolgende Entwicklung der modernen Plastik hatte, sondern auch Einfluss auf andere Kunst- und Lebensbereiche ausübte und immer noch ausübt. So hat etwa im Jahr 1916 – um nur ein markantes Beispiel anzuführen – der US-amerikanische Dichter und Historiker Carl August Sandburg (1878-1967) das Gedicht *The Walking Man of Rodin* (Sandburg 1992, 14) verfasst:

### THE WALKING MAN OF RODIN

LEGS hold a torso away from the earth.  
And a regular high poem of legs is here.  
Powers of bone and cord raise a belly and lungs  
Out of ooze and over the loam where eyes look and ears hear  
And arms have a chance to hammer and shoot and run motors.  
You make us  
Proud of our legs, old man.

And you left off the head here,  
The skull found always crumbling neighbor of the ankles.

Schon 1913 hatte Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926), der gleich nach der Jahrhundertwende engen Kontakt zu, und persönlichen Austausch mit Rodin hatte, sein Werk *Auguste Rodin* erstmals mit einem umfangreichen Illustrationsteil von 96 Abbildungen im Insel-Verlag veröffentlicht. Mit hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit hatte Ludwig Wittgenstein auch dieses Werk von Rilke gelesen; zumal sich darin unter den enthaltenen Abbildungen eben auch jene Skulptur *L’homme qui marche* befindet, welche sein Vater von Rodin gekauft und wieder zurückgegeben hatte.

<sup>3</sup> Rodin hatte 1907 zunächst den Werktitel *Grand figure d’homme* gewählt, dann aber bleibend der Skulptur den Titel *L’homme qui marche* verliehen. Die Übersetzung des Werktitels ins Deutsche ist unterschiedlich „Marschierender (Mensch/Mann)“, „Schreitender (Mensch/Mann)“, „Gehender (Mensch/Mann)“, „Der Schreitende“, „Der Gehende“. Also: laufen, gehen, schreiten, marschieren und Mann bzw. Mensch. Titelvergaben und Titelübersetzungen können, und dies gilt es insbesondere auch in philosophischer Hinsicht im Auge zu behalten, bedeutenden Einfluss auf das Verständnis eines Kunstwerkes haben.

<sup>1</sup> Für die Übersetzungen von in Französisch geschriebenen Briefen ins Deutsche möchte ich mich bei Helga Bleile herzlich bedanken.

<sup>2</sup> Einen weiteren Brief diesbezüglich schrieb Rodin am 9. August 1911 an Wittgenstein. Siehe auch den Brief vom 5. Mai 1911 von Rodin an Vittorio Pica (Beausir 1986, III, 139f mit Anmerkung 1 und 2).

Wittgenstein der Jüngere lässt Rilke dann ja auch, durch Vermittlung von Ludwig von Ficker im Jahre 1914 einen Spendenbetrag von 20.000 Kronen zukommen. Und Rilke bedankt sich daraufhin mit einer Abschrift „Aus den Elegien“ für Wittgenstein, den „unbekannten Freund“. Wittgenstein trug als Soldat in Galizien diesen Originaltext von Rilke „als Zeichen und Andenken dieser Zuneigung am Herzen“.<sup>4</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein war, nicht nur durch die mögliche Lektüre von Rilkes Publikation, mit dem Œuvre von Auguste Rodin umfassend vertraut. Nicht nur *L'homme qui marche* / *Der Schreitende*, nicht nur *Le Penseur* / *Der Denker*, sondern etwa auch *La Pensée* / *Der Gedanke* und *Le Christ et la Madeleine* / *Christus und Maria Magdalena* war ihm bekannt. Über die eindrucksvolle Marmorskulptur *La Pensée* – ein weiblicher Kopf, ein Gesicht dem Steinblock abgerungen, der Gedanke der Materie entspringend, der Gedanke ans Licht gebracht – bekundet Rilke in seinem Buch *Auguste Rodin* (Rilke 1984, 41 und 82.)

Verwandt damit [mit der Skulptur *L'homme et sa pensée*] ist auch der Kopf, der sich sinnend und still bis zum Kinn aus einem großen Steine löst, der *Gedanke*, dieses Stück Klarheit, Sein und Gesicht, das sich langsam aus dem schweren Schläfe des dumpf Dauernden erhebt.

[...]

Es gibt da wirklich Steine mit eigenem Licht, wie das gesenkte Gesicht auf dem Block im Luxembourg-Museum, *La Pensée*, das, vorgeneigt bis zum Schattigsein, über das weiße Schimmern seines Steines gehalten ist, unter dessen Einfluß die Schatten sich auflösen und in ein durchsichtiges Helldunkel übergehen.

Kennt man eben dieses Kunstwerk von Rodin, kennt man diese Aussagen von Rilke, weiß man, dass eine Abbildung auch dieser Plastik in Rilkes Rodin-Buch vorhanden ist, so kann man gut, ja besser, adäquater insbesondere zwei Bemerkungen von Wittgenstein nachvollziehen. Am 5.9.1930 macht er nämlich in Manuskript MS109,99 folgende Eintragung: „(Nichts ist wichtiger als die falschen Gedanken ganz ans Licht zu ziehen & absolut richtig <getreu & handgreiflich> darzustellen [wiederzugeben]).“ Und am 11.8.1946 notiert er in seinen Manuskriptband MS131,19: „[Der Gedanke, der sich an's Licht arbeitet.]“ Über seinen Freund Francis Skinner bemerkt Wittgenstein 1934 zu Maurice O'Connor Drury: „You know Rodin's statue called *The Thinker*; it struck me the other day that I couldn't imagine Francis in that attitude.“ (Drury 1984, 127)

Hatte Karl Wittgenstein die Skulptur *L'homme qui marche* letztlich doch nicht für seine Sammlung erworben, so kann aber mit Sicherheit nachgewiesen werden, dass er eine von zwei (eine frühere von 1906-1908 und eine spätere von 1908-1909) Marmorfassungen von *Le Christ et la Madeleine* (110 x 81 x 78 cm)<sup>5</sup> für seine Kunstsammlung erworben hatte. Er selbst besuchte nämlich Auguste Rodin 1907 in dessen Atelier. Dort sah und bestaunte er die gerade entstehende erste, frühere Marmorfassung dieses Werkes, die übrigens der Industrielle im Eisen- und Stahlgeschäft in Deutschland August Thyssen in Auftrag gegeben hatte. Daraufhin gab Wittgenstein dann eine zweite,

spätere Marmorfassung in Auftrag, die er im Januar 1909 dann auch nach Wien bekam. Diese Fassung blieb bis 1964 im Besitz der Wittgensteins bzw. der Wittgenstein-Stonboroughs; sie wurde dann in den Niederlanden an eine Privatsammlung verkauft, wo sie bis 2012 blieb; sie wurde schließlich im Jahre 2014 wiederum verkauft und befindet sich nun im Jean Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles. Ludwig Wittgenstein war also von Jugend an von hochkarätiger Kunst im alltäglichen Leben im Palais Wittgenstein umgeben und damit sehr gut vertraut.

## B) Karl und Ludwig Wittgenstein und Ivan Meštrović

Der Künstler Ivan Meštrović (1883-1962), ein Kroat in der damaligen Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie, der 1907-1909 an der Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Wien studierte, hatte, nachdem er Ende April 1911 zusammen mit Karl Wittgenstein in Rom den Französischen Pavillon der Esposizione internazionale d'arte besucht hatte, den Ankauf der dort gezeigten Skulptur *L'homme qui marche* durch Karl Wittgenstein vermittelt<sup>6</sup> und so bewirkt, dass – wie es im eingangs zitierten Brief von Henri Marcel an Auguste Rodin heißt – Rodin dieses Kunstwerk „auf die Bitte von Herrn Mestrovicz hin für 14.000 FFs an Herrn Wittgenstein in Wien verkauft“ hat. Es existiert dazu sogar ein am 17. Mai 1911 auf der Hochreit, dem Sommersitz der Wittgensteins, verfasstes und von dort versendetes Schreiben von Karl Wittgenstein an Ivan Meštrović in welchem er dem Künstler „für die Vermittlung beim Kauf von Rodins Plastik *Gehender Mann* [*L'homme qui marche*]“<sup>7</sup> dankt. Karl Wittgenstein, der Magnat der böhmischen Eisenindustrie, war nicht nur Mäzen der Wiener Secession, sondern auch offenerherziger und großzügiger Förderer junger Künstler – eben auch von Ivan Meštrović. Er gab nicht nur mehrere Werke bei ihm in Auftrag, sondern finanzierte auch dessen Arbeitsaufenthalt in Paris 1908-1909.<sup>8</sup> So stammte beispielsweise das Schlüsselwerk der Wittgensteinschen Kunstsammlung – ein Wandbrunnen mit dem Titel *Quelle des Lebens* (1906) – von Meštrović. Die *Quelle des Lebens* wurde im Sommer 1907 im Atrium des Palais Wittgenstein aufgestellt<sup>9</sup> und im folgenden Jahr dann in der XXX. Ausstellung der Wiener Secession (3.4.-12.7.1908) ausgestellt. (vgl. Dolinschek 1989, 233) Weiterhin gehörte auch das von Meštrović als Auftragsarbeit geschaffene *Portrait Mme Wittgenstein* (1908), von Leopoldine Wittgenstein (1850-1926), der Frau von Karl, in die Kunstsammlung Wittgenstein.<sup>10</sup> Während Meštrović in Paris lebte, wurde im Jahr 1908 im Salon d'Automne Rodin auf diesen Künstler aufmerksam, wurde mit ihm gut bekannt und urteilte alsdann über ihn: „das größte Phänomen unter den zeitgenössischen Künstlern“.<sup>11</sup> Insbesondere Ivan Meštrović war die Verbindung und Brücke zwischen Auguste Rodin und Karl Wittgenstein.<sup>12</sup> Und so

<sup>6</sup> Siehe Briefwechsel zwischen Meštrović und Rodin 5.5., 21.5. und 17.6.1911 im Archiv des Musée Rodin (veröffentlicht in: (Musée Rodin, 2012)).

<sup>7</sup> Vgl. (Kraševac 2004, 142). Dort (143) ist auch die erste Seite dieses Schreibens als Faksimile abgebildet.

<sup>8</sup> Siehe die Briefe Karl Wittgensteins an Ivan Meštrović – 1908/1909 nach Paris und 1911 nach Rom. Vgl. (Kraševac 2004, 135), Anmerkung 11.

<sup>9</sup> Vgl. (Kraševac 2004, 135). Dort findet sich auf 133 eine Abbildung von *Die Quelle des Lebens* im Atrium des Palais Wittgenstein. Große Abbildung in (Nedo 2015, 218, Nr. 268). Seit 1958 ist diese Brunnenplastik in Dnriš in Kroatien aufgestellt.

<sup>10</sup> Diese Plastik befindet sich nun unter dem Titel *Weibliche Halbfigur* in der Österreichischen Galerie Belvedere in Wien. Vgl. (Kraševac 2004, 136, Anmerkung 13 und 145). Weiterführend siehe den Abschnitt „Werke für Karl Wittgenstein“ in (Grabovac 2010, 97-99).

<sup>11</sup> (Kraševac 1970, 5) und (Kraševac 1983, 10); (Grabovac 2010, 33). Siehe hierzu auch den Katalog zur Ausstellung *Ivan Meštrović chez Rodin. L'expression croate* im Musée Rodin in Paris 2012/13.

<sup>12</sup> Die Auswertung der 21 Briefe von Karl Wittgenstein an Rodin im Archiv des Musée Rodin in Paris, der 16 Briefe von Karl Wittgenstein an Meštrović in der Stiftung Ivan Meštrović im Atelier Meštrović in Zagreb und der 3 Briefe zwi-

<sup>4</sup> Wittgenstein an von Ficker am 13.2.1915. Dazu insbesondere Unterkircher, Anton / Methlagl, Walter: Rainer Maria Rilke und Ludwig Wittgenstein: Abschrift „Aus den Elegien“ war das „herrliche Geschenk“ an den „unbekannten Freund“. Dort auch Rilkes „Aus den Elegien“ als Faksimile und in Transkription.

<sup>5</sup> Von *Le Christ et la Madeleine* existieren noch zwei frühere Fassungen. Eine Fassung aus Gips, Holz und Stoff (84,5 x 74 x 44,2 cm) entstand 1894, welche sich heute im Musée Rodin in Paris befindet. Eine weitere Fassung aus Marmor (102 x 77 x 70 cm) entstand 1906-1908, wurde von August Thyssen im Dezember 1905 bestellt, wurde April/Mai 1908 an ihn ausgeliefert und befindet sich heute im Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid.

wurden auch Karls Kinder – darunter auch Ludwig, der eben im Herbst 1911 erstmals nach Cambridge ging um Philosophie zu studieren – nicht nur mit diesen beiden und anderen Künstlern vertraut, sondern auch auf dem Themen- und Kunstgebiet „Skulpturkünstler der Moderne“ ausgesprochen gut bewandert.<sup>13</sup>

Im Jahr 1928, also kurz bevor Wittgenstein wieder nach Cambridge zurückkehrte und wieder intensiv Philosophierte, hatte Stanley Casson (1889-1944) sein Buch *Some Modern Sculptors* geschrieben und publiziert. Im Vorwort heisst es: „I have selected what I take to be some of the most important sculptors and discussed the most interesting tendencies of modern sculpture.“ (Casson 1928, v) Nach einem Kapitel über Rodin, Barye, Maillol, Bourdelle, Bernard, Despiau findet sich ein eigenes Kapitel über Meštrović und Rosandić, gefolgt von einem Kapitel über Gill und Gaudier-Brzeska und ein Kapitel über Epstein. Zwei Besprechungen dieses Werkes waren im März 1929 erschienen – in *Times Literary Supplement* (14. März 1929, 202.) und in *The Architectural Review* (March 1929, 144). Wittgenstein war ja seit Mitte Januar 1929 als Philosoph wieder in Cambridge und es ist sehr gut denkbar, dass er nicht nur das Buch von Casson studiert, sondern insbesondere auch die Rezension in *Times Literary Supplement* zur Kenntnis genommen hat; zumal darin kritisch auch über Ivan Meštrović gehandelt wird.<sup>14</sup>

Das Kapitel über Meštrović und Rosandić in *Some Modern Sculptors* hebt mit eben jenem Jahr an, in welchem Karl Wittgenstein durch Vermittlung von Meštrović Rodins Skulptur *L'homme qui marche* von Rodin erworben hatte und mit Meštrović, der in Rom weilte, Briefkontakt unterhielt, nämlich: „In 1911 the genius of Meštrović first made itself manifest to the world of art. The International Exhibition at Rome in that year showed the work of a mastermind, at once more impressive than the art of Rodin because it was more expressive, simpler even than that of Maillol, and more prolific both in invention and in production than that of either. Here was a prodigy and a wonder in sculpture.“ (Casson 1928, 59) Ivan Meštrović hatte nämlich 1911 – und darauf nimmt Casson konkret Bezug – bei der Esposizione Internazionale di Roma den ersten Preis für Bildhauerei gewonnen. Bei den Wittgensteins in Wien wurde dieser Bildhauer – wie mehrere andere Künstler auch – bereits Jahre zuvor geschätzt und gefördert. Meštrović hatte im Jahr 1910 in der Wiener Secession eine eigene umfassende Ausstellung, bei welcher er 60 Werke präsentierte (vgl. Dolinschek 1989, 160-164 und 232-234.). Und 1915 hatte er sogar im berühmten Victor & Albert Museum in London eine eigene große Werkschau.

schen Meštrović und Rodin in welchen auf Karl Wittgenstein Bezug genommen wird (siehe oben Anm. 6) erbringt interessante, weiterführende Detailinformationen.

<sup>13</sup> Betrachtet man beispielsweise die in der Wiener Secession im ersten Drittel des 20. Jahrhunderts gezeigten Skulpturen und veranschlagt, daß nicht nur Karl Wittgenstein, sondern auch seine Kinder, insbesondere Hermine und Ludwig Wittgenstein, kontinuierlich die Ausstellungen der Secession besuchten, so wird deutlich wie umfassend die Erfahrung mit Plastik/Skulptur/Bildhauerei bei ihnen gewesen ist, wenn etwa Auguste Rodin, Constantin Meunier, George Minne, Medardo Rosso, Ivan Meštrović, Anton Hanak, Michael Drobil dort ihre Arbeiten zeigten. Als Beleg dafür kann folgende Aussage von Hermine Wittgenstein in einem Brief vom 5.11.1920 an Ludwig Wittgenstein exemplarisch angeführt werden: „Ich habe auf den ersten Blick an den Köpfen in der Secession gesehen, dass das Wollen und Können des Drobil darauf geht, die mannigfaltigen kleinen Formen in der Natur aufzusuchen und deutlich zu machen, d.h. zu übertreiben in gewissem Sinne.“ Siehe dazu die Studie *Die Bildhauerwerke in den Ausstellungen der Wiener Secession von 1898-1910* von Ilse Dolinschek und den Beitrag *Les mécènes de la Secession* von Bernard Michel.

<sup>14</sup> Zu prüfen wäre zudem, ob Wittgenstein das 1919 in London erschienene Werk *Ivan Meštrović – A Monograph*, das in *The Burlington Magazine* (Vol. 35, No. 200, November 1919, 224) besprochen und gelobt wurde, bereits gelesen hatte.

Für Ludwig Wittgenstein kann in ganz besonderem Maße gezeigt werden, dass er sich hervorragend nicht nur in den Kunstgebieten „Musik“ und „Architektur“, sondern auch im Gebiet der „Bildenden Kunst“ und ganz speziell im Bereich „Skulptur/Plastik/Bildhauerei“ auskannte. Und es kann weiterführend dargetan werden, dass diese Vertrautheit gerade auch tiefen und nachhaltigen Einfluss auf sein Philosophieren hatte. Am 14.10.1931 macht er folgenden Eintrag in seinen Manuskriptband MS112,24r:

\\ Die Arbeit an der Philosophie ist – wie vielfach die Arbeit in der Architektur – eigentlich mehr die/eine Arbeit an Einem selbst. An der eigenen Auffassung. Daran, wie man die Dinge sieht. (Und was man von ihnen verlangt.)

In dieser Bemerkung kann die Formulierung „wie vielfach die Arbeit in der Architektur“ eins zu eins durch die Formulierung „wie vielfach die Arbeit in der Bildhauerei“ ersetzt werden. Umfassende, detaillierte Forschungsstudien zu diesem Themengebiet sind noch keine vorhanden – ein weites Feld für innovative Recherchen, ein wichtiges Desideratum in der Wittgenstein-Forschung, eine spannende Unternehmung gerade auch für ein möglichst adäquates Verstehen der Tätigkeit des Philosophierens von Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Zuletzt noch eine nichtabschließende, vielleicht anregende Bemerkung: Das Auffinden von Familienähnlichkeiten, das Betrachten von Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschieden beim Skulpturenvergleich – etwa zur Thematik „L'homme qui marche“ z.B. bei Rodin, Archipenko, Lehmbruck, Boccioni, Giacometti, Hepworth, u.a. – ist ganz im Sinne Ludwig Wittgensteins, ist auf der Linie und Höhe Wittgensteinschen Philosophierens.

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# Wittgensteins Schach-Paradigma – oder: Beruht unsere Sprache auf Regeln?

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## Abstract

Wittgenstein entwickelt besonders in der mittleren Phase seines Denkens – etwa von Beginn bis Mitte der 30er Jahre – eine Auffassung der Sprache, die sich sehr eng am Paradigma des Schachspiels orientiert. Der Regelbegriff, bzw. der einer „*philosophischen Grammatik*“, wird zum zentralen Schlüssel seiner Philosophie. Gleichzeitig aber findet sich in Wittgensteins Werk eine deutliche Gegenstimme zu dieser einseitig am Kalkül orientierten Auffassung der Sprache, auf die Stanley Cavell als einer der ersten hingewiesen hat. Danach haben Regeln eine nur marginale Bedeutung für Wittgensteins Sprachphilosophie, im Gegenteil führt uns die Suche nach solchen Regeln häufig in die Irre. Entgegen der oft vertretenen These einer zeitlichen Entwicklung von einer Regel-zentrierten zu einer Regel-kritischen Konzeption der Sprache soll gezeigt werden, dass sich beide Stimmen von Anfang an parallel in Wittgensteins Werk finden, dass sich allerdings die Schwerpunkte bezüglich sprachlicher Regeln in subtiler Weise verschieben.

## 1. Das Schachparadigma

Wir wissen nicht wie gut und wie oft Wittgenstein Schach spielte. Einzig David H. Pinsent erwähnt in seinen Tagebuchaufzeichnungen während ihrer gemeinsamen Islandreise im Sommer 1912, Schachpartien mit Wittgenstein (Pinsent 1994, 58). In den philosophischen Schriften Wittgensteins aber hat das Schachspiel sehr deutliche Spuren hinterlassen. Es wird für sein Denken zu einem zentralen Paradigma für das Verständnis von Sprache. Diese gilt vor allem für die Zeit ab 1930 bis etwa zur Entstehung der „Urfassung“ der Philosophischen Untersuchungen (Ms 142, 1936/37); während es später seine dominierende Bedeutung verliert. Der Beginn dieser intensiven Auseinandersetzung mit dem Schachspiel als Paradigma für die Sprache lässt sich etwa mit Wittgensteins Bemerkung vom 15.1.1930 datieren „*Die Frage ‚Was ist eigentlich ein Wort?‘ ist analog der ‚Was ist eine Schachfigur?‘*“ (Ms 107, 240, gleichlautend in PU §108). Was macht das Paradigma des Schachspiels für Wittgenstein so anziehend? Dafür gibt es zumindest drei überzeugende Argumente.

### - Wörter funktionieren wie Schachfiguren

Wittgensteins Hauptargument ist, dass Schachfiguren und ihr Gebrauch im Spiel eine klare strukturelle Ähnlichkeit zu Wörtern und ihrem Gebrauch aufweisen: „Wörter und Schachfiguren sind einander ähnlich, zu wissen wie ein Wort gebraucht wird, das ist so, wie zu wissen, welche Züge man mit einer Schachfigur ausführen kann.“ (Wittgenstein 1989, 147).

Die Bedeutung einer Schachfigur ist bestimmt durch die Spielregeln, die für diese Figur gelten.

Der Bauer im Schachspiel hat weder eine Bedeutung in dem Sinn, daß er etwas vertritt, daß er Zeichen von etwas ist, noch ist er bloß die aus Holz geschnitzte Figur... Was der Bauer ist wird erst durch die Regeln des Schachspiels bestimmt. ...Die Bedeutung des Bauern ist – wenn man so will – die Gesamtheit der Regeln, die für ihn gelten. (Wittgenstein 1984, 150)

Genau das aber – meint Wittgenstein – gilt auch für die Sprache. Die Frage nach der Bedeutung, ist im Grunde die Frage nach den Verwendungsregeln, für einen Ausdruck.

Deshalb kann Wittgenstein auch sagen: „Das Wesen ist in der Grammatik ausgesprochen“ (PU §371). Denn: „Die

Schachregeln sollen nicht dem Wesen des Schachkönigs entsprechen, denn sie geben ihm dieses Wesen.“ (MS 117, 140)<sup>1</sup>

Eine wichtige Konsequenz daraus ist, dass wir Wörter nicht sinnvoll entgegen oder im Widerspruch zu den allgemeinen, alltäglichen Verwendungsregeln gebrauchen können, weil sie ihre Bedeutung nur durch diese Regeln erhalten.

### - Spielregeln wie grammatische Regeln bedürfen keiner Rechtfertigung

Will ich Schach spielen, so muss ich die Schach-Regeln befolgen – u.z. dieselben, die auch für die anderen Schachspieler gelten; will ich – verständlich – sprechen, so muss ich die grammatischen Regeln unserer Sprache befolgen. Der Schachspieler beschäftigt sich aber weder mit der Frage der Begründung noch der Verbesserung dieses Regelsystems. Auch die Philosophie kann den Sprachgebrauch, die grammatischen Regeln nach Wittgenstein weder rechtfertigen noch verbessern (PU §133). „Grammatik lässt sich nicht rechtfertigen“ (Wittgenstein 1989, 70) „Naturgesetzte kann man rechtfertigen, Regel der Grammatik nicht.“ (Wittgenstein 1989, 131)

Wenn ich Schach spielen will, stehen die Regeln außer Streit. Wenn ich andere Regeln aufstelle, spiele ich nicht länger Schach, sondern erfinde ein anderes Spiel. „Wenn ich die Regeln ändere, ist es ein anderes Spiel, und damit ist der Fall erledigt.“ (Wittgenstein 1989, 41)

### - Bedeutungen sind keine psychischen Akte

Noch eine Parallele drängt sich auf: Welche psychischen Vorgänge im Schachspieler vor sich gehen, während er spielt, ist für die Schachpartie genauso irrelevant, wie die psychischen Akte des Sprechers für die Bedeutung eines Satzes.

Was würden wir denn Einem entgegen, der uns mitteilte bei ihm sei das Verstehen ein innerer Vorgang?  
— Was würden wir ihm entgegen, wenn er sagte, bei ihm sei das Schachspielkönnen ein innerer Vorgang?  
— Daß nichts, was in ihm vorgeht, uns interessiert,

<sup>1</sup> Martin Gustafsson hat kürzlich in einem scharfsinniger Artikel (Gustafsson 2015) den Einwand erhoben, dass diese Analogie an einem entscheidendem Punkt zusammenbricht, auf den hier aber nicht näher eingegangen werden kann.

wenn wir wissen wollen, ob er Schach spielen kann. — (Ms 144, 15)

Entscheidend für eine Schachpartie sind ausschließlich die Züge der Spieler, nicht etwa was in ihrer Psyche während des Spiels vorgehen mag. Und das ist der Grund, warum wir auch ohne weiteres mit einem Computer Schach spielen können. Aber lässt sich die psychologische Dimension – und das heißt ja das Menschliche – aus einer Betrachtung der Sprache wirklich gänzlich ausschließen?

Schachweltmeister Emanuel Lasker, der für seinen psychologischen Zugang zu Spiel bekannt war, wird der Ausspruch zugesprochen: „Dieser Zug wäre gegen Janowski ein schwerer Fehler, gegen Tarrasch ist er stark.“

Wittgenstein leugnet nirgendwo, dass es auch diese psychologische Dimension gibt, sie interessiert ihn aber nicht, er möchte sie als „amorphen“, inexakten Störfaktor ausblenden. Allerdings relativiert er diese radikale Sicht an vielen Stellen bereits sehr früh, z.B.: „Sage ich nicht Etwas symbolisiert darum, weil ich es verstehe? Das ist doch gewiß.“ (Ms 110, Feb. 1931)

Diese vom Schachparadigma bestimmte Auffassung der Sprache als Regelsystem, die besonders im Zeitraum um das Big Typescripts (Ts 213) inklusiver seiner Überarbeitungen im Ms 114/115 und im „Großen Format“ (Ms 140) hervortritt, lässt sich durch folgenden Zitate programmatisch beschreiben:

Die Sprache funktioniert als Sprache nur durch die Regeln, nach denen wir uns in ihrem Gebrauch richten, wie das Spiel nur durch seine Regeln ein Spiel ist. (Ts 213, 196)

Wir interessieren uns für die Sprache, als einen Vorgang nach expliziten Regeln. Denn die philosophischen Probleme sind Mißverständnisse, die durch Klärung der Regeln, nach denen wir die Worte gebrauchen wollen, zu beseitigen sind.“ (Ms 140, 24)

Wir betrachten die Sprache unter dem Gesichtspunkt des Spiels nach festen Regeln. Wir vergleichen sie so mit einem Spiel, messen sie an ihm. (Ms 140, 33)<sup>2</sup>

So wie die Regeln im Schach bestimmen, welcher Zug erlaubt, also möglich ist, bestimmen die Regel der Grammatik welche Sätze möglich = sinnvoll sind – unabhängig von ihrer Wahrheit. Die Philosophie beschäftigt sich demnach nicht mit der Frage nach der Wahrheit von Sätzen, sondern nur mit der Frage nach deren Sinn, – so wie der Schiedsrichter im Schach, der nur die Korrektheit der Züge zu beurteilt hat, nicht ihre Qualität. „Unsinn reden heißt: sich nicht an die Regeln halten.“ (Wittgenstein 1989, 107)

Wittgenstein geht sogar so weit so behaupten: „Und ich betrachte also ‚etwas meinen‘ und ‚einer Regel folgen‘ als gleichbedeutend.“ (Ms 109, 280).

Diese Auffassung entspricht – wie ich meine – weitgehend der Wittgenstein-Interpretation von Newton Garver und Peter Hacker.

## 2. Die Regel-kritische Auffassung der Sprache

Einer der ersten, der diese vom Begriff der Regel dominierte Auffassung der Sprache bei Wittgenstein radikal in

Frage stellte, war Stanley Cavell. Bereits in seinem Aufsatz „The availability of Wittgenstein's later philosophy“ aus 1962, betont Cavell, dass Regeln für Wittgensteins Sprachkonzept nur von sehr geringer Bedeutung sind.<sup>3</sup> Er führt dazu u.a. folgende Stelle aus dem *Blue Book* an:

Denn bedenke, dass wir im allgemeinen die Sprache nicht nach strengen Regeln gebrauchen – man hat sie uns auch nicht nach strengen Regeln gelehrt. ... Nicht nur, daß wir nicht an Regeln des Gebrauchs – an Definitionen etc. – denken, wenn wir die Sprache gebrauchen; in den meisten Fällen sind wir nicht einmal fähig, derartige Regeln anzugeben, wenn wir danach gefragt werden. ...

Warum vergleichen wir dann unseren Gebrauch von Wörtern, wenn wir philosophieren, mit etwas, das sich nach genauen Regeln vollzieht? Die Antwort lautet, daß die Rätsel, die wir aus dem Weg zu räumen versuchen, immer gerade aus dieser Haltung der Sprache gegenüber entspringen.“ (Wittgenstein 1980, 49; 1933/34)

Bereits zur selben Zeit als Wittgenstein das Regel-fokussierte Konzept der Sprache entwickelt, zeigt sich also die Regel-kritische Stimme, auf die Cavell in seinem Aufsatz verweist (Cavell 1962). Demnach liegt in der Analogie zum Schachspiel bzw. einer am Kalkül orientierten Auffassung der Sprache eine Versuchung, die uns irreführt. Indem wir nur eine besondere Verwendungsweise eines Ausdrucks, eine bestimmte Regel im Auge haben, übersehen wir andere und operieren so mit einem einseitigen Bild, das in anderen Kontexten zu Widersprüchen führt. Wir übersehen die Komplexität unseres Sprachgebrauchs nicht.

Die Spannung zwischen diesen beiden Konzepten ist evident und kennzeichnet Wittgensteins gesamtes Werk.

## 3. Zwei Stimmen

Wittgenstein-Interpreten haben häufig versucht, diese Spannung zwischen einem Regel-fokussierten und einem Regel-kritischen Sprachkonzept durch eine zeitliche Abfolge aufzulösen<sup>4</sup>, d.h. durch die These, das „Schachparadigma“ werde später durch das „Sprachspielparadigma“ abgelöst. Dies ist aber eine zu einfache Erklärung und widerspricht auch der simplen Tatsache, dass die angeführten Wittgenstein-Zitate sämtlich aus etwa der gleichen Zeitspanne – Mitte der 30er-Jahre – stammen. Ich möchte dem gegenüber die These vertreten, dass beide Stimmen in Wittgensteins Denken von Beginn an nebeneinander bestehen, dass also die Stimme des Kalküls ihre Bedeutung bis zuletzt behält (vgl. dazu besonders Lugg 2013), dass aber umgekehrt auch die Regel-kritische, psychologische Stimme, die ein „amorphes“, „intransitives“ Verstehen etwa am Beispiel der Musik ins Spiel bringt (PU §527), bereits von Anfang an nachzuweisen ist (vgl. dazu besonders Pichler 2015). Generell lässt sich in Wittgensteins Denkentwicklung aber eine Abschwächung der „Kristallinen“ Kalkül-Konzeption der Sprache erkennen, was sich an drei Punkten beispielhaft demonstrieren lässt.

(i) Es gibt nicht überall Regeln in unserm Sprachgebrauch

<sup>2</sup> Das letztere Zitat drückt bereits eine deutliche Verschiebung des Akzents aus, das Spiel nach Regeln ist hier nur noch Vergleichsobjekt, das sowohl Unterschiede wie Gemeinsamkeiten zu erkennen hilft, vgl. dazu besonders (Kuusela 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Ähnlich etwa auch Oswald Hanfling in seinem Artikel „Does Language need rules?“ aus 1980, wo er lapidar feststellt: „The first thing that may be said against the idea of rules of language is that they are non-existent.“ (Hanfling 1980, 194) Severin Schroeder hat diese Bedenken Wittgensteins gegen ein zu einseitig an Regeln orientiertes Sprachverständnis systematisch aufgelistet (Schroeder 2013, 157f).

<sup>4</sup> So argumentieren etwa Hintikka/Hintikka, David Stern, Hans-Joachim Glock und insbesondere Engelmann (2013).

Wenn Wittgenstein in PU §68 sagt unser Sprachgebrauch „ist nicht überall von Regeln begrenzt“ so impliziert dies, dass er an vielen Stellen sehr wohl durch Regeln begrenzt ist. Wenn es beim Tennis auch keine Regel gibt, wie hoch der Ball bei Service geworfen werden darf, so gibt es doch sehr genaue, andere Regeln, ohne die das Spiel nicht Tennis wäre. Umgekehrt wäre ein Spiel kaum denkbar, dass überall von Regeln begrenzt ist (PU §84).

Stanley Cavell hat dieses Thema unter dem Titel „Wörter erlernen / Wörter projizieren“ ausführlich dargestellt (Cavell 2006, 314 ff.). Unser Sprachgebrauch weist sowohl eine Stabilität, wie auch eine Offenheit/Toleranz auf, d.h. es gibt einerseits sehr wohl Kriterien (Regeln) unter welchen Umständen es richtig ist, ein Wort zu gebrauchen. Gleichzeitig kann ein Wort aber auch auf neue, originelle, metaphorische Weise gebraucht werden, die (noch) durch keine grammatische Regel bestimmt ist. Wenn etwa jemand sagt „Ich füttere die Parkuhr“, so verstehen wir ihn. – D.h. Die Sprache ist offen, für neue Situationen und Anwendungen. Ob es z.B. korrekt ist zu sagen, dass Computer denken, muss von uns erst entschieden werden, hier ist die Grammatik des Wortes ‚denken‘ noch nicht festgelegt.

(ii) Sprachliche (grammatische) Regel liegen nicht explizit vor

Wittgenstein verabschiedet sich ausdrücklich von der Vorstellung, dass wir über explizit vorliegende Sprachliche Regeln verfügen, so wie etwa im Fall des Schachspiels. Dies lässt sich besonders anschaulich in der Überarbeitung des Big Typoskripts zeigen. Den bereits zitierten Satz: „Die Sprache funktioniert als Sprache nur durch die Regeln, nach denen wir uns in ihrem Gebrauch richten, wie das Spiel nur durch seine Regeln ein Spiel ist.“ (TS 213, 196r) kommentiert Wittgenstein später mit der kritischen Anmerkung: „Das ist insofern nicht richtig, als für die Sprache keine Regeln niedergelegt sein müssen, sowenig wie für's Spiel. Aber man kann die Sprache (und das Spiel) vom Standpunkt eines Vorgangs nach Regeln betrachten.“ (TS 213, 196r)

Bereits in den Gesprächen mit dem Wiener Kries vom Jänner 1930 findet sich eine ähnliche Feststellung: „Ich kann die Regel im Gebrauch kennen, ohne sie ausdrücklich formuliert zu haben.“ (Wittgenstein 1984, 78), ja - so könnte man hinzufügen - ohne sie auch nur formulieren zu können.

Damit aber kehrt sich das Verhältnis von Regel und Anwendung offenbar um. Während uns Spielregeln gewöhnlich zuerst erklärt werden und wir dann zu spielen beginnen, scheint es sich bei der Sprache genau umgekehrt zu verhalten: wir haben längst ohne explizite Regeln zu sprechen gelernt und versuchen hinterher, implizit zu Grunde liegenden Regeln zu erkennen. Genau so definiert Wittgenstein an einer Stelle die Aufgabe der Philosophie:

„Die Wilden haben Spiele (oder wir nennen es doch so), für die sie keine geschriebenen Regeln, kein Regelverzeichnis, besitzen. Denken wir uns nun die Tätigkeit eines Forschers die Länder dieser Völker zu bereisen und Regelverzeichnisse für ihre Spiele anzulegen. Das ist das genaue Analogon zu dem, was der Philosoph tut.“ (MS 112, 99r, vom 16 Nov. 1931)

(iii) Das Problem des Regel-Folgens?

Wittgenstein beschäftigt sich bereits ab den frühen 30er Jahren kritisch mit der Frage, was es überhaupt bedeutet, einer Regel - etwa einer grammatischen - zu folgen.

„Heißt ‚den Regeln der Grammatik folgen‘ in irgendeinem Sinn während des Sprechens an diese Regeln

denken? Nein.- Heißt es bestimmten Regeln immer gemäß reden/sprechen? Nein.- Es heißt Regeln folgen.- Aber das tut doch jeder der irgendetwas macht: denn eine Regel wird es schon geben der das entspricht was er tut.“ (MS 109, 280)

Daraus entwickelt sich die für die PU § später grundlegende Problematik des Regel-Folgens (PU §198 ff) bzw. des „Regel-Paradox“ wie es Saul A. Kripke pointiert herausgearbeitet hat (Kripke 2006). Die Analogie des Schachspiels ist dafür aber nur noch wenig hilfreich, denn die Regeln des Schachspiels und ihre Interpretation bilden eine solide gesicherte „Praxis“ im Sinne von PU §202. Dies ist einer der Gründe, warum die Schach-Analogie später an Bedeutung verliert.

#### 4. Resümee

Auch wenn das Schach-Paradigma (und damit die Stimme des Kalküls) für Wittgenstein ab etwa dem MS 142 (1936/37) seine zentrale Bedeutung verliert, distanziert er sich nie ganz davon. Auch noch in der Endfassung der PU § finden sich entsprechende Passagen (u.a. PU §108, 136, 197). Doch wird die Regel-fokussierte Auffassung der Sprache in zumindest drei wichtigen Punkten modifiziert (wie ausgeführt). Die sich so ergebende Synthese beschreibt Wittgenstein an einer Stelle im Big Typescript sehr treffend folgendermaßen:

„Ich mache mich doch anheischig, das Regelsystem unserer Sprache aufzustellen. Was soll ich nun in einem Fall wie des Begriffs der ‚Pflanze‘ tun? Soll ich sagen, daß für diesen und diesen Fall keine Regel aufgestellt ist? Gewiß, wenn es sich so verhält. Soll ich also sagen, es gibt kein Regelverzeichnis unsere Sprache und das ganze Unternehmen eins aufzustellen ist Unsinn? – Aber es ist ja klar, daß es nicht Unsinn ist, denn wir stellen ja mit Erfolg Regeln auf, und wir müssen uns nur enthalten Dogmen aufzustellen.“ (TS 213, 250)  
Wir können sagen: untersuchen wir die Sprache auf ihre Regeln hin. Hat sie dort und da keine, so ist d a s das Resultat unsere Untersuchung.“ (TS 213, 254)

Wittgenstein zeigt auch immer wieder wie solche implizite Regeln aussehen, die uns helfen, bestimmte sprachliche Verwirrungen zu beseitigen, wie etwa an dieser Stelle: „Es ist richtig zu sagen: ‚Ich weiß, was du denkst.‘, und falsch: ‚Ich weiß, was ich denke.‘ (Eine ganze Wolke von Philosophie kondensiert zu einem Tröpfchen Sprachlehre“ (MS 144. 94, gleichlautend in PU §II, XI, 356, auch PU §246)

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# Wittgensteins Antirelativismus in *Über Gewissheit*

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## Abstract

Die Frage danach, ob Wittgenstein in *Über Gewissheit* einen Relativismus vertritt, ist so allgemein formuliert nicht zu beantworten. Daher werde ich Licht in die Debatte werfen, indem ich zwei Varianten des Relativismus behandle. Nachdem ich den Zusammenhang zwischen Mooreschen Gewissheiten, unserer Erziehung und der Bedeutung unserer Worte skizziert habe, zeige ich auf Grundlage dieser Einsichten, dass sich Wittgenstein deutlich von den folgenden beiden Positionen distanziert: (1) In verschiedenen Systemen gilt Unterschiedliches als Wissen, Wahrheit und Rechtfertigung; sowie (2) verschiedene Weltbilder sind gleichermaßen korrekt.

## 1. Einleitung

Mit seinen Unterscheidungen zwischen verschiedenen Spielarten des Relativismus macht Martin Kusch deutlich, dass es eine einfache ja-/nein-Antwort darauf, ob sich Wittgenstein in *Über Gewissheit* zum Relativismus bekennt, nicht gibt (vgl. Kusch 2013, 38-41). Vielmehr gilt es zu klären, welche Formen des Relativismus durch Wittgensteins Überlegungen dort nahegelegt werden und welche Stellung er ihnen gegenüber einnimmt – falls er überhaupt eine klare Stellung einnimmt. Ich werde im Folgenden dafür argumentieren, dass sich Wittgenstein durch seine Überlegungen bezüglich des Zusammenhangs Moorescher Gewissheiten („Hier ist eine Hand“) mit unserer Erziehung und der Bedeutung unserer Wörter von zwei Formen des Relativismus deutlich distanziert.

## 2. Gewissheiten, Erziehung und Bedeutung

Offenbar gibt es nach Wittgenstein nur eine Erklärung, aber keinen guten Grund, warum wir Gewissheiten als solche anerkennen:

Aber mein Weltbild habe ich nicht, weil ich mich von seiner Richtigkeit überzeugt habe; auch nicht, weil ich von seiner Richtigkeit überzeugt bin. Sondern es ist der überkommene Hintergrund, auf welchem ich zwischen wahr und falsch unterscheide. (§94)

Das „überkommen“ ist hier als „überliefert“ zu lesen. Gewissheiten „glauben wir auf Grund dessen, was wir lernen“ (§171). Eine (Mutter)Sprache konnten wir nur erlernen, indem wir in viele der Äußerungen derer vertrauen, die uns die Sprache beibrachten: „Das Kind lernt, indem es dem Erwachsenen glaubt. Der Zweifel kommt *nach* dem Glauben“ (§160, vgl. auch §139-144, 159-161, 165, 170, 283). Wir haben beim Erlernen einer Sprache ein kohärentes System an Überzeugungen erworben, von denen einige besonders hartnäckig sitzen (vgl. §102, 105, 136f, 141f, 144, 185). „Was feststeht“, heißt es in §144, „tut dies nicht, weil es an sich offenbar oder einleuchtend ist, sondern es wird von dem, was darum herumliegt, festgehalten“. Ein Zweifel an einer Gewissheit zieht Zweifel an vielen anderen Gewissheiten nach sich: „Wenn ich an der Existenz der Erde lang vor meiner Geburt zweifeln wollte, müßte ich alles mögliche bezweifeln, was mir feststeht“ (§234). Wittgenstein liefert damit eine *Erklärung*, warum wir bestimmte Dinge als unumstößlich gewiss anerkennen: Wir konnten unsere Sprache nur erlernen, indem wir manches als gewiss voraussetzten; und die so erworbenen Überzeugungen bilden ein kohärentes System, in dem das Aufgeben

bestimmter Überzeugungen (Gewissheiten) radikale Änderungen nach sich ziehen würde.

Unser Anerkennen der Gewissheiten ist bedeutungskonstitutiv. Wie Wittgenstein in §96-99 metaphorisch beschreibt, nehmen Gewissheiten eine Stellung zwischen Regel und Erfahrungssatz ein. Einerseits erhalten wir aus der Erfahrung stets Bekräftigung unserer Gewissheiten. Andererseits können wir kaum genau sagen, warum wir nun eigentlich glauben, dass wir Hände haben, dass wir soundso heißen, etc. Noch können wir diese Sätze als Hypothesen oder gar als Ergebnis einer Untersuchung auffassen (vgl. §138). Als *Regeln* geben sie den Verlauf des Flusses unserer Gedanken und Überzeugungen vor. „Ich will sagen: Sätze von der Form der Erfahrungssätze und nicht nur Sätze der Logik gehören zum Fundament alles Operierens mit Gedanken (mit der Sprache)“ (§401). Die Gewissheiten zu bezweifeln ist unmöglich, da sie „bezweifeln“ nach sich zöge, dass wir etwas anderes mit ihnen machen, als sie zu bezweifeln (genauso unmöglich ist es aber auch zu behaupten, man wisse sie, vgl. §6, 10). Wir spielten nicht länger ein Sprachspiel mit einem „Zweifel“, „Wissen“ und „Gründegeben“. Aufgrund des besonderen Status der Gewissheiten gibt es keinen möglichen Zug in unseren Sprachspielen, der darin bestünde, sie zu bezweifeln. Sie legen infolgedessen fest, welche Züge legitim sind. Insofern sind sie nicht nur Erfahrungssätze, sondern auch *Regeln*: „Wir verwenden Urteile als Prinzip(ien) des Urteilens“ (§124). Unsere Initiierung in ein Überzeugungssystem (*Weltbild*) beim Spracherwerb ist damit nicht von unserem Erwerb begrifflicher Kompetenz zu trennen.

Hätten wir ein grundlegend anderes System an Überzeugungen, so würden wir andere Dinge mit unseren Worten meinen. Nach Wittgenstein kann sich ändern, was wir als gewiss anerkennen: „Die Mythologie kann wieder in Fluß geraten, das Flußbett der Gedanken sich verschieben“ (§97, vgl. auch §63-65, 96). Ist es in irgendeinem Sinne *willkürlich*, dass wir gerade dieses Überzeugungssystem erworben haben und nicht ein anderes? Dies führt zur Frage nach einem Relativismus bei Wittgenstein in *Über Gewissheit*.

## 3. Zwei Formen des Relativismus

Wenn wir nur vor dem Hintergrund unseres offenbar ungerechtfertigten Weltbildes „zwischen wahr und falsch unterscheiden“ können (vgl. §94), ist Wissen dann relativ zu einem System – beispielsweise unserem Weltbild oder Sprachspiel? Gibt es dann nur Wissen relativ zum System A und Wissen relativ zum System B, aber nicht einfach *Wissen*? Und weiter: Ist es nicht willkürlich, ob wir dieses

oder jenes System haben? Sind nicht vollkommen unterschiedliche Systeme gleichermaßen korrekt? Der Relativist bejaht mindestens einen dieser beiden Fragenkomplexe. Sie werden im Folgenden behandelt, um zu entscheiden, inwiefern Wittgenstein eine Form des Relativismus vertritt. Ich werde zeigen, dass sich Wittgenstein deutlich von beiden Varianten distanziert. Paul Boghossian konstruiert analoge Positionen bezüglich Rechtfertigung (vgl. Boghossian 2006, 73) und zitiert Stellen aus *Über Gewissheit* zur Diskussion dieser Positionen (vgl. Boghossian 2006, 70, 78, 80) – zu Unrecht, wie nun deutlich werden wird.

#### 4. Zum Wissensrelativismus

Die Relativität von Wissen zu einem System scheint sich daraus zu ergeben, dass Gewissheiten als Regeln fungieren. Schließlich legen die Gewissheiten fest, was in unseren Sprachspielen als Wissen gilt und was nicht:

Was als ausreichende Prüfung einer Aussage gilt, – gehört zur Logik. Es gehört zur Beschreibung des Sprachspiels.

Die *Wahrheit* gewisser Erfahrungssätze gehört zu unserem Bezugssystem. (§82f)

In §81 scheint Wittgenstein einen Relativismus *bezüglich Rechtfertigung*, in §82 *bezüglich Wahrheit* zu vertreten. Auf einen Relativismus *bezüglich Wissen* legt sich folglich fest, wer einen Wahrheitsrelativismus anerkennt und meint, dass eine Person S nur dann weiß, dass p, wenn p wahr ist; oder wer einen Rechtfertigungsrelativismus anerkennt und meint, dass eine Person S nur dann weiß, dass p, wenn sie gerechtfertigt ist, p zu glauben – also in der Lage ist, gute Gründe für die Wahrheit von p anzuführen. Als Systeme werde ich im Folgenden Sprachspiele betrachten, die auf unterschiedlichen Weltbildern – also unterschiedlichen Systemen von Gewissheiten – beruhen. Gilt in solch radikal verschiedenen Sprachspielen Unterschiedliches als „Wissen“, „Wahrheit“ oder „Rechtfertigung“?

Rudolf Haller beschreibt eine Form von Wahrheitsrelativismus als Inkommensurabilität verschiedener Systeme:

The upshot of the incommensurability thesis is – among other things – that he or she who "moves" within one conceptual system will not be able to understand what is meant in the other. In order to find a way to bridge the gulf between two incommensurable systems, be they theories or languages, one would require the complete switch of the systems one has learned by entering, that is, learning the other from scratch.

To the extent that truth is taken as a topic of these views, it certainly remains a predicate relative to the system, and has no meaning outside a theory or paradigm [or language-game, Anm. d. Verf.]. (Haller 1995, 224)

Dies lässt sich auf Wissen und Rechtfertigung übertragen. Wissen ist *Wissen relativ zu System S*, Rechtfertigung ist *Rechtfertigung relativ zu System S*. Dass ein Satz wahr ist, hieße immer, dass er wahr ist *relativ zum Sprachspiel S*, aber womöglich nicht wahr *relativ zum Sprachspiel S\**. Die Frage, ob der Satz wahr ist, ließe sich nicht ohne Bezug auf ein Sprachspiel beantworten. *Absolute Wahrheit* – Wahrheit ohne Bezug auf ein Sprachspiel – gäbe es nicht. Haller scheint Wittgenstein letztlich als Wahrheitsrelativisten zu interpretieren (vgl. ebd. 230).

Wir müssen uns hier jedoch auf Wittgensteins Bedeutungslehre besinnen. Daraus, dass Gewissheiten als Regeln fungieren und festlegen, welche Züge in unserem

Sprachspiel legitim sind, kann nicht gefolgert werden, dass es Wahrheit nur relativ zu einem Sprachspiel gibt. Vielmehr sollte man sich noch einmal klar machen, wie die Abhängigkeit der Bedeutung unserer Worte von einem Sprachspiel nach Wittgenstein zu verstehen ist: „Wenn sich die Sprachspiele ändern, ändern sich die Begriffe, und mit den Begriffen die Bedeutungen der Wörter“ (§65). Äußert jemand (in einer unpassenden Situation ähnlich der Moores), dass es zweifelhaft ist, ob sich hier eine Hand befindet, lässt diese Person keinen im gewöhnlichen Sprachspiel legitimen Zug zu, um sich davon zu überzeugen, dass sich hier eine Hand befindet (z.B. näheres Hinschauen, vgl. §3). Insofern sie mit ihrem Satz „Es ist zweifelhaft, ob sich hier eine Hand befindet“ überhaupt etwas meint, meint sie daher nach Wittgenstein sicher etwas *anderes* als wir. Es ist nicht so, dass sie relativ zu unserem Sprachspiel S nicht zweifelt, aber relativ zum skeptischen Sprachspiel S\* zweifelt – sie *zweifelt nicht*. Denn ein Zweifel in einem anderen Sprachspiel als den gewöhnlichen ist *kein Zweifel*, sondern höchstens ein Zweifel\*.

Doch genauso wenig gibt es außerhalb unseres gewöhnlichen Sprachspiels eine Wahrheit, wie es dort einen Zweifel gibt. Es gibt keine Wahrheit relativ zu Sprachspiel S und eine andere relativ zu Sprachspiel S\*. Vielmehr ist eine Wahrheit außerhalb von S eben *keine Wahrheit*: „Denn rede ich hier [bei Gewissheiten] von einem möglichen Irrtum, so ändert das die Rolle, die „Irrtum“ und „Wahrheit“ in unserem Leben spielen“ (§138). Dies lässt sich analog auf Rechtfertigung übertragen: Wer bestimmte Tatsachen unter bestimmten Umständen nicht als gute Gründe dafür anerkennt, etwas zu glauben, der schließt sich aus unseren Sprachspielen aus: Er meint mit „Rechtfertigung“ höchstens Rechtfertigung\*. Sein Sprachspiel gehorcht keinen anderen Regeln der Rechtfertigung. Was Rechtfertigung ist, wird vielmehr durch die Regeln *unseres* Sprachspieles des Grundegebens festgelegt.

Sieht jemand die Tatsache, dass das Fenster offen steht, als Grund dafür zu glauben, dass es gesund ist, Kirschen zu essen, so macht diese Person keinen legitimen Zug in einem unserer Sprachspiele. *Falls* sie überhaupt ein Sprachspiel spielt, so können wir nicht mitspielen, weil wir es nicht verstehen. Es gibt kein Wissen, keine Wahrheit und keine Rechtfertigung außerhalb eines Sprachspieles. Aber es gibt eben nicht einmal Wissen außerhalb *unserer* Sprachspiele und insofern auch keinen Standpunkt außerhalb *unseres* Sprachspieles. Entgegen einer Behauptung Michael Kober (vgl. Kober 1996, 433f), wissen wir nach Wittgenstein daher durchaus, dass es keine Wahrheit außerhalb unserer Sprachspiele gibt. Und innerhalb unserer Sprachspiele handelt es sich um *Wahrheit* und nicht um *Wahrheit relativ zu S*. Was „Wahrheit“ bedeutet, ergibt sich aus den Regeln unserer Sprachspiele, in denen wir das Wort verwenden.

So gesehen verschwindet der Eindruck, Wittgenstein sei Wissensrelativist. Weder gibt es Wahrheit, noch Rechtfertigung nur relativ zu einem Sprachspiel. Vielmehr gibt es einfach Wahrheit und Rechtfertigung – und zwar *nur in unseren gewöhnlichen Sprachspielen*. So ist es zu verstehen, wenn Wittgenstein meint, dass es zur Logik des Sprachspieles gehört, was als ausreichende Prüfung einer Aussage gilt (vgl. §82). Unser Sprachspiel *legt fest*, was Rechtfertigung bedeutet. Aber es gibt außerhalb des Sprachspieles keine Rechtfertigung. Dass die Wahrheit gewisser Erfahrungssätze zu unserem Bezugssystem gehört (vgl. §83), heißt demnach einfach, dass diese Sätze – die Gewissheiten – festlegen, welchen Regeln unser Sprachspiel gehorcht und damit, welche Bedeutung unsere Wörter haben. Aus keiner dieser beiden Thesen lässt sich ein Wissensrelativismus schließen.

## 5. Zur Willkür unseres Weltbildes

Ist es aber nicht nach wie vor willkürlich von uns, einfach an den Gewissheiten festzuhalten, die wir beim Erlernen unserer Muttersprache anerkannt haben? Wieso reden wir von gewöhnlichem Wissen, gewöhnlichem Zweifel etc., wenn wir durch das Anerkennen eines anderen Weltbildes auch von Wissen\* und Zweifel\* reden könnten? Sind nicht vollkommen unterschiedliche Systeme gleichermaßen korrekt? Einige Paragraphen provozieren eine bejahende Antwort. So stellt sich Wittgenstein in §92 einen König vor, der mit der Überzeugung aufgewachsen ist, dass mit seiner Geburt die Welt begonnen hat:

Und wenn nun Moore und dieser König zusammenkämen und diskutierten, könnte Moore wirklich seinen Glauben als den richtigen erweisen? Ich sage nicht, daß Moore den König nicht zu seiner Anschauung bekehren könnte, aber es wäre eine Bekehrung besonderer Art: der König würde dazu gebracht, die Welt anders zu betrachten. (§92)

Den König vom Gegenteil zu überzeugen „geschähe durch eine Art *Überredung*“ (§262). An anderer Stelle betont Wittgenstein, dass sich verschiedene Sprachspiele nur *bekämpfen* können (vgl. §609) und dass das Gründegeben ein Ende hat, an dem man jemanden nur noch überreden kann (vgl. §612). „Wo sich wirklich zwei Prinzipien treffen, die sich nicht miteinander aussöhnen können, da erklärt jeder den Andern für einen Narren und einen Ketzer“ (§611). Wider den ersten Anschein verweisen jedoch auch diese Zitate auf keinen wirklichen Relativismus, sondern auf eine Art *Antifundamentalismus*: Gewissheiten sind nicht gerechtfertigt (so auch Coliva 2010, 190, 201–203).

Gründegeben hat ein Ende (vgl. z.B. §248, 253). Gewissheiten von Sprachspielen, die von anderen Gewissheiten ausgehen als unsere, sind genauso wenig gerechtfertigt wie unsere Gewissheiten. Dennoch ist es für beide Sprachspiele nicht willkürlich, diese Gewissheiten anzuerkennen: Viele Gewissheiten mussten wir anerkennen, um überhaupt eine Sprache erlernen zu können, und aufgrund der Kohärenz unseres Überzeugungssystems können wir sie nicht ohne weiteres aufgeben. *Die Gewissheiten* sind daher weder gerechtfertigt noch ungerechtfertigt. Das heißt jedoch nicht, dass *wir* nicht gerechtfertigt sind, die Gewissheiten als solche anzuerkennen. Unter gewöhnlichen Umständen *können* wir nicht anders: „[I]ch *muß* irgendwo mit dem Nichtzweifeln anfangen; und das ist nicht, sozusagen, vorschnell aber verzeihlich, sondern es gehört zum Urteilen“ (§150, meine Hervorhebung). *Wir* sind daher berechtigt, an Gewissheiten festzuhalten (so auch Williams 2004, 256). Von unserem epistemischen Standpunkt aus ist nicht zu sehen, wieso wir ein anderes Weltbild akzeptie-

ren und damit Sprachspiele spielen sollten, die auf diesem beruhen. Für uns – also ausgehend von unserer tatsächlichen epistemischen Situation – ist es nicht möglich, unsere Gewissheiten ohne weiteres aufzugeben. Wittgenstein möchte die Unbegründetheit unseres eigenen Weltbildes hervorheben und zugleich aber betonen, dass das Weltbild das einzige ist, welches wir momentan haben, und daher als Startpunkt jedes Versuches einer Revision gelten muss (vgl. Coliva 2010, 202).

## 6. Fazit

Wer Wittgenstein in *Über Gewissheit* einen Wissensrelativismus unterstellen möchte, sollte einen genaueren Blick auf dessen Bedeutungslehre werfen. Es gibt kein Wissen außerhalb unserer Sprachspiele. Unsere Gewissheiten sind zwar nicht gerechtfertigt, aber auch nicht ungerechtfertigt. Nur insofern sind zwei verschiedene Weltbilder im selben Sinne *korrekt*. Es gibt keine Rechtfertigung für die Gewissheiten, die die Weltbilder konstituieren. Versteht man unter „Korrektheit“ die Eigenschaft eines Weltbildes, ohne weiteres von uns akzeptiert werden zu können, so hat nur *unser* Weltbild diese Eigenschaft für uns. Ein korrektes Weltbild, das auf anderen Gewissheiten basiert, gibt es in diesem Sinne für uns nicht. Unser Weltbild ist nicht willkürlich. Es gibt eine Erklärung, warum wir es haben und nicht einfach so aufgeben können.

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# Moral Relativism and the Idea of Morality

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## Abstract

This paper explores two strategies for developing a “benign” moral relativism, which allows that there is no single true morality but nevertheless acknowledges substantial constraints on what can count as an adequate moral system. It defends one strategy deployed by Foot, draws parallels between her argument and Wittgenstein on grammar, and concludes with a critical discussion.

Moral Relativism often provokes considerable ire. Examining its defenders, it is easy to see why. For example, Gilbert Harman argues that his relativism implies that even contented mass murders have no reason to accept any principle forbidding killing (1975, 7). Such claims naturally prompt rebuke. It seems that, on Harman’s view, relativism amounts to the claim that *anything* is permitted, given the right circumstances. What seems problematic about Harman’s relativism is not only the unblinkingness with which it permits atrocity, but also its cavalier use of the term “moral”. It offends against morality twice: once at the level of content, and second, against the concept itself.

Perhaps, however, the idea that there is some substance to morality as such, such that not just anything goes contains the seeds of a more comforting thought in the relativists’ favor. For, if the idea of morality is *already* one that comes saddled with content such that not just any system of norms which a person or a group of persons takes seriously counts as moral, then there may be a kind of moral relativism which rules out much of what might prompt one to balk at the prospect while preserving what makes relativism seem attractive – its tolerance, for example.

This paper explores the prospect of constructing a “benign relativism,” which holds that “the requirements of morality vary but are not for that reason to be taken less seriously” (Scanlon 1995, 188). The relativism at issue here attempts to preserve the thought that there are substantial constraints on what counts as a morality. It develops this view by drawing on the work of David Wong and Philippa Foot, who develop the argument above in different ways. My aim is not to defend relativism – I remain agnostic—but rather to gain clarity about the limits of the concept of morality, and what those limits imply for the debate between relativists and universalists.

## 1. Relativism

Moral relativism, for purposes of this paper, is the view that moral appraisals must be understood not as judgments about what is right or wrong absolutely, but about what is right or wrong relative to the particular standards that are made relevant by the context of the action in question, or by the context of the judgment itself. A characterization along these lines is found in the work of T.M. Scanlon (1995). For Scanlon, any relativist account must meet two conditions. First, it must meet what Scanlon calls Condition R; that is, it must maintain that “the cardinal virtue for [some class of moral] judgments...cannot be assigned absolutely, but only relative to certain conditions or parameters” (Scanlon 1995, 184). Second, it must rule out what Scanlon terms “parametric universalism.” This is the view that “there is a single standard of validity for moral princi-

ples but which leave open the possibility that what valid moral principles allow and require can vary, depending on certain variable conditions” (Scanlon 1995, 186). On this characterization, acknowledging that moral norms can vary relative to circumstances, local customs, or expectations is compatible with both moral relativism and its opposite, moral universalism. The debate between relativism and universalism concerns whether there exists some single set of norms that is *not* relative in the way described by Condition R.

So defined, moral relativism is commonly met with several objections. One objection is that relativism permits too much. If moral systems are allowed to vary in such a way that any coherent set of parameters can serve as the background for assessment of moral claims, then *anything* is potentially permitted. Harman, as mentioned above, defends a version of relativism (about ‘ought to do’ statements) that has this implication. On his view, morality “arises when a group of people reach an implicit agreement...about their relations with one another,” and as such moral judgments only make sense “in relation to one or another such agreement” (Harman 1975, 3). Since there are no limits on which agreements groups could reach, anything is permitted, given the right background agreement.

Many philosophers recoil in the other direction, taking recourse in universalism. But universalism, too, can seem unsatisfying. It has problems accounting for certain moral disagreements that seem intractable. If individuals across cultures, or within pluralist cultures, disagree about important moral norms, universalism seems committed to the claim that one must be wrong, and the other right. Universalism can thus seem too intolerant or inflexible to account for the complexities of moral life (Wong 2006).

## 2. Constraints

In such a predicament, it is natural to search for an alternative which can preserve what is attractive about relativism, without thereby permitting too much. Consider David Wong’s “pluralistic relativism.” Wong argues that although there is no one true morality, there are nevertheless substantial limits on what counts as an ‘adequate moral system’ (Wong 2006, xv). Wong’s position is motivated by a particular kind of naturalism, which views morality as a social construction, arising out of the functional need to promote beneficial social cooperation. He explains moral evaluation “in terms of standards and reasons as these relate to [natural] human needs, desires, and purposes” (Wong 2006, 36). These aspects of human nature supply “constraints on what could be a true morality” (Wong 2006, 45), which are substantive –enough to rule out patently



immoral behavior—but variable – responsive to the differing needs of different cultures and communities.

Despite my sympathy with Wong's conclusion, the way in which Wong grounds moral constraints seems problematic. His argument depends upon two controversial theses: one about the function of morality; and another about human nature. However, since reasonable people disagree about the nature of morality (Scanlon 1995, 199) and human nature, both views are contestable. Wong's constraints thus seem to come in at the wrong level – they are external in nature.

Philippa Foot's work provides an alternative. Foot argues that not everything that one might want to call a moral code can be properly so described. She begins by drawing an analogy with a factual judgment:

If I say 'I am sitting on a pile of hay' and bring as evidence the fact that the object I am sitting on has four wooden legs and a hard wooden back, I shall hardly be described as thinking, even mistakenly, that I am sitting on a pile of hay; all I am doing is to use the words 'pile of hay' (Foot 2002b, 103).

To be accurately described as using a certain concept, rather than just certain words, one must think certain determinate things. The same holds for "thick" evaluative concepts. Take the concept rude. Someone can truly be said to think a bit of behavior rude if one thinks that the behavior indicates lack of respect. It makes no sense to doubt that a behavior which causes such offense is rude because rudeness *just is* the kind of thing we call actions to which certain descriptions apply. If one leaves behind the usual criteria of rudeness, one also "leaves behind the concept [of rudeness] itself" (Foot 2002b, 103). When calling something rude, one must use the same criteria as anyone else, or one cannot be truly described as thinking, even mistakenly, that something is rude.

Now many suppose that morality is a matter of sentiment, and that any belief one holds a certain attitude towards counts as a moral belief. Foot finds this dubious. It implies, for example, that a rule recognized as "completely pointless" could count as a moral one, or that someone could deny that the fact that torture harms a person is morally significant. A person who believes such things could not adequately be described as having a *moral* belief at all, "anyone who uses moral terms at all...must abide by the rules for their use" (Foot 2002b, 105). Moral concepts lose their meaning when divorced from such criteria. For example, "I do not know what could be meant by saying it was someone's duty to do something unless there was an attempt to show why it mattered if this sort of thing was not to be done" (Foot 2002b, 105). If we are to count as talking about the same subject matter, or employing the same concepts, we are not totally free to make up our minds about what counts as a moral statement.

There are restrictions, then, which are internal to the idea of morality, and are of two kinds. First, Foot thinks certain concepts such as harm, advantage, benefit, importance are systematically related to moral concepts such as rightness, obligation, goodness, duty and virtue in determinate ways (Foot 2002b, 106). Second, it is implausible to think that "if we describe a man as being for or against certain actions, bringing them under universal rules, adopting these rules for himself, and thinking himself bound to urge them on others, we shall be able to identify him as holding moral principles, whatever the content of the principle at which he stops" (Foot 2002b, 107).

Foot uses this point to elaborate a variant of relativism. There are "definitional criteria" for what counts as a moral claim. This "may lead us to cut down the number of judgements that we would count as certainly relativistic" (2002a, 22). However, within these parameters, the content of morality is underdetermined by these starting points. There are things about which different sets of standards may differ while still being properly described as moral. Foot elaborates her picture as follows:

Even if there actually are definitional criteria of moral[ity]...it does not follow that we can settle all moral questions in this way. There could be both fixed starting-points and an element of 'play' in the system, allowing different and irreconcilable points of view about certain things...[T]his is probably the actual position, and that the concept of morality while it fixes a great deal also leaves quite a lot open. (Foot 2002a, 7)

While anything that counts as morality must rule out, say, gratuitous murder, some issues – such as which norms a society should adopt for governing biomedical research – remain open. Different societies could thus construct different judgments, which are true in virtue of different sets of "contingent principles" or standards that the society adopts. Such principles might conflict in the practical sense that one could not simultaneously act in accordance with both sets of principles; hence, Foot's relativism.

This way of grounding constraints offers a response to the objection that moral relativism means "anything goes". For if the envisioned constraints on what can properly be called moral are suitably robust, much of what is disquieting about a view like Harman's does not apply to Foot's. Yet, Foot's conclusion is distinct from Wong's. While Wong argues that not all "moralities...are adequate moralities" (Wong 2006 xii-xiii), Foot concludes that not just anything we might want to call a morality can be coherently described as one. This *internal* strategy for grounding constraints strikes me as more plausible and less contentious.

### 3. Objections

One might object to Foot's argument in two ways. One might charge, first, that Foot is "making a verbal [point] in favour of our own moral code" (Foot 2002b, 107). Foot's point, however, is that the difference between our moral code and some radically alien other is, in fact, a difference between a moral and a non-moral point of view (Foot 2002b, 108). But this might strike us as in a way arbitrary; it makes the bounds of morality contingent on what *our* linguistic practices happen to be.

To allay the discomfort here, consider an analogy between Foot's argument and Wittgenstein's conception 'grammar'. Wittgenstein sometimes writes of the grammar of a word- for example, "to know." Grammar, in this sense, concerns the constitutive rules for the use of signs. It shows the post at which a word is stationed (Wittgenstein 1967, §257). Understood thusly, what Foot is doing is exploring the 'grammar' of the term morality, seeking to dissolve what she takes to be a confused (non-cognitivist) philosophical picture of morality. To press the analogy further, just as Wittgenstein noted that "the rules of grammar" are in one sense "arbitrary" (Wittgenstein 1967, §497), Foot describes the definitional criteria of morality as "contingent...starting-points" (Foot 2002a, 10). Since this is kind of arbitrariness generally holds of grammar, it is hard to see what is specifically objectionable about it in the case of morality.

A second objection runs as follows. Although Foot argues that “moral terms such...are restricted, to a certain degree, in their extension,” (Foot 2002a, 31), she says little about these restrictions’ content. She notes that some kinds of behavior, like mass slaughter, could not possibly be justified as moral (Foot 2002a, 32). Not only is this a thin starting point; at other times, she suggests the constraints in question concern only the relations among moral claims. Foot notes that we ought to “recognise Nietzsche as a moralist”, despite his repugnance, because of how Nietzsche justifies his views (Foot 2002b, 108). This issue has implications for relativism. If the constraints Foot envisions are too minimal, her argument does little to help the relativist respond to charge that she permits anything.

At times, Foot attempts to meet the objection by noting that “a moral system seems necessarily to be one aimed at removing particular dangers and securing certain benefits” (Foot 2002a, 6f). If this is so, perhaps one could reconstruct some aspects of Wong’s argument for substantive constraints in grammatical, rather than metaphysical terms. However, the only satisfactory response would be to “look more carefully at the rules of evidence” for the use of moral concepts, and see what restrictions these rules, in fact, license (Foot 2002b, 108). Thus, whether the strategy succeeds remains, in a way, open.

## 4. Conclusion

The success of Foot’s argument depends on how on the nature and substance of the constraints it envisions. But, if one can develop, from the very idea of a morality itself, a set of constraints on its content, it seems that one kind of discomfort with moral relativism is unfounded. This on its own settles little, but it suggests that “we should not at the moment try to say how far moral relativism is true or false, but should start the work farther back” (2002a, 36) –with the idea of morality itself.

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# The Human Person and the Language of Value

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## Abstract

This paper explores in a modest way the usefulness and limits of the language of “value” and the “valuable”.

The language of “the valuable” is useful when employed with reference to inanimate objects such as gold coins, antique cars, or trees. Trees can be replaced without loss of value as can, say diamonds. This language is also useful for thinking about animals used for food production, for example, cattle. But this language fails with respect to human persons. If a neighbor wants one tree of a certain species cut down on my property and will in return replace it with three others of the same size and type I would be foolish not to accept. But suppose he or she said I like your 5 year old son and I will trade my 3 for your 1. No one would accept this offer.

At the beginning of the western philosophical tradition Plato employed a method that has too infrequently been employed by later, explicitly philosophical thinkers. This is the method of showing how to think about a particular problem as distinct and different than telling the reader or the student what the correct way to think about the problem or even what the answer must or should be.

Socrates does not tell Glaucon what is wrong with his “perfect community” He shows him the “community of wives”. He does not actually tell Meno what truth is. He demonstrates with Meno’s slave boy an answer sufficient to satisfy Meno. Yet as Augustine and Kierkegaard have shown this “solution” is not really sufficient.

Other philosophers have used dialogues, storytelling, “histories” and even commentaries to show a point or a way of thinking: e.g. Augustine’s dialogues on knowledge and free will, Averroes’ commentaries on Aristotle, Hobbes’ *Behemoth*, Hume’s *Dialogues on Natural Religion*, his *History of England*, his witty tract *Sister Peg*, Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra*, Machiavelli’s *Florentine History*.

Though what these thinkers point to is varied, their method of “showing” is followed up most powerfully in the twentieth century by the later work of Wittgenstein. In what follows I shall use his method of showing by example to explore the concept of “value” and the “valuable” and to show the limits of this language. I am guided in this paper by a line from Wittgenstein’s notebooks. “I ought to be no more than a mirror, in which my reader can see his own thinking with all its deformities, so that help in this way, he can put it right.” (Wittgenstein 1931, 1980)

I will use examples that I hope will capture the way we use the language of “value,” how it works in many cases, yet is woefully inadequate when used with respect to human persons.

## I

The language of “value” and its forms i.e., values, valuing, valued, valuable is pervasive in our era. When we desire something we “value” it or claim that it is “valuable”. If someone in the past thought that something had worth, they are said to have “valued” this thing.

The concept is most frequently used to express our desires or preferences for some object, person, artistic or athletic performance, or special relation, e.g. with a spouse or children. Though the use is frequent, the concept itself is, I submit, unable to give full expression to our way of thinking about the worth of human life in general and/or the

worth of human persons in particular. In what follows I shall show these difficulties and suggest an alternative, if only briefly.

## II

Suppose I place a high value on Austrian Guilder from the Hapsburg era of 1770—1800. I value them not merely for their gold but because these coins are of a specific “species” i.e. a specific time period and a specific empire. Some things seem to follow:

1. I should want to own as many such coins as I can obtain.
2. As long as coins meet my benchmark, each coin has equal worth to me
3. The coins are interchangeable to me.

Suppose someone desires 3 of my coins with specific serial number because they were once owned by a beloved ancestor. He will trade 5 coins that meet my criteria for my 3. I would be foolish not to trade.

Consider then something living. Will not the same criteria apply?

Suppose I value oak trees instead the specific coins in the previous example.

1. I should want as many oak trees on my property as possible. I might also implore my town council to plant as many oak trees in public parks they are able.
2. As long as the oak trees meet my specific criteria, i.e. an oak tree in flourishing condition each oak tree is equally valuable to me.
3. The oak trees are interchangeable.

Suppose my neighbor wants a specific oak tree on my property removed because it shades his solar panels too much. In exchange he will pay to have 3 oak trees planted in my yard. I would appear foolish to refuse his offer.

These three elements of the “valuable” start to be problematic when we apply them to animals. If I am a sheep rancher or cattleman one cow or one sheep is as valuable or valueless as any other. If I am a dog breeder each pup that I can sell is as valuable as any other. Suppose a stray calf had been killed by a driver at night. If the driver replaced the calf, I would not have lost anything. The value of my herd would remain the same.

This sort of “replacement equivalence” does not, however, work with my dog, the dog who knows the name I

have given him or her, who sits in my lap when I watch television, who jumps on me when I enter the door.

If this dog, we shall call him Popcorn, is killed by a driver I can get another dog of the same breed and age. I can have a substitute for Popcorn. But Popcorn cannot be replaced. In time I can appreciate the special qualities of my new dog Popcorn II. Yet, however much I appreciate Popcorn II, he or she cannot be Popcorn I.

If a fox kills one of my hens that lays eggs, the hen can be replaced. If a member of my sheep herd dies I can replace it. But Rufus cannot be replaced like coins, oak trees, or cattle. Suppose from my herd I have given my children a lamb to have and care for as a pet. This lamb, we shall call her Sally, cannot be replaced. If the lamb is killed and eaten by a coyote my children can get a substitute but Sally cannot be replaced.

Things that are regarded as “valuable” like diamonds, fir trees or red tulips have, then these features.

1. Though they are not “infinitely valuable”, more is typically better.
2. Each member of the class, e.g. guilders, is equally valuable.
3. Each member of the class is interchangeable. Any member can be replaced. If one diamond is lost or one oak tree dies, another can take its place.

### III

Let us then take what we have sketched about the “valuable” and see if it fits when we transpose it from inanimate and animate things to human persons.

1. Are more human persons better than fewer? If so, then every family should have as many children as they are able to have and care for.

Even if one thinks, as I do, that the world is far from overpopulated and that, in fact, the developed world is facing serious problem with aging populations and too few young people to provide for them, the idea that each family should have as many children as possible seems bizarre.

2. In one sense each human person is equally valuable. Yet in another, richer, sense each human person is “priceless” as who they are. Each human person has this “priceless” quality equally with every other person. But it is specifically a feature of the individual person and not just a class, e.g. all human persons.

Human persons are not interchangeable or replaceable. Each human person has this special worth for whom we would not trade any amount of something merely “valuable” e.g. diamonds. Secondly, each human person has this worth as who they specifically are, e.g. Greta or Hans, David or Julia. Of course we may substitute Andrew for David as a student, lawyer, factory worker, or priest. But the substitute is not David.

3. My daughter Alex is “priceless” first as a human person who cannot be replaced by any amount of something else like diamonds or gold. Second she is priceless for who she specifically is. For me she is irreplaceable. I would not trade her for any other person or for many other people.

All human persons are equally “priceless” as human persons. But my daughter or son or grandchildren “priceless” are priceless to me as who they individually are. They cannot be replaced like oak trees or coins.

### IV

If the language of “value” does not seem to capture fully the worth we place on human persons what other language is available in which, as Wittgenstein says, “the reader can see his own thinking.”

Perhaps the language of respect might capture what we ordinarily think. Unfortunately, however, this language will not capture our ordinary way of thought i.e. a language of worth that applies to all and only human persons as such without any reference of any other qualities of specific persons.

We respect for a person for some special quality or skill e.g. surgical dexterity, philosophical intellect, artistic creativity, athletic prowess, military valor, etc. We can and do respect the philosophical ability of Plato, Heidegger, or Wittgenstein, the creative ability of Goethe or Tolstoy, the musical ability of Verdi or Brahms. But human persons are not regarded as having a unique worth for what they have done, are doing, or might do in the future.

For example, the opposition to capital punishment cannot be based on the good things the convict has done or may yet do. The opposition to euthanizing severely retarded persons likewise cannot be based on what such persons have done or might do in the future. I respect a Nobel Prize winner for his or her discovery and Hermann Hesse for his novels. But this framework doesn’t seem to work when applied to human persons as such

Though a newly conceived has a special worth in a sense similar to the example of respect I have noted above, it seems that only saying I “respect” the new baby is inadequate. Respect focuses too much on what a person has done to express the special worth of all and only human persons.

The language of “valuable” allows for interchangeability and replacement that do not reflect how we think about human persons. The language of respect focuses too much on what is done or created and not sufficiently on the persons themselves.

Is there then a language that can capture the unique worth of all and only human persons? In my view the only language that can capture what we think about the worth of all and only human persons is the language of sanctity of life. There are of course, pantheists such as the 19<sup>th</sup> century American Henry David Thoreau and the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess who developed the idea of “deep ecology” who seem to hold that all life has a special “sanctity”. Apart from this way of thinking, however, we do not typically speak of the sanctity of life of cattle, hogs or fir trees. Nor do we use the language of sanctity to refer to inanimate objects such as Niagara Falls, Lake Lucerne, or Mount Blanc.

The language of sanctity comes from religious sources, e.g. sacred, saintly and holy. But the concept itself does not require a religious context to comprehend it. We can speak of a person having a worth that is inviolable or inalienable, words that are often synonyms for “sanctified” or “sanctity”. Neither of these words, for example, “inviolable”, are essentially rooted in a specifically religious framework. Yet both of them convey a sense of special or privileged worth.

The idea that human life is inviolable has consequences that must be explored when thinking about extending or ending human life. These questions I can only explore briefly. If the life of a human person is inviolable wouldn’t living in a healthy state to 200 be better than living to 90?

This result seems obviously wrong. Secondly, shouldn't we use every medical technology available, e.g. respirators, to delay the end of life? This also seems wrong.

The idea that the life of human persons is inviolable entails neither that a much longer life is better nor that more human persons is a morally superior outcome. The first of these ideas would seem to mean that a child dying of cancer who has a shorter life has less value than his sister who has much longer life ahead of her. The second seems to focus on a class of human persons and not individuals. What this concept of inviolability does require is that other persons should not intentionally end the life of any other person. None of us should violate the on-going lives of the supposedly unwanted, aged or fragile.

Each individual person has an inviolate life or we can say that the "sanctity of life" applies to all and only human persons. Others may not intentionally shorten the life of any person. But they need not employ every conceivable technology to prolong life.

The language of "value" does not capture the unique and special worth of all and only human persons. The language of "respect" focuses too much on the worth of what a person has done or will do and not enough on the worth of the person as such. Only the language of "sanctity" captures the unique worth of all and only human persons.

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# “Solipsistic” Realism via the Logic of *Tractatus*

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## Abstract

Solipsism was consistently a serious and genuine philosophical problem for Wittgenstein (LW) from the period of pre-*Tractatus* (TLP) to *Philosophical Investigations* (PI). According to my interpretation, LW conceived of solipsism as ‘correct’ at some time in his middle term. Then, he abandoned it as philosophical nonsense.

In this paper, I will examine a solipsism that I believe LW struggled against. This said, I will not be concerned with the validity of the interpretation of it, although I believe that the solipsism in this paper may be equated with LW’s own.

Independently of the exegetical problem, I will examine a kind of solipsism—to be called ‘ $\lambda$ -solipsism’ to avoid confusion with LW’s own. First, I will formulate the structure of  $\lambda$ -solipsism to reveal that it has an intrinsic self-refuting feature. According to my view, there are at least two logics that can isolate  $\lambda$ -solipsism from its self-refuting circuit. One is the logic that Diamond finds ‘in’ TLP (Diamond 2000). The other is the logic that I consider to be inherent in TLP. In this paper, I attempt to demonstrate how the latter logic can vindicate what  $\lambda$ -solipsism ‘means’ to say.

## 1. Structure of $\lambda$ -Solipsism

What I mean by ‘ $\lambda$ -solipsism’, as investigated in this paper, can be illustrated in the following way. There exist numerous objects within space and time. They are divided into inorganic and organic substances. One part of the latter is constituted by living things. One group of these living things is constituted by animals. Mammals are one species of animal. One sub-class of this species is classified as *Homo sapiens*. Some members of this sub-class have competence in language. Using language, they communicate with each other in various ways, such as exchanging information, having dialogues, giving or obeying orders, or engaging in the play of fictional performances. Through such intercourse, they behave with each other as beings with ‘minds’. That is, they express something about their perception, inner sensations, beliefs, desires, intentions, expectations, wishes, recollections, or distress by themselves, or ascribe those properties to others.

However, this description is not yet sufficient as one about how the world is. It lacks a crucial moment. That is, among a number of beings with minds situated within space and time, one of them has to be *me*.

In fact, my world is opened from the viewpoint of an individual, ‘S’, who is among the beings with minds standing side by side in space and time, whose sensation and perception only I can experience, whose body only I can move at will, and from whose mouth only I can emit sounds with linguistic meaning. However, my world is not opened from the viewpoint of the other individuals standing side by side with S in space and time, none of whose sensations and perceptions I can experience, none of whose bodies I can move at will, and from none of whose mouths can I emit sounds with linguistic meaning. That is the way the world comes into existence, though I do not know why it is that way. It is this plain fact about how the world comes into existence that  $\lambda$ -solipsism insists upon.

$\lambda$ -solipsism is opposed to the following insistence:

Plural self-ism: More than one being with a mind (self) exists, side by side in space and time. The world is opened from the viewpoint of each of these beings. However, my world or my viewpoint is not opened from any of them. I can experience neither their sensations nor perceptions, I can move none of their bodies at will,

and I can perform none of their intellectual acts. That is the actual way the world comes into existence.

Let me confirm another remarkable feature of  $\lambda$ -solipsism. First,  $\lambda$ -solipsism has to be distinguished clearly from epistemological skepticism about the existence of other minds.  $\lambda$ -solipsism has nothing to do with skeptical doubt as to whether every other being that behaves in an appropriate manner outwardly, as beings with minds, are nothing but zombies who lack qualitative experience<sup>1</sup>. All that  $\lambda$ -solipsism claims is that among a number of non-zombie beings with qualia, there exists an individual from whose viewpoint my world is opened.

$\lambda$ -solipsism is also distinguished from idealism in general that claims that any other substance than mind (Idea), for example material, cannot exist independently from mind (Idea). Because both  $\lambda$ -solipsism and plural self-ism imply the existence of mind (self, Idea), they are incompatible with materialism that allows only matter, without mind, to exist. However, all that is needed to insist on  $\lambda$ -solipsism or plural self-ism is not to insist that only mind (Idea) exists (idealism), but to allow for the possibility of the existence of mind (Idea). Thus, idealism is neither a necessary condition nor a sufficient condition for  $\lambda$ -solipsism and plural self-ism<sup>2</sup>.

Let us assume that I insist on  $\lambda$ -solipsism of the aforementioned characterizations. In response, another being with a mind, for example M, will immediately reply in the following way: “I think that every other being with mind including me (= M) will agree with what you mean by  $\lambda$ -solipsism. However, we do not agree with *the*  $\lambda$ -solipsism that you insist on, but a variation of the  $\lambda$ -solipsism in which each of us replaces ‘S’ with a proper name of one’s own; for example, ‘M’ for me.”

To refute this reply, I might attempt to insist on a revised version of  $\lambda$ -solipsism,  $\lambda$ -solipsism\*, obtained by inserting an indexical ‘this’ in front of each ‘I’ that occurs in the expression of  $\lambda$ -solipsism, but in vain. This is because M can repeat the isomorphic claim with  $\lambda$ -solipsism\*.<sup>3</sup> Conse-

<sup>1</sup> Refer to (Hintikka 1958), (Stenius 1960, 221f) for examples of the view that Wittgenstein had no interest in skepticism about the existence of other minds.

<sup>2</sup> However, because both TLP and PI are considered variants of ‘linguistic idealism’, although each ‘linguistic idealism’ has to be distinguished from the other,  $\lambda$ -solipsism is thought to imply idealism within LW’s philosophy.

<sup>3</sup> This type of criticism of solipsism can be found, for example in PR §58, NLP 228-9, PI §261.

quently,  $\lambda$ -solipsism is thought to include the grounds for refuting itself intrinsically. Let me formulate the structure.

1. [Premise]: More than one being with a mind, seen from a functional and qualitative viewpoint, stands side by side within space and time.
2. [Insistence on  $\lambda$ -solipsism]: My world is actually open to and can be experienced by an individual S among the individuals standing side by side within space and time. The world is neither open to nor can be experienced by the other individuals. That is the way the world comes into existence.
3. [Refutation of  $\lambda$ -solipsism]: Beings other than me can claim a variation of 2 that is obtained by substituting their own proper names for the proper name in 2.

From the outset,  $\lambda$ -solipsism allows for the existence of more than one being with a mind (plural self). However, the essence of a being with a mind is nothing but that it lives and experiences the world from its own viewpoint in an isomorphic way as  $\lambda$ -solipsism insists. If there were a being who could not claim a variation of  $\lambda$ -solipsism from its own viewpoint, against my insistence on  $\lambda$ -solipsism, then the being could not be seen as a 'being with a mind'. Because of its intrinsic nature, it seems to be impossible to explicitly insist on  $\lambda$ -solipsism.

## 2. Condition of $\lambda$ -solipsism

Can we salvage  $\lambda$ -solipsism from this self-refuting structure? According to my view, it is the logic I consider inherent in TLP that enables us to answer that question affirmatively.

As a preliminary consideration for showing how the logic inherent in TLP can defend  $\lambda$ -solipsism, I will examine the conditions under which  $\lambda$ -solipsism can come into existence. Basically,  $\lambda$ -solipsism consists of the [premise] and the [insistence]. From them, the refutation, which any being with a mind but me can reiterate, follows. The [premise] of  $\lambda$ -solipsism is indispensable in distinguishing it from epistemological solipsism, which casts doubt on the existence of other minds.

So, under what conditions can the [premise] come into existence? It is impossible for us to experience the qualia of others. This impossibility is not empirical, but logical. This is because if I can experience the qualia of a being, the being cannot be someone other than myself (BB 48, PI §302). Because it is logically impossible for us to verify whether others are zombies that lack qualia, it is necessary to introduce particular criteria for assuming the [premise]. The criteria are required to satisfy two conditions: 1. It is empirically possible to satisfy the criteria, 2. The beings that satisfy the criteria are necessarily considered as those with minds, both functionally and qualitatively: in other words, non-zombie.

Here, I will propose sufficient, even if not necessary and sufficient, criteria that are supposed to satisfy those two conditions. The first criterion is that a being, E, is admitted to use a first person expression that is immune to error through misidentification (BB 66, Shoemaker 1968); in other words, the first person expression that is based on knowledge irreducible to any knowledge *de dicto* or *de re* (Castañeda 1964, Perry 1977, 1979, Lewis 1979, Anscombe 1975). The second criterion is that a being E is admitted to use a proposition, which is composed of the first-person expressions that satisfy the first criterion, that is immune to error except error about the meaning of the

words that constitute the proposition. (For example, 'I feel pain,' 'I see (hear) so and so,' etc.)

I can formulate the criteria in the following way.

[Criteria (for the premise of  $\lambda$ -solipsism)]

A being is entitled to use such a proposition that is composed of a first-person expression that is immune from error thorough misidentification (Criterion 1) and that is immune from error as a whole except error regarding the understanding of the meaning of words included in the proposition (Criterion 2).

[Conditions (of the situation)] The being is not situated under a condition that casts doubt on one's understanding of the meaning of words included in the proposition.

Due to space constraints, I will omit the detailed argument to confirm that the criteria are appropriate to satisfy the two required conditions for the premise of  $\lambda$ -solipsism; however, this is not difficult to confirm.

## 3. Elimination of Indexical 'I' in TLP

Then I will extract the logic inherent in TLP that has significant implications for  $\lambda$ -solipsism. According to my view, TLP eliminates the possibility of using the first person 'I' from the totality of propositions = language (4.001). In advance of arguing the grounds for the thesis, I will define the meaning of the term 'the first person "I"' in the following argument.

I use 'the first person "I"' to mean any expression of function intrinsic in the first person, 'I'. The function intrinsic in the first person 'I' constitutes the following features, as referred to in the previous section.

[Intrinsic function of the first person 'I']

The function of representing the subject who uses the expression that is immune to error through misidentification of the subject.

The function of representing the subject who uses the expression based on knowledge that is irreducible to any knowledge *de dicto* or *de re* about the subject.

(Hereafter, the notation 'Indexical 'I'' is used to represent any expression that can play the role of this function.)

Based on this, the thesis that I will attempt to ground in this section is within the logic of TLP; Indexical 'I' is eliminated from the totality of propositions that 'can be said'. (Hereafter, this thesis is called [T].) Let me demonstrate [T].

Needless to say, a number of Indexical 'I's or 'we's are used in descriptions of TLP. However, because all propositions of TLP are considered nonsense ("anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them [my propositions] as nonsensical" (6.54)) we can preclude all of them from the totality of what 'can be said'<sup>4</sup>.

In relation to the thesis, it is 5.542 that I think is remarkable:

It is clear, however, that 'A believes that p,' 'A has a thought,' and 'A says p' are of the form "'p" says p.' This does not involve a correlation of a fact with an object but, rather, the correlation of facts by means of the correlation of their objects.

<sup>4</sup> The logic of TLP that I will demonstrate hereafter is not consistent with irresolute readings but with resolute readings of TLP. I cannot help but save the detailed argument about this significant issue for another occasion.

Although it is difficult to determine the exact implication of this section, its objective is clear. It is to show how TLP resolves the difficulty that such intensional propositions, which include propositional attitudes (beliefs, desires, expectations), bring about the extensional or truth-functional theory of propositions in TLP ('a proposition is a truth-function of elementary propositions' 5) (Introduction to TLP by Russell, Black 1964). According to 5.542, propositions with propositional attitudes ('A believes that p,' 'A has the thought,' and 'A says p') can be reduced to the form "'p" says p'. This form, "'p" says p,' expresses the correlation between two facts. "'p" is one fact as just a sequence of tones or letters stripped of the sense. 'p' is another fact that makes true "p" that is considered to take on its sense (Russell *ibid*).

According to the proposal, two propositions with different appearances, for example, 'Ramsey believes that LW is a philosopher,' and 'LW believes that LW is a philosopher,' are analyzed into the identical proposition in the following manner.

Ramsey believes that LW is a philosopher  $\Leftrightarrow$  'LW is a philosopher' says LW is a philosopher  
LW believes that LW is a philosopher  $\Leftrightarrow$  'LW is a philosopher' says LW is a philosopher

That is, whoever might be the subject of a propositional attitude (a belief in this example), Ramsey, LW, or any other, the content that the subject takes some attitude towards is to be analyzed into a correlation between two facts, a propositional sign that expresses it considered as a fact and another fact that makes it true.

Then, how can a proposition of a propositional attitude including indexical 'I,' for example, 'LW believes 'I am a philosopher,' be analyzed? Following the method of Castañeda (Castañeda *ibid*), the proposition can be expressed as 'LW believes that he\* is a philosopher.' Based on the method of 5.542, it can be analyzed in this way:

LW believes that he\* is a philosopher  $\Leftrightarrow$  'he\* is a philosopher' says he\* is a philosopher

5.542 analyses a proposition with a propositional attitude into a propositional sign, considered as a fact, and another fact that it depicts. However, as many scholars (Castañeda, Perry, Lewis, Anscombe, *ibid*) have argued persuasively, 'he\*' is irreducible to any other kind of referring expression based on knowledge *de dicto* or *de re*. Thus, within the logic of TLP, the expression 'he\*' cannot be any constituent in a propositional sign with a sense. Moreover, when LW believes that he himself is a philosopher, it is not that he believes about an object, event, or process placed within space and time that it is a philosopher. Thus, he\* that 'he\*' is supposed to depict cannot be any constituent in a possible fact. Consequently, either sign 'he\*' or he\* that it is supposed to depict cannot help but drop out of the domain of analysis, as advocated in 5.542.

Every actual usage of Indexical 'I' has to be able to be expressed in the form of a proposition of a propositional attitude with 'he\*'. That is, it has to be able to be reduced to the form [S V<sub>1</sub> that he\*/(she\*/they\*) V<sub>2</sub> ~]. However, as shown above, it is impossible to analyze the propositions of this form in the way advocated in 5.542. Consequently, I can conclude that every proposition that includes Indexical 'I' as a constituent is eliminated from the totality of propositions with sense via the logic of TLP.

## 4. Solipsism of TLP

Then, concerning  $\lambda$ -solipsism, what consequence can be drawn from [T]?  $\lambda$ -solipsism is composed of a [premise] and [insistence] (§1). Moreover, the criteria (§2) need to be satisfied so that the [premise] can come into existence.

However, because the Indexical 'I', that is to say the first person who is immune from error through misidentification, is to be eliminated from the totality of propositions that 'can be said' according to [T], it is impossible to satisfy the criteria within the logic of TLP. Thus, the [premise] of  $\lambda$ -solipsism cannot come into existence. Thereby, the grounds for refuting  $\lambda$ -solipsism are nulled. This is because it denies the possibility of more than one being with a mind who can insist on a variation of the  $\lambda$ -solipsism from each viewpoint existing within space and time.

Yet, at the same time [T] denies the possibility that I insist on  $\lambda$ -solipsism. Because the usage of Indexical 'I' is eliminated from the totality of propositions that 'can be said', the individual, S, from whose viewpoint my world is actually opened, is not allowed to use Indexical 'I'.

If so, does [T] thoroughly refute solipsism rather than defend it? My answer is no. This is because there is a fundamental asymmetry between the [premise] of  $\lambda$ -solipsism and the [insistence] of it. In order that a mind from whose viewpoint the world is opened exists in space and time, it is necessary to conceive it by means of language (or an expression that can be perceived). This is because we cannot experience immediately the world opened from another viewpoint. However, the possibility to conceive it through language is eradicated by the elimination of the usage of Indexical 'I'. Thus, it is impossible for a being with a mind to come into existence in space and time.

However, even if the usage of Indexical 'I' is eliminated and, thereby, the existence of a being with a mind within space and time is also eliminated, there remains intact the 'language which alone I understand' (5.62), the totality of propositions that say what can be said and the reality that they depict (2.06, 4.01). Is it not the very world that by using Indexical 'I'  $\lambda$ -solipsism is eager to insist on but can never come through (even though the scope of what can be expressed is restricted).

Such expressions as "I see so-and-so" (visual phenomena), "I hear so-and-so" (auditory phenomena), and "I have a toothache" (private sensation) that LW often employs afterwards (BB 66) cannot be expressed as a proposition with a sense within the logic of TLP because the use of Indexical 'I' is eliminated. However, the existence of the sense of a proposition that can be shown (4.022) and my private experience have not yet been doubted in TLP, unlike in PI. Thus, it ought to be thought that in TLP, my private experience that can be expressed in a proposition with sense only by making use of indexical 'I' is 'not said' but 'shown' in a proposition, unified with 'the limits of' 'language which alone I understand' = 'the limits of my world' (5.62) = 'a limit of the world' = 'subject' (5.632)<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> The logic 'in' TLP that (Diamond 2000) finds also denies the existence of others' private experience, but never one's own private experience, although it does not eliminate the Indexical 'I' from language.



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# Anderson and Belnap's Confusion

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## Abstract

Wittgenstein's discussion of the colour exclusion problem in 'Some Remarks on Logical Form' led to a series of papers by Lewy, von Wright and others on Entailment. Later, Anderson and Belnap took up the issue of Entailment in a different way. Indeed, it was not until Anderson and Belnap's work that a thorough study of the distinctive grammar of remarks like 'That something is red all over entails that it is not green' was undertaken. The problem for both of these traditions, however, was that they had no way of formalising 'that'-clauses as referential phrases, allowing the relation to be formalised in predicate logic terms. Indeed that would have brought up for them difficult philosophical questions to do with Realism. But now that we are moving out of the Empiricism of those times it is easier for us to see just what it was that Wittgenstein had in mind.

Anderson and Belnap, in their otherwise very thorough grammatical appendix to volume 1 of *Entailment*, knew that they were treading on shaky ground. For they wanted to make it philosophically respectable, they said, to 'confuse' two things. Their attempt was to 'make it philosophically respectable to "confuse" implication or entailment with the conditional' (Anderson and Belnap 1975, 470). But there are other cases they needed to consider besides the ones they did which show that they definitely created confusion, thereby failing to make the matter 'philosophically respectable.' Clarifying the matter has a number of significant consequences not only for their work on Entailment, but also for the Relevance Logic tradition (see, for example, Read 1988) and standard propositional logic. Indeed it even means we must move right away from Empiricism, and the associated Nominalism, and towards Rationalism, and the associated Realism.

Anderson and Belnap were exceptionally good on the grammar of 'that'-clauses. These are referential phrases, Anderson and Belnap admitted, and they refer to propositions. They are also the standard complements on both sides of verbs like 'entails' and 'implies' (also 'means', although they do not remark this). So Anderson and Belnap were quite clear that 'entails' expresses a relation, and at one point they are also quite clear that the conditional 'if ... then ...' does not. Nevertheless, in their conclusion, they think that it is excusable to 'confuse' the two forms as above, and write an entailment in the form ' $\phi \rightarrow \psi$ ' with ' $\rightarrow$ ' some supposedly improved form of 'if ... then ...'. The improvement intended was on the standard formulation of the conditional by means of hook, which was therefore deemed to be inappropriate.

The first problem for Anderson and Belnap's grammar arises because not only 'that'-clauses can flank verbs like 'entails'. There are also propositional names and definite descriptions. Anderson and Belnap are not unaware of this possibility, and give one instance – 'Euclid's First Proposition' (Anderson and Belnap 1975, 478). However, in their conclusion this insight gets lost and there they only consider 'that'-clause complements. But evidently there are not just forms like 'that  $\phi$  entails that  $\psi$ ' to consider, there are also ones like ' $x$  entails that  $\psi$ ' and even ' $x$  entails  $y$ '. And the problem is that there is no way that these latter forms are of the 'if  $\phi$  then  $\psi$ ' form, since there is nothing in them corresponding to the ' $\phi$ ' (or the ' $\psi$ ' in the second case). So the implication and conditional forms are distinct, and the implication form *must* be symbolised in a relational way, i.e. not as a conditional but as ' $xEy$ '.

There are plenty of ways of symbolising 'that'-clauses in the literature, which will then allow, as special cases, the ' $x$ ' or ' $y$ ' to be 'that'-clauses. Kneale and Kneale, for instance, in 1962 used the section sign, while noting its likeness to the lambda of the Lambda Calculus; and Haack followed them. But other writers have settled on an extension of the Lambda Calculus for dealing with the matter (Prior, Cocchiarella), or used brackets of different kinds (Bealer square ones, Horwich angled ones). Using any of these symbolisations it then becomes possible to symbolise propositional identities like 'Goldbach's Conjecture is that every even integer greater than 2 can be expressed as the sum of two primes' and 'Pythagoras' Theorem is that the square on the hypotenuse of a right angled, Euclidean triangle is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides', as having the form ' $x = \lambda\phi$ ', and so to allow that the general relational form ' $xEy$ ' might in some cases be the one Anderson and Belnap were pre-occupied with, namely ' $\lambda\phi E\lambda\psi$ '.

Of course a formal connection can then be made between such entailments and conditionals using the propositional truth scheme:  $T\lambda\phi \equiv \phi$ . For if it is true that  $\phi$ , and that  $\phi$  entails that  $\psi$ , then it is true that  $\psi$ , and this can be formalised

$$(T\lambda\phi \ \& \ \lambda\phi E\lambda\psi) \supset T\lambda\psi,$$

Hence

$$\lambda\phi E\lambda\psi \supset (T\lambda\phi \supset T\lambda\psi),$$

and so

$$\lambda\phi E\lambda\psi \supset (\phi \supset \psi).$$

More generally

$$xEy \supset (Tx \supset Ty).$$

But one cannot improve upon this conditional to make the two sides equivalent, since the so-called 'Paradoxes of Material Implication' are against it. For it is well known that we can say such things as 'There is jam in the cupboard, if you want some', and also 'If there is jam in the cupboard, then I am a Dutchman', and in neither case is there any claim that the consequent is implicated in the antecedent. Examples like these have been thought to be anomalies because 'If ... then ...' was expected to express an implication. But instead they simply and directly show, against Anderson and Belnap, and indeed the whole Relevance Logic tradition, that 'If ... then ...' *does not* express an implication.

But now a second, and even more severe problem arises for this latter tradition. For, as Anderson and Belnap so clearly point out, not only are 'that'-clauses referring phrases, what they refer to are *propositions*. Anderson and Belnap make a clear distinction between sentences and propositions, by pointing out that sentences are referred to in a quite different way, for instance by using quotation marks. It follows, therefore, that entailments are relations between propositions, i.e. that they are not relations between sentences, but between what sentences express. So there is no way that some relation between *sentences*, like the popular 'sharing a variable', can be involved. The idea has been that such standard propositional truths as ' $(\phi \& \neg\phi) \supset \psi$ ' and ' $\phi \supset (\psi \vee \neg\psi)$ ' cannot formalise entailments or implications because their antecedent and consequent in each case have nothing in common. So they have no relevance to one another. But it is not a surface, or verbal feature of the sentences that matters if the relation is one between what some sentences express. In the classic case that Wittgenstein considered in 1929 neither of 'it is red' and 'it is green' is a molecular sentence; they are both elementary sentences, as Wittgenstein was quick to point out. It was just this fact that broke his faith in the logic of the *Tractatus*, since there he had assumed that all elementary sentences were independent. For it is not a verbal connection, but a connection of meaning that has to be involved in such cases. We must therefore move right away from Empiricism, and the associated Nominalism, and towards Rationalism, and the associated Realism.

The move throws a quite different light on the so-called 'Paradoxes of Strict Implication' that C. I. Lewis faced when he tried to defend his account of entailments as expressed by means of fishhook, i.e. by what has been called 'strict implication'. Lewis wanted to say that if not the material conditional then at least the necessary truth of such a conditional expressed an entailment, and gave a couple of independent proofs that he said showed that this was the case. The first moved from ' $\phi \& \neg\phi$ ' to ' $\phi$ ' and ' $\neg\phi$ '; then from ' $\phi$ ' to ' $\phi \vee \psi$ ', and finally from ' $\neg\phi$ ' with ' $\phi \vee \psi$ ' to ' $\psi$ ', establishing that it is necessary that if  $\phi \& \neg\phi$  then  $\psi$ . The second moved from ' $\phi$ ' to ' $\phi \& (\psi \vee \neg\psi)$ ' via ' $(\phi \& \psi) \vee (\phi \& \neg\psi)$ ', and then finally to ' $\psi \vee \neg\psi$ ', showing that necessarily if  $\phi$  then  $\psi \vee \neg\psi$ . Relevance theorists have objected, as above, that both these theses involve irrelevance, and so have tried to break the chains of steps in Lewis' arguments, in an attempt to ensure that the given conditionals do not follow. For instance in the first case it has come most widely to be believed that there is some problem with Disjunctive Syllogism, i.e. the move that gets one from ' $\neg\phi$ ' with ' $\phi \vee \psi$ ' to ' $\psi$ '. But if entailments are *not* conditionals then there is no problem with Lewis' proofs other than the fact that they do not establish entailments. All they establish are the given conditionals, and conditionals do not necessarily correspond to entailments, since, as we have seen, one cannot improve upon

$$\lambda\phi E\lambda\psi \supset (\phi \supset \psi)$$

to make an equivalence.

Why doesn't its being necessary that  $\phi \supset (\psi \vee \neg\psi)$  reflect an entailment, i.e. why is it not the case that that  $\phi$  (for arbitrary ' $\phi$ ') entails that  $\psi \vee \neg\psi$  (with classical ' $\neg$ ')? That is because it is no part of the meaning of a proposition, in general, that the Law of the Excluded Middle holds. If propositional identity were a matter of strict equivalence, or equally, if propositions were functions from sentences to possible worlds, then this would follow, since then any proposition at all would be identical to the conjunction of itself with any necessary truth. But Fermat's Last Theorem

is clearly different from Pythagoras' Theorem, while each of them is true in all possible worlds, so propositional identity cannot be a matter of strict equivalence. It is a matter of synonymy and translation instead. Why doesn't its being necessary that  $(\phi \& \neg\phi) \supset \psi$  reflect an entailment, i.e. why is it not generally the case that that  $\phi \& \neg\phi$  (with classical ' $\neg$ ') entails that  $\psi$  (for arbitrary ' $\psi$ ')? This time the supposition in question, namely that it is true that  $\phi \& \neg\phi$  (with classical ' $\neg$ ') is impossible. It is against the Law of Non-Contradiction. So there is nothing that could entail anything. As an earlier tradition noted, there is nothing to start with which might have entailments (cf. Strawson 1948, von Wright 1957). In appreciating this, it is important to note the condition that the negation involved is classical. Under the influence of the pervasive Nominalism of the period, commonly just the un-interpreted formula ' $\neg(\phi \& \neg\phi)$ ' is called 'The Law of the Non-Contradiction', which has the consequence that this 'law' might be false under some interpretations of the negation sign. What it is here claimed it is not possible to suppose to be true is what the formula ' $\phi \& \neg\phi$ ' expresses with the classical understanding of negation.

The irony is that Anderson and Belnap provided the clearest, and most sustained analysis of the grammar of 'that'-clauses up to their time. In particular this was what was crucially missing in the immediately preceding period, in the work on Entailment by Strawson, von Wright, Lewy, Smiley and Bennett. The so-called 'paradoxes of material and strict implication' had bothered logicians since at least the time of the Stoics. But it is only on the basis of Anderson and Belnap's grammatical appendix that we can now see at all clearly that the mistake has simply lain in calling hook and fishhook forms of 'implication'. Take that description away and there are no paradoxes. The description confuses verbs with connectives, specifically 'entails' and its cognates with 'only if' and is equivalents; and there is no confusion once these are kept separate.

But an extension of Anderson and Belnap's analysis is required to have the matter fully clear, since they did not ponder enough on the possibility of propositional names and definite descriptions. For example they crucially could give no formalisation of such an expression as 'The Axiom of Determinacy entails The Continuum Hypothesis'. There is, however, after due consideration of the required extension, an even deeper problem for the tradition that developed from Anderson and Belnap's work. For it also becomes clearer just how non-formal the logic of propositional identities is, and so just how non-formal the logic of propositional implications is. What does this necessarily non-formal character mean for the Relevance Logic tradition in particular? For more on the implications for Relevance Logic see Slater 2014b.

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# „Was ist denn dann die Aufgabe der Philosophie?!?“ – Zwei Begriffe der Analyse und ihre Bedeutung für Wittgensteins *Tractatus*

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## Abstract

Im *Tractatus* behauptet Wittgenstein, dass sich jeder Satz als Wahrheitsfunktion von Elementarsätzen analysieren lasse, die aus Namen in unmittelbarer Verbindung bestehen. Ausgehend von Michael Beaney's Unterscheidung zwischen verschiedenen Analysebegriffen soll in diesem Beitrag der Charakter dieser Analyse von Sätzen und ihre Rolle im *Tractatus* geklärt werden. Abschließend wird gezeigt, wie sich die unterschiedlichen Auffassungen der Analyse auf die Einschätzung der philosophischen Entwicklung Wittgensteins zwischen *Tractatus* und Philosophischen Untersuchungen auswirken.

Im *Tractatus* postuliert Wittgenstein, dass es für jeden Satz eine eindeutige und vollständige Analyse geben muss (vgl. TLP 3.25), in deren Rahmen er auf Elementarsätze zurückgeführt wird, „die aus Namen in unmittelbarer Verbindung bestehen“ (TLP 4.221). Um was für eine Art von Analyse handelt es sich hierbei? Welchen Zweck verfolgt Wittgenstein mit ihr und welche Rolle spielt sie im System des *Tractatus*? Diese Fragen sollen im Folgenden ausgehend von Michael Beaney's Klassifikation verschiedener Arten und Modi der Analyse geklärt werden.

## 1. Zwei verschiedene Analysebegriffe: „reductive“ vs. „paraphrastic analysis“

Michael Beaney unterscheidet zwischen zwei Formen der Analyse, die die frühe analytische Philosophie geprägt haben: „reductive“ und „paraphrastic analysis“. Während eine „reductive analysis“ auf die letzten Bestandteile der Welt schließen lässt, führt eine „paraphrastic analysis“ lediglich zu einem präziseren (oder auf eine andere Weise verbesserten) Ausdruck desselben Satzes und bleibt ohne metaphysische Implikationen. In Bezug auf Beaney's Unterscheidung zwischen verschiedenen Modi der Analyse entspricht die „reductive analysis“ dem Modus der „decomposition“, während die „paraphrastic analysis“ dem Modus der „interpretation“ entspricht. (Vgl. Beaney 2000, 99)

Susan Stebbing und John Wisdom prägten in den 1930er Jahren eine analoge Unterscheidung zwischen „new-level“ und „same-level analysis“ um die philosophische Methode der „Cambridge School“, der sie selbst angehörten, von jener des Wiener Kreises abzugrenzen. Als Synonyme für die von ihnen bevorzugte Methode der „new-level analysis“, die unter anderem Moore und Russell zugeschrieben wird, verwendeten sie auch „philosophical“ und „metaphysical“ bzw. „directional analysis“ sowie Beaney's Ausdruck „reductive analysis“; als Synonyme für die Methode der „same-level analysis“ auch „logical“ oder „symbolic analysis“. (Vgl. ibd.)

Wie ist Wittgensteins Analyse von Sätzen in Wahrheitsfunktionen von Elementarsätzen in Bezug auf diese Klassifikation von Formen und Modi der Analyse einzustufen? Ist sie eher „Dekomposition“ oder „Interpretation“? Für Stebbing ist klar, dass auch Wittgenstein, der als Inspirationsquelle für die „Cambridge School“ der philosophischen Analyse gilt, zu den Vertretern der metaphysisch ambitionierten „reductive analysis“ zählt (vgl. Beaney 2000, 100).

Beaney stimmt ihr in Bezug auf diese Einschätzung zu (vgl. Beaney 2000, 102).

Laut dieser „metaphysischen“ oder „realistischen“ Auslegung des *Tractatus*, die Beaney mit Stebbing teilt, ist die Analyse im *Tractatus* ein Verfahren, das zu den letzten Bestandteilen der Wirklichkeit führt. Diese Auffassung entspricht dem gängigen Verständnis, demzufolge Wittgenstein im *Tractatus* – wenn auch auf indirekte Weise – eine Ontologie darlegt und liegt auch Wittgensteins Einfluss auf die „Cambridge School“ der Analyse zugrunde. Gleichzeitig hat sie Auswirkungen auf Beaney's Auffassung von Wittgensteins philosophischer Entwicklung: Laut Beaney kritisiert Wittgenstein in den *Philosophischen Untersuchungen* jene Annahmen, auf denen eine „reductive analysis“ aufbaut (vgl. ibd.), und geht zur Methode der „paraphrastic analysis“ über (vgl. Beaney 2002, 91, Fn 31). Auch diese Interpretation des Übergangs zwischen Wittgensteins frühem und seinem späten Philosophieren als Abwendung von metaphysischen Fragen entspricht der gängigen Auffassung. Im Folgenden soll eine alternative Interpretation der Form und Funktion der Analyse in Wittgensteins Frühwerk entwickelt werden, die eine Verschiebung in Bezug auf diese weit verbreitete Auffassung von Wittgensteins philosophischer Entwicklung mit sich bringt.

## 2. „Die Logik muß für sich selber sorgen“ – Der Wandel in Wittgensteins Auffassung von der Aufgabe der Philosophie als Abwendung vom Modell der „reductive analysis“

Zwar macht Wittgenstein in der Endfassung des *Tractatus* Bemerkungen zu seiner Auffassung der richtigen Methode der Philosophie (vgl. v.a. TLP 4.112), diese thesenhaften Formulierungen lassen aber keine direkten Aufschlüsse auf seinen Analysebegriff zu. Sie stellen den Endpunkt einer Positionsänderung in Bezug auf die Frage nach der Aufgabe der Philosophie dar, die sich anhand der Einträge der *Tagebücher* aus der Entstehungszeit des *Tractatus* nachvollziehen lässt.

Die sogenannten „Kriegstagebücher“ gehören zu den wenigen erhaltenen Dokumenten Wittgensteins philosophischen Denkens aus der Zeit vor dem *Tractatus*. Am 9. August 1914, zwei Tage nachdem Wittgenstein als Freiwilliger einem Artillerieregiment zugeteilt worden war, schreibt er den ersten Eintrag in das erste erhaltene Geblie-

bene Heft. Dieser Eintrag ist in Geheimschrift verfasst und wurde wie alle in dieser Schrift verfassten Einträge nicht in die Edition der *Tagebücher* in der Werkausgabe aufgenommen, sondern erst später als Teil der „Geheimen Tagebücher“, die diese privaten Eintragungen enthalten, veröffentlicht. (Vgl. Baum 2014, 35)

Am 22. 8. 1914 macht Wittgenstein die erste dezidiert als philosophisch klassifizierte Eintragung. Ihr erster Satz lautet: „Die Logik muß für sich selber sorgen.“ (TB 22.8.1914, 89) Von dieser Einsicht, die Wittgenstein im Tagebuch als „ungemein tiefe und wichtige Erkenntnis“ (TB 2.9.1914, 89) bezeichnet, nimmt eine Wandlung in Wittgensteins Auffassung von den Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Philosophie und der richtigen philosophischen Methode ihren Ausgang.

Am 3. 9. 1914 notiert Wittgenstein in sein Tagebuch: „Wie ist es mit der Aufgabe der Philosophie vereinbar, daß die Logik für sich selber sorgen soll?“ (TB 3.9.1914, 89). Wittgenstein stellt an dieser Stelle eine Spannung fest, die in seinem Denken zwischen der für sein Logikverständnis zentralen Einsicht, dass die Logik für sich selber sorgen muss, und dem, was er bisher für die Aufgabe der Philosophie gehalten hat, entstanden ist.

Die metaphorische Formulierung „Die Logik muß für sich selber sorgen“ lässt verschiedene Interpretationen zu, verweist aber in jedem Fall auf eine bestimmte Unabhängigkeit oder Autonomie der Logik. Im Zusammenhang mit den ersten Tagebucheinträgen bedeutet, dass die Logik für sich selber sorgen muss, in erster Linie, dass sich die logischen Formen der Sprache nicht durch entsprechende Formen der Wirklichkeit rechtfertigen lassen müssen. Wittgensteins erläutert das in den *Tagebüchern* am Beispiel der Entsprechung von Sätzen und Tatsachen der „Subjekt-Prädikat Form“:

Wenn wir z.B. fragen: ist die und die Tatsache von der Subjekt-Prädikat Form, dann müssen wir doch wissen, was wir unter der „Subjekt-Prädikat Form“ verstehen. Wir müssen wissen, ob es so eine Form überhaupt gibt. Wie können wir dies wissen? „Aus den Zeichen!“ Aber wie? Wir haben ja gar keine Zeichen von dieser Form. Wir können zwar sagen: Wir haben Zeichen, die sich so benehmen, wie solche von der Subjekt-Prädikat Form, aber beweist das, daß es wirklich Tatsachen dieser Form geben muß? Nämlich: wenn diese vollständig analysiert sind. Und hier fragt es sich wieder: gibt es so eine vollständige Analyse? Und wenn nicht: Was ist denn dann die Aufgabe der Philosophie?!? (TB 3.9.1914, 89f)

Aus den letzten beiden als Fragen formulierten Sätzen geht hervor, dass das, was Wittgenstein bisher für die Aufgabe der Philosophie gehalten hat, von der Möglichkeit einer bestimmten „vollständigen Analyse“ von Zeichen abhängt, die von sprachlichen Formen zu entsprechenden Formen der Wirklichkeit führt. (Die Interpunktion veranschaulicht die Dringlichkeit, die diese Fragen für Wittgenstein an diesem Punkt haben.) Die Form der Analyse, die Wittgenstein bisher für die Aufgabe der Philosophie gehalten hat, lässt sich mit Beaneys als „reductive analysis“ auffassen: die vollständig analysierten Satzzeichen sollen über die Formen der Tatsachen Aufschluss geben.

Dass sich in den Tagebucheinträgen ein Wandel in Wittgensteins Auffassung von Philosophie vollzieht, wird auch durch folgende Formulierung deutlich: „Also: wenn alles, was gezeigt werden braucht, durch die Existenz der Subjekt-Prädikat SÄTZE etc. gezeigt wird, dann ist die Aufgabe der Philosophie eine andere, als ich ursprünglich annahm.“ (TB 3.9.1914, 90) Wie auch aus dem Eintrag vom folgen-

den Tag hervorgeht ist Wittgenstein an dieser Stelle bereits zu der Auffassung gelangt, dass „die Existenz des Subjekt-Prädikat Satzes alles Nötige zeigt“ (TB. 4.9.1914, 90), die im Gegensatz zu der Auffassung steht, dass den Sätzen Tatsachen von derselben Form entsprechen müssen. Demnach ist die Aufgabe der Philosophie tatsächlich eine andere als er bis dahin angenommen hatte.

Das Modell der „reductive analysis“ spielt in Wittgensteins früher Philosophie – die von einer engen Zusammenarbeit mit Russell geprägt ist – also durchaus eine Rolle. Die Tagebucheinträge lassen darauf schließen, dass Wittgenstein die Auffassung, diese Art von Analyse durchzuführen wäre Aufgabe der Philosophie, zunächst teilte, sie dann aber mit seiner Überzeugung, dass die Logik für sich selber sorgen müsse, in Konflikt geraten sieht. Im Gegensatz zu Beaneys Darstellung ist das Modell der „reductive analysis“ kein methodisches Prinzip, das im *Tractatus* zur Anwendung kommt, sondern Teil einer Auffassung von Philosophie, von der sich Wittgenstein während der Arbeit am *Tractatus* abzugrenzen beginnt.

### 3. Ist die Analyse im *Tractatus* als „paraphrastic analysis“ zu verstehen?

Obwohl in den *Tagebüchern* eine Abwendung von jener Konzeption der „vollständigen Analyse“, die sich mit einer „reductive analysis“ im Sinne Beaneys gleichsetzen lässt, deutlich wird, spielt eine bestimmte Art von Analyse, gemäß der sich alle Sätze auf Wahrheitsfunktionen von Elementarsätzen zurückführen lassen, im *Tractatus* eine entscheidende Rolle. Die logische Notation, die Wittgenstein im *Tractatus* entwickelt, lässt sich als Mittel auffassen, diese Analyse durchzuführen: Die Übersetzungen eines Satzes in die *Tractatus*-Notation entspricht der Analyse des Satzes als Wahrheitsfunktion von Elementarsätzen.

Mit Wittgensteins Begriff der Analyse verbinden sich keine metaphysischen Festlegungen, sondern der Wunsch bestimmte strukturelle Eigenschaften der Sätze klarer zum Vorschein zu bringen. Daher lässt sich die Analyse im *Tractatus* als „paraphrastic analysis“ im Sinne Beaneys auffassen. Bei dieser Einordnung müssen allerdings zwei Einschränkungen berücksichtigt werden: Zum einen ist die Analyse von Sätzen im *Tractatus* etwas, dessen Möglichkeit zwar postuliert wird, das aber nur in einem eingeschränkten Sinn von Wittgenstein selbst durchgeführt wird. So gibt Wittgenstein etwa im Zusammenhang mit seinem Umgang mit Quantifikation und Identität Beispiele an, wie Sätze aus Russells Notation in die von ihm im *Tractatus* entwickelte Notation übersetzt werden können (vgl. TLP 5.52, 5.531-5.5321). Diese dienen aber lediglich der Veranschaulichung seiner Methode und sollen zeigen, dass solche Übersetzungen stets möglich sind. Es handelt sich nicht um vollständige Analysen konkreter Sätze, die zu konkreten Elementarsätzen führen. Im Gegenteil, bekanntermaßen findet sich im *Tractatus* kein einziges Beispiel für einen Elementarsatz. Vielmehr schreibt Wittgenstein, dass „die Frage nach allen möglichen Formen der Elementarsätze“ (TLP 5.55) prinzipiell nicht beantwortet werden kann, da sich die unterschiedlichen Namen einer Sprache nicht voraussehen lassen (vgl. ibd.). Die Antworten auf solche Fragen hängen von der „Anwendung der Logik“ (TLP 5.57) ab und müssen im Rahmen der Philosophie prinzipiell unbeantwortet bleiben (vgl. TLP 5.551).

Die logische Analyse ist im *Tractatus* etwas, das möglich ist, aber nicht unabhängig von verschiedenen Verwendungsweisen der Sprache vorweggenommen werden kann. Die Analyse spielt daher eine indirekte Rolle: es ist nicht die Aufgabe der Philosophie, sie durchzuführen,

sondern zu zeigen, dass sie stets möglich ist. Das Aufzeigen der Möglichkeit alle Sätze auf eine bestimmte Weise zu analysieren zeigt etwas über das Funktionieren der Sprache. Das lässt sich mit weiteren Bemerkungen aus den *Tagebüchern* zusammenführen, in denen Wittgenstein an seine Überlegungen zur Aufgabe der Philosophie anknüpfend schreibt: „Die Logik sorgt für sich selbst; wir müssen ihr nur zusehen, wie sie es macht.“ (TB 13.10.1914, 99) und „Wir müssen erkennen, wie die Sprache für sich selbst sorgt.“ (TB 26.4.1915, 134)

Diese Hinweise auf Wittgensteins neu gewonnenes Philosophieverständnis leiten zu einer weiteren Einschränkung über, die in Bezug auf die Charakterisierung der im *Tractatus* angesprochenen Form der Analyse als „paraphrastic“ berücksichtigt werden muss: Beaneys spricht von einer Skala von Formen der „paraphrastic analysis“ von „completely conservative to radically revisionist“ (Beaneys 2000, 104). Die Analyse des *Tractatus* kann nur dann als „paraphrastic analysis“ aufgefasst werden, wenn man sich dabei auf das „konservative“ Ende des Bedeutungsumfanges dieses Begriffs beschränkt: Für Wittgenstein im *Tractatus* kann das Übersetzen von Sätzen der Umgangssprache in die Notation des *Tractatus* keine „Verbesserung“ im Sinne einer Präzisierung des Sinns oder der Vermeidung von unsinnigen Konstruktionen sein, da gilt:

Alle Sätze unserer Umgangssprache sind tatsächlich, so wie sie sind, logisch vollkommen geordnet. – Jenes Einfachste, was wir hier angeben sollen, ist nicht ein Gleichnis der Wahrheit, sondern die volle Wahrheit selbst.

(Unsere Probleme sind nicht abstrakt, sondern vielleicht die konkretesten, die es gibt.) (TLP 5.5563)

Die Notation des *Tractatus* ist keine „Idealsprache“, im Sinne einer Verbesserung der Umgangssprache. Sie stellt die Funktionsweise der Sätze nur deutlicher dar. Ihr Zweck ist Klarheit über das Funktionieren der Sprache zu schaffen.

#### 4. Auswirkungen auf die Einschätzung des Verhältnisses zwischen *Tractatus* und *Philosophischen Untersuchungen*

Obwohl Beaneys der „paraphrastic analysis“ die größere Bedeutung für die Entwicklung der analytischen Philosophie zuschreibt (vgl. Beaneys 2000, 113f), sieht er sie bei Wittgenstein erst im Spätwerk angewandt. Aus dieser Perspektive stellt sich der Übergang von Wittgensteins methodischem Vorgehen im *Tractatus* zu den *Philosophischen Untersuchungen* als Wandel vom Modell der „reductive analysis“ zur „paraphrastic analysis“ dar. Das entspricht der weitverbreiteten Auffassung, dass Wittgenstein im *Tractatus* Erkenntnisse über den Zusammenhang zwischen Sprache und Welt vermitteln will, während er sich in den *Philosophischen Untersuchungen* von diesem Vorgehen abwendet und sich auf die Gegebenheiten der Sprache selbst beschränkt.

Laut der in diesem Aufsatz entwickelten Interpretation findet der Übergang zwischen „reductive“ und „paraphrastic analysis“ nicht zwischen *Tractatus* und *Philosophi-*

*schen Untersuchungen* statt, sondern bereits während der Entstehungszeit des *Tractatus*. Das lässt den Blick auf einige Kontinuitäten zwischen Wittgensteins frühem Philosophieren im *Tractatus* und seinem späten Philosophieren in den *Philosophischen Untersuchungen* frei werden.

Dass Wittgenstein sich in den *Philosophischen Untersuchungen* bei der Beseitigung von Problemen auf die Gegebenheiten der Sprache beschränkt und keine darüber hinausgehenden Fragen zu beantworten versucht, ist weitgehend unumstritten. Diese Haltung drückt sich etwa in §90 der *Philosophischen Untersuchungen* aus, wo Wittgenstein schreibt: „Unsere Betrachtung ist daher eine grammatische.“ (PU 90) (Im selben Absatz vergleicht Wittgenstein das Ersetzen von missverständlichen Ausdrücken mit einem „Analysieren“ dieser Ausdrucksformen (vgl. ibd.).) Wie aus den Tagebuchaufzeichnungen hervorgeht gelangt Wittgenstein bereits während der Arbeit am *Tractatus* zu der Auffassung, dass die Sprache selbst alles Wesentliche zeigt, und weist über die Gegebenheiten der Sprache hinausgehende Fragen zurück: Einerseits können sie nicht beantwortet werden, da verlässliche Methoden fehlen, andererseits brauchen sie nicht beantwortet zu werden, da alles, was für die Philosophie relevant ist, an den Sätzen selbst ersichtlich ist (vgl. TB 3.9.1914, 89f, 4.9.1914, 90f). Dass Wittgenstein diese in den *Tagebüchern* entwickelte Haltung bis zur Fertigstellung des *Tractatus* beibehält, zeigt sich an seinem Umgang mit der Frage nach den konkreten Formen der Elementarsätze, die er als innerhalb der Logik nicht zu beantworten zurückweist.

Wittgensteins philosophische Überlegungen beschränken sich demnach nicht erst in den *Philosophischen Untersuchungen*, sondern bereits im *Tractatus* auf eine „sprachinterne“ Untersuchung. Das hat Auswirkungen auf den Status philosophischer Sätze: In beiden Texten stehen diese nicht für sich selbst, sondern sollen den Blick auf Funktionsweisen der Sprache, auf Aspekte dessen, was bereits offen zutage liegt, lenken. Daher haben sie nicht den Status von Thesen, sondern von „Erläuterungen“ (vgl. TLP 4.112) bzw. „Beschreibungen“ (vgl. PU 109) oder sind Teil einer „übersichtlichen Darstellung“ (vgl. PU 122).

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# Rule Following: Where are “The Missing Masses”?

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## Abstract

There are many interpretations of the rule following. We agree with the main point of Kripke's and Bloor's interpretation. For both rule following is a social institution. For both community is the only authority to judge whether any instance of rule following is correct, even for arithmetic rules. Both note the significance of the fact that consensus between rule followers in the case of arithmetic rules is easily attainable. Why is it so? In the search for the reasons we propose to turn to Bruno Latour ideas about material objects as an active part of the sociality and social institutions.

## 1. Rule following by Wittgenstein himself

The title of this paper recalls that of Bruno Latour's (Latour 1992). Latour argues in his paper, that sociologists fail to explain the stability of social boundaries and norms. He explains this failure by the sociologists' missing to appreciate the role of things in the maintaining of this stability. It would be interesting to apply this approach to the rule following problem, especially because, as we all know, the rule following is a custom (uses, institutions).

Wittgenstein was the first to discuss following the rule. He began discussing it in order to demonstrate that there is not any problem in it. This way he created for all the Wittgensteinians a puzzle, what he really meant by that. In fact, some of his statements are difficult to understand. Moreover, in paragraphs dealing with this question, it is not even easy to understand, which statements belong to Wittgenstein himself, and which to his imaginary opponent.

Let us see how Wittgenstein explains in *Philosophical Investigations* §86, that the language-game of a builder A and his assistant B can be played by means of written signs and a table (Wittgenstein 1953). The apprentice learns the relation between the signs and the building stones, following the lines in the table by his finger. Such practice in teaching tables and reference books is trivial. But suddenly Wittgenstein provides an example of a very strange scheme for coordination of a sign and its meaning. What for? Does he want to make us think, that our using tables and reference books is doubtful? – Of course not, because, right after his strange example, he claims: “Can we not now imagine further rules to explain *this* one? And, on the other hand, was that first table incomplete without the schema of arrows? And are the other tables incomplete without their schemata?” (Wittgenstein 1953 §86). By these questions Wittgenstein makes us understand that it is *one and the same thing* – to learn a rule and to learn how to obey this rule. That's why there is no need in new entities such as “metarules” (instructions how to obey rules), interpretations, special mental states or mechanisms. Such explanations of rule following lead to the reverse effect: it becomes an inexplicable miracle, and a situation described in §201 of *Philosophical Investigation* emerges: “No course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule”. But what Wittgenstein wants to tell us is that learning and obeying a rule do not require a special explanations using any unobservable entities. There is everything obvious here. The teacher shows and the pupil imitates. If the pupil makes a mistake, the teacher points it out and corrects it. The problem of the pupil's interpretation of the rule emerges only if the teacher has reasons to think that the pupil's mistake is not casual but systematic. So the

teacher tries to correct the pupils' wrong interpretation. If there's no systematic mistakes, the interpretation problem does not even appear (Wittgenstein 1953 §143-145). Wittgenstein seemed to see it simple and obvious.

But in this case, as well as in some others ones, his writings provoked a reverse effect. He did not relieve us from torments about rule following, but his imaginary examples only aggravated them. Let us see §185. Here we see again the same pupil, who has already mastered the rule of writing down the series of even numbers. But once we get the pupil to continue a series beyond 1000, and he writes: 1000, 1004, 1008. Moreover, the pupil says: “Yes, isn't it right? I thought that was how I was *meant* to do it”.

What for does Wittgenstein invent such a case? I think the case is invented not by Wittgenstein himself, but by his imaginary opponent. As for Wittgenstein, he shows that the case is irrelevant, because a teacher does not teach what to write down after every other number, but he teaches to “go on like this”, “and so on”. Wittgenstein remarks that “if you have to have an intuition in order to develop 1, 2, 3, 4..., you must also have one in order to develop the series 2 2 2 2 ...” (Wittgenstein 1953 §214). Wittgenstein rejects all references to what was meant by the teacher. He also rejects the explanations of rule learning as a pupil's guessing of what the teacher means. Probably, Wittgenstein means the people's natural ability to grasp what is “the same” when they are taught by socially accepted and effective practices of teaching. He seemed to think about something simple and usual. Our failure to see the clue to rule following explanation emerges not because it is hidden, but because it's obvious.

## 2. Available proposals concerning “missing masses”

Nonetheless, the problem of rule following exists and bothers Wittgensteinians. Wittgenstein repeated that rule following is a custom, a practice, an institution, but it seems that this is not enough to explain why new generations do copy without distortion some rules, for example, arithmetical ones. So the question remains: where are the missing masses, i.e. some obvious but unconceptualized components of our practices of the rule learning and following?

Kripke has found the most bothering form of the question with his case of “plus” and “quus” (Kripke 1982). Kripke argues that the teacher himself is not able to give the firm evidences, that he really taught pupils plus but not quus. Evidences are to be looked for not in the mental history of the teacher, but in the community's practice. That's why



community for Kripke always follows the addition rule rightly. It is nonsense to suppose that the whole mankind suddenly forgot how to add, and began to add wrongly, because the right addition is the one accepted in the community. There cannot be any other criterium. For an individual “to follow the rule” and “to think one is obeying the rule” is not the same thing – because the members of the community mutually control each other. But for the community as a whole according Kripke “to think one is obeying the rule” is just “follow the rule”.

For example  $68+57=125$  is right because everybody agrees that it is right. But why everybody agrees? How is it possible that nobody does count as he likes but exactly as his neighbor does? Kripke’s treatment is essentially based on the assumption that there is a *considerable agreement* between humans concerning how to add: “In fact, our actual community is (roughly) uniform in its practices with respect to addition” (Kripke 1982, 91f). Indeed, in practice we unlikely encounter the behavior such as pupil’s in §185 of *Philosophical Investigations* or “quoddition” instead of addition. Wittgenstein’s and Kripke’s reasonings are not valid without such an assumption. Indeed, how the stable practices of mutual control of how our partners in all kinds of actions add, could appear in the society, if this factual uniformity does not take place?

Like Kripke, David Bloor explains the normativity of a rule by the social consensus about how to follow this rule. In the series of even numbers 1000 ought to be followed by 1002, because our society demands exactly this. We say that rules demand something from us. But the rule “add two” itself possesses no power: “It is society that is external to us and the true source of our sense that rules exist as an independent reality set over against the individual rule follower” (Bloor 2002, 22). For Bloor, as for Kripke, the rules of addition are a social institution. Thus, thought an individual can make mistake, for the society as a whole the notion of mistake is irrelevant. In such an interpretation of the rule the most important role belongs to the assumption of common agreement. Bloor refers to our biological nature in explaining why the common agreement takes place. More precisely, he thinks that Wittgenstein himself in this issue refers to our instincts, our biological nature (Bloor 2002, 19). For Bloor, “we must think of the mechanisms for maintaining consensus as one thing and the rule as another” (Bloor 2002, 18). That is why it is sufficient to demonstrate a pupil a few examples, for him to grasp them and to apply them for a new material. And the socially accepted methods of learning stimulate such a disposition to instinctive generalization.

### 3. Are the hard material objects the missing masses?

Bloor’s reference to our biological nature seems to be reasonable and acceptable. But so far cognitive science does not know what are those instinctive generalizations and how much help do they provide for the explanation of the following the addition rule. So we continue to look for “the missing masses” which stabilizes our practice of addition, which does not allow to change plus for quus, and which would help to explain why society can so easily attain the common agreement concerning the following of the arithmetical rules. We follow Bruno Latour as a critic of David Bloor and ask whether the missing masses contain – at least partially – hard and obstinate material objects which we count. First let’s remember that Wittgenstein himself mentions “the instruments of the language” (Wittgenstein 1953, §16) demonstrating that the stability of the meaning

of some words is guaranteed by commonly observed material objects, but not by the stability of mental images. Instruments and samples for the practice of counting are easy to find. These are sticks, the pieces of stones, apples and all others things, with which children are taught to add. Indeed, such teaching does not consist in writing down the numbers and guessing the meanings in teachers mind. It does consist, first of all, in training the skills of counting the stable, easily distinguishable objects in piles. The pupil is taught to join two piles into one and to count the objects in it. So, to teach to add is simultaneously to teach *to apply* the rules of adding. Later on the domain of these applications constantly increases. The failure to count like all the other people do leads the one to fiascos in different kinds of practices, for example, purchases.

Indeed, the rules of counting and addition have various applications, that govern almost all social interactions. Wittgenstein often stresses out this fact: “<...> Is that supposed to mean that it is equally correct whichever way a person counts, and that anyone can count as he pleases?” – We should presumably not call it “counting” if everyone said the numbers one after the other *anyhow*, but of course it is not simply a question of name. For what we call “counting” is an important part of our life’s activities. Counting and calculating are not – e.g. – simply a pastime. Counting (and that means: counting like *this*) is a technique that is employed daily in the most various operations of our lives” (Wittgenstein 1967, I, §4, 3 - 4).

We asked before, why the agreement concerning the results of addition is so easily achieved in society. Now we answer: hardness and stability of the objects, which the children use to learn to obey the rule of addition in various situations plays the important role in this achievement (as well as a priori constitution of our biological nature and our innate dispositions).

Kripke argues that there can be no evidence that in the past people meant by “+” “plus” but not “quus”. What will happen, however, if one day all mankind suddenly decides, that “+” is “quus”, and has always been “quus”? Then soon mankind will have to feel that many of its practices, previously successful, now are not. Piers of bridges, covering of buildings, doses of drugs, items in the budget and food stores will force people to feel that they follow the rule incorrectly. That’s why even concerning all mankind it would be possible to say that it follows the addition rule incorrectly. So, the things and their resistance are the very element of arithmetic rule following, which remained invisible in debates on the rule following, because it was so obvious. Mankind cannot suddenly and imperceptibly change its practice of adding without changing the applications of arithmetic rules. But the changing of such applications would be too complicated.

In reality, rules of arithmetic do change. The appearance of negative numbers and the extension of all arithmetical operation to them is an example of such change. New practices of following the arithmetic rules were accompanied by new applications (e.g. counting of debt).

The new practices, however, were formed in such a way that they would correspond to the old ones in cases where the latters were applied.

Other examples of counting practices can be given. For example, for numbers that are such huge that they have never been used and added in all of mankind’s history, there exists in society a really different practice compared with that we all learned in school. They are written down differently, for example: the order of magnitude is  $10^{10}$ . The practice of dealing with them is an estimation. Such prac-

tice has its own domain of applications, which is different from that in which we ordinarily add.

This example must demonstrate that the arithmetical rules are really social practices, and not some autonomic platonic objects. However, when we say that they are social practices, customs, institutions, we must not forget what Latour shows us: the role of hard material objects in the formation and maintaining of such practices.

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# Ludwig Wittgenstein: Reden und Schweigen, Sagen und Zeigen

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## Abstract

Obwohl sich Wittgenstein zeitlebens mit Sprache und Sprachproblemen auseinander setzte, spielt der Aspekt des Schweigens in seiner Philosophie eine tragende Rolle, die nicht unterschätzt oder gar ignoriert werden darf.

Zumeist wird damit der bekannte Schlusssatz des *Tractatus* 7 verbunden, doch meines Erachtens lässt sich dieser Aspekt durch das gesamte Oeuvre verfolgen – in seinen philosophischen Untersuchungen sowie insgesamt in seiner Haltung gegenüber der Welt – der der Tatsachen und der außerhalb der Tatsachen.

Folgende Punkte sollen zur Diskussion gestellt werden:

1. Schweigen als Konsequenz der Grenzen von Sprache, d.h. als philosophische Konsequenz oder Resümee im analytischen Sinne, um das Sagbare vom Unsagbaren, schließlich auch das Denkbare vom Undenkbaren abzugrenzen.
2. Schweigen als eine Art mystische Haltung des Staunens.
3. Schweigen bzw. Zeigen als Möglichkeit des Ausdrucks in der Kunst.
4. Formale Aspekte in Wittgensteins Stil und Schreiben.

## 1. Schweigen hinsichtlich der Grenzen von Sprache

Bereits im Vorwort zum *Tractatus* schreibt Wittgenstein, dass sein Buch „dem Denken eine Grenze ziehen“ will, oder „vielmehr – nicht dem Denken, sondern dem Ausdruck der Gedanken: Denn um dem Denken eine Grenze zu ziehen, müssten wir beide Seiten dieser Grenze denken können (wir müssten also denken können, was sich nicht denken lässt).“ Diese Grenze, so fährt er fort, wird nur in der Sprache gezogen werden, und „was jenseits der Grenze liegt, wird einfach Unsinn sein.“

Damit weist Wittgenstein bereits auf den Bereich des Unsagbaren hin, d.h. auf eine andere, sozusagen höhere Ebene oder Dimension – der der Ethik und Religion –, wo Sprache an ihre Grenzen stößt, da über diesen Bereich sinnvolle Sätze nicht möglich sind. Demnach unterscheidet er dezidiert zwischen sinnvollen und sinnlosen Sätzen in der Philosophie – gemäß 4.022, wo es heißt: „Der Satz zeigt seinen Sinn. Der Satz zeigt, wie es sich verhält, wenn er wahr ist. Und er sagt, daß es sich so verhält.“

Den Zweck der Philosophie sieht Wittgenstein als die „logische Klärung der Gedanken“. Deshalb ist es entscheidend, „Gedanken, die sonst, gleichsam, trübe und verschwommen sind“, klar zu machen und scharf abzugrenzen, um den Unterschied zwischen dem, was sich klar sagen lässt, und dem, was nicht klar ausgedrückt werden kann, aufzuzeigen. (Vgl. TLP, 4.112)

Im Aufzeigen dieses Unterschieds und dabei der Grenzen von Sprache, wird auch der Unterschied zwischen dem Denkbaren und dem Undenkbaren festgelegt:

„[Die Philosophie] soll das Denkbare abgrenzen und damit das Undenkbare.

Sie soll das Undenkbare von innen durch das Denkbare begrenzen.“ (TLP, 4.114)

„Sie wird das Unsagbare bedeuten, indem sie das Sagbare klar darstellt.“ (TLP, 4.115)

Wittgenstein ist überzeugt, dass alles, was überhaupt gedacht werden kann, klar gedacht werden kann und alles, was sich aussprechen lässt, sich klar aussprechen lässt. (Vgl. TLP, 4.116)

Gibt es nun einen Bereich, der weder klar gesagt noch klar gedacht werden kann? Einen Bereich, wo nicht nur Sprache, sondern Philosophie und Wissenschaften per se an ihre Grenzen stoßen? Das „Undenkbare“, das Wittgenstein „von innen durch das Denkbare begrenzen“ will? Und ist darunter das Mystische zu verstehen, dem nur in einer Haltung des Schweigens zu begegnen ist?

Es scheint so, doch wie verhält es sich mit dem Begriff des „Zeigens“, den Wittgenstein so oft verwendet, als Gegenstück zum „Sagen“? Bedeutet dieses Zeigen eine Art Alternative oder Lösung zum Schweigen in Anbetracht der Grenzen von Sprache und Wissenschaft?

Wittgensteins letzter Satz im *Tractatus* weist auf die Bedeutung hin, die er der Dimension des Schweigens in der Philosophie zuschreibt – eine Bedeutung, die auch in seinem Brief an Ludwig von Ficker zum Ausdruck kommt, als er diesem den tieferen Sinn seines Buches näher zu bringen versuchte. Dieser Sinn sei ein Ethischer, so schrieb er, und dass über all das, worüber sonst „geschweifelt“ werde, er es zu schweigen vorgezogen habe. Somit bestehe sein Werk im Grunde aus zwei Teilen – dem, den er geschrieben, und dem, den er nicht geschrieben habe, wobei letzterer der wesentliche Teil sei. (Wittgenstein 1969, 35)

Die Dimension des Schweigens ist also nicht als etwas Negatives zu sehen, als sozusagen resignierendes Fazit in der Philosophie, als eine Haltung der Resignation in Anbetracht der Grenzen in philosophischer und wissenschaftlicher Hinsicht, sondern vielmehr als eine Art Weg zu tieferer Einsicht in andere Bereiche wie Ethik, Religion oder Kunst.

Die Bedeutung dieser Bereiche in seinem Philosophieren streicht Wittgenstein immer wieder hervor; bereits im erwähnten Brief an Ficker betont er, dass sein Werk „streng philosophisch und gleichzeitig literarisch“ sei (Wittgenstein 1969, 33). Eine Bemerkung, die sein Philosophieverständnis unterstreicht: Nämlich zum einen die Aufgabe, Metaphysisches bzw. das, worüber Andere „schweifen“, aus dem philosophischen Diskurs auszuklammern, zum anderen, durch Mittel von Kunst und Literatur dies anzudeuten bzw. zu zeigen. Darüber später.

Im *Tractatus* wird deutlich, dass Sagen und Zeigen im analytischen Sinne zu verstehen sind – als Unterschei-

derung zwischen sinnvollen und sinnlosen Sätzen. Der Satz, der seinen Sinn zeigt, „zeigt die logische Form der Wirklichkeit“ (TLP, 4.121) Doch er kann die logische Form nicht darstellen, d.h., er kann die gesamte Wirklichkeit darstellen, aber nicht das, was er mit ihr gemein hat, nämlich die logische Form. Diese spiegelt sich nur im Satz und kann nicht durch die Sprache ausgedrückt werden. (cf. TLP, 4.121) Das heißt, sie kann nur *gezeigt* werden.

Die Gegenüberstellung von Sagen und Zeigen findet sich nicht nur im *Tractatus*, sondern auch in zahlreichen Bemerkungen von Wittgensteins Aufzeichnungen in späteren Jahren, wobei der Unterschied zwischen einer analytisch-diskursiven und einer intuitiven, auf das Ganze gerichteten Betrachtung, deutlich wird. Insofern bedeutet „etwas zu verstehen“, es als Ganzes wahrzunehmen – d.h., wie Wittgenstein sich ausdrückt, „etwas Ähnliches wie „Übersehn““. (PG, 40)

In seinen Reflexionen über das Verstehen eines Satzes weist er auf die Ähnlichkeit zwischen dem Verstehen eines Bildes oder dem Verstehen eines Musikstücks hin. So wie ein Bild oder eine Melodie selbst zu uns spricht, so muss auch „Sprache für sich selbst sprechen“ (PG, 40). Und so wie Sprache ohne die Logik nicht existieren kann, obwohl die Logik selbst nicht dargestellt werden kann, können die gesprochenen Worte nur durch die Mittel der Sprache erklärt werden. Dies bedeutet aber nicht, dass die Sprache selbst erklärt werden kann, sondern vielmehr, dass Sprache für sich selbst sprechen muß. (Vgl. PG, 40).

Demnach weist Wittgenstein auf ein intransitives bzw. unmittelbares Verstehen eines Satzes hin – ein Verstehen davon, was der Satz bedeutet oder zeigt. In ähnlicher Weise, wie wir ein Bild sozusagen auf den ersten Blick erfassen, uns auf irgendeine Weise mit oder in ihm vertraut fühlen, anstatt uns auf die einzelnen Striche und Linien zu konzentrieren. Die Vertrautheit bzw. „Wohlbekanntheit“ liege darin, dass wir „sofort einen bestimmten Rhythmus des Bildes ergreifen und bei ihm bleiben, sozusagen in ihm ruhen.“ (Vgl. PG, 78f)

Wittgenstein ist in der Betrachtung dermaßen „gefangen“, dass er aufhört, nach weiteren Erklärungen zu suchen. „Nicht das findet statt, daß sich dieses Symbol nicht mehr deuten läßt, sondern: ich deute nicht. Ich deute nicht, weil ich mich in dem gegenwärtigen Bild heimisch fühle. Wenn ich deute, so schreite ich auf dem Gedankengang von Stufe zu Stufe.“ (Z, §234)

Man könnte auch zu seinen Reflexionen über Gewissheit verweisen, wo er schreibt, dass unsere Zweifel irgendwann zu einem Ende kommen müssten, d.h. wir eine sogenannte „beruhigte Sicherheit“ anstatt einer noch „kämpfenden Sicherheit“ erreichen müssen. (Vgl. ÜG, §357, PU, §607) Sprache könne nicht auf Zweifeln bzw. Unsicherheit aufgebaut werden, so Wittgenstein, sondern müsse einen festen Boden haben, sonst könne nichts mehr wahr oder falsch sein.

In Zusammenhang mit seinen Bemerkungen über das Gefühl von „Wohlbekanntheit“ bzw. „Wohlvertrautheit“ angesichts eines Gegenstandes, ist nicht etwas Historischen im Sinne von Erinnerung bzw. der Vorgeschichte eines Erlebnisses zu verstehen, sondern das jeweils besondere Erleben in einem besonderen Fall, wie z.B. das Erleben des Bildes eines Tisches oder das Erleben des Bildes eines Bettes, das ein anderes Erleben habe. (Vgl. PG, 78f)

Und so können auch Wörter in einer bestimmten Weise auf uns wirken, so dass sie nicht nur als Gekritzel wahrgenommen werden. (BB, 261) Wittgenstein spricht dabei von einem „zusammengesetzten Erlebnis“ – dem Erlebnis, ein

Wort als Gekritzel zu sehen und dem Erlebnis der Physiognomie des Wortes.

Dasselbe gilt für die Betrachtung einer Zeichnung: Diese kann entweder als einzelne Striche gesehen werden, oder als Ausdruck des Gesichts, wobei die Wahrnehmung eines z.B. traurigen Gesichtsausdrucks ein drittes Erlebnis bedeuten würde.

Insofern könnte man bei der Betrachtung und Erfahrung einer Zeichnung (oder eines Wortes usw.) von einem sinnlichen als auch kognitiven Zugang sprechen – d.h. der Wahrnehmung von Details des konkreten Gegenstandes als auch das emphatische Erfassen und Verstehen des Ganzen. Des „Eindrucks“, bzw. dem, was *sich zeigt*, aus sich, *zu uns spricht*. Als Beispiel brachte Wittgenstein einmal die Betrachtung eines Blumenbeets mit verschiedenen Arten von Blumen. „Was für eine Vielfalt von Farbenmustern, und ein jedes sagt etwas“, bemerkte ein Freund und Wittgenstein antwortete, dies sei genau das, was auch er gesagt hätte. (Vgl. BB, 272) All diese Beispiele veranschaulichen die Bedeutung des Non-Verbalen, sich Zeigenden.

„Du willst doch wohl nicht annehmen, daß *Sagen*, was man sieht, eine direktere Art der Mitteilung ist als das Zeigen auf ein Muster!“, betont er in den Aufzeichnungen für Vorlesungen über „privates Erlebnis“ und „Sinnesdaten“. (VE, 52)

Im Übergang vom Erklären zum Beschreiben in späteren Jahren weist Wittgenstein immer wieder auf die Bedeutung schweigenden Betrachtens hin, in anderen Worten, auf die Stärke des Eindrucks, solange wir ihn nicht zu erklären suchen: Im MS 110, 80, heißt es:

„Nur beschreiben kann man hier und sagen: so ist das menschliche Leben.“ Und in Klammern fährt er fort: „[Ein Motto für dieses Buch: ‚Seht ihr den Mond dort stehn? Er ist nur halb zu sehn und ist doch rund und schön.‘]“ Und er folgert: „Die Erklärung ist im Vergleich mit dem Eindruck, den uns das Beschriebene macht, zu unsicher. Jede Erklärung ist ja eine Hypothese.“

Wittgensteins Wertschätzung von nicht weiter erklärungsbedürftigen oder nicht erklärbaren Phänomenen wird vor allem hinsichtlich ethischer und religiöser Fragen deutlich, denen er in einer Haltung des Schweigens begegnete.

## 2. Die Dimension des Schweigens in Wittgensteins Betrachtung der Welt außerhalb des Tatsachenraumes

Der Staunende, so Ernst Bloch, ist so empfindlich, dass er an jeder Sprache leidet, „man kann sagen: er müsste stumm sein, wenn andere nicht die Sprache erfunden hätten.“ (Vgl. Bloch 1996, 17)

Wittgensteins Schweigen kommt insbesondere in seiner Haltung des Staunens gegenüber der Welt – der nicht sichtbaren wie auch der sichtbaren – zum Ausdruck. Dies wird bereits im *Tractatus* deutlich, wo er sich in kryptisch anmutenden Sätzen wie „Nicht *wie* die Welt ist, ist das Mystische, sondern *daß* sie ist“ (6.44) usw. ausdrückt, die teils als mystisch-pantheistische Tendenzen betrachtet werden können und ihren deutlichsten Ausdruck im erwähnten Satzlösungsatz finden.

Diese staunend-respektvolle, auf weitere Erklärungsversuche verzichtende Haltung setzt sich im *Vortrag über Ethik* fort, in dem er das Staunen über die Existenz der Welt explizit als das erste und wichtigste Beispiel für sei-

nen Zugang zur Ethik nennt – als sein „Erlebnis par excellence“ schlechthin. Anhand zwei weiterer Beispiele – dem des Gefühls absoluter Sicherheit und dem Schuldgefühl – weist er auf die Unsagbarkeit ethischer und religiöser Fragen hin, d.h. auf die Unsinnigkeit, die dem Versuch von deren verbaler Erfassung innewohnt. Diese Unsinnigkeit liege nicht darin, dass er die richtigen Ausdrücke noch nicht gefunden hätte, sondern „daß ihre Unsinnigkeit ihr eigentliches Wesen ausmacht“, so betont er in *Entscheidenheit*. (VE, 18) Denn jeder Versuch, über Ethisches bzw. absolute Werte etwas auszusagen, sei zum Scheitern verurteilt, sei mit dem Anrennen gegen die Wände eines Käfigs zu vergleichen. Denn Sprache beschränkt sich auf die Welt der Tatsachen, Werte liegen außerhalb ihrer.

„Darum kann es auch keine Sätze der Ethik geben. Sätze können nichts Höheres ausdrücken“, heißt es bereits im *Tractatus* 6.42. Und in seinen Gesprächen mit Mitgliedern des Wiener Kreises betonte Wittgenstein seine Abwehr gegenüber jedweder Theorie über Ethik:

Wenn man mir irgendetwas sagt, was eine *Theorie* ist, so würde ich sagen: Nein, nein! Das interessiert mich nicht. Auch wenn die Theorie wahr wäre, würde sie mich nicht interessieren – sie würde nie *das* sein, was ich suche.

Das Ethische kann man nicht lehren. Wenn ich einem anderen erst durch eine Theorie das Wesen des Ethischen erklären könnte, so hätte das Ethische gar keinen Wert. (WWK, 116f)

Nur in der Lebensweise des Einzelnen könne Ethik sichtbar gemacht werden – eine Lebensweise, die Wittgenstein in den *Tagebüchern 1914-1916* in Zusammenhang mit dem glücklichen Leben thematisiert – einem Leben in der Erkenntnis – in der Gegenwart, nicht in der Zeit. (Vgl. TB, 8.7.1916)

Dieses ewige, d.h. „unzeitliche“, da nicht von Zeit und Raum abhängige Leben, ist als ein Leben im Geistigen zu verstehen – ähnlich dem reinen Subjekt des Erkennens, wie es Schopenhauer darstellt, dessen Einflüsse man im sogenannten frühen Wittgenstein beobachten kann. Das Zeit und Raum und allen persönlichen Affekten und Leidenschaften enthobene, nur mehr als Intellekt existierende, reine Subjekt des Erkennens, erfährt im Zustand der Kontemplation die im Leben selten glücklichen Augenblicke vollkommener Ruhe und Stille. Im Loslösen von Sinnlichkeit und Hinwendung zu Geistigkeit liegt das ethische Moment, wie auch in ästhetischer Betrachtung das Ewige und Universale – die Idee im Platonischen Sinne – anstatt des Einzelnen, Konkreten und Vergänglichen wahrgenommen wird. Diese Betrachtung ist analog der Betrachtung *sub specie aeternitatis* (Spinoza), worauf Schopenhauer verweist und worunter Wittgenstein den Zusammenhang zwischen Ethik und Ästhetik sieht. (Vgl. TB, 7.10.16)

### 3. Möglichkeit des Zeigens in der Kunst

„Die Kunst ist ein Ausdruck. Das gute Kunstwerk ist der vollendete Ausdruck.“ (TB, 19.9.16)

Nicht Aussprechbares zu vermitteln bzw. zu zeigen sieht Wittgenstein als Aufgabe der Kunst.

Dies gilt für alle Bereiche – sei es Literatur, Musik, Malerei oder bildende Künste.

Damit zusammenhängend verwendet er nicht nur den Begriff des *Zeigens* oder *Ausdrucks*, sondern auch den der „Geste“.

„Architektur ist eine *Geste*“, schrieb er einmal (VB, 89), doch nicht als zweckmäßiges Gebäude, sondern insofern als sie „einen Gedanken ausdrückt“ (VB, 55), oder etwas „verewigt“ und „verherrlicht“ (VB, 127).

Der Aspekt des Zeigens liegt auf derselben Ebene wie der des Schweigens: Das in Sprache nicht Ausdrückbare wird angedeutet, sozusagen zugänglich gemacht, wobei verbale Zurückhaltung, Distanz wesentlich sind: „In der Kunst ist es schwer etwas zu sagen, was so gut ist wie: nichts zu sagen“, notierte er im MS 156a. (VB, 56)

Und in einem Brief an Paul Engelmann nach dessen Hinweis auf ein Gedicht Ludwigs Uhlands antwortete er folgendermaßen:

„Das Uhlandsche Gedicht ist wirklich großartig. Und es ist so: Wenn man sich nicht bemüht das Unaussprechliche auszusprechen, so geht nichts verloren. Sondern das Unaussprechliche ist, – unaussprechlich – in dem Ausgesprochenen enthalten!“ (Wittgenstein 2006, 24)

In seiner Bewertung von Künstlern und Kunstwerken verwendet Wittgenstein häufig das Wort „Ton“ oder „Stil“ – als Ausdruck künstlerischen Schaffens und zugleich als Ausdruck des Charakters des Künstlers selbst. Georg Trakl war einer der Wenigen, der in seinen Gedichten den Ton hatte, der Wittgenstein berührte – ja beglückte, wie er an Ficker schrieb. Ein Ton, den er, ohne die Gedichte zu verstehen, als „Ton der wahrhaft genialen Menschen“ empfand. (Vgl. Wittgenstein 1969, 22). Es war wohl Trakls stilles *Zeigen* auf das Nicht-Aussprechbare, sowie dessen glaubwürdige Auseinandersetzung mit der düsteren Seite des Daseins, ohne diese zu beschönigen. Was auch Beethoven für Wittgenstein erfüllte. (DB, 72)

Somit kann Kunst das vermitteln, was sich Sprache und Wissenschaft entzieht – wo Philosophie an ihre Grenzen stößt. Denn die Schwierigkeit in der Philosophie liege darin, „nicht mehr zu sagen, als was wir wissen.“ (BB, 75) An anderer Stelle heißt es:

(Wie man manchmal eine Musik nur im inneren Ohr reproduzieren kann, aber sie nicht pfeifen, weil das Pfeifen schon die innere Stimme übertönt, so ist manchmal die Stimme eines philosophischen Gedankens so leise, daß sie vom Lärm des gesprochenen Wortes schon übertönt wird und nicht mehr gehört werden kann, wenn man gefragt wird und reden soll.) (Zettel, §453)

Es obliegt der Kunst, die leise „Stimme eines philosophischen Gedankens“ darzustellen und dabei ohne den „Lärm des gesprochenen Wortes“ das Unaussprechbare auszudrücken.

### 4. Formale Aspekte in Wittgensteins Stil und Schreiben

Die hohe Anforderung an wahrhafte Kunst und Künstler scheint Wittgenstein auch sich selbst in der Abfassung seiner Texte zum Ziel gesetzt zu haben – dies nicht nur inhaltlich hinsichtlich der Distanzierung von Spekulationen über wissenschaftlich nicht erklärbare Phänomene, sondern auch in formaler Hinsicht. Wittgensteins Sprache ist glasklar – gemäß seinem philosophischen Anspruch, Gedanken und damit Sätze klar zu machen. In immer neuen Varianten überarbeitet er seine Texte, die er einer strengen Beurteilung unterzieht.

„Es fehlt auch meiner Arbeit (meiner philosophischen Arbeit) an Ernst & Wahrheitsliebe. – Wie ich auch in den Vorlesungen oft geschwindelt habe indem ich vorgab et-

was schon zu verstehen, während ich noch hoffte es werde mir klar werden“, notiert er z.B. in seinem Tagebuch am 23.11.1936. (DB, 145)

In der Reduzierung sprachlicher Mittel auf das Wesentliche, kann sein Stil im Sinne Ockhams als *simplex sigillum veri* bezeichnet werden. Vor allem auch im Sinne Kierkegaards, der in seiner *Kritik der Gegenwart* schrieb: „Nur der, der wesentlich schweigen kann, kann wesentlich reden, nur der, der wesentlich schweigen kann, kann wesentlich handeln. Verschwiegenheit ist Innerlichkeit.“ (Kierkegaard 1922, 49)

## 5. Konklusion

Sprache und Schweigen hängen voneinander ab. Schweigen ist das Ursprüngliche und geht dem Wort voraus. Wie Max Picard sagen würde: „Das Wort entsteht aus dem Schweigen“ (Picard 1848, 18)

Um auf Blochs Zitat über die Sensibilität des Staunenden gegenüber von Sprache zurückzukommen, bin ich der Meinung, dass diese Worte im wesentlichen Wittgensteins Verhältnis zur Sprache entsprechen. Zu sagen, er müsste stumm sein, wenn andere nicht die Sprache erfunden hätten, trifft jedoch nicht auf ihn zu. Für Wittgenstein war Sprache alles, auch wenn er an ihr litt – an unserem sorglosen Umgang mit, ja Missbrauch von ihr, der zu philosophischen Konfusionen führt. Vor allem aber litt er an ihren Grenzen, gegen die anzurennen er als ein vergebliches Unterfangen sah, und weshalb er sorgsam die Grenze zwischen Sagen und Zeigen zu wahren suchte.

Seine Bemerkung „Ethik und Ästhetik sind Eins“ weisen meines Erachtens nicht nur auf den Zusammenhang dieser zwei Bereiche hin, sondern auch auf die Bedeutung des Schweigens, das im Hinblick auf Wittgensteins Philosophieren sowohl der Ethik als auch der Ästhetik innewohnt.

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# How Russell did not Abandon Russellian Propositions

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## Abstract

Recommending that one treat propositions as incomplete symbols, Russell departed from his earlier theory about propositions in 1910. According to one frequently endorsed interpretation, he maintained that ontological commitments to false propositions as objective entities cannot be reconciled with the associated theory of propositional unity. I explain that the versions of this interpretation in Sainsbury (1979) and Linsky (1993, 1999) are incorrect from exegetical reasons. The objection they ascribe to later Russell relies on the so-called 'unity argument'. I also argue against Weiss (1995) and Lebens (2009) who endorse the unity argument independently on exegesis of Russell's texts. In the course of my argument, I outline Russell's primitivist views about unity and truth. I elaborate on his theory of unity and develop a sort of redundancy account of unity which I consider to be a correct answer to the problem of unity inherited from Bradley-Russell dispute.

Proposing in 1910 that one treat propositions as incomplete fragments of belief-complexes, Russell departed from his realism about propositions defended earlier, in *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903) [*PoM*]. Although he argued against his earlier theory at length, it remained unclear which reasons were definitive. According to one frequently endorsed interpretation, Russell realized that ontological commitment to false propositions as objective entities cannot be reconciled with his related theory of propositional unity. I shall argue that this is incorrect from various exegetical reasons. The objection claimed to be essential to Russell's self-criticism is based on the so-called 'the unity argument'. Why this argument is inconclusive becomes clear once we inquire into early Russell's views on unity and truth. He separates strictly unity from truth. However, Weiss (1995) and Lebens (2009) suggest that this separation is untenable. Regardless of what Russell thought, if separating unity from truth falls short, the unity argument holds. I shall argue that Weiss and Lebens illegitimately confuse metaphysics with a theory of language.

## 1. The Myth of truth-bringing unity

In §54 of *PoM*, Russell characterizes the feature had by a relation when it relates terms in a proposition as 'actually relating'. Taken to be the source of the propositional unity, this feature is necessarily constitutive of every proposition. But, according to Sainsbury who is not convinced by this view, 'if the relation [of difference, MS] actually relates A and B the sentence "A differs from B" must be true.' (Sainsbury 1979, 21) Provided the truth-value of a declarative sentence derives from the truth-value of the proposition expressed by it, Sainsbury sets against Russell this:

(P1) If  $R$  relates  $a$  to  $b$ , then  $aRb$  is a true proposition,

where  $R$  is a binary relation and  $a$  and  $b$  terms of appropriate types. By his account of the unity, early Russell 'is tempted to characterize the predicative role as one which suffices for truth, and plainly this is absurd.' (Ibid.; also in Sainsbury 1996/2002, 105)

As Macbride put it in a recent revival of this interpretation, early Russell's theory of propositions 'made a mystery of how propositions could ever be false.' (Macbride 2013, 214) Russell is said to realize that (P1) was unavoidable, i.e., that propositions cannot be both false and objective since the logical unity of an objective complex rests in a relation's actually relating terms and this relatedness does not get along with falsehood. Had (P1) been accepted,

every proposition and, consequently, every sentence would be true. This is absurd. Sainsbury suggests that early Russell conflated two sorts of unity, the predicative and the objective one; while the former is neutral with regard to the truth-value, the later is strictly associated with truth.

I call the argument that relatedness must entail propositional truth 'the unity argument'. Sainsbury treats the unity argument to be Russell's reason for abandoning propositions. The same view is presented in Linsky (1993, 199), Gaskin (2008, 48), Connelly (2011/12, 144-5). They all propose an answer to this question:

Did Russell use the unity argument to refute his former theory of propositions?

They all believe that the argument holds. Weiss (1995) doubts that Russell endorsed the argument but shares the conviction that the argument is conclusive. This is because the unity argument draws on our 'entrenched intuitions about the nature of truth'. (Weiss 1995, 263) Lebens (2009) elaborates on Weiss' idea by taking the unity argument based on an self-evident truth. Weiss and Lebens propose to answer this question:

Does the unity argument refute early Russell's theory of propositions?

I shall argue that both questions should be answered in the negative. An attribution of the unity argument to Russell is a myth which dissipates once we stop caricaturing his early philosophy and pay attention what he says in his works. Weiss and Lebens attempted to find an *irrefutable* element in the grounds of the argument. But the element they found is a truth about language which principally cannot establish the unity argument.

## 2. Sainsbury's interpretive error

Sainsbury's conviction that Russell was in *PoM* concerned with predication in a linguistic sense is false. Russell was not tempted to take *linguistic* predication as sufficient for *sentential* truth. One may believe that the propositional unity can be only the unity of a *representation*. But to impose this onto early Russell makes the argument against him to beg a question. Russellian propositions are not representations, linguistic or otherwise.

Still one may hope that this error does preclude the unity argument. Perhaps we can avoid Sainsbury's error and,

with or without later Russell, use the argument successfully against the objectivity of propositions. Perhaps there is a good reason why unity must always go with truth and Sainsbury was right in saying that the argument led Russell to assume in *PoM* that only true propositions are logically asserted. (Sainsbury 1979, 21) To investigate this possibility, we must first get a deeper insight into early Russell's views.

### 3. The propositional unity in *PoM*

Russell held for a long period that relations have a 'two-fold' nature. A relation is unifying when it actually relates its terms, i.e., 'occurs as concept'. This is opposed to the occurrence of a relation 'as term' or 'as logical subject' or 'in itself'. Albeit the discussion in §54 concludes that Russell has no clear account of the distinction, it is resumed in §99. Dealing with Bradley's objection against pluralism, Russell appeals again to the ability of a relation to relate terms in a proposition. He extends his statement in §54 by saying that 'a relating relation is distinguished from a relation in itself by the indefinable element of assertion ...' (*PoM*, §99)

Russell's replies to Bradley as follows. Consider, e.g., the proposition that *a* differs from *b*. This proposition implies that *a* is related by the relation of difference to *b*. Since the later proposition differs from the former and  $\supset$  in *PoM* (in contrast to the modern truth-functional connective  $\Rightarrow$ ) holds between propositions as epistemically independent terms, we have new proposition introduced into our domain of discourse. From the generality of this procedure, it follows that there is an infinite number of propositions implied by every proposition. But since the procedure is *not* defining with regard to the proposition it starts with, the resulting regress is innocuous, so far as the actual infinite is successfully defended and accepted, as Russell notes in §99.

What Russell means by indefinability of unity? Relatedness is expressible on pain of systematic ambiguity. When we assert that *a* is related by *difference* to *b* or, what I take to be equivalent, that *difference* is exemplified by the members of (*a, b*), two things may be asserted:

- (i) the proposition that consists of *a*, *b*, *difference* and *exemplification*, where the triadic relation of exemplification is relating.
- (ii) the proposition that consists of *a*, *b* and *difference*, where the binary relation of difference is relating while the relation of exemplification is absent.

Since the unity is, according to Russell, logically independent of whether the proposition is true or false, the description (ii) is ambiguous between two options. Until we know the truth-value of the proposition described by (ii), we cannot decide whether it is the proposition expressed by

'*a* differs from *b*' or '*a* does not differ from *b*'.

Accordingly, the general principle for the complexes with a binary relation (without direction) is

(PTNU) *R* is exemplified the members of (*a, b*)  $\equiv$  (*aRb*  $\vee$   $\sim$ *aRb*)

Call this the principle of the truth-value neutrality of unity. Owing to the mutual exclusivity of *aRb* and its negation, once the truth-value of them is determined, we can infer either

*R* is exemplified the members of (*a, b*)  $\equiv$  *aRb*

or

*R* is exemplified the members of (*a, b*)  $\equiv$   $\sim$ *aRb*.

Having one of these activates what I call the redundancy pattern of the relatedness/exemplification talk (in short, the unity talk). Let us assume, e.g., that *a* differs from *b*, therefore (ii) materially equivalent to '*a* differs from *b*'. Now let us return to the descriptions (i) and (ii).

The description (i) picks out a proposition that differs from the one expressed by '*a* differs from *b*' and which is implied by the proposition expressed by '*a* differs from *b*'. Indeed, the proposition analyzed in (i) is the one we arrive at by the iterative procedure of Bradley's objection. According to the option based on (ii), once we know that *aRb* is true, asserting that *difference* is exemplified by the members of (*a, b*) is nothing but reasserting that *a* differs from *b*. But this does not mean that there is no difference between asserting the former and asserting the latter. By asserting that difference is exemplified by the members of (*a, b*), we make the relating occurrence of *difference* or, equivalently, exemplifying occurrence of *a* and *b* explicit for a purpose of analysis. This is how we answer the question: What provide the proposition that *a* differs from *b* with unity? We say: the proposition is united because *a* and *b* exemplify *difference*.

### 4. Primitivism about unity

Russell's rejects that his explanation of propositional unity is its definiens. Roughly speaking, to define some *X* in the sense intended by Russell (where *X* is a not a particular but a property, e.g., being the power set of a set) is to express the complexity of *X* not expressed by the defined symbol; the complexity expressed by the definiens is an interrelation of properties that are such as to form propositions when holding of terms, i.e., they are robust according to (D1) below.

The unity of, say, the proposition that *a* differs from *b* is for Russell explained by pointing out that the members of (*a, b*) exemplify *R*; this explanation draws the distinction between the proposition and the aggregate of its constituents, (*a, difference, b*). While serving the purpose of drawing the distinction, it does not define: it does not express some complexity of its subject which has not already been expressed by the expression '*a* differs from *b*'. *Exemplification* invoked in the course of the explanation is *not* a constituent of the proposition that *a* differs from *b*, although *in some other sense*, it is involved in it. '[W]hat distinguishes our complex [from the aggregate of its constituents, MS] is not any constituent at all, but simply and solely the fact of relatedness in a certain way.' (Russell 1904, 437)

Where *R* is a relation, *n* its arity and *x*<sub>1</sub>, *x*<sub>2</sub> ... *x*<sub>*n*</sub> variables of appropriate types, 'the members of (*x*<sub>1</sub>, *x*<sub>2</sub> ... *x*<sub>*n*</sub>) exemplify *R*' or 'the members of (*x*<sub>1</sub>, *x*<sub>2</sub> ... *x*<sub>*n*</sub>) are related by *R*' are not schemata for standard referential expressions, i.e., schemata for propositional functions. What do I mean by 'standard' here? Consider a referential expression for a property, say *P*(*x*), where '*P*' is a monadic predicate and *x* a variable of a suitable type, and substitute the name *a* for *x* in *P*(*x*). We get '*Pa*'. If *P*(*x*) is a standard referential expression, '*Pa*' expresses the proposition that *Pa*. This is not the case with the instances of the 'unity' schemata. Consider the expression 'the members of (*x, y*) exemplify *difference*'; substitute the names *a* and *b* for *x* and *y* respectively. We get 'the members of (*a, b*) exemplify *difference*'. Provided '*a* differs from *b*' is true (to activate the redundancy pattern), 'the members of (*a, b*) exemplify *difference*'



ence' expresses the proposition that *a* differs from *b*! And it expresses this proposition in a way which we take, with Russell, to be an *explanation* of its unity.

In general, the instances of 'the members of ( $x_1, x_2 \dots x_n$ ) exemplify *R*' or 'the members of ( $x_1, x_2 \dots x_n$ ) are related by *R*' (and the like) are expressions referring to properties that are *not* robust in the sense of the following definition:

(D1) *F* is robust =def there is a unique proposition that  $F(x_1, x_2 \dots x_n)$ ,

where *F* is a *n*-ary property and  $x_1, x_2 \dots x_n$  are terms of appropriate types with regard to *F*. If a property does not satisfy (D1), we call it 'non-robust'.

## 5. Primitivism about truth

Truth was for Russell likewise a primitive feature of a proposition, namely the element he calls in *PoM* 'logical assertion'. This element is said to be involved in every true proposition and missing in every false one. (*PoM*, §52, §38) As suggested in the appendix A of *PoM*, truth enjoys a systematic ambiguity which is analogous the that of unity. Truth as logical assertion is a non-robust property of a proposition, which leads to a redundancy thesis about the predicate 'is true'. But there is also concept of truth which is robust.

One source from the unity argument may be seen in Russell's alleged conflation truth with unity. Gaskin (2008) argues in this way. This is ungrounded. Russell, indeed, uses 'assertion' for both primitive features of propositions, but this is at most an unhappy terminological choice.

Moreover, as soon as in his review of Meinong in 1904, he makes clear that there is no such conflation by saying that '[i]t is the fact that propositions, and the complexes formed by means of them, have a kind of unity which, *apart from truth and falsehood*, distinguishes them among objects ...' (Russell 1904, 456; my emphasis). I have incorporated the separation of unity from truth and falsehood in my reconstruction of early Russell's theory of unity by means of (PTNU). Given that this reconstruction reflects Russell's then theory as best as possible, one can hardly claim that he run truth and unity fatally together.

## 6. The unity argument in Russell's works

It is a common mark of the commentators who endorse the Myth that they fail to provide adequate exegetical grounds for their convictions. They have missed that Russell assessed, at least twice, the unity argument.<sup>1</sup> In the first installment of his Meinong review, we find that he univocally rejects it. (see Russell 1904, 444f). More importantly, the argument is considered in Russell's manuscript *Theory of Knowledge* (1913/1992). 'This argument, cannot be regarded as very conclusive; still, if anybody thinks he can see an entity which is a false proposition, "I desire it to be produced".' (Russell 1913/1992, 109f) The unity argument is rejected. But we should not, Russell insists, stop doubting false propositions.

Russell never thought that there is a knockdown argument against his early theory. The main reason for his departure from it was related to the theory of incomplete symbols. In the *Theory of knowledge*, he says his former realism of propositions: 'Such a view is not, I think, strictly refutable, and until I had discovered the theory of "incom-

plete symbols" I was myself willing to accept it. Now, however, it appears to me to result from a certain logical naïveté, which compels us, from poverty of available hypotheses, to do violence to instincts which deserve respect.' (Russell 1913/1992, 108)

## 7. A platitude

I have argued that Russell did not abandon propositions as objective entities on the basis of the unity argument. But there is also a systematic issue. Some commentators claim that Russell was committed to (P1), hence he should have used the unity argument to move away from his early views. They believe that there are systematic grounds for an intimate link between truth and unity. Weiss says that early Russell's theory of propositions 'runs counter to an important platitude about truth'. (Weiss 1995, 264) Which platitude? 'We want to be able to say, ... that the proposition 'Rab' is true just in case *a* is R-related to *b*.' (Weiss 1995, 263) Elaborating on this point, Lebens (Lebens 2009, 12) proposes this bi-conditional:

(P1') *R* relates *a* to *b* if and only if *aRb* is a true proposition.

(P1) directly follows from (P1'). Russell was not willing to accept (P1'), but this was a mistake, according to Lebens, because it is "a platitude, and therefore seemingly self-evident; ..." (Lebens 2009, 12)

I do not see anything platitudinous in (P1'). The statement of (P1') involves 'proposition' in early Russell's technical sense and no statement involving such a theory laden term can possibly be a platitude. I suspect that the whole confusion comes from making an instance of the following schema into a metaphysical statement:

(P2) *S* if and only if '[*S*]' is true,

where *S* is a declarative sentence. (P2) and its instances are self-evident, but they are about our use of 'is true'. This can never yield the desired result.

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<sup>1</sup> Lebens is an exception. See Lebens (2009, 13).

# Nothing but Sounds, Ink-marks: Is Nothing Hidden?

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## Abstract

Is there something that lies beneath the surface of our ordinary ways of speaking? Philosophy in some of its phases encourages the all-too-human thought that reality lies, as it were, just outside our ordinary grasp, hidden beneath the surface of our experience and language. The present discussion will concentrate on a few connected paragraphs of Wittgenstein's text – in particular Philosophical Investigations §431 ("There is a gulf between an order and its execution. It has to be filled by the act of understanding") and §432 (Every sign by itself seems dead. What gives it life? – In use it is alive. Is life breathed into it there? – Or is the use its life?). This leads to a consideration of bodily gesture, including "In my heart I understood when you said that", pointing to one's heart?" Yet this is not a metaphorical elaboration that codes our literal meaning: a literal expression would not be more real. Such figures are woven into our natural forms of expression and constitute part of the fabric of our lives. The meaning is there in the surface of the expression. With some reference to Emerson and to Stanley Cavell, the discussion explores implications of Wittgenstein's assertion that nothing is hidden. This, it will be claimed, militates against phoney obsessions with transparency and endorses a confidence in the reality of our ordinary words. And yet how adequate is Wittgenstein's treatment of the sounds and ink-marks, the materiality of the sign? Might a more adequate account the sign coincide with the claim that nothing is hidden?

"The human body is the best picture of the human soul"  
(Wittgenstein, 1958, 178).

I want to pursue the alleged error of thinking that there must be something that lies beneath the surface of our ordinary ways of speaking about our reactions and responses to the world. Something of what is at stake here with my example of the person who responds to me: "Just wait a minute while I process what you have said." There are various ways in which Wittgenstein considers the relation between our language and our thought, including the relation of expression to various psychological states. The caption that is my title-phrase, "nothing is hidden", is to be found in the *Investigations*, and it is also, of course, the title of a late book by Wittgenstein's friend and interpreter Norman Malcolm (1986). I propose to concentrate on just a few connected paragraphs of Wittgenstein's text, intercalating these with my own comments, without which they will, I think, remain somewhat enigmatic.

In what follows, then, it is important to realise the play between different dialogical voices. Wittgenstein is concerned here with the relation between sentences and gestures, on the one hand, and something beyond them, on the other, where this something beyond may be "an act of understanding" or a thing portrayed or a representation. Representation, it needs to be remembered, has been at the heart of epistemology throughout much of the modern period, central to its project of explaining the relation of thought to the world. And this has tended to lead to explanation of meaning in terms of an underlying logic, to the neglect of the variety of things we do with words and in blindness to the subtle differences realised in natural language (or, to be more precise, languages). In the first of the paragraphs the interlocutor speaks assertively, imploring the reader to hear the apparently obvious truth of what is claimed, and Wittgenstein initially withholds his response:

"There is a gulf between an order and its execution. It has to be filled by the act of understanding."

"Only in the act of understanding is it meant that we are to do THIS. The *order* – why, that is nothing but sounds, ink-marks. –" (PU §431)

The inverted commas signal that a thought is being expressed that is not exactly Wittgenstein's own but one by which we are typically tempted: this is the thought that the words that are used must be accompanied by a mental process – here an "act" of understanding. The emphatic "THIS" is intended to convey the speaker's sense that an intense mental concentration has captured the nature of the action that has been specified: mere words could not do this – hence, the imploring tone.

In the next paragraph, however, Wittgenstein offers a response, and this is marked by an entirely different, quieter tone:

Every sign *by itself* seems dead. *What* gives it life? – In use it is *alive*. Is life breathed into it there? – Or is the use its life? (PU §432)

In much of the *Investigations* Wittgenstein is, as it were, applying a kind of therapy to the thinking that had once held him captive, where, in his early work, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, the assumption of representation found expression in the *picture theory of meaning*. What is emphasised here, by contrast, is the doctrine of *meaning as use*. While the former tended to foreground examples that purported to show a mirroring relation or correspondence between thought and world, here we find meaning illustrated in multifarious, dynamic contexts of human practice. The sign by itself, without context, seems dead. And Wittgenstein is drawn for a moment, so it seems, by the animistic phrasing that use "breathes" life into it. But in the end he settles for the less spiritually charged thought that the use *is* its life – though still expressed as a rhetorical question.

In the longer paragraph that follows this one, the example of the giving of orders leads into a consideration of the nature of gesture. Wittgenstein appears to be thinking first of the kind of gesture of the hand that might accompany the speaker's emphatic (and artificial and forced) utterance of "THIS". But an implicit question lies in the background here of how gesture figures in ordinary life, of what importance it does assume:

The gesture – we should like to say – *tries* to portray, but cannot do it. (PU §434)

The negative thought here, which seems to afflict Wittgenstein's interlocutor, is that gestures and words alike are doomed to a kind of inadequacy, existing only in a precarious relation to the achieving of understanding, the grasp of inner meaning. The trace of a more positive thought is to be found, by contrast, in the idea that it is not exactly the purpose of words or gestures to "portray", as if there must be some other mental operation with which they correspond, for the meaning is already there in their use.

Let me digress for a moment to allow the thought that the sense is already there in the surface of the signs. Following the wonderful aphorism of the epigraph to this paper, "The human body is the best picture of the human soul", Wittgenstein writes:

And how about such an expression as: "In my heart I understood when you said that", pointing to one's heart? Does one perhaps not *mean* this gesture? Of course one means it. Or is one conscious of using a *mere* figure? Indeed not. – It is not a figure that we choose, not a simile, yet it is a figurative expression (Wittgenstein 1958, 178).

Not only does this passage try to show something about the understanding: it also says something about the human heart. Unlike the metaphysical aspirations of the gesture that accompanies the utterance of "THIS" (in §431), here is a natural, unforced expression. The reference and gesture to one's heart is a figurative expression, but it is not a *mere* figure and not self-consciously adopted. It is not a fancy, metaphorical elaboration that codes our literal meaning: a literal expression would not be more real. This is to say that such figures are woven into our natural forms of expression and constitute part of the fabric of our lives. What, in any case, is a heart? It is true that it is an organ of the body, but such a statement is only adequate when one thinks in terms of biology, and biology has developed as an abstraction from our ordinary ways of being in the world. Ordinarily the heart is rightly connected with a particular, powerful range of emotion, and hence with trust and sincerity. This is the natural life of human beings, and it is a mistake to think of the account that biology provides as somehow more basic, as coming closer to what is most real – richly valuable though biology undoubtedly is. I say "in my heart" or gesture to my heart. The meaning is there in the surface of the expression. I risk the thought here that this is evident in Japanese culture in ways that tend to escape the West, in such everyday practices as introducing oneself to a stranger or serving food or wrapping a gift; and perhaps it is also there especially in the highly refined gestural range of the Noh play, where the point will be to attend to that surface of signs rather than to imagine that it is a coding of something hidden or "deep".

In the next paragraph in the sequence we are considering, it is our obsession with representation that is raised:

If it is asked: "How do sentences manage to represent?" – the answer might be: "Don't you know? You certainly see it, when you use them." For nothing is concealed.

How do sentences do it? – Don't you know? For nothing is hidden.

But given this answer: "But you know how sentences do it, for nothing is concealed" one would like to retort "Yes, but it all goes by so quick, and I should like to see it as it were laid open to view." (PU §435)

Wittgenstein, I take it, is leading us away from the question, easing the anxiety that leads us to pose and address it in a particular way. For to abstract and isolate, say, the "general form of the proposition", as Wittgenstein had at-

tempted to do in his earlier work, would be to adopt a methodology that will become the source of our problems. And to imagine that there must be something concealed, something hidden below the surface, will be the source of metaphysical confusion.

Wittgenstein is not only exorcising the ghostly aspects of his earlier vision, for the problems he exposes are endemic in the Western philosophical tradition, with their trail-effects in popular consciousness. He explains:

Here it is easy to get into that dead-end in philosophy, where one believes that the difficulty of the task consists in our having to describe phenomena that are hard to get hold of, the present experience that slips quickly by, or something of the kind. Where we find ordinary language too crude, and it looks as if we were having to do, not with the phenomena of every-day, but with ones that [as Augustine puts this] "easily elude us, and, in their coming to be and passing away, produce others as an average effect". (PU §436)

Philosophy in some of its phases then encourages the all-too-human thought that reality lies, as it were, just outside our ordinary grasp, that something lies hidden beneath the surface of our experience and language. It is difficult to read these words without recalling Ralph Waldo Emerson's remark around a century earlier, in his essay "Experience": "I take this evanescence and lubricity of all objects, which lets them slip through our fingers then when we clutch hardest to be the most unhandsome part of our condition." Emerson's "clutch" and "slips through our fingers" anticipate Wittgenstein's "hard to get hold of" and "slips quickly by". And Emerson's wilfully inelegant use of "unhandsome" would suggest, first, "un-beautiful" but this in the manner of being clumsy, implying that we do not handle things well or lose touch with the world. Heidegger, writing around the same time as Wittgenstein, will speak of thinking as a handicraft (Heidegger, 1968, pp. 16-17). It is, in these lines from Emerson and Wittgenstein, as though we were dissatisfied with, or sceptical of, our accustomed interaction with the world and longed for something that exceeded the ordinary purchase of our language. But this is a scepticism that, however much it may be natural to the human condition, threatens to anaesthetise our relation to the world and to deaden the way the world is.

One of Stanley Cavell's figures for the deadening effects of this better-than-ordinary knowledge that we clutch after is that it is tainted with the Midas touch, where the touch that succeeds in turning everything to gold kills the world before our eyes (Cavell, 1979, p. 455). We are dissatisfied with the ordinary currency of our common practices and, avariciously like Midas, seek the harder coinage of a Gold Standard – only to lose sight of the fact that standards can be maintained only on the basis of continuities of human interaction and trust. These are continuities upon which learning and enquiry depend. By contrast, the ordinary economy of our lives turns into a flexible "knowledge economy", where knowledge is rendered exchangeable and commodified. If we can, for a moment, entertain this thought alongside Karl Marx's analysis of commodities, and of the fetish value of commodities, the dangers being considered here are only too apparent, and this is especially so in conditions of globalisation.

Now, on the face of it, it may seem that transparency is an avoidance of those occult elements, those mysterious, hidden things, that have been under suspicion throughout my discussion, but in fact it is their accomplice. For once again we find the same pattern: our ordinary confidence in, say, teaching and learning is devalued in favour of some

more technical language, which is thought to be closer to the reality of things. Ironically again, one casualty of this approach is the word “criteria” itself. Amongst teachers and amongst students, the word now has a special, technical sense: it typically connotes lists of numbered points, each referring to a behavioural outcome that can be identified with minimal interpretation or judgement on the part of the teacher, often as a binary value. This, it is supposed, is objectivity! This reinforces the sense that teachers’ judgements are merely “subjective” and so must be avoided where possible. The teacher becomes more like a flexible, replaceable technical operative, and the kinds of communities of practice that have sustained standards in the past are progressively eroded.

Obsession with transparency in this way is certainly not confined to education but pervades public service institutions. It stands in the way of confidence and trust, and hence it distorts conceptions of professional practice and expertise. It almost totally misses the critical role that must be played by judgement if these activities are not to be reduced to caricatures of themselves. And it places emphasis on technical and managerial innovation to the detriment of continuities of practice on which such professions and such expert judgement depend.

These, then, seem to be important implications of Wittgenstein’s assertion that nothing is hidden – which militates against phoney obsessions with transparency and endorses a confidence in the reality of our ordinary words. And yet I am left with a doubt, to be elaborated in discussion: how adequate is Wittgenstein’s treatment of the materiality of the sign, a topic to which he gives passing attention at best? And how far could a more adequate account of the sign coincide with the claim that nothing is hidden?

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# In Defence of Epistemic Relativism: The Concept of Truth in Georg Simmel's Philosophy of Money

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## Abstract

As one of the first modern philosophers, Georg Simmel systematically developed a "relativistic world view" (Simmel 2004, VI). In this paper I attempt to examine Simmel's relativistic answer to the question of truth. I trace his main arguments regarding the concept of truth and present his justification of epistemic relativism. In doing so, I also want to show that some of Simmel's claims are surprisingly timely.

Simmel's relativistic concept of truth is supported by an evolutionary argument. The first part of this paper outlines that pragmatic foundation of his epistemology. The second part of the paper shows that Simmel develops what today would be called a coherence theory of truth. He presents his coherentist view that every belief is true only in relation to another one primarily as a theory of epistemic justification. The third part turns to Simmel's original way of dealing with the (in)famous self-refutation charge against relativism.

## 1. Introduction

The turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is of special interest for the philosophical debate about relativism. In 1898 Wilhelm Dilthey delivered a lecture on "The Culture of Today and Philosophy" in which he defined "the problem" of relativism as the "challenge of the epoch" (Dilthey 1898, 204). In 1900 Georg Simmel's *Philosophy of Money* presented an interesting solution to that problem. As one of the first modern philosophers, Simmel systematically developed a "relativistic world view" (Simmel 2004, VI) and directly addressed what his contemporaries saw as the threat of relativism. His aim was to prove that relativism does not lead to subjectivism and scepticism. On the contrary, Simmel was convinced that relativism offers the only possibility of explaining the objectivity of cultural forms after the "historical dissolution of all substantial, absolute and eternal in the flow of things, in historical variability and psychological reality" (Simmel 1958, 9; translated by J.S.). Accordingly, the main question of the *Philosophy of Money* is how human achievements and practices with a contingent genesis can gain objective validity. Specifically with respect to values, Simmel wanted to show that their objective status is a result of their contingent genesis and that objectivity always rests on the interactions between subjective elements. Chris Swoyer has called the question of truth the "Achilles' heel of relativism" (Swoyer 2014, 94). In this paper I attempt to examine Simmel's answer to the question of truth. I will concentrate on the systematic reconstruction of Simmel's defence of epistemic relativism which is presented in the third section of the first chapter of the *Philosophy of Money* (see Simmel 2004, 101–130).

## 2. The Evolutionary Argument

Simmel's relativistic concept of truth is supported by an evolutionary argument. Simmel claims that the totality of epistemic "norms and facts has validity only in relation to specific physio-psychological organizations, their conditions of life and the furthering of their activity" (Simmel 2004, 108). This view presupposes that the mechanisms of perception and cognition are natural properties which are products of evolution. Consequently, truth in its relation to the external world is conceived as relative to the specific needs of specific species. Simmel holds a pragmatic perspectivism in which the truth of a belief is determined by whether an action guided by the belief has useful conse-

quences. Therefore, he identifies truth, first and foremost, with usefulness: "We dignify those representations with the name of 'truth' that, while active within us as real forces or motions, incite us to useful behaviour. Thus there are as many basically different truths as there are different organizations and conditions of life. The sense perception on the basis of which the insect acts properly would obviously not be true for the eagle." (Simmel 2004, 108)

Despite the possibility of various "true" images of the very same world, Simmel denies that the value of these images is only subjective. Rather, he argues that the various different images of the world possess "normative stability" (ibid.) in themselves. This is because, for any species, what can count as "true" for that species is determined by its physio-psychological organisation. Simmel claims that "every perceiving being possesses a generally established 'truth' which his representation may grasp or miss." (Simmel 2004, 107) And thus, the development of a knowledge within a certain species is defined as process of selection. Simmel applies that pragmatic concept of truth only to the foundation of a whole set of knowledge. This is because he thinks: "Once these modes of representation have been finally established as expedient through selection and cultivation, they form among themselves a realm of theory that determines, according to inner criteria, the inclusion or exclusion of new representations." (Simmel 2004, 108)

As I will show in the next section, Simmel develops what today would be called a "coherence theory of truth" which is supported by the evolutionary argument. Simmel's evolutionary argument enables him to deal with a common objection against coherentist approaches: The "isolation objection" is that "there is little reason to think that a coherent system of belief will accurately reflect the external world" (Olsson 2014, 4). Simmel avoids the problem of a "missing guidance whatsoever to truth or reality" (ibid.), because every set of knowledge has an evolutionary foundation.

## 3. The Coherentist Argument

Simmel develops his coherentist view that every belief is true only in relation to another one primarily as a theory of epistemic justification. He holds the fallibilist view "that no belief [...] can ever be rationally supported or justified in a

conclusive way" (Hetherington 2015). Since Simmel nevertheless does not doubt "that the truth of any statement can be known only on the basis of criteria that are completely certain and general" (ibid. 103), he has to provide sources for the justification of a belief other than an ultimate principle. Accordingly, Simmel traces the way in which a belief can be justified and concludes that the justification of knowledge can either follow the course of infinite regress (a) or constitute a circle (b). Simmel regards both the infinite construction and the process of reciprocal verification as sufficient accounts of justification, not least because they follow from the "decisive form" (ibid. 117) of the human mind: "The inherent necessity for our minds to know the truth by proofs either postpones the discovery of truth to infinity, or results in a circle, so that one statement is true only in relation to another one; this other one however, eventually only in relation to the first." (ibid. 106)

Simmel develops these two forms of reflection subsequently and gives a wide range of examples to demonstrate their significance. In the following I shall leave aside the details of Simmel's attempt to establish relativism as a "world formula" (ibid. 101). Instead I will only sketch the general outline of the further development of that distinction and concentrate on the reasons, why Simmel conceives regress and circle as legitimate strategies of justification:

(a) For Simmel, it is the *process of thinking* itself which has to be conceived as "continuous flux" (ibid. 115). From this observation Simmel concludes that, if cognition itself should offer an ultimate basis for knowledge, its justification forms a never-ending chain. Even if we grant Simmel that epistemological reflection forces us to accept an infinite regress of justifications, there are serious doubts whether doing so could give us the kind of justification we need for knowledge. One could argue that, precisely because reflection forces us to accept an infinite regress, knowledge is impossible. Simmel answers this sceptical objection with a transcendental argument. He thinks that, on the one hand, we can never define an ultimate principle which gives our process of thinking an absolute basis. But on the other hand, we can assume that every process of thinking involves a principle which accomplishes the task of justification in that singular case. According to Simmel, it is not scepticism „if we admit that our knowledge may have somewhere an absolute norm [...], but that its content remains in constant flux because knowledge progresses" (ibid. 104).

(b) Simmel presents the justificatory circle as another way of seeing "our knowledge as conditioned" (ibid. 105). He presents a holistic argument to show that the justificatory circle is not vicious. According to him, "it is not inconceivable that our knowledge, taken as whole, is imprisoned within this pattern. If one considers the vast number of hierarchically ordered presuppositions, stretching into infinity upon which all particular knowledge depends, it seems actually possible that the statement A is proved by the statement B, and the statement B through the truth of C, D, E, etc., until finally it can only be proved by the truth of A. [...] Cognition is thus a free-floating process, whose elements determine their position reciprocally, in the same way as masses of matter do by means of weight." (ibid. 106)

Simmel thinks that the "reciprocity of proof" (ibid.) constitutes the relation among the *contents of thought*. Again a transcendental move enables the dissolution of absolute claims in the relation of mutual interdependence. Simmel defines "the final, highest abstractions, simplifications and

syntheses of thought" (ibid. 110) as heuristic principles and claims that they always emerge in contradicting pairs. This idea is the foundation of his theory of world views which were more carefully elaborated in later works, especially in his treatise *Main Problems of Philosophy* (1910). Already in the *Philosophy of Money*, Simmel lists several examples of the reciprocal validation of opposing principles, like monism and pluralism or individualism and socialism. Since Simmel's theory of world views needs a careful elaboration, I do not investigate it in this paper.

#### 4. The Reversal of the Self-Refutation Charge

Simmel presents his defence of relativism as an original way of dealing with the (in)famous self-refutation charge against relativism. Consider the traditional form of the argument. Swoyer summarizes Plato's "peritrope" in the following way: „Plato's argument against strong truth-value relativism is typically said to go like this: either the claim that truth is relative is true absolutely [...] or else it is only true relative to some framework. If it is true absolutely, all across the board, then at least one truth is not merely true relative to a framework, so this version of the claim is inconsistent. Furthermore, if we make an exception for the relativist's thesis, it is difficult to find a principled way to rule out other exceptions; what justifies stopping here? On the other hand, if the relativist's claim that truth is relative is only true relative to his framework, then it can be false in other, perhaps equally good, frameworks." (Swoyer 2014, 95)

Simmel begins his defence of epistemic relativism with a criticism of other epistemological views, namely dogmatism, scepticism and criticism. He argues that they all have a problem when they are used to clarify their own presuppositions. In what follows Simmel shows that every epistemological view has to choose one of the horns of Plato's argument. And he concludes generally: "Epistemology here encounters a typical hazard. In analysing itself, it judges its own cause. It needs a vantage point outside itself, and is confronted with a choice between excepting itself from the test or rule imposed to all other knowledge [...]; or else subjecting itself to the laws and the process which it has discovered and thereby committing an act of circular reasoning, as is clearly illustrated by the self-negation of scepticism." (ibid. 117)

For Simmel, the typical danger which all epistemology faces is a problem of justification of knowledge. And Simmel has already introduced relativism as a solution to that problem (see section 2 of this paper). According to him, a relativistic approach can accept that knowledge cannot be justified in a conclusive way. Now, Simmel applies this thought to the justification of epistemic relativism. Unlike other epistemological principles, relativism is not destroyed if it is judged by its own principle, because it offers a solution to both horns of Plato's argument: Relativism can be held "absolutely", because this only means that a never-ending process of justification gets started: "Relativism strives to dissolve into a relation every absolute that presents itself, and proceeds the same way with the absolute that offers itself as the ground for this new relation. This never-ending process whose heuristic eliminates the alternative: either to deny or to accept the absolute. It makes no difference how one expresses it: either that there is an absolute but it can be grasped only by an infinite process, or that there are only relations but that they can only replace the absolute in an infinite process." (ibid. 117) The last argument makes clear that Simmel eliminates the absolute "as a conceptual counterpart to the

relativity of all things" (ibid. 104). His relativistic account is not least an attempt to re-define what it means to be true across the board. Since all epistemological principles with a definitive statement end in self-contradiction, Simmel questions the possibility of ultimate justification in itself. Against this background, the problem with the traditional self-refutation argument is its requirements, i.e. what it accepts as a valid epistemic justification. Roughly speaking, from the perspective of the self-refutation argument epistemic relativism should meet the standards of an epistemic absolutism. In other words, relativism is also expected to offer an epistemological principle "whose being and significance rests exclusively within" (ibid. 104) itself. But, as Simmel emphasises, "if the concept of relativity is construed in such a way that it requires an absolute, it is impossible to eliminate the absolute without self-contradiction". (ibid.) For Simmel, it is this requirement which leads to the self-contradiction, also in the case of relativism. Thus, Simmel's epistemic relativism has to be considered as an attempt to transform the standards of epistemology. He simply drops the requirement of an ultimate justification (see Geßner 2003, 89–90). Here, two already mentioned propositions are decisive: Simmel holds the view that all beliefs are only fallibly justified and claims that the fallibility of this belief itself is not a self-contradiction. In his terms, "[h]eurgistics, which is only the consequence or the application of the relativistic principle to the categories of knowledge, can accept without contradiction that it is itself a heuristic principle." (ibid. 117)

This claim leads us to Simmel's answer to the second horn: He thinks that relativism can exist in alternation with other, even absolute principles without losing its validity. This is because relativism expresses nothing other than the relativity of all justification, i.e. also its self-relativity. In the interaction with other principles, the process of justification is a case of circular reasoning which is allowed by epistemic relativism – in contrast to the absolute principles which have to cut "the continuing fruitful development of relations" (ibid. 117) and thus end in self-contradiction. But that the relativistic principle is valid only relatively, is exactly what the relativistic principle claims. In that case, it realizes its own proposition. Therefore, Simmel considers relativism as the only epistemological view which "proves itself by subordination to its own principle" (ibid. 118).

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper, I tried to clarify Simmel's version of epistemic relativism. I presented the sketch of a reconstruction of his main arguments regarding the concept of truth and suggested that some of his claims are surprisingly timely. I

think that Simmel's general approach to developing a "relativistic world view" (ibid. VI) deserves further investigation, both from a philosophical-historical and a systematic perspective. Such an approach is still a desideratum in the studies about Simmel, not least because his philosophy suffered a common fate in the history of relativism: Because it was 'tainted' with the relativist label, Simmel's work on philosophical concepts like truth was not taken seriously. For opponents like the Neokantian Heinrich Rickert, Simmel always remained a sceptic (see Simmel 1916, 637). And followers tried to save him from the relativist label and interpreted his world view as "relationistic" instead of "relativistic" (see e.g. Köhnke 1996, 480; Geßner 2003, 87–93). Both accounts miss the peculiarity of Simmel's philosophical approach which consists of his attempt to develop "a relativistic interpretation of being" (Simmel 2004, 56).

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# Grammar and Logic: A Close Reading of PI §89 and §90

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## Abstract

"Grammar" and "logic" are two central notions in Wittgenstein's philosophy. When we look at his *Nachlass*, we will find not only that he uses them both throughout his writings, but also that there are shifts in how and how often he uses them. In Wittgenstein scholarship, grammar and logic are often considered as being synonymous. This view, however, is questionable. In this paper I will focus on a text passage in the PI suggesting a conceptual difference between logic and grammar. I will then briefly contemplate what the distinction between grammar and logic may consist in by taking Wittgenstein's latest manuscripts into account. Logic may be understood as including everything that stands fast for us in our way of acting. From this perspective, grammar may be seen as a part of logic dealing with our linguistic practices.

## Grammar and logic in Wittgenstein's 'Nachlass'

"Grammar" and "logic" are two central notions in Wittgenstein's philosophy.<sup>1</sup> When we look at his *Nachlass*, we will find not only that he uses them both throughout his writings, but also that there are shifts in how and how often he uses them. In the *Tractatus*, logic is clearly the predominant notion, whereas grammar does only occur as "logical grammar" (TLP 3.325). After Wittgenstein's return to Cambridge 1929, logic is still his main focus. In the *Big Typescript*, however, the relation between the frequency of the terms "logic" and "grammar" is turned around, while later, in the *Philosophical Investigations* (PI), grammar is still prominent, yet the difference in frequency is not as outstanding as in the *Big Typescript*. Finally, in the latest manuscripts that Wittgenstein worked on short before his death, "logic" is taking over again as it occurs ten times as often as "grammar".

These observations make us wonder about the relation between grammar and logic. We can distinguish at least four positions: (1) Wittgenstein only changes his choice of words, and "logic" and "grammar" are to be understood as being synonymous; (2) "logic" and "grammar" mean the same, but Wittgenstein wants to emphasise different aspects of it by calling it "logic" in one place and "grammar" in another; (3) Wittgenstein's use of "logic", and perhaps also of "grammar", is not consistent; (4) "logic" and "grammar" are not the same, and thus changes in Wittgenstein's terminology imply a conceptual change.

In Wittgenstein scholarship, the change in terminology is barely addressed, let alone discussed. Oskari Kuusela mentions it briefly and takes position (1): "But he [Wittgenstein] continues to use 'grammar', 'logic' and their cognates interchangeably later too. There is no textual evidence for a change of mind" (Kuusela, forthcoming). Most Wittgenstein scholars seem to agree with him at least implicitly as they, when discussing Wittgenstein's notion of grammar, often quote passages from texts dating from the early thirties to 1951 - without referring to neither Wittgenstein's possible change of his understanding of grammar, nor his shift in terminology.

I do not claim that it is wrong to take position (1). Rather do I wish to emphasise that the terminological shift in Wittgenstein's writing deserves more attention and careful in-

vestigation. There are good reasons for taking position (1), but there are also good reasons for taking one of the other three positions. In this paper I will argue for position (4), which seems plausible especially in regard to *On Certainty* (OC) and Wittgenstein's latest writings. This paper is to demonstrate, however, that even the most polished part of the PI contains passages suggesting that logic is distinct from grammar. In the following I will first take a close look at PI §89 and §90 before taking Wittgenstein's latest writings into account and briefly sketching what such a distinction between grammar and logic may consist in.

## PI 89

Wittgenstein begins PI §89 by raising a question about the sublimity of logic. There are at least two ways of understanding the phrase: "Wir stehen mit diesen Überlegungen an dem Ort, wo das Problem steht". First, we may read the definite article in "das Problem" with no emphasis and simply take the introductory phrase as a slightly peculiar way of announcing a new issue. Second, we may stress the definite article and thus understand the problem as one of special, perhaps even crucial significance. There are two reasons for why the second reading is more plausible: first, for it seems unlikely that Wittgenstein chooses such a prominent way of introducing a question without aiming at emphasising it, and second, for logic is a central theme throughout his writings, and hence emphasising a problem related to it seems only natural. It is worth pointing out that Wittgenstein does not ask whether logic is sublime or not, but rather suggests, in his way of putting the question, that there is indeed a way in which logic *is* sublime. He does not give us an answer, but leaves it open for us to find out.

In a next step, Wittgenstein continues by spelling out why one might be at all inclined to understand logic as something sublime: "Denn es schien, daß ihr eine besondere Tiefe - allgemeine Bedeutung - zukomme. Sie liege, so schien es, am Grunde aller Wissenschaften." His way of using past tense and subjunctive in this explanation suggests that this is a view which he once held, and we can well assume that he is referring to his views on this matter as expressed in the *Tractatus*, but which he has now withdrawn from. After a dash he goes on in a similar manner and gives another reason why one might want to call logic something sublime: "Denn die logische Betrachtung erforscht das Wesen aller Dinge. Sie will den Dingen auf den Grund sehen, und soll sich nicht um das So oder So des tatsächlichen Geschehens kümmern." It is striking that Wittgenstein has now ceased to use past tense and sub-

<sup>1</sup> I am talking here about grammar and logic according to Wittgenstein's use of these notions. There are passages in his writings in which he refers to grammar, and especially to logic, in the traditional sense, yet these passages are not the focus of this paper.



junctive, and thus does not explicitly distance himself from this view as he has done in the previous explanation. Yet we still have reasons to assume that he is not expressing his own ideas in this passage since, given the context of the PI, we can hardly expect him to be interested in exploring “the essence of all things” in any metaphysical sense. After another dash, Wittgenstein takes up the contrast between the logical and the empirical by emphasising that logic does not originate from curiosity in empirical facts, but from the desire to understand the foundations of the empirical. This view of logic is clearly linked to the nature of the philosophical approach in the PI for he connects it to the method of his own investigation: “Nicht aber, als sollten wir dazu neue Tatsachen aufspüren: es ist vielmehr *für unsere Untersuchung* wesentlich, daß wir nichts Neues mit ihr lernen wollen.” [my emphasis] This passage suggests that Wittgenstein in the PI has the urge to understand the foundation of everything empirical, and that he is indeed inclined to call this foundation of everything empirical its essence. Further, he explains that he does not want to find out new facts – like a scientist would want to – but that he strives to *understand* something that is already open to view. In this way, he uses another expression for what he is trying to understand by means of his investigation: it is the foundation of everything empirical that is already in plain view. Since it is logic which arises from the urge to understand this foundation, we can call this urge, or aim, a *logical* one; and if it is a logical aim, then any investigation designed to meet it, and hence also Wittgenstein’s, is a *logical* investigation. Here we have a clear contrast between logic on the one hand the natural sciences on the other.<sup>2</sup> Wittgenstein emphasises the same contrast again after quoting Augustine.

It is striking that the way Wittgenstein talks about logic in PI §89 appears to be quite traditional. The idea of seeing a strong contrast between logic and the natural sciences is not at all new, but has often been put forward, not least by Immanuel Kant. Moreover, the suggested way of reading the passage just cited seems to be surprisingly similar to the view that Wittgenstein has distanced himself from in the same remark by using past tense and subjunctive, namely the view that logic has “a peculiar depth – a universal significance” and lay “at the foundation of all the sciences”. But it would be overhasty to think that Wittgenstein has this conviction in the PI. What he is saying is not that logic *lies* at the foundations of the sciences (and thus of the empirical), but rather that it *seeks to understand* these foundations. Furthermore, logic has certainly lost its “peculiar depth”. The original part of PI §89 is indeed the idea that what logic seeks to understand, namely the foundations, is for Wittgenstein nothing deep, but something already in plain view; we just have to call it to our minds.

## PI §90

In PI §90, Wittgenstein reformulates his point in the language of phenomenology: “Es ist uns, als müßten wir die Erscheinungen *durchschauen*: unsere Untersuchung aber richtet sich nicht auf die *Erscheinungen*, sondern, wie man sagen könnte, auf die ‘*Möglichkeiten*’ der Erscheinungen.” In the same sense in which he is not interested in gathering individual empirical facts, he is not interested in becoming clear about individual phenomena; and in the same sense in which he is striving towards an understanding of the foundations of everything empirical, he is aiming at an understanding of the possibilities of phenomena in princi-

ple. He further explains that this means that we call to mind “the *kinds of statement* that we make about phenomena.” Only here does it become obvious that Wittgenstein is interested in the way we *talk* about phenomena; and since our way of *talking* is his main focus, he finally identifies his inquiry as a grammatical one.

Here we are confronted with a shift from logic to grammar that is sudden and almost goes unnoticed. Yet a shift it is indeed. As has just been demonstrated, it follows from PI §89 that Wittgenstein’s investigation is a *logical* one for it seeks to understand the foundations of everything empirical. Yet in PI §90, he calls his investigation a *grammatical* one for we call to our minds the kinds of statements we make about phenomena. Thus we can construe that Wittgenstein’s investigation is both logical *and* grammatical. One might be inclined to assume at this point that logic and grammar are to be understood as the same, but I consider this to be very unlikely. Wittgenstein is very careful with his word choices, and we are dealing here with a part of the PI which he polished many times. Therefore it just does not seem plausible that he uses “grammar” and “logic” to mean the same in two consecutive remarks, especially not since these are remarks which express crucial ideas about his philosophical goal and method.

What other relation between grammar and logic does this text passage suggest? We may conclude that for Wittgenstein a grammatical investigation is also a logical one, while not every logical investigation is necessarily grammatical. In other words, we may conclude that for Wittgenstein grammar is a part of logic. While grammar in PI §90 is clearly linked to our use of words – Wittgenstein talks about the kind of *statements* we make, about “misunderstandings regarding the *use of words*, brought about, amongst other things, by certain analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of our *language*” [my emphasis] – logic in PI §89 is not at all connected to our way of talking. Rather, Wittgenstein seems to be making here a fundamental point about the nature of his investigation in general, namely that it is a logical one.

## Logic vs. grammar

If we understand PI §89 and §90 in the way that a grammatical investigation is also a logical one, whereas a logical investigation is not necessarily grammatical, we are left with the question what a logical investigation is concerned with if it is not grammatical. To answer this question, we would have to look more closely at other remarks than the ones I have considered here. Yet I would like to make a suggestion by emphasising the notion of practice, which is crucial for Wittgenstein’s philosophy (Johannessen 1988): Grammar, as it appears in the PI, is *really only* concerned with our way of using words, i.e. our *linguistic* practices. Logic, however, goes beyond this insofar as it encompasses our actions and practices in general, not only the linguistic ones. It is concerned with all we cannot call into doubt, for if we doubted it our whole network of beliefs would fall apart. In order to arrive at this understanding of logic we have to consider other writings than the PI, especially Wittgenstein’s latest manuscripts. In OC, he makes it very clear that our action is at the bottom of our language game (OC 110, 204). He also emphasises that not everything we do not doubt stands fast for us in language, but in action (e.g. OC 148), and that our language has sense due to our other practices (OC 229).

The distinction between logic and grammar I suggest here fits very well to OC and would explain why Wittgenstein speaks of logic rather than grammar in his latest writ-

<sup>2</sup> We find the same contrast, as well as an illustration of Wittgenstein’s striving towards an understanding of the foundations of the empirical, also in Wittgenstein’s draft for a preface from 1930 (Ms 109, 207).

ings. We may even say that in the PI his inquiry is a grammatical one, while in OC it is a logical one. Furthermore, this reading is compatible with PI §89 and other passages of the PI, especially those where Wittgenstein emphasises that language is a practice (PI §7, 21, 51). I do not doubt, however, that we will also encounter remarks that speak against this way of distinguishing logic from grammar. Hence I do not claim that there is a clear-cut systematic distinction between the two. What I do claim, however, is that to consider grammar and logic as being synonymous is by far not the only possible reading, and perhaps not even the most plausible one.

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# Anti-Antirealism

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## Abstract

We have discussed a theoretical concept, which we call anti-antirealism. It is the argumentation in favour of realism and developed against any forms of antirealism. This argumentation has been inspired by Wittgenstein's philosophy of language expressed in his *Philosophical Investigations* and by modern natural sciences. We are showing that it is impossible to practice any science without the postulate of realism being accepted.

### 1.

*Realism* is the title *anti-antirealism*. The notion of *realism* has a distant historical origin. It has hardly ever been understood explicitly. It used to be functioning in opposition to what is *ideal* or what is *unreal*. Realism is based on the assumption of mind-independent existence of not only the concrete specimens but also the universal beings. In the dispute of universals realists acknowledged real and independent existence of abstracts, i.e. the universal "entities". Contemporarily, realism is being discussed in the context of the dispute realism vs. instrumentalism and realism vs. antirealism.

In the context of the first of the above-mentioned controversies the parties of the dispute focus on theoretical objects, whose existence is postulated by appropriate theories; such an approach can be called the scientific realism whose "natural" opposition is instrumentalism. As usually, numerous moderate positions are formulated which lead the dispute realism vs. antirealism (instrumentalism) to be conducted at several levels becoming entangled in different contexts and having a number of different aspects. It has led to the situation where e.g. the approach to the issue of cognitive status of scientific knowledge is once qualified as realistic and another time as an antirealist one whereby some versions of realism differ more from each other than from some versions of antirealism.

Instrumentalism (antirealism in the science) assumes scientific theories to be the tools, which serve for observation statements to be associated and systemized and for calculations to be carried out which enable the forecasting of occurrence of some determined events depicted by observation statements. The problem of existence of theoretical entities being the designata of theoretical notions or the issues related to the truth or reality description is not taken into consideration within this approach. For the advocates of constructivism (antirealism) the most important feature of science is its ability to create theoretical structures, which enable conceptualization of available experimental data. The advocates of both realistic and antirealist approach to the philosophy of science can be the followers of the „constructive" option with regard to the approach to the science. The adjective "constructive" means scientific activity to consist rather in „constructing" than in „exploring". Since Popper's time a number of realists have stressed the „creative" elements of scientific activities. The basic difference between the constructive realists and the advocates of the constructive empiricism (antirealists) consists in the way of determining cognitive status of theoretical models constructed by science. Realists analyze the relationship between theoretical model and real system, whereas the advocates of the constructive empiricism con-

sider its empirical adequacy understood as the conformity with phenomena.

An apt metaphor determining the function of antirealism within the science is the definition of constructivism presented by (Quine 1987): "The sense (of constructivism – G.R.T.) can be defined as a practice, project or policy of mathematizing with one's hands tied."

The reproach of antirealism formulated towards the classical scientific realism means that „the culprit" constitutes an infeasible attempt to view the world from its external perspective. Some authors suppose that in view of the existence of a number of realisms which differ from one another in practically everything there *only* exist different types of realism, whereby it should be kept in mind that such an expression is by no means non-problematic, as the question remains if there exist any common theses acknowledged by particular realisms. For example, (Newton-Smith 1981) asserts that „The word *realism* means a large number of approaches to the philosophy of science. All of them acknowledge a certain common minimum, i.e. that all the statements of science are either true or false whereby the truth is understood in terms of the classical theory of truth".

The opposition realism versus antirealism appears when truth conditions are considered with regard to theorems (statements, opinions), which describe reality. The followers of antirealist approach (unless they are associated with instrumentalism which, as mentioned above, is often perceived as a stronger attitude) assume the existence of reality whose nature is determined somehow by mental state of cognitive subject his knowledge language and the preferred notional system etc. According to realists the truth of a statement depends on cognitive abilities of cognitive subject (methods of statement verification). Consequently, the truth is understood in this comprehension as an epistemic notion, which depends on cognitive abilities of subject, contrary to the classical truth concept where statement truth does not depend on fact that anybody confirms (i.e. recognizes) this truth at any time.

### 2.

Michael Dummett (1978) – one of key theorists of so called semantic antirealism presented his doctrine in the following way: „I characterize realism as the belief that statements of the disputed class possess an objective truth-value, independently of our means of knowing it: they are true or false in virtue of a reality existing independently of us. The antirealist opposes to this the view that statements of the disputed class are to be understood only by reference to the

sort of thing which we count as evidence for a statement of that class."

For an antirealist, the apprehension of a statement is based on knowledge, which is a sufficient evidence for the statement to be acknowledged, whereas truth of statement may consist only in existence of such evidence. Antirealistic attitude acknowledges a statement to be true without the need to assume that statement refers to the reality, which exists regardless of the ability of its cognition. Dummett „cancels” the assumption of the objectively existing reality so Dummett's antirealism is in accordance with idealism in the sense that it does not assume the reality described by a true statement, i.e. the one that is in accordance with reality, to be independent of the mind that finds this conformity.

### 3.

Bastian van Fraassen, when reconstructing the realistic approach, writes about literally true description and says that the following can be called in question on antirealistic approach: (i) possibility of a literal description or (ii) possibility of a true description. The title of van Fraassen's work (*The Scientific Image*) makes reference to distinction between the *scientific* and *manifest image* introduced by W. Sellars, i.e. the scientific and the explicit image of the world. According to W. Sellars scientific realism, the reasons in favour of any scientific theory are also in favour of existence of objects postulated by it to be acknowledged. Meanwhile, according to van Fraassen the realism means view „that the goal of science is to provide the literal and true report on the world by means of its theories and the acknowledgment of a scientific theory assumes the belief in respect of its being true”, whereas the concept of constructive empiricism presented by him indicates “that the goal of science is to provide us with empirically adequate theories; and acceptance of a theory assumes the belief only of its empirical adequacy. (...) A theory is empirically adequate if it is true in respect of the observable objects and events” (Van Fraassen 1980). In van Fraassen's opinion the acceptance of a theory does not require belief of its being true but it is rather connected with involvement in a determined research program, i.e. with tendency to comprise any future events by means of notional means which are appropriate for that theory.

In view of the above controversies we are facing in contemporary disputes about realism it could be worthwhile to present list of discrepancies:

Realism	Anti-Realism
Reality does not depend on what we think of it	Reality depends on what we think of it
Truth is not defined by means of epistemic terms	Truth is defined by means of epistemic terms
There is the risk of scepticism.	There is no risk of scepticism.
Principle of excluded Middle is accepted	Principle of excluded Middle is not accepted at all.
Meaning is explained by means of truth conditions	Meaning is explained by means of verificationist conditions

Cognition of reality is usually identified as its accurate (apt, truthful) description. Contemporary dispute between *realists* and *sceptics* or *relativists* (*anti-relativists*) is focused on the issue if such a truthful description is possible. Even

the notion of such a description brings a number of difficulties.

Finally, we have to do with two alternative concepts of the truth, i.e. coherence and correspondence theories of truth. None of the traditional (often called naive) formulations can be regarded to be satisfactory. Most generally, it can be said that, according to coherence theory, the truth is everything that can be placed in a logically consistent system. According to correspondence theory, the truth is everything that is in accordance with reality. The courageous formula of coherence theory is based on a rather irrational idea according to which there exists only one logically consistent distribution of confirmations and negations in the indefinite set of possible conceptions. According to (Quine 1987) „when we get rid of unnecessary details, the significant contrast between correspondence and coherence theories would consist in the fact that first one stresses relationship between a true statement and entity it refers to, e.g. white snow, while other stresses relationships between true statements and other statements. (...) If we consider coherence and correspondence properly then it turns out that they are not rival theories of truth but they constitute its complementary aspects. Coherence aspect is related to the way of reaching the truth in an ideal case. Correspondence aspect is connected with the relationship between the truth and the entity to which it refers.”

### 4.

The approach recommended in this paper can be called a radically realistic one. It opposes both realism and antirealism as each of them is based on the supposition of existence of one world. Science is unable to devise a thesis which is not true in a certain world. At most, it can be a truth that is useless for us. But it is not a reason to deprive such a thesis of the quality of being true. It is only a reason to refuse the will of fully disinterested cognition”. When defending the realism (it is the same with the opposite attitude) it is necessary to keep in mind the *lingua* principles in the field of semantics, i.e. not every sentence makes reference to a certain possible situation. For example, a sentence may happen not to denote anything when semantic system of the given language is defective. Every language (also the one of scientific theories) is shaped in such a way that it is matched to the ontology assumed by its users and not to the ontology of the real world.

Let us point out that such an important antirealistic category as experimenting, as a scientific activity, assumes (more or less explicitly) a kind of reference to an extra-subjective reality. It is similar with van Fraassen's postulate to replace the truth (as an exceedingly ambitious and unnecessary cognitive goal) by the empirical adequacy. Certainly, an anti-realist could protest saying that we will never know what our theories are referred to. The lack of such knowledge does not derogate the fact of existence of such a relationship, i.e. you may ask no question e.g. if wave theory of light is true or not, but you may ask the proper question: which empirical situations are reflected adequately on the ground of wave theory of light.

In order to be a realist it is sufficient to show the following position: if we systematically observe the same events or situations in given circumstances, then the „identity” of the observed things constitutes an objective feature of those situations.

Making reference to Plato's allegory of the cave it can be said that the shadows seen by the prisoners are the objective but strongly uncertain representations of realities.

In our opinion is that the postulate of realism (in any of its versions) is a necessary condition for the science to exist. In other words, antirealism cannot be defended secondarily to realism; in respect of the theses already formulated and related somehow to the reality. In still other words: when we consider realism as a position explaining how it is possible for the science to explain particular phenomena, then it becomes an alternative attitude to realism; it ceased to be it when we forecast the occurrence of a future event or situation. When the forecast is apt, the explanation of science success on the ground of instrumentalism is more than ambiguous. Moreover, it must be a problem for an antirealist to answer the following question: how is it possible to forecast anything if the designata of the appropriate notions of theory of science do not comply with reality?

We know no research program or project based on anti-realism, which would result in „empirically adequate” discoveries in the field of nature studies. It is one of key arguments against antirealism. Unfortunately, it is of persuasive nature so it cannot be regarded to be conclusive.

We become convinced that the realism is correct in respect of some determined objects when checking the evidence and arguments aimed at supporting particular statements on those objects. The general sceptical arguments concerning the theoretical subjects are less convincing than e.g. the evidence in favour of DNA actuality. Evidence of actuality is derived from a strong conformity of inter-disciplinary results; their strength results from their diversity and the fact that they have endured practical testing in different Fields of science which are of ten distant from each other. It is exaggeration to expect any univer-

sally useful arguments in favour of scientific realism in general. What exists in the world does not respect any disciplinary boundaries of particular sciences and that is one of the signs (criteria) of the real existence.

It is clear that it is not conclusive what we just presented; however, it has some persuasive value and we personally share the opinion that there is not much more to be achieved in this matter.

Realism, like everything behind the boundaries of logics, can neither be proved nor rejected, because no event or experience can be found to be a conclusive rejection of realism. It is similar with idealism, which takes the shape of antirealism nowadays. Almost all physical chemical and biological theories imply realism in the sense that if they are true then the realism must also be true. Rationality, description, evidence - all that is related to a certain actuality and to certain recipients. Rejection of realism „is a megalomania – the most frequent illness of Professional philosophers” (Quine 1987).

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# Stanley Cavell, Criteria and Fictional Discourse

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## Abstract

Stanley Cavell criticizes Norman Malcolm and Rogers Albritton for misinterpreting Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of "criteria." Malcolm and Albritton think that criteria of a thing allow us to determine the existence of something with certainty. Cavell underlines that the Wittgensteinian criteria help identification and recognition rather than determination of the existence of something with certainty. Therefore, the criteria for a real goldfinch for example are the same for stuffed, painted or phony goldfinch. In this paper, I criticize John Searle's assertion that fictional discourse is pretended representation of state of affairs by appealing to Cavell's idea that criteria serve identification rather than determining the existence of something with certainty. First, I briefly summarize the Malcolm-Albritton view on criteria and secondly, I express how Cavell's critique of the Malcolm-Albritton view helps us criticize Searle's view of the logic of fictional discourse.

The relation between concepts, our uses of terms and their relation to grammatical criteria is one of the important topics discussed in relation with Wittgenstein's philosophy of language. Norman Malcolm and Rogers Albritton interpret Wittgenstein's view of criteria in a certain way, which I want to summarize briefly.

## 1. The Malcolm-Albritton View on Criteria

Malcolm and Albritton think that criteria are related to what a thing is called, and it is possible for us to determine necessary and sufficient conditions as criteria of a thing allowing us to determine its existence with certainty. Albritton says that in Wittgenstein "the criterion for this or that's being so is, among other things, a logically sufficient condition of its being so" (Albritton 1959, 847) and "...that this or that was a criterion for so-and-so's being the case was to be a sort of 'tautology,' a matter of 'convention'" (Albritton 1959, 854-855). According to Albritton, this requirement presupposes a necessary relation between criteria, or behaviors, which are an indication of sensation and sensation itself. For example, if you have a toothache, then, you have a red patch on your cheek and behave in a certain way such as holding your cheek. These patterns of behaviors as criteria of toothache allow a second person to infer that you have a toothache. He says,

And Wittgenstein also holds, if I understand him correctly, that it is a necessary truth that a man whose behavior does *not* include any belonging to this family, under normal circumstances, never or almost never has a toothache. These kinds of patterns of behavior, then, if there are any, are 'criteria' of having a toothache, in Wittgenstein's usage, so far as I can make out what that usage is (Albritton 1959, 856).

Norman Malcolm also analyzes the topic of the relation between concepts and criteria of that concept and their relation to what a thing is called. In line with Albritton, Malcolm thinks that we establish a connection between criteria of a sensation and the utterance of sensation word and here too criteria determine the existence of sensation with certainty.

According to Malcolm, Wittgenstein means that the child's utterances of the word for a sensation must be in accord with some nonverbal, natural expression of that sensation. "This concomitance serves as the criterion of his understanding the word. Later on, the word can be uttered in the absence of primitive expressions. ('It hurts' can

be said without cries or winces.)" (Malcolm 1954, 540). Malcolm talks about a relation between nonverbal, natural expression of sensation, which constitutes criteria of sensation and the word of sensation. In the same manner, Malcolm thinks that while the words are used to report the occurrence of sensation and to inform others of it, natural expressions are not used to inform others (Malcolm 1954, 540). Like Albritton, Malcolm believes that pain-behavior is a criterion of pain only in an actual situation of having pain. In case a person is rehearsing in a play, or hypnotized and told to be acting as if he is in pain; under these conditions we cannot say that the expressions of pain are criterion of pain. Malcolm says, "[t]he expressions of pain are a criterion of pain in certain 'surroundings'" (Malcolm 1954, 545). Hence, criterion in language is fulfilled, only if there is an actual corresponding thing. In case of sensation words such as "pain," it is fulfilled only if a person is really in pain. As Cavell points out, this shows us that criterion in the Malcolm-Albritton view determines the existence of something, in this case sensations, moods and feelings with certainty. Malcolm states, "if someone *always* had endless doubts about the genuineness of expressions of pain, it would mean that he was not using *any* criterion of another's being in pain" (Malcolm 1954, 547). Malcolm says that we use a man's identification of his sensation as a criterion of what his sensation is: it is dependent criterion in the sense that it cannot be isolated from the rest of the behavior of a human being (Malcolm 1954, 558).

[V]erbal reports and identifications would not be a criterion unless they were grounded in the primitive sensation-behavior that is the primary and independent criterion of ...sensations. If we cut out human behavior from the language-game of sensations ...one result will be that a man's identifying a sensation as the 'same' that he had a moment before will no longer be a criterion of its being the same. Not only the speaker, but no one will have a criterion of identity. Consequently, for no one will it have any meaning to speak of a man's being 'struck by the recurrence of a certain sensation' (Malcolm 1954, 558-559).

Hence, according to Malcolm, verbal reports and identifications can be criteria only if they are grounded in the primitive sensation-behavior constituting the existence of sensations. This view requires vertical or corresponding relations between criteria of sensation- what a thing is called- this may be a certain type of behavior, or constellation of behaviors, its utterance, and the sensation itself.

## 2. Cavell's View of Criteria and its Implications for the Critique of Searle's View of the Logic of Fictional Discourse

### I

In contrast to the Malcolm-Albritton view, Cavell thinks that criteria serve identification rather than determining the existence of something. He appeals to J.L. Austin and Wittgenstein to show that in ordinary cases we do not question the existence of a bird such as goldfinch, it only happens in special cases. He points out that Austin takes a specific example such as "goldfinch" and states that we know this specific bird from "the marks or features in terms of which something is recognized to be a goldfinch" (Quoted by Cavell 1979, 50). According to Cavell, there are no Austinian criteria for determining the actual existence of something. His main point is "There are (can be) no criteria for something's being a real X over and above the criteria for its being an X.... There are no criteria for a thing's *being* so over and above the criteria for its being *so*" (Cavell 1979, 51). In this sense, the problem of knowledge is the problem of identification rather than determination of an existence of something. Hence, to provide a basis for a claim is not to provide a basis sufficient to show that it is real because a criterion for claiming that something is a goldfinch equally provides the basis for claiming that it is a stuffed goldfinch. Cavell continues,

the criteria (marks, features) are the same for something's being a goldfinch whether it is real, imagined, hallucinatory, stuffed, painted, or in any way phony. Am I *just wrong* if I say "There's a goldfinch" and it "turns out to be" stuffed? If you hold up a chart of birds and ask me "Is there a goldfinch here?" or "Which is the goldfinch?" and I say "There's a goldfinch", will you reply "You're wrong, it's only a painting"? That is fully outrageous. Because I was *right* in my identification, and because I *knew* they were all painted. How did I "know" that? Not the way I know that one was the goldfinch. (Existence is not a predicate) (Cavell 1979, 51).

Hence, according to Cavell, the difference between real and imaginary, between existence and absence is not a criterial difference (Cavell 1979, 51). He distinguishes the Austinian "specific objects," which are characterized by for example a specific instance of birds such as goldfinch, from "generic objects." Generic objects, on the other hand, are categorized by "mind, matter, sense-data, meanings, colors, etc." (Cavell 1979, 77). According to Cavell, the Wittgensteinian, or grammatical criteria, as different from the Austinian criteria are related to generic objects.

If you do not know the (non-grammatical) criteria of an Austinian object (can't identify it, name it) then you lack a piece of information, a bit of knowledge, and you can be told its name, told what it is, told what it is (officially) called. But if you do not know the grammatical criteria of Wittgensteinian objects, then you lack, as it were, not only a piece of information or knowledge, but the possibility of acquiring any information about such objects *überhaupt*; you cannot be told the name of that *object*...the possibility of finding out what it is officially called is not yet open to you (Cavell 1979, 77).

According to Cavell, in each case criteria help our identification and recognition rather than determination of the existence of something with certainty. As Cavell underlines Malcolm's and Albritton's worry and the response to the question of criteria overlap with the traditional epistemologist's question such as "How do we know, e.g., that ...?" which can be translated to the question "How do we know

(can be certain) that *anything* exists?" (Cavell 1979, 56). In line with Wittgenstein, Cavell thinks that unless there is a special reason, we do not ask questions such as whether there are tomatoes, tables or material things. Cavell also emphasizes that even in case you have a stuffed or painted example in front of you; you have the same type of criteria to identify and recognize an object. "... (The concept is retained. It is retained because the criteria for its application are present and satisfied)" (Cavell 1979, 58). In other words, the concern for referential force drops out of consideration, when it comes to define a concept with criteria.

Both in Wittgenstein and Austin criteria are related to "a knowledge of what a thing is (conventionally) called" (Cavell 1979, 65). In that sense, the question of reality is not settled in the way questions of identity are settled (Cavell 1979, 63). In a Wittgensteinian context, criteria are related to generic objects and the criteria do not relate a name to an object, but various concepts to the concept of that object.

Here the test of your possession of a concept (e.g., of a chair, or a bird; of the meaning of a word; of what it is to know something) would be your ability to use the concept in conjunction with other concepts, your knowledge of which concepts are relevant to the one in question and which are not; your knowledge of how various relevant concepts, used in conjunction with the concepts of different kind of objects, require different kinds of contexts for their competent employment (Cavell 1979, 73).

Cavell states that the Malcolm-Albritton view defines criteria by means of logically necessary and sufficient conditions; and in doing so, it takes one kind of context or object as inevitable (Cavell 1979, 74). The Wittgensteinian criteria, on the other hand, do not relate a name to an object, "but various concepts to the concept of that object" "They establish the position of the concept of an 'object' in our system of concepts" (Cavell 1979, 76).

### II

How this view is related to John Searle's view of the logic of fictional discourse? Searle analyzes fictional discourse from a logical point of view and states that fictional discourse consists of assertive type of illocutionary acts, which have no referential force. Because fictional discourse cannot fulfill vertical relations and word-to-the world direction of fit, they do not satisfy truth conditions, but require "horizontal conventions." This, in its turn, removes corresponding relations between fictional events and real events. Searle concludes that an author of fictional discourse pretends to perform assertive illocutionary acts rather than actually uttering them. According to Searle, because referential force is eliminated in literary discourse, then fictional discourse is not serious (Searle 1979, 65)<sup>1</sup>. This mentality is similar to Malcolm's idea that pain-behavior is a criterion of pain only in an actual situation of having pain and in case a person is rehearsing in a play, or hypnotized and told to be acting as if he is in pain, under these conditions the expressions of pain cannot be a criterion of pain. Searle is in search of corresponding relations between criteria of concepts and objects. To define fictional discourse by means of pretended representation of facts and hence as non-serious discourse (because it is devoid of referential force) is problematic. Cavell's view on criteria discussed above helps us criticize Searle's view of the logic of fictional discourse because even in the context

<sup>1</sup> I criticized other aspects of Searle's view of the logic of fictional discourse in (Turanli 2012)

of fictional discourse, we have the same type of criteria to identify and recognize objects such as goldfinch. Hence, the concept is retained because the criteria for its application are present and satisfied. The sentence such as "There is a goldfinch in the garden" used in a fictional discourse is recognized by readers in the same way it is recognized in actual life because we apply the same criteria. However, according to Searle, this is an assertive type of speech act, and it is a kind of a "brute fact." Although we require the institution of language to state brute facts, the fact stated is distinguished from the statement of it (Searle 1996, 2). In this sense, it has reference to nonlinguistic fact. Our sentence states the existence of goldfinch in the garden with a vertical type, word-to-the world direction of fit. However, fictional discourse has not that kind of force, so it is "non-serious." Actually, according to Searle, any linguistic element, or linguistic form is "partly constitutive of the facts" (Searle 1996, 37) because language represents facts. The Malcolm-Albritton view and Searle, in their different ways, assume vertical relations between criteria of concepts and objects. Searle commits the realistic fallacy in stating that fictional discourse is pretended representation of state of affairs.

À la Cavell, I say that criteria of concepts are fulfilled even in fictional discourse. In that context too, we understand, identify and recognize concepts not because concepts are related to objects, but they make sense in the system of concepts. In this sense, even in fictional discourse speech acts are genuine with regard to showing us how a concept is used and how it makes sense in the constellation of concepts and contexts.

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# On the Matter of “Fact”

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## Abstract

The word 'fact' is essential to many philosophical theories, especially realistic theories and theories in the philosophy of science. Through etymological analysis and by example I want to show that the meaning of this term, once clear and simple, has become overloaded and diffuse. While this has fostered the adoption of the word, it also has led to the loss of any substance it might have had.

## A brief examination of the etymology of the word 'fact'

Etymology can not only be fun, it can also be philosophically valuable. When one bases a philosophical theory on a word, knowledge of its origin and meaning is essential. In Paul Boghossian's book *Fear of Knowledge* (Boghossian 2006) for example there is hardly a page where the word 'fact' is absent. I did not yet finish counting the number of occurrences, but I believe that it is fair to say that this word plays a central role in his argumentation. This, it seems, is neither new nor unusual. Fritz Mauthner's philosophical dictionary (Mauthner 1923) contains an article called 'Logik der Tatsachen':

Von den Bestandteilen dieses Schlagwortes ist das Wort *Tatsache* allein schon eine Mißbildung; darauf hat bereits Lessing hingewiesen, in dem kleinen Fragment „Über das Wörtlein *Tatsache*“ (Leben und Nachlaß von K. G. Lessing III, 177; Adelung hatte die Wortform schon getadelt.): „Mit Recht sage ich *Wörtlein*; denn es ist noch so jung. Ich weiß mich der Zeit ganz wohl zu erinnern, da es noch in niemandes Munde war. Aber aus wessen Munde oder Feder es zuerst gekommen, das weiß ich nicht.“ (Nach dem D. W. hätte Spalding, der protestantische Prediger und Aufklärer, das Wort 1756 als Lehnübersetzung eines ebenso papiernen *res facti* zuerst geprägt.) „Noch weniger weiß ich, wie es gekommen sein mag, daß dieses neue Wörtlein ganz wider das gewöhnliche Schicksal neuer Wörter in kurzer Zeit ein so gewaltiges Glück gemacht hat; noch, wodurch es eine so allgemeine Aufnahme verdient hat, daß man in gewissen Schriften kein Blatt umschlagen kann, ohne auf eine *Tatsache* zu stoßen.“

Here Mauthner quotes Lessing, who says that he does not know where this new word comes from and that he remembers a time when no-one used it. He understands even less how it could have found its way into the language so quickly and how it could have deserved such a favourable reception that in some works one can hardly turn a page without stumbling upon a 'Tatsache'. Judging by this account, it seems that the word 'Tatsache' had something compelling about it, right from its introduction into the German language. The work by Spalding that is referred to here is likely 'Bestätigung der natürlichen und geoffenbarten Religion aus ihrer Gleichförmigkeit mit der Einrichtung und dem ordentlichen Laufe der Natur' (Butler 1756), a translation of Butler's 'Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed' (Butler 1897)<sup>1</sup>. One of the relevant sections is:

This revelation, whether real or supposed, may be considered as wholly historical. For prophecy is nothing but the history of events before they come to pass: doctrines also are matters of fact: and precepts come under the same notion. (Butler 1897, 270)

In the German translation, 'matters of fact' is translated as 'Thatsachen' (an old form of 'Tatsachen') and '(Res facti)' was added:

Diese Offenbarung, sie mag nun wahr oder bloß vorgegeben sein, kann ganz als historisch angesehen werden. Denn eine Weißsagung ist nichts anders, als eine Erzählung von Begebenheiten, ehe sie geschehen sind. Die Lehren sind auch Thatsachen, (Res facti) und die Gebote gehören gleichfalls unter diese Klasse. (Butler 1756, 358)

However, Spalding was in no way consistent in his translation:

Thus we find, that the true notion or conception of the Author of nature, is that of a master or governor, prior to the consideration of his moral attributes. The fact of our case, which we find by experience, is, that he actually exercises dominion or government over us at present, by rewarding and punishing us for our actions, in as strict and proper a sense of these words, and even in the same sense, as children, servants, subjects, are rewarded and punished by those who govern them. (Butler 1897, 46)

The German translation of this section contains 'Thatsache' and '(Res facti)', even though the English version said just 'fact':

Es ist eine Thatsache (Res facti) die wir in der Erfahrung wahrnehmen, daß er wirklich aufs gegenwärtige Herrschaft und Regiment über uns ausübet, indem er uns unserer Handlungen wegen belohnet und strafet, und zwar in einem so eigentlichen und strengen Verstande des Wortes, ja in eben demselbigen Verstande, als Kinder, Bediente und Unterthanen von denenjenigen, welche über sie herrschen, belohnet und gestrafet werden. (Butler 1756, 51)

There are sections where Spalding translated 'matter of fact' with something other than 'Thatsache', such as this gem:

The proof from final causes of an intelligent Author of nature is not affected by the opinion of necessity; supposing necessity a thing possible in itself, and reconcilable with the constitution of things. And it is a matter of fact, independent on this or any other speculation, that he governs the world by the method of rewards and punishments: and also that he hath given us a moral

<sup>1</sup> Butler's 'Analogy' was first published in 1736. Lacking access to the original, I based my analysis on a later edition.

faculty, by which we distinguish between actions, and approve some as virtuous and of good desert, and disapprove others as vicious and of ill desert. (Butler 1897, 123)

In the German version, 'matter of fact' becomes 'wirkliche Erfahrung' (roughly translated: 'real experience'):

Der Beweis von den Absichten eines verständigen Urhebers der Natur leidet bei der Meinung von der Nothwendigkeit nichts, wenn wir einmal voraussetzen, daß die Nothwendigkeit an sich selbst möglich ist, und mit der Einrichtung der Dinge bestehen kann. Und es ist eine wirkliche Erfahrung, die weder von einer noch der anderen Spekulation abhänget, daß er die Welt vermittelst Belohnungen und Strafen regieret; er hat uns auch eine moralische Fähigkeit gegeben, mit welcher wir zwischen den Handlungen einen Unterschied machen, und einige als tugendhaft und würdig billigen, andere aber als schlimm und unrecht verwerfen. (Butler 1756, 160)

Three things are of note:

1. Spalding translated 'matter of fact' or 'matters of fact' not only to 'Thatsache' but also to a number of other words.
2. He translated a number of other words and phrases, such as just 'fact', to 'Thatsache'.
3. '(Res facti)' occurs only in the German translation, never in the English original, and it is always preceded by 'Thatsache'.

I hypothesise, specifically from 3., that Spalding translated the English 'matter of fact' to the Latin 'Res facti' and from that created the German word 'Thatsache'. 1. and 2. could be interpreted in a number of different ways, I will refrain from speculation about that.

There is also the matter of 'fact', which was likely derived from the Latin 'facere', as was the German 'Tat'. Fact used to have the meaning of 'deed', 'act' or 'crime', all of which translate very well to the German 'Tat'. What is clear is that every deed needs someone to have done it, the question is as to who.

It seems that these words were and are mainly used in the domains of theology, law and philosophy.

- Butler's 'Analogy' is an example that shows that in theology, specifically Christian theology, 'matters of fact' are the acts of god.

- Law deals with the deeds of man, 'evil' deeds, crimes and the like. This meaning is still present today in such phrases as 'before the fact' and 'after the fact' (fact 1969).

- With respect to philosophy this question is not so easy to answer. Who did the deed, if not god, if not man? Who created the mountain, if not god, if not man? If such a question would be posed in modern philosophy, the answer would likely be that it is not the role of philosophy to answer it. It may be the role of some branch of science, and that is fine. The trouble is that we have arrived at a point where we act as if deeds just are, things done just are, and we no longer have a clear idea what the word 'fact' is supposed to mean.

How did it come to be that the meaning of fact changed from its original meaning to its later meanings? I do not have a definitive answer to that yet, only speculation. I supposed that it could have gotten this meaning in the domain of law. In a court of law, each of the two parties tries to convince the judge to believe his version of the

story, that the deed happened one way or the other. In such a situation it is of course useful to have a word that supports one's own position (although the other side can learn to do the same, which nullifies its effect). It could be that in this way the word 'fact' was frequently used in conjunction with a word such as 'real' and later on absorbed its meaning. The word 'real' means nothing more than 'pertaining to things' (real 1969). It may look somewhat different on the outside, but does a 'deed pertaining to things' mean something different than a 'matter of fact' or 'Res facti'?

There is also the matter of how the word 'fact' is used today. When I read 'Fear of Knowledge' (Boghossian 2006) I frequently found the phrase 'facts obtain' which struck me as odd. English is not my native language, but I was familiar with the word 'obtain' in its common and original meaning, 'come into possession of' (obtain 1969). The word 'obtain' is clearly a verb, thus requiring a subject and that is in the phrase 'facts obtain' the word 'fact'. Not only does it make little sense to say that a 'fact comes into the possession of'. One also has to wonder what the fact comes into the possession of. Consequently it also requires an object, which does not exist in this phrase. It was also news to me that facts could act on their own. However, the solution in this case seems to be that 'obtain' at some point obtained an additional meaning. The meaning in conjunction with the word 'fact' seems to be more or less that of 'to be', 'to exist', 'to persist', 'to pertain' or in German 'sein', 'existieren', 'bestehen', 'gelten'. This particular meaning of 'obtain' seems to be quite removed from its original and common meaning. I think that this meaning may be most frequently found in domains such as law, and that it may have developed in conjunction with the meaning of 'fact'. I believe this would warrant further investigation, as these words are highly influential in domains such as philosophy and law, yet they are ill understood and often enough undefined.

## Austin's fact

One example of how the word 'fact' can be understood can be found in Austin's paper 'Truth' (Austin 1970) where he discusses it in conjunction with the truth of statements. In it, he criticises the use of the phrase 'fact that'. He distinguishes between 'soft' and 'hard' facts and describes the latter as 'facts which are natural and unalterable, or anyhow not alterable at will'. It does however not become clear what constitutes a fact, only that facts are things in the world, states of affairs, that statements correspond to or not. There was a discussion between Austin and Strawson, part of which can be found in Austin's article 'Unfair to Facts' (Austin 1970). I believe that it cannot be concluded without a doubt from this account what facts are for him, but it certainly becomes clear that it is a complicated matter. I believe that the discussion between Austin and Strawson would deserve re-examination.

## Wittgenstein's fact

An example of a completely different understanding of 'fact' can be found in the beginning of the 'Tractatus', where Wittgenstein uses the word 'Tatsache' to describe the world. It seems to me that he uses 'Tatsache' (fact) and 'was der Fall ist' ('that is the case') synonymously and he rather explicitly says that it is not the same as 'Ding' (thing) (Wittgenstein 2003, 1, 1.11, 1.12, 1.2, 2). Rather than having facts corresponding to or referring to things, he introduced the term 'Sachverhalt' ('state of affairs') (Wittgenstein 2003, 2). Statement 2, in which he intro-

duces the word 'Sachverhalt', seems to be quite ambiguous. I take it to mean simply that it is a 'Tatsache' (fact) that 'Sachverhalte' exist. For him a 'Sachverhalt' is a conjunction of things (Wittgenstein 2003, 2.01). He elaborates further on how these concepts are related, but for the purpose of this paper it is sufficient to demonstrate that for Wittgenstein, a fact is something quite different from what it is for Austin.

## Conclusion

I tried to show that the word 'fact' has a history in theology and law. It is nowadays frequently used in law, philosophy and science. I have also given two examples out of the many different meanings the word has in philosophy. The departure from its original meaning lead to a term so diffuse and unclear that it permits a multitude of interpretations. On the one hand, this makes the term seem incredibly useful and benefited its popularity. On the other hand, using a term so diffuse to build a theory on, or to use as the basis of criticism, can only lead to confusion and pointless arguments. The term 'fact' should either be clarified beyond reasonable doubt or abandoned. Both have been attempted, and I believe the former can only be achieved by shedding the concept of much of its ballast. If the term has to be used, it should only be used with an explication of its intended meaning. Abandoning this term is in my opinion the more viable way.

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# Wittgenstein's Socratic Philosophy of Mind and the Undecidability of the Limits of Sense

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## Abstract

1. I remind the reader of some disagreements between Daniel Dennett, John Searle and Maxwell Bennett and Peter Hacker about Wittgenstein's philosophy of mind.
2. I refer to Bouwsma's conversation with Wittgenstein in 1949 to argue that the problem in the debate is a false idea about what there is to learn from Wittgenstein's philosophy. "Therapeutic" readers of Wittgenstein also insist too much that Wittgenstein searched for liberation from illusions of sense.
3. Our task in the philosophy of mind is neither to find truth nor to delimit sense from nonsense. It is to understand better what community we can form with ourselves and others.

## 1.

First, I want to go back a decade, to the still unresolved exchange between Maxwell Bennett and Peter Hacker (writing jointly and expressing a shared view), John Searle and Daniel Dennett. For present purposes it is sufficient that we record one aspect of that exchange. Crucially for us, Searle and Dennett follow Bennett and Hacker in zooming in on this particular passage by Wittgenstein:

It comes to this: Only of a human being and what resembles (behaves like) a living human being can one say: it has sensations; it sees, is blind; hears, is deaf; is conscious or unconscious. (PI, §281)

Searle, Dennett and Bennett and Hacker make very different things with the remark.

Bennett and Hacker bring in the passage as witness and expression of their own stance, which we may for present purposes summarise as follows. Bennett and Hacker notice that neuroscientists today often say that "the brain *has experiences, believes things, interprets clues on the basis of information* made available to it and makes *guesses*." (2007, 16.) They then famously claim that such "application of psychological predicates to the brain *makes no sense*." (Ibid. 21.) The mistake arises from what the authors call the "mereological fallacy" of saying of parts of human beings what can only, with right, be said about the whole. (Ibid. 22.) The fallacy leads, Bennett and Hacker contend, to *grammatical error*. It is, for instance, a grammatical error to attribute consciousness to brains or its parts. To say this is, they say, to make a *conceptual point*. (Ibid. 21.)

Here is Searle: Searle writes that "behavior provides not just inductive grounds for the presence of mental phenomena, but *logical criteria*." (2007, 101.) So far, Searle seeks agreement with Bennett and Hacker and as they all (at their peril?) suggest, with Wittgenstein. Then, choosing a different path, Searle makes a distinction between the (behavioral) grounds for attributing mental phenomena and the fact that is attributed. He says that even if behavior may be criterial for the application of mental concepts it does not follow that mental phenomena could not exist in the brain. "All that could follow," he writes, "is that 'if we are to talk about mental states in the brain then the brains must be part of a causal mechanism capable of producing behavior.'" (Ibid. 105f) Unsurprisingly, on this basis, and after some further, nice analytical footwork Searle arrives

at conclusions Bennett and Hacker object to, such as this: "all conscious states exist in the brain" (ibid. 116).

Searle's point, we may say, is to give privilege to questions about what is the case over questions about grammatical criteria. Hence, even if we accept the "Wittgensteinian" idea that grammar tells us what we can say literally and what we can only say metaphorically we can, nevertheless, maintain that mental phenomena are in the brain and available to neuroscientific study. On this basis Searle announces that he has hope that the mind-body problem will become one of those rare philosophical problems that has admitted of "a solution in the natural sciences." (Ibid, 123.)

Here is Dennett: Dennett agrees with Searle that Bennett's and Hacker's wholesale rejection of the attribution of mental properties to the brain is mistaken. But where Searle wants to shift the ground of the debate from grammar to facts Dennett's strategy is to challenge Bennett and Hacker at their own, "Wittgensteinian" terrain.

Dennett agrees with Bennett and Hacker against Searle, that we can only say of what resembles persons that they have sensations. But he says that we have two levels of explanation "when the subject matter is human minds and action". One is the "personal level" and the other is "subpersonal". Once we agree about this we confront the task of relating the two levels. (Ibid. 78f) Dennett's decisive turn is the idea of parts that resemble human beings. (Ibid. 78) Brains and their parts can, in Dennett's terminology, be regarded as subpersonal *and* as personlike agents (ibid. 88). On this basis Dennett holds that *we can say* of brains and their parts, as well as of robots and computers, that they resemble human beings and that "this resemblance is sufficient to warrant an adjusted use of psychological vocabulary to characterize that behavior". (Ibid. 78)

With this divergence between accomplished researchers, what to do? Can we, perhaps, try to sort out which view is right? Or should we look for yet another, correct view? Do these questions define, now, the philosophical task? Is this our responsibility, as philosophers, whose goal is truth? – I wish to suggest that we can learn more if we stop asking who is right and ask instead what difference the differences we have noted make.

To start work in this direction I suggest that we take a critical look at the distinctions between factual (empirical) questions and conceptual (grammatical) questions and between sense and nonsense that we often meet in dis-

cussions inspired by Wittgenstein. We may say that the difference between Bennett and Hacker and Searle turns around the former and the difference between Bennett and Hacker and Dennett around the latter distinction. Can we now find out whose position is correct?

We ask: Do we have an idea of what it would be like to find out whether it is *either* factually correct or conceptually confused to say that pain is located in the brain? And we ask: Do we have an idea of what it would be like to find out whether it *either* makes sense or does not make sense to say that parts of the brain are like human beings and that we can ascribe pain to them? Various ideas come to mind. But is it helpful to think of the distinctions factual / empirical and sense / non-sense in such a way that we are encouraged to respond to the differences we have recorded between Bennett, Dennett, Hacker and Searle by asking: "Who is right?"

## 2.

To start the discussion let us call "St. Ludwig" (Dennett) as our witness. On which side is he in these debates?

And now this is one way in which the problem may be stated further: Would your attitude towards your friend or towards anyone remain the same if when he lies to you, you could have observed the course of electrical impulses over a period of five minutes in slow motion as they culminated in his speaking. Would you still be inclined to blame him? Now imagine that your friend is only a cog or a certain part of a grand electrical system, Schopenhauer's Will, then would not you contemplate that with horror? [ . . . ] W. said, I think, that the problem is crucial. (Bouwsma 1986, 16.)

The quote is from Bouwsma's notes from conversations with Wittgenstein which took place in August 1949. The hermeneutical questions about the authority of the Bouwsma notes in discussion of Wittgenstein's later philosophy are too complex to take on here. I proceed to some staccato observations and proposals.

(i) I see little reason to say that Wittgenstein does not take the thought experiment that he engages seriously. He is not, so to say, on the way to a rejection of the picture he presents as mistaken or senseless. *This picture is not one against which Wittgenstein wants to offer a cure.* He does not, for instance, marshal the distinctions factual/empirical and sense/nonsense to fight against it. His attitude is more like this. He says: this picture is there, in our life. Now what can we say? Who am I who has this idea entering my thoughts? What does it mean to me? How can I place it and how, if I offer it to you, in this conversation, can you help me in placing it?

(ii) Bouwsma's note is difficult to reconcile with the idea that Wittgenstein's discussions of mind, meaning, language are geared towards establishing facts or limits of sense. He is not seeking to uncover nonsense nor he is inviting Bouwsma to learn how to keep a misdirected image at bay. If we take this case to be wholly compatible with Wittgenstein's mature conception of philosophy, then, contrary to a fairly popular opinion, his investigations do not have the (therapeutic?) purpose of liberating us from illusions of sense or meaningless questions. (Baker 2004, Conant and Diamond 2004, Stern 2004). Arguably, to read him like that gets us no closer to what he was after than we get if we read him with Searle, Dennett and many others as a fountain of ideas for a theory of mind that is compatible with naturalism and a scientific world view.

(iii) "Grammatical" Wittgensteinians, like Bennett and Hacker, constructive theorists like Dennett and perhaps many "therapeutic" or "new" Wittgensteinians as well may all agree that philosophy, in the Bouwsma note, in the *Philosophical Investigations*, as well as in the Socratic dialogues, is about our confusion, about our difficulties with understanding what our thoughts are and what our words mean. But in what way if not in the ways indicated so far?

## 3.

Wittgenstein's philosophy of mind, like all radically Socratic, sceptical philosophy is not in the business of getting it right if getting it right is understood as involving either the idea, or the promise, of resulting in a true theory or a liberation from illusion. On both these accounts the promise of philosophy resides in its power to *take us out of confusion*. But look, now, at Wittgenstein's remarks on Fazer. Is it not one of Wittgenstein's themes that Frazer is more primitive than the savages exactly insofar as he thinks that he sees things as they are while the savages live under illusion and are confused.

The business of Socratic, sceptical philosophy is not to say how it is. Its business is the more ethical, aesthetic and political business of confessing, illuminating, conversing, caring and transforming. (Wallgren 2013.) The ethical transformations come out of efforts to become clear, but clarity need not be clarity without confusion, it can well be, and often is, clarity *about* confusion.

It is confusing that we think of people as machines *and* as responsible agents. One aspect, not the only aspect, of clarity here is to see that our situation is, as Wittgenstein says to Bouwsma, *horrible*. This horrifying aspect of what it is to be human can be acknowledged (Cavell). It can also be kept at bay, domesticated, momentarily silenced or appeased by theories like those of Searle or by therapeutic philosophical cures. We may also join with enthusiasm the company of those who seek to naturalise the mind or those who take pride in liberating us and others from the idea that naturalism about the mind makes sense. To be clear about the mind is, among other things, to be clear about these purposes and reactions: domestication, enthusiasm, liberation, pride and so forth: about what they are, where they come from and where they take us. About what kind of people we become if we follow, and how we follow, one path suggested in philosophy, or several.

Consider this. Dennett writes that "the (factual) answer" to the question whether computer scientists speak of computers *wanting* and *thinking* is "Yes." He adds: "There is also, I suppose, a political question. Do they have any right to speak this way?" Dennett's answer comes quickly: "Well, it pays off handsomely, generating hypotheses to test, articulating theories[. . .] and so forth." (Dennett 2007, 87)

So many things go wrong here. But it is to Dennett's great credit that he does introduce the word political at the place where many of his fellow Wittgensteinians typically use the word "grammatical." Whatever we think of politics, if we say that a question is political we understand it as a question of some consequence. The consequence is not only for the person who speaks, or even for the persons who are present in the conversation. A political intervention is typically of consequence also to "other others" whose lives are intertwined with ours. (Socrates said that his craft, examination with others of what our words mean, is "the best possible service to the state", Ap. 36.)

Dennett's astonishing move is to proceed from his important notice about the political in the philosophy of mind to a *quick* answer. Any quick answer (perhaps any answer) is likely to be a dismissal and avoidance. Dennett's answer is a perfect example. He assumes, without argument, that a responsible response to a "political" question can ("well", as he writes) be given in terms of pay-off, and, even, that "articulating theories" and such else is a kind of pay-off and (thereby) a good thing that answers the political question. (How did it become acceptable to isolate discussion of Wittgenstein's philosophy of mind from his views about science and progress?)

Bennett and Hacker implicitly agree with the Dennett's naive perspective. This is clear when they begin their response to him and Searle by saying that in their joint book they "aimed to contribute to neuroscientific research." (Bennett and Hacker 2007, 127)

There may well be differences between what neuroscientists can learn from Dennett and what they can learn from Bennett and Hacker. But when I say, nevertheless, that Bennett, Hacker and Dennett share a political perspective I mean this: they agree, implicitly and perhaps unwittingly, with what is implied by what Dennett says, namely, that we have, first, a question about people say (and what they can say) and then another question, which Dennett calls political. The picture is this: Here: What people say. There: How they live. But that picture of language and words is problematic. (PI §694)

What Bennett, Hacker, Searle and Dennett say comes out of, is part of and may affect what they and others say

and think about pain and love, about Schopenhauer's will, about animal rights, about saving money in elderly care by replacing workers with robots, about funding priorities in neuroscience and about so many other things. The stakes are high. It is time to see Wittgenstein as a Socratic philosopher who does not undermine rational standards and truth but whose idea of what rational standards and the search for truth in philosophy and life involve challenges habits deeply ingrained in modernity.

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# The Meaning of “Search”: How Software Programmers Implicitly Define Words

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## Abstract

According to the theory of Operational Analysis by P. W. Bridgman, terms are defined – or rather explicated – by giving accounts on operations which lead to the usage of the words. An explication of a term is therefore a set of operations. Software engineers develop algorithms that are also sets of operations. By calling an algorithm “an algorithm that does  $x$ ”, mostly without acknowledging it, software engineers implicitly define  $x$  in their programs. Taking “searching  $y$  in a text  $z$ ” as an example, I want to justify this thesis and discuss some corollaries for scholars in both information science and humanities.

## 1. Operational Analysis

In his seminar paper “Operational Analysis” (1938), P. W. Bridgman has offered an approach of explicating words that is later often called “Operationalism”. To say what a word means, people should give account on “operations” – we could also rephrase them as “actions” – that are linked to this word. In the beginning, Bridgman – as a physicist – used this method in the field – today a computer scientist would call it “domain” – of physics; later, however, Bridgman extended the operational analysis also to words that are used in everyday language. According to Klüver (1971), by doing so, Bridgman isn’t just a physicist anymore, but he also becomes a philosopher.

The main intuition of the Operational Analysis by Bridgman may be simplified as this: To capture the meaning of a word, neither the intension nor the extension of a term is important. We should rather give accounts on *operations* that lead to the usage of the term in question. The prime example for Operational Analysis is the explication of the term ‘length’. What is ‘length’? The length of a thing – say a table – is the *number of units* you get, when you have performed the ‘length-measuring-operation’ in the right way. And such a length-measuring-operation could be, say, “using a ruler along the long side of the table”.

But there are many different ways to measure the length, “using ruler” is just one of them. According to Klüver, Bridgman himself has admitted the following claim: If there are three different ways to measure the length, then there are also three different notions of ‘length’. Sadly, a deeper discussion on different notions and possible equivalence of the operations is beyond this paper. For the current purpose, however, I will support the intuition of Bridgman that there are different notions of ‘length’.

Motivated by Operationalism, Carl Friedrich Gethmann (1979) and many dialogue logicians (e.g. Lorenzen 1965) have used operations to explicate philosophical terms. Here, I want to present their explication of logical operators ‘and’ and ‘or’. What are the meanings of these words?

For Gethmann the explications of logical operators (e.g. “and” and “or”) necessary draw on the operation of speaking. The logical operator ‘and’ is explicated as follows: If a speaker conjuncts two sentences  $a$  and  $b$  with the logical operator ‘and’, then, when questioned by her opponents, she must defend both assertions, in order to defend the assertion  $a$  and  $b$ . Similarly, the logical operator ‘or’ is explicated as follows: If a speaker conjuncts two sentences  $a$  and  $b$  with the logical operator ‘or’, then, when questioned by her opponents, she can choose to either defend  $a$  or  $b$ ,

in order to defend the assertion  $a$  or  $b$ . These explications clearly draw on the operations of “asserting”, “questioning”, and “defending”; and by doing so, they, too, can be called “Operational Analyses”.

To be sure, not every given set of operations is an operational analysis. Since operational analysis is a method of explicating a term, in order for a set of operations to be an operational analysis, one must also *name* the term that is being explicated. And in most given sets of operations, there is no term given which is being explicated.

## 2. Algorithms for searching a term in a text

Let us turn to software engineers. Programmers – especially those working in the field of applied informatics or applied research – must often (re-)invent algorithms that are used to perform certain tasks. An algorithm is a set of given operations used for solving a problem; by performing them in the right order, we will get one (or multiple) solution(s) for the given problem. It is important to notice that although the word “algorithm” is often used in mathematics and computer science, a cake recipe can also be called as an algorithm. It is a set of operations, after performing it one will have a cake to eat.

When programming a computer, the algorithms that can be used must be based upon basic operations a computer can perform. While it is relatively easy to “transform” (or “reduce”) arithmetic operations to binary operations that a CPU is capable of doing, transforming operations in researches in humanities to binary operations is not a trivial task. The following example should elucidate this.

One of the most common problems a scholar in humanities encounter in her daily work is ‘searching for terms within a text’. *Prima facie* “searching for a word” seems to be a rather easy – albeit tedious – task, since everyone who is able to read is able to do the search. Algorithms developed for searching are non-trivial. In the following section, I want to present three different algorithms that can be used for searching a word within a text.<sup>1</sup>

Let us first set up a scenario: The following excerpt of the British anthem should be the text within which we want to search for the term “the”.

God save our gracious Queen! Long live our noble Queen! God save The Queen! Send her victorious,

<sup>1</sup> In order to abbreviate the explication of these algorithms, I will assume that “comparing two strings” is a basic operation that the computer already knows how to perform.

Happy and glorious, Long to reign over us: God save  
The Queen!

O Lord our God arise, Scatter her enemies, And make  
them fall: Confound their politics, Frustrate their knavish  
tricks, On Thee our hopes we fix: God save us all.

*Algorithm A.* This algorithm is what a basic thought on this problem will bring forward: Just compare the given text  $s$  with the search term  $t$  at each position and mark the found word as bolded. By doing so we will find each occurrence of 'the' in the given text.

1. Store the given text as  $s$ .
2. Store the search term as  $t$ .
3. Store 0 to *cursor*.
4. Go to position *cursor* of  $s$ .
5. Look for  $t$ .
6. If  $t$  is found, then mark these characters as bolded.
7. Add 1 to *cursor*.
8. If *cursor* is greater or equals to the size of  $s$ , go to 10.
9. Go to step 4.
10. Output the search result.
11. Stop.

When we let a computer perform this algorithm, the following result will be shown:

God save our gracious Queen! Long live our noble  
Queen! God save The Queen! Send her victorious,  
Happy and glorious, Long to reign over us: God save  
The Queen!

O Lord our God arise, Scatter her enemies, And make  
**them** fall: Confound **their** politics, Frustrate **their** knavish  
tricks, On Thee our hopes we fix: God save us all.

So, surprisingly, not one "the" is found, but rather words that contain "the" have these three letters marked. Programmer will realize that Algorithm A isn't suitable for searching. Two problems are identified: A problem with uppercase letters and a problem with "the" as part of a word. And now, we can change Algorithm A to cope with these problems.

*Algorithm B.* To amend the uppercase problem, we can first lowercase the whole text and the search term; and then we perform the search.

1. Lower case the whole string within which the search should be performed and store it as  $s$ .
2. Lowercase the search term and store it as  $t$ .
3. Create a list of integers, name it *pos*. We will store the positions of found places here.
4. Set cursor to 0.
5. Go to the position cursor in  $s$ .
6. Look for the characters stored in  $t$ .
7. If these characters are found, then add cursor to the list *pos*.
8. Add 1 to cursor.
9. If the length of  $s$  is smaller or equals to cursor, then go to 11.
10. Go to step 5.
11. Take the numbers stored in *pos*. At each position in *pos* the original text is marked at that position.
12. Output the search result.
13. Stop.

After applying Algorithm B to the text, we get the following result:

God save our gracious Queen! Long live our noble  
Queen! God save **The** Queen! Send her victorious,

Happy and glorious, Long to reign over us: God save  
**The** Queen!

O Lord our God arise, Scatter her enemies, And make  
**them** fall: Confound **their** politics, Frustrate **their** knavish  
tricks, On **Thee** our hopes we fix: God save us all.

As one can see, the algorithm is now more complicated. Not only must we lowercase the texts; but we also have to find a way to mark found places in the original text. If we do not do this, our output would consist of only lowercase letters.

*Algorithm C.* In order to solve the problem of marking words containing as the search term as a part of them, we must "teach" the computer how to split a string into words.

1. Lowercase the whole string within which the search should be performed and store it as  $s$ .
2. Lowercase the search term and store it as  $t$ .
3. Split  $s$  at non-letter-characters, and store the words including the starting position of the word into a map of string to integer, called *map*.
4. Create a list of integers called *pos*.
5. Set cursor to 0.
6. Get the entry of *map* at the position *cursor*.
7. Compare the key of the entry (=the lower-cased word) with  $t$ .
8. If they are equal to each other, then store the value of the entry (= the position of the word) into *pos*.
9. Add 1 to cursor.
10. If the size of *map* is smaller or equals to cursor, then go to 12.
11. Go to step 6.
12. Take the numbers stored in *pos*. At each position in *pos* the original text is marked at that position.
13. Output the search result.
14. Stop.

The result of applying Algorithm C to the text looks like this:

God save our gracious Queen! Long live our noble  
Queen! God save **The** Queen! Send her victorious,  
Happy and glorious, Long to reign over us: God save  
**The** Queen!

O Lord our God arise, Scatter her enemies, And make  
them fall: Confound their politics, Frustrate their knavish  
tricks, On Thee our hopes we fix: God save us all.

Algorithm C seems to do what we want. Only words that consist of "the" are marked, regardless whether it is written in upper- or lowercase. Unlike the other two algorithms, however, by splitting the text into words Algorithm C cannot search for terms composed of multiple words, e.g. "New York".<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Programming as Operational Analysis?

Without doubt, algorithms, as presented in Algorithm A, B and C, describe sets of operations that are performed by computers in order to achieve a certain goal. At first glance, these algorithms are similar to operations used in operational analyses to explicate terms. The only thing lacking is a term that is being explicated. This term needs to be named. Thus, do software engineers name terms they are defining?

In my opinion, if it is claimed that a program (or an algorithm) is performing a certain task  $t$ , then the naming of the

<sup>2</sup> It will be beyond the scope of this paper to discuss other algorithms which are able to cope with multiple search terms.



term  $t$  is implicitly performed. Without acknowledging it, if a programmer claims that her software  $x$  is able to perform  $t$ , then we can assume that her algorithms used in  $x$  is explicating  $t$ . And by doing so, the software engineer becomes (maybe unwillingly) a philosopher: She is explicating terms and defining words. And now we can say that in the second part of this paper, three *different* explications of 'searching for a word within a text' are presented.

If we can accept the theory that programmers are actually explicating terms, there are several surprising consequences. On the one hand, information science has one method more to measure and compare algorithms with each other. Not only can we ask how fast and how accurate an algorithm is (cf. Harel/Feldman 2006); but we can also ask whether a certain algorithm is a good – or adequate – explication of a certain term, just like we would do when another philosopher has proposed an explication of a term.

But they are also important consequences for scholars in humanities who use software in their research. If a person uses a computer program to search for, say, certain vocabularies in several large text corpora and use statistic tools to analyse the findings, then the algorithms used for searching and for analysing are playing perhaps an even

greater role in her research than she might have realized. Implicitly – and mostly with no discussion on algorithms – the scholar accepts the explications of "searching" and "analysing" that are present in software programs used for this task.

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# A Pedagogic Reading of the *Philosophical Investigations*: Criteria, Judgment and Normativity

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## Abstract

A striking number of Wittgenstein's examples throughout the *Philosophical Investigations* revolve around teaching and learning. In this paper, I show how the content, prevalence, and placement of those references compel us to consider a pedagogic reading of Wittgenstein's work. Such a reading not only provides a new lens through which to view his later thought, but also reconciles us to the centrality of judgment and the 'contingent stability' of norms.

The thread, once found, is clear: a striking number of Wittgenstein's examples throughout the *Philosophical Investigations* (PI) revolve around teaching and learning. Wittgenstein invites us to ponder how we are trained to understand a limited set of words at a young age, are taught to conceive of abstract concepts in language, and how we learn to use words in accordance with – or in contravention of – norms when we act in meaningful ways. A pedagogic reading which focuses on learning and teaching provides insights into the processes by which we become acculturated into new language-games. Understanding this variegated process, furthermore, sheds light on the basis of normativity, the capacity to judge and the role of criteria in guiding our actions and shaping the forms of life that we inhabit. In this paper I show how the content, prevalence, and placement of Wittgenstein's references to learning and teaching compel us to consider a pedagogic reading of his work. Such a reading not only provides a new lens through which to view his later thought, but also reconciles us to the centrality of judgment and the 'contingent stability' of norms.

References to teaching and learning begin with the very first words of the PI. The text opens with Augustine's famous quotation wherein he describes his account of how he learned his first language as a child: his elders "named some object, and accordingly moved towards something," through which Augustine "grasped that the thing was called by the sound they uttered" (Wittgenstein 2009, §1). Augustine's formulation is commonly read as a stand-in for the representational theories of language Wittgenstein sets out to critique, which advance the notion that words represent objects in the world and can be taught by ostensive means – by pointing and naming. While this critique is undeniably an element of what is at stake in the text, it also shows that Wittgenstein's investigation is intimately tied up with the process of teaching and learning.

Stanley Cavell points out that Augustine's opening quotation "contains assumptions ... about teaching, learning, pointing, naming – say these are modes of establishing a 'connection' between language and the world" (Cavell 1996, 266). Cavell's observation picks up on the presence of teaching and learning as processes that function as potential modes of establishing meaning. However, he reads them as pertaining *only* to Augustine's explanation and does not pursue how they unravel throughout Wittgenstein's own thinking. In fact, Wittgenstein returns to this motif again and again. Even the well-known and highly circumscribed builders and shopkeeper examples (which do not contain teachers and pupils as players) nevertheless raise questions about how the builders and shopkeeper came to *learn* the language-games they are in-

involved in – questions that in turn teach the reader to ponder the larger and previously existing intersubjective context that enables language to gain meaning.

In the shopkeeper example, Wittgenstein presents the reader with the following scenario: after a shopkeeper is handed a shopping list marked "five red apples," the intended meaning is correctly interpreted and five red apples are presented to the shopper (Wittgenstein 2009, §1). But how did the shopkeeper learn what to do when presented with such a list? Wittgenstein uses this example to probe the conditions under which we say we understand or know how to go on when we become acculturated into a new language-game. How can we be certain that a particular individual has grasped the point? And if such knowledge is unachievable, how do we explain that we nonetheless act as though we *do* know anyway? What follows in Wittgenstein's answer to such queries is the introduction of action (not mere speaking) and the first clue that a skeptic's pursuit of the foundations of knowledge will ultimately be frustrated. He says: "Well, I assume that [the shopkeeper] *acts* as I have described. Explanations come to an end somewhere" (Wittgenstein 2009, §3). Here we get an early indication of the normative force of linguistic practice – they shape our actions and use of language – even if such norms are not resting on immutable bedrock.

The early examples seem to always point beyond themselves – beyond their delimited boundaries – to all the prior and surrounding context that would need to be in place for the language in the examples to be meaningful. A case in point is the highly circumscribed (but 'complete') language, consisting of only 4 words, that is used by Builder A to command Builder B to fetch blocks, pillars, slabs and beams. This example begs the question of how Builder A and B came to be players of such a game in the first place, if their language is in fact so limited. What foundation or context is necessary for it to be possible that "A calls them out; B brings the stone which he has learnt to bring at such-and-such a call" (Wittgenstein 2009, §2)? Wittgenstein's frequent return to the moment of learning reveals that our dissatisfaction with the examples' constrained microcosms is symptomatic of wanting to know how language-games gain traction and come to be norm-governed in the first place. We cannot imagine sufficiently explaining the myriad functions of language or learning the meaning of all words simply by being trained to respond to orders (builders) or looking up the meaning of a string of words in a chart and reassembling them (shopkeeper). It is equally unlikely that we can be taught them through ostensive definition or rote memorization, and yet the process of learning seems to be how we gain admittance into the various new language-games that we come to inhabit.

In subsequent critical passages such as the rule-following sections, private language argument, and pain discussion, Wittgenstein returns to teaching as a way to interrogate our quest for certainty: focusing on the learning process highlights our assumptions about whether there is a precise moment at which we can say we have learned something and the grounds for our certainty regarding such claims. In exchanges with the interlocutor about how one learns particular behaviors that are under investigation, Wittgenstein chips away at our reliance on abstractable criteria that are thought to exist prior to – and therefore provide the grounds for – establishing certain knowledge. For example, Wittgenstein investigates how a pupil learns to “write [a] series of signs according to a certain formation rule” (Wittgenstein 2009, §185, originally elucidated in §143). He continues: “let us suppose that after some efforts on the teacher’s part, [the pupil] continues the series correctly... But how far need he continue the series for us to have the right to say that? Clearly you cannot state a limit here” (Wittgenstein 2009, §145). This example reveals that it is not a sufficient criterion of knowledge to assert that one knows how to go on following a rule based on any definable number of demonstrations to that effect, since any subsequent attempt could be aberrant. Even in its most clear instantiation like a mathematical formula, the following of a rule according to determinable criteria and the precise point at which a pupil can be said to “know” it is illusory.

On a skeptical reading, this leaves us with no workable conception of norms at all. Yet for Wittgenstein we have once again asked the wrong questions and once again teaching figures in his explanation of approaches that yield a more satisfying result. One such approach is to focus on what our experience teaches us, as Wittgenstein does in §194 when he says: “Experience will teach us whether this [rule] gives the pin this possibility of movement” (own translation). And in §224, Wittgenstein tells us that: “The word ‘agreement’ and the word ‘rule’ are *related* to one another, they are cousins. If I teach anyone the use of the one word, he learns the use of the other with it.” While both of these passages deserve further elaboration in their own right, my aim is to demonstrate the prevalence of teaching and learning in the central passages of the text and to suggest that the process of teaching and learning may itself be a way to conceptualize a non-foundationalist notion of criteria as an iterative process whose relation to norms is to constantly “*point beyond them*” (Wittgenstein 2009, §208).

In a similar fashion, Wittgenstein’s discussions of private sensations and the possibility of a private language further undermine our common conception that normativity is grounded by our ability to judge the similarity or dissimilarity of a given example relative to an existing rule or category. Simply asserting to oneself inwardly that *this* sensation is the same as the one experienced last week is not enough to establish certainty that one is correct (Wittgenstein 2009, §263). In the case of pain, Wittgenstein ponders the following circumstance: if the immediate access to one’s own pain is not a suitable foundation for judgment, then can the only explanation be that we *learn* to exhibit and recognize pain behavior (Wittgenstein 2009, §244–246)? As the well-trodden debates about Wittgenstein’s ‘behaviorism’ bear out, the pain discussion hinges on whether we can successfully anchor our language use to internal, private experience or are solely reliant on community convention that we must learn to mimic. In this light, the emphasis on learning can lead to an unsettling conclusion: instead of individually significant experiences, we merely pick up from others those behaviors that constitute

even our most privately held sensations. But seen sans the behaviorist veneer, this situation can also be read more positively as a powerful vision of how our individual self-conception is interwoven with the web of meaning beyond ourselves and in which we learn to understand ourselves.

While the contexts of the various teaching references vary, each reference nevertheless addresses the nexus between language’s normative force and the learning situation. One aspect of what Wittgenstein is trying to teach us to examine more closely is the complex web of contexts nesting within each example. Just like higher order dimensions in physics, the contextual dimensions of language are folded into or embedded within even the simplest phrases. Those contexts are imbued with the norms in relation to which any subsequent actions are taken and accrue meaning. Our actions, in turn, can then be judged to be in accordance with or in contravention of those prior norms. Instances of learning in the text alert us to the possibility that, in limited instances, we use the normative force of the *new* articulation to reshape the context in which we are acting. One abiding puzzle is how we judge what constitutes a particular language-game in the first place and become capable of acting in *new* ways. Teaching and learning weave throughout not only Wittgenstein’s investigation but also our consideration of these key issues such as judgment and the possibilities for change in language-games and their attendant forms of life.

In her book *Blind Obedience*, Meredith Williams assesses the teaching and learning references as key to understanding the problem of ‘normative similarity,’ or how we determine whether a case falls within a previously established normative category. Her work provides a detailed analysis of the learning examples’ role in Wittgenstein’s arguments disputing prior theories of language such as the correspondence and representationalist approaches. I gladly follow her insight that the learning examples are intimately tied up with questions of normativity, since our inculcation into new forms of life via learning new language-games carries with it implicit standards and expectations of how we are to act or speak. In fact, she argues, the only way to establish normative regularity out of our actions is to closely examine the learning situation and process (Williams 2010, 8). However, Williams’ normative similarity arguments conceptualize judgment as our ability to discern whether a case before us in the current moment is the same as a previously existing case or criteria; more precisely, judgment is the ability to discern similarity with reference to prior norms. While this is an aspect of judgment, I want to suggest instead that a full accounting of normativity also requires judgment to encompass the ability to be proscriptive and to discern potential future agreement that informs our decisions to act in accordance with or in contravention of existing norms. Only with this element of judgment in view can we ‘project words into new contexts,’ as Cavell put it (Cavell 1999, 180).

The teaching and learning references are a thread with many intertwined strands: the examples reveal new insights about normativity, judgment and the relation of ourselves to the language-games in which we live. Wittgenstein returns to the teaching and learning motif in part because the process of learning is closely tied to standards of knowledge and what counts as understanding. We are often confounded in our drive to establish unshakable criteria for knowledge, Wittgenstein tells us, but as a consequence of this drive we turn the moment of learning in an effort to pinpoint the circumstances of knowing. Wittgenstein is also continually, albeit implicitly, investigating how we are generally taught and learn new (or new to us) lan-

guage-games in order to dislodge our expectation that we will find a definitive answer to what language *is*. Wittgenstein's use of examples, which at face value address how basic language-games function, actually compels us to consider the multitude of practices and activities through which we become players of language-games and respond to and shape their attendant norms; these practices do not ultimately rest on stable grounds. We learn in a condition devoid of bedrock referents, we act without recourse to ultimate standards as a guide – what we are left with is our seemingly wondrous capacity to learn how to judge and act despite this.

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# Minar's Quietism in the Individualist vs. Communitarian Debate on Rule-Following

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## Abstract

The debate between the individualist and communitarian conceptions of rule-following is a debate on whether the concept of a rule-follower is a concept of something that presupposes more than a single individual. In brief, individualists claim that the concept of a rule-follower does not presuppose more than one individual while communitarians assert that it does so presuppose. With regards to this debate, Edward Minar advocates a third position that I shall call quietism. It is the view that there is no determinate answer to the question of whether the concept of a rule-follower presupposes more than one individual. In this paper, I shall outline and examine Minar's case for quietism and argue that he has given us insufficient reasons for remaining silent in the debate.

The debate between the individualist and communitarian conceptions of rule-following is a debate on whether the concept of a rule-follower is a concept of something that presupposes more than a single individual. In brief, individualists claim that the concept of a rule-follower does *not* presuppose more than one individual while communitarians assert that it does so presuppose. With regards to this debate, Edward Minar advocates a third position that I shall call quietism. It is the view that advocates "silence on the much-debated topic of whether community agreement is necessary for rule-following" (Minar 1994, 74) because there is no determinate answer to the question of whether the concept of a rule-follower presupposes more than a single individual. In this essay, I shall outline and examine Minar's case for quietism and argue that he has given us insufficient reasons for remaining silent in the debate.

To provide an overview of Minar's argument, Minar claims that both communitarianism and individualisms suffer from the same mistaken assumption. This assumption is that Wittgenstein's problem of interpretation is a genuine problem. In Minar's reading of Wittgenstein, the problem of interpretation should not be regarded as a genuine problem, because "Wittgenstein challenges and diagnoses the need for philosophical accounts of the 'intelligibility of meaning'" (Minar 1991, 207). By showing how Wittgenstein does this, Minar hopes to undermine the motivation for taking up either individualism or communitarianism.

For Minar, the problem of interpretation is summed up in the following thought: How does an expression of a rule determine a particular course of action as being in accord with it, when "[through] reinterpretation, an expression for a rule may be construed as pointing in any direction" (Minar 1991, 204)? In the context of this discussion, we should understand interpretation as the act of appealing to a further expression to supply the first expression its content. Consequently, if an expression of a rule can be interpreted in multiple diverging ways, then it seems that we have the problem of accounting for the content of a rule, i.e., what actions are in accord or discord with the rule (henceforth called the rule's extension).

Minar thinks that the problem of interpretation is best illustrated through Wittgenstein's example of the strange pupil of *PI* §185. Here we have a pupil who has radically different inclinations to respond to training compared to us, and so responds to the instruction of '+2' in a dramatically different way. His teacher's explanations and examples seem inadequate in communicating to him how he has

gone wrong because such explanations are susceptible to deviant interpretations that are compatible with the pupil's actions. Thus, we seem to have the problem of finding something that determines the extension of a rule in a way that is immune to misinterpretation.

Now suppose that we take the problem of interpretation as a genuine problem and so think that it requires a solution that provides an explanation of how the extension of a rule is determined. In Minar's reading, there are two kinds of responses to this problem that Wittgenstein would reject. The first is to try and find an item that determines the extension of a rule in a way that is immune to misinterpretation. According to this response, there is a "particular interpretation of the rule that will settle all the actions that count as according with it from other, non-standard interpretations" (Minar 1991, 213). One notable feature of this response is that, if successful, it would lend justification for an individualist stance on rule-following. This is because the response claims that what constitutes understanding of a rule is something in the mind of an individual, and having this item in mind does not seem to require other individuals.

The second type response is that we should think that the determination of a rule's extension is to be explained via the agreement or regularity of a community, where "community agreement represents a condition on the possibility of identifying actions as correct or incorrect" (Minar 1991, 218). Thus, communitarianism seems to be an option for responding to the problem of interpretation. However, it is worth noting that individualism can also appropriate the basic structure of this kind of response. Instead of suggesting that community agreement or regularity is necessary for determining the extension of a rule, it can be claimed that regularity of sufficient complexity in an individual's behaviour can also be enough for determining a rule's extension. For example, this kind of individualist response is suggested by Baker and Hacker (Baker/Hacker 1990, 176).

As shown above, these two types of responses to the problem of interpretation lead one to adopt either an individualist or communitarian position. What is notable about each response is that they take the problem of interpretation as genuine: each tries to offer an explanation of a rule's determination by appealing to something that it thinks is not vulnerable to misinterpretation.

However, Minar believes that the problem of interpretation should not be taken as a genuine problem. One of the

main thrusts of the problem of interpretation is how it discourages us from appealing to our ordinary explanations and examples. But Minar wants us to take a step back and consider if our ordinary resources really are as impoverished as the pupil of §185 might lead us to think:

Normally and for the most part, we manage without having to forestall the *possibility* of divergent interpretation, and we explain ourselves when problems arise. Our ordinary resources serve their purpose. That they do so depends on "normal circumstances" and on us—on our characteristic responses to training, for example. [...] The scenario of §185 provokes a worry about the grounds of our practices only if we preclude any dependence on our normal responses or reactions from the beginning. (Minar 1991, 210)

According to Minar, our ordinary explanations and examples are adequate for the purpose of communicating the extensions of rules despite their susceptibility to radical misinterpretation. So the mere observation that our rules and their explanations are susceptible to deviant interpretations does not by itself threaten the notion that our rules require grounding in a way that is immune to misinterpretation. However, this success in communication is limited to beings with similar basic inclinations as us, and so excludes strange individuals like the pupil. So it is only if we demand that our understanding of a rule can be shared, at least in principle, by beings that are radically different from us that the problem of interpretation starts to become a concern. It is only if we demand that the extension of a rule must be determined in a way that is immune to radical misinterpretations that we allow the problem of interpretation to take root.

So Minar wants to investigate why philosophers are inclined to make such demands. Why must the extension of a rule be determined in a way that is immune to misinterpretation? Minar locates one of the primary sources for this demand in the reluctance to appeal to our shared basic inclinations. We are, as he says, "hesitant to view our difference from the pupil (the fact that *our* way is what the rule dictates) in terms of differences in "what comes natural" (Minar 1991, 210). This is because we fear that by doing so our rules become "somehow too dependent on us, and [so] we have at best a simulacrum of the necessity characteristic of the relation between rules and their applications" (Minar 1991, 211).

In other words, the demand for an account of how rules determine their extensions stems from a worry that we undermine the necessity of our rules if we respond by appealing to our shared basic inclinations. If we reply to the strange pupil that his misunderstanding is the result of him having radically different inclinations to respond to training than us, then this seems to imply that our training is only effective for beings that share a certain set of basic inclinations. This in turn seems to suggest that what is in accord with the training given for the instruction of '+2' depends on our basic inclinations. And this provokes the worry that it is only for beings 'like us' that the teacher's instruction of '+2' requires writing '1000, 1002, 1004, 1006'. For beings 'unlike us' such as the pupil of §185, that instruction might very well require writing '1000, 1004, 1008, 1012'. Thus, we think that the problem of interpretation cannot be easily dismissed by appealing to shared basic inclinations. And so we must take the problem as genuine, and try to supply an account of how our rules determine their extensions in a way that transcends all contingencies about us.

It must be emphasised that the motivation for taking the problem of interpretation as a genuine problem is the worry

of losing the necessity of our rules if we appeal to our shared basic inclinations. This leads us to think that if we want our rules to possess necessary relationships with their applications then what determines the extensions of our rules must be something that can be apprehended by someone with radically different inclinations and ways of acting than us. In other words, to take the problem of interpretation as genuine is to require that the determinant of our rules be in principle discernible from a perspective external to our rule-following and linguistic practices.

However, the very idea that there is such a perspective outside our practices from which we can raise a problem about meaning is something that Minar wishes to criticise as self-defeating:

If we could *really* manage to begin from a *wholly* external position, we would remain unable to conceive of a general problem about how signs get their meaning: From this "detached perspective", where use as "what comes natural" (§185) is treated as mere psychology, that is as mere behavior, meaning would no longer show up in the use of signs. We could discern no more than regularity in behavior and, perhaps, accompanying psychological phenomena. The *need* for more would become incomprehensible, not because the behavior was seen as already meaningful or subject to norms, but precisely because it was not. If this conclusion is correct, then the problem of the life of the sign is, from this point of view, inapplicable; there is no such thing. (Minar 1995, 442)

We can explain Minar's argument in relation to the problem of interpretation as follows. Minar has said that taking the problem of interpretation as a genuine problem involves taking a perspective external to practices. However, from this external perspective, to raise the problem of what determines the extension of, say, '+2', requires that we view the sign as having a determinate extension. After all, it is only because we view the sign as determining '1000, 1002, 1004 ...' that we can ask what gives it that particular extension. But on reflection, when we take up a perspective external to our practices, the sign of '+2' lacks a determinate extension because it appears compatible with an infinite number of possible divergent interpretations. And so, to take the problem of interpretation as a genuine problem is self-defeating: taking the problem as genuine implies the inability to raise the problem at all. Thus, quietism is justified: by undermining the problem of interpretation as genuine, Minar also undermines the motivation to take up either the individualist or communitarian positions.

However, we should ask: can this self-defeating position be avoided by someone who wishes to take the problem of interpretation as a genuine problem? A way of avoiding this predicament can be found in Kripke's Wittgenstein (henceforth KW). Recall that KW raises a problem similar to the problem of interpretation with one crucial adjustment: KW asks what constitutes my meaning something by an expression as I used it *in the past*. By talking about past meaning, KW grants that the signs he uses at present possess determinate extensions, and simply asks what facts determined the extensions of his signs as he used them at a previous point in time. It seems that KW was himself aware of a worry that was similar to Minar's, when he writes "I put the problem in this way so as to avoid confusing questions about whether the discussion is taking place 'both inside and outside language' in some illegitimate sense" (1982, 12).

Can this move be appropriated by the defender of the problem of interpretation in the face of Minar's criticism? It

seems so. The defender can simply adjust his notion of an external perspective to be a perspective external to his practices *at a previous point in time*, and ask what determines the extensions of his use of '+2' at that past point in time. In doing so, he can grant that '+2' at present possesses a determinate extension, and simply ask what facts in the past determined that his previous uses of '+2' possess the extension that it currently seems to have. Consequently, we can avoid Minar's worry by taking up a perspective whereby we see the sign of '+2' as currently possessing a determinate extension and a perspective where its previous uses have indeterminate extensions, and thus raise the problem of interpretation as a genuine problem with respect to '+2' as it was used in the past.

What can Minar say in reply? In order to counter this manoeuvre, Minar might argue that problems about the meaning of a sign can only be raised with respect to a sign considered in the present rather than the past, or that such questions can only be raised for the entire history of a sign up to the present. However, these are strange assertions to make, because it is not clear what the concept of time has to do with the legitimacy of questions of meaning. In any case, making such claims will require substantial justification to avoid being simply *ad hoc*. Unfortunately, Minar does not hint at any such justifications, and so it looks like this manoeuvre is for the moment admissible.

To conclude, I have attempted to show why Minar's quietism on the individualist vs. communitarian debate is problematic. Even if we grant this claim that taking a side in the debate requires that we take the problem of interpretation as a genuine problem, his argument against taking the problem as genuine does not convince. As we saw, it is possible to take the problem of interpretation as genuine by adjusting the notion of an external perspective in a way that emulates KW.

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# The Need for Pluralism and Relativism of Causality

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## Abstract

The paper shows that there is no single concept of causality which is applicable to different domains. On the contrary there is a need for different concepts with different properties relative to different domains.

## 1. Introduction

The non-pluralistic theory of causality of Salmon and Dowe (D&S)

Necessary Features of Causal Processes and Causal Relations according to D&S

- 1.1 A Causal Process is a *World Line* (Dowe 2000, 90; Salmon 1994, 298)
- 1.2 of an *Object* (Dowe 2000, 90, 91)
- 1.3 that Possesses a *Conserved Quantity* (Dowe 2000, 90; Salmon 1994, 299, 303, 306).
- 1.4 This World Line is *Continuous*, a Continuous Trajectory (Dowe 2000, 90f; 147f; Salmon 1994, 298).
- 1.5 This World Line is in *Minkowski Space Time*, belonging to the Special Theory of Relativity (for short: SR), (Dowe 2000, 90; Salmon 1994, 298).
- 1.6 Conditions 1.2 and 1.3 presuppose that the Object has *Identity over Time* (Dowe 2000, 91 and 101f).
- 1.7 *Statistical Characterizations* of Causal Processes or Relations are Inadvisable according to D&S (Dowe 1992, 204ff; 2000, 33f; Salmon 1984, 174; Salmon 1994, 301).

Features 1.1-1.7 are best satisfied by objects and causal processes of Classical Mechanics (*CM*). The condition of *World Line* fits Minkowski Space Time and SR and *CM*-objects which possess always a well-defined position in space. Features 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6 rule out causal connections in Quantum Mechanics (*QM*): Elementary particles do not have unique trajectories. There is Permutational Invariance, i.e. indistinguishability of *QM*-objects of the same kind. D&S mislead by giving examples of *QM*, although their concept of causality cannot be applied to them. *Conserved Quantity* (feature 1.3) is violated in SR w.r.t. mass, length and time; except charge is invariant. But to peg causality on charge invariance seems inadequate. *Continuity* is not satisfied in *QM* (*h-v-jump*) as has been mentioned above.

*Identity over Time* or reidentifiability is not satisfied in SR (nor GR): the "essential" properties of the object (mass, length, shape) may change. It is not satisfied in *QM*: permutational invariance.

The claim by D&S that *Statistical Characterizations* are not advisable is in conflict with their using examples of decay phenomena.

D&S causality is an important type of causality but restricted to *CM*. This requires other types of causes and causal relations.

## 2. Three Main Types of Causes

### 2.1 Causes as Causal Factors

In most cases of everyday life and of science causes are "causal factors" (*CF*) which are neither *necessary* nor *sufficient*.

Examples: Amazonas has hundreds of tributary rivers. A change of the temperature of one of them is a causal factor.

Self-control in early childhood seems to lead to more health, more stable financial status and less criminality (Moffitt et al., 2014). It is a *CF*.

Properties of *CF*: irreflexive, asymmetric or not-symmetric, not transitive, continuous or discontinuous; *CF* may be a necessary element of a set of (together) sufficient conditions.

### 2.2 Causes as Sufficient Conditions (CS)

The famous historical example is Leibniz with his Principle of Sufficient Reason:

"It is certain, therefore, that all truths, even the most contingent, have an a priori proof, or some reason why they are rather than are not. And this is itself what people commonly say, that nothing happens without a cause, or that nothing is without a reason." (GPh 1875-90, 303f)

Examples (1): The guillotine-stroke is a CS for death.

Events of the past light cone are CS for the events in the future light cone in SR.

CS in SR is irreflexive, asymmetric, transitive, continuous. This holds also in *CM*. In *CM* the causal relation is completely observer-invariant. In SR although time measurement, simultaneity and spacial distance of simultaneous events are not generally invariant under transformations of inertial systems, with the help of the Lorentz transformation the causality relation can be kept observer invariant.

To interpret the events of the past light cone as CS is incomplete. In fact, only these events plus the law structure is sufficient for the future events. More accurately: The past events are *CFs*, the law structure (represented by the dynamical laws) is a cause as necessary condition (*CN*) and *CF* + *CN* are sufficient (*CS*) for the effect.

Examples (2): A change of *V* (volume, or *T*, temperature) leads to a change of *P* (pressure). The change of the length of a spherical pendulum leads to a change of the time of oscillation.



CS is irreflexive, asymmetric, continuous. Also here the respective changes are only *CFs*. Only together with the respective law they are sufficient.

Observe: Physically we cannot change the time of oscillation directly, but only the length; thus changing the length is a *CF*. Mathematically one can change any magnitude with the consequence of changing others.

Examples (3): A photon causes an electron to jump up from the ground state to the first excited state; the light-electric effect (Einstein 1905);  $\alpha$ -decays produce liquid droplets in the cloud chamber.

The photons and the  $\alpha$ -particles are *CFs*. Only together with the laws of *QM* of electromagnetism (*EM*) and of decay (*DC*) they are sufficient causes (*CS*) for the effects.

Observe: Here are statistical laws involved (*DC*). Thus the respective causal process is not describable by dynamical laws only. We have what Wolfgang Pauli called "statistical causality".

*CS* and *CF* are irreflexive, asymmetric, discontinuous, not transitive. The causal process is not a trajectory – except in the cloud chamber.

Examples (4): The entropy  $E(M_1 t_1)$  of a macrostate  $M_1$  at  $t_1$  develops into the greater entropy  $E(M_2 t_2)$ . The DNA-polymerase III reduplicates the DNA. A certain mutation  $m$  of the DNA causes a certain illness.  $E(M_1 t_1)$ , DNA-polymerase III, mutation  $m$  are *CFs* for the respective effects.

## 2.3 Causes as Necessary Conditions (CN)

*CN* has a longer tradition than *CS*:

Aristotle: His *causa materialis* and his *causa formalis* are *CN* (Met V, ch. 2)

Thomas Aquinas: "To take away the cause is to take away the effect" (STh, I,2,3)

David Hume: "We may define a cause to be an object followed by another... where if the first object had not been, the second has never existed" (EHU, VII,2)

Reasons for Aquinas to take cause as *CN* in his Five Ways: If God were a cause (for the world) as *CS*, then:

- (i) no cooperation of creatures as "secondary causes" (for example: no evolution) is possible.
- (ii) there is no possibility for *learning* of creatures by trial and error.
- (iii) God would cause every evil including moral evil, i.e. being inconsistent by giving Ten Commandments.

Examples: The grandparents are *CN* for the grandchildren. "The observed values of all physical and cosmological quantities are not equally probable, but they take on values..." that are *CN* for Carbon Based Life (Barrow and Tipler 1986, 16).

*CS* is usually not transitive. The causal process in Minkowski space time is an exception.

*CN* is usually transitive. A particular event of the past light cone is not a *CN*, but some or other is. The change of length of the spherical pendulum is a *CN*. The change of either volume or temperature is a *CF* for the change of pressure.

The absorption of a photon is not a *CN* for the excited state of the electron because it may be also caused by particle-collision; but some energy input is a *CN*. The strong electrostatic repulsion is a *CN* for the  $\alpha$ -decay. In all the examples the laws – ontologically speaking the law structure of nature – are *CNs* for the respective effect.

*CN* is irreflexive, asymmetric, continuous or discrete, and transitive in the cases where transitivity is applicable.

## 3. Properties of Causal Relations

### 3.1 Logical Relations

Let  $p, q, r$  be states or events.  $p \rightarrow q$  (material implication) does not say anything about a causal relation between  $p$  and  $q$ ; it does not involve time or a time-order either. The same holds for  $p \Rightarrow q$  (strict implication). No causal relation follows from material or strict implication.

However,  $p$  is a sufficient cause for  $q$  –  $p$  *CS*  $q$  – implies that  $p$  is a sufficient condition of  $q$ :

$$p \text{ CS } q \rightarrow (p \rightarrow q)$$

Analogously: If  $p$  is a necessary cause for  $q$  –  $p$  *CN*  $q$  – then  $p$  is a necessary condition of  $q$ :

$$p \text{ CN } q \rightarrow (q \rightarrow p)$$

To be a causal factor –  $p$  *CF*  $q$  – is weaker and does not imply either of the two. However, *CF* must be implied by both:

$$p \text{ CS } q \rightarrow p \text{ CF } q \quad p \text{ CN } q \rightarrow p \text{ CF } q$$

Irreflexivity:  $(\forall p) \neg p \text{ CS } p; (\forall p) \neg p \text{ CN } p; (\forall p) \neg p \text{ CF } p$   
 Asymmetry:  $(\forall p, q)(p \text{ CS } q \rightarrow \neg q \text{ CS } p)$   
 $(\forall p, q)(p \text{ CN } q \rightarrow \neg q \text{ CN } p)$   
 $(\forall p, q)(p \text{ CF } q \rightarrow \neg q \text{ CF } p)$   
 Not-Symmetry:  $\neg(\forall p, q)(p \text{ CS } q \rightarrow q \text{ CS } p)$ ; analogously for *CN* and *CF*

### 3.2 Continuity/Discontinuity

$p \text{ CS } q, p \text{ CN } q, p \text{ CF } q$  is continuous iff there is (are) events(s) or state(s)  $r, r_1, r_2, \dots, r_n$  between  $p$  and  $q$  such that  $r_i$  is caused by its predecessor and causes its successor.

*CS, CN, CF* are strongly continuous iff  $r_1, \dots, r_n$  can be mapped on real numbers.

*CS, CN, CF* are weakly continuous (= weakly discontinuous or weakly discrete) iff  $r_1, \dots, r_n$  are finite.

*CS, CN, CF* are strongly discontinuous (discrete) iff there is no  $r$  between  $p$  and  $q$ .

*CS, CN, CF* in Minkowski space time (*SR*) are strongly continuous. *CS, CN, CF* in the photoelectric effect or in a quantum jump are strongly discontinuous. *CN* and *CF* in the genealogical tree are weakly continuous (=weakly discontinuous). In all stochastic phenomena described by statistical laws like radiation, thermodynamical processes, osmoses, diffusion, electric transport, entropic processes, reduplication, mutation – presupposing that the ensembles are huge but finite – *CS, CN, CF* are weakly continuous (=weakly discontinuous).

### 3.3 Temporal Order

That the cause must be earlier than the effect does not have a straight forward tradition. Aristotle accepts it for the

most frequent cases in which the cause is in potency w.r.t. the effect, but claims simultaneity if the cause is in actuality (Met, V,2). Thomas Aquinas assumes generally that the cause must be earlier than the effect and uses this assumption to show the irreflexivity of the causal relation, since the cause cannot be prior to itself (STh, I,2,3). Newton interprets causes as his forces and claims simultaneity with the effect (Princ I, definitions). Kant seems to have thought that the cause must be earlier than the effect although the temporal order is not observable according to him (KRV, B233).

From SR (and GR) we know that

- (i) every causal propagation needs time
- (ii) the causal propagation has an upper speed limit, i.e.  $c$ , the velocity of light in vacuum

These two conditions hold for CS, CN and CF.

An important assumption about time which does not follow from physical laws or accepted axioms is this: The time coordinate is not closed; although the space coordinates are. There are no closed time-like curves. This is called the *chronology condition of space time* (Hawking-Ellis 1973, 189, Mittelstaedt-Weingartner 2005, 219). This is essential for a realistic causality. Otherwise time-travel is possible.

### 3.4 Transitivity

Pearl proposed the following test for transitivity: Is there a case as follows: State (event)  $A$  is capable of changing state (event)  $B$  and state (event)  $B$  is capable of changing state (event)  $C$ ; yet state (event)  $A$  is incapable of changing state (event)  $C$  (2000, 237).

Applying this test to CS shows that CS is not generally transitive.

Examples: Car  $A$  bumps (= makes a damage on the back-side of) car  $B$  and car  $B$  bumps car  $C$ ; yet car  $A$  does not bump car  $C$ . The sun ( $A$ ) by sending electromagnetic high grade energy causes (CS) order and information on earth ( $B$ ) and  $B$  by passing it through causes (CS) low grade energy  $C$  (distributing it to the environment); yet  $A$  does not cause (CS)  $C$ . On the contrary,  $A$  caused (CS) order and information, but not its opposite.

Interpreting cause as CN however shows that CN is transitive.

Conjectured result:

$$(p \text{ CS } q \wedge q \text{ CS } r) \Rightarrow p \text{ CS } r \quad (p \text{ CN } q \wedge q \text{ CN } r) \Rightarrow p \text{ CN } r$$

### 3.5 Objectivity of the Causal Relation

We say that a causality relation is *objective* iff it is observer-invariant, i.e. if it holds for any observer.

- (1) In CM, because of the assumption of universal time and simultaneity the causal relation is *objective*.
- (2) In SR the Lorentz transformation corrects the underlying (wrong) preconditions of Galilean invariance: that time measurement, simultaneity and spacial distance of simultaneous events are generally invariant w.r.t. inertial systems. By this correction the causality relation can be kept *objective* in SR.
- (3) In GR the causality relation is only *locally objective* in regions where there is a light-cone structure.

(4) In QM there are two restrictions of causality:

- (i) the incomplete causality of the Schrödinger dynamics is applicable only for the subset of commensurable properties;
- (ii) the causality of the measurement process is complete but only statistically applicable, i.e. not relevant in single cases (Mittelstaedt-Weingartner 2005, ch. 9.3).

(5) In Thermodynamics causality is twofold:

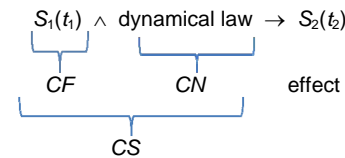
- (i) on the macrolevel, independently of an underlying microstructure it is similar as in (1)
- (ii) on the microlevel as an explanatory causal structure of the macrolevel it is statistical causality as in (4 ii) above.

## 4. Causality Relations in Causal Explanations

### 4.1 Dynamical Laws

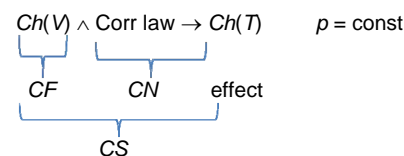
A dynamical law describes the time development of a (physical, chemical, biological, psychological) system  $S$  in such a way that

- (i) State  $S_2$  at  $t_2$  of  $S$  is a definite function (described by a differential equation) of earlier state  $S_1$  at  $t_1$  of  $S$ .
- (ii) Condition (i) holds also for every part of  $S$ .
- (iii) There is a hidden assumption: the system  $S$  has a certain type of stability in the following sense: small changes in the initial states lead to proportionally small changes in the final states.



### 4.2 Correlation Laws

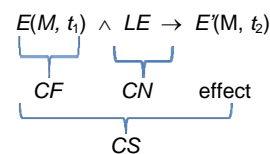
$$p \cdot V = R \cdot T$$



### 4.3 Law of Entropy

$E(M)$  = the finite (but huge) number of microstates ( $m$ ) which can realize the macrostate  $M$

The entropy  $E$  of  $M - E(M)$  – of an (isolated) system  $S$  at time  $t_1$  develops according to the law of entropy (LE) into a higher entropy  $E'(M)$  of  $S$  at  $t_2$ .



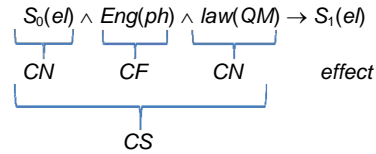
#### 4.4 Quantum Jump

The input of energy  $h \cdot \nu$  by absorption of a photon causes an electron to jump up from the ground state to the first excited state.

$S_0(el)$  ... ground state of electron

$S_1(el)$  ... first excited state of electron

$Eng(ph)$  ... energy input of a photon

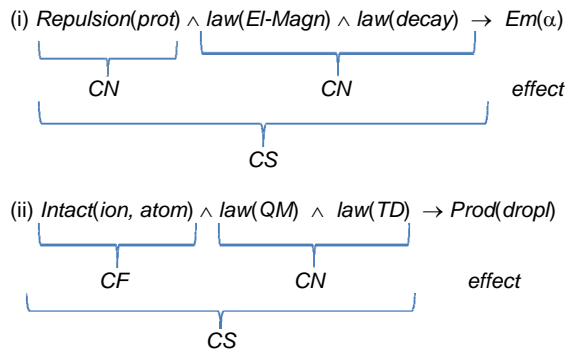


#### 4.5 Causality in the Cloud Chamber

$\alpha$ -decays produce in a cloud chamber at most one track, i.e. a sequence of liquid droplets, which points in a random direction. Two types of causal relations are involved here:

(i) the decay, i.e. the emission of  $\alpha$ -particles is caused by electrostatic repulsion of the protons in heavy nuclei

(ii) the production of liquid droplets is caused by the charged  $\alpha$ -particle interacting with atoms of the super-saturated vapor



#### 5. A Model Defined by a 6-Valued Logic

The basic logic of this model is a decidable and consistent 6-valued propositional logic (called *RMQ*) with the following properties (Weingartner 2009).

- (1) *RMQ* is a finite matrix system and contains its own semantics
- (2) *RMQ* contains two concepts of validity: materially valid ( $cv$  = highest value of the matrix of the wff: 3) strictly valid ( $cv = 2$ )
- (3) All theorems of classical 2-valued propositional calculus are at least materially valid in *RMQ*

(4) The strictly valid theorems of *RMQ* have relevance-properties and avoid paradoxes in the domains: theory of explanation of law statements, of conditionals, of versimilitude, of quantum physics (distributivity, commensurability, Bell's inequalities) of value statements, of Deontic Logic

(5) *RMQ* is closed under transitivity of implication of modus ponens and has the finite model property

(6) *RMQ* contains a Modal Logic with 14 modalities

In *RMQ* the causal relations  $p \text{ CF } q$ ,  $p \text{ CS } q$  and  $p \text{ CN } q$  can be defined by three different matrices of 36 truthvalues. Then it can be shown that the postulates of section 3.1 above together with irreflexivity, not-symmetry and transitivity or not-transitivity for *CN* and *CS* are theorems of this extended *RMQ*.

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# Chinese Gestures, Forms of Life, and Relativism

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## Abstract

In this essay I focus on Wittgenstein's discussion of how we understand and feel about people that come from cultures very different from our own. Wittgenstein writes about "guessing thoughts", "regularities", and "common human behavior" (*gemeinsame menschliche Handlungsweise*) in this context. I will argue that his idea of given forms of life that we should "accept" will be problematic if we want to find a meaningful way of relating to such people with whom we cannot "find our feet" (*in die man sich nicht finden kann*).

In her 2001 article "Interkulturelles Verstehen oder kulturbedingtes Erklären: Wittgensteins Kritik an Frazer", Sigrid Fretlöh-Thomas reports that a former DAAD representative in London once said about people who come into a foreign country that "first they think there are so many things they have in common. But after they have lived here for some years, they begin to find more and more differences". Having lived in London herself, Sigrid Fretlöh-Thomas came to the conclusion that mutual understandings are "processes that rely not on presupposed common bases [*auf vorausgesetzten gemeinsamen Grundlagen*], but on worked-out common bases [*auf gemeinsam erarbeiteten Grundlagen*]." (Fretlöh-Thomas 2001, 49, my translation).

When someone moves to an even more different culture, such as a German moving not to London, but to Taiwan, things naturally become even more difficult. It can sometimes seem as Wittgenstein wrote in *Zettel* §219, that "we don't understand Chinese gestures any more than we do Chinese sentences" (*Chinesische Gebärden verstehen wir so wenig, wie chinesische Sätze*, my translation). The context of this passage is a discussion of our understanding facial expressions and our seeing happiness, indifference, and interest in them. Wittgenstein repeatedly thought about this problem. In the context of guessing other people's thoughts, we read in the second part of the *Philosophical Investigations*:

"We also say of some people that they are transparent to us. It is, however, important as regards this observation that one human being can be a complete enigma to another. We learn this when we come into a strange country with entirely strange traditions; and, what is more, even given a mastery of the country's language. We do not *understand* the people. (And not because of not knowing what they are saying to themselves.) We cannot find our feet with them." (*Wir sagen auch von einem Menschen, er sei uns durchsichtig. Aber es ist für diese Betrachtung wichtig, daß ein Mensch für einen anderen ein völliges Rätsel sein kann. Das erfährt man, wenn man in ein fremdes Land mit gänzlich fremden Traditionen kommt; und zwar auch dann, wenn man die Sprache des Landes beherrscht. Man versteht die Menschen nicht. (Und nicht darum, weil man nicht weiß, was sie zu sich selber sprechen.) Wir können uns nicht in sie finden.* PU II, 223). Thus even knowing the language in terms of vocabulary and grammar is often not enough. It seems one must live in the other culture, use the language, and share the forms and patterns of life of those people in order to understand them, such as their patterns of greeting, calculating, hoping, expecting and sadness (for forms and patterns of life, see Majetschak 2010). Only then can one 'find one's feet with them'. Similarly, in the first part of the *Philosophical*

*Investigations*, we find a discussion of our understanding of others who come from a country that is foreign and strange to us:

"Suppose you came as an explorer into an unknown country with a language quite strange [*fremd*] to you. ... The common behavior of mankind [*die gemeinsame menschliche Handlungsweise*] is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language" (PU I §206). But what exactly is meant by "common" here? Is it something that is common among the people that I observe? Something that is common to their behavior and considered independently of my own behavior? Or is it something that is common to both me and them? The context of §206 discusses "customs", "uses", and "institutions" (*Gepflogenheiten, Gebräuche, Institutionen*, §199). It is marked by discussions of the rule-following problem. In the remark immediately following §206, Wittgenstein talks about "regular connections between what they say, the sounds they make, and their actions". All this discussion of "regularity" suggests that what is meant by "common" in §206 are features that are common among the people foreign to me and that I might not share. Eike von Savigny has taken this view, and so have I. Schulte, Baker and Hacker, Garver, and Pichler offered other interpretations. The problem is what exactly does Wittgenstein mean by "common" in the expression "common human behavior" (*gemeinsame menschliche Handlungsweise*).

Recently Katalin Neumer has explored wider contexts (Neumer 2001). She has consulted the *Bergen Electronic Edition* and has also included Wittgenstein's use of the word "behavior" (*Handlungsweise*) and "human" (*menschliche*), which occur in the expression "common human behavior". She came to the conclusion, that contrary to what the context in the *Philosophical Investigations* suggests, earlier manuscripts show that Wittgenstein had more in mind than the idea of what is common merely among the people foreign to me, or us. As Anscombe's rather encompassing translation of "*menschlich*" as "of mankind" correctly suggests, he also thought of features that we share with the people whose forms of life appear strange to us, and not only of the features that are common to them. But all this is not of much help as long as we do not know what these common features are. It is also not said how we should relate to other people whose traditions are "entirely strange to us".

Chinese is certainly a language that is very different from English say, and Chinese cultures can be "strange" to Westerners. So what exactly do we have in common? Chinese and Westerners are all human beings and Chinese is a language as much as is German or English. So here is something that we have in common. But it is rather ab-

stract. What exactly is “human” and what is the meaning of “language”? Can we also say that we share some basic needs, hopes, experiences, and maybe even values? Here things become difficult. If you follow for instance the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, you might be skeptical (see Wenzel 2007). We also know that Wittgenstein was notoriously skeptical about our talk of the inner, which appears to be “covered up” by language. Thus in the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* he writes about “guessing thoughts” (*Gedankenerraten*). He says: “‘I must go to the bank to get some money’ ... is it necessary that in order to understand this sentence something special is going on while you hear it? Is it not rather the case that all experiences [*Erlebnisse*] are covered up [*zugedeckt*] by the practice of the language game? And that just means: We are here not at all interested in such experiences.” (*‘Ich muß zur Bank gehen und Geld holen’ ... muß da etwas besonderes beim Hören des Satzes vorgehen, damit du ihn verstehst? Werden hier nicht alle Erlebnisse des Verstehens vom Gebrauch, von der Praxis des Sprachspiels zugedeckt? Und das heißt nur: Solche Erlebnisse interessieren uns hier garnicht.*” BPP I §184, my translation). Neumer notes about this passage: “Wittgenstein’s critique of the idea of a private language is exemplary of his general view that not only our thoughts but all of our inner life [*Seelenleben*] is ‘covered up’ (BPP I §184) by language” (*Die Privatsprachenkritik Wittgensteins stellt eines der Paradebeispiele dar, wie ihm zufolge das gesamte Seelenleben des Menschen und nicht nur seine Gedanken von der Sprache ‘zugedeckt’ (BPP I §184) wird.* Neumer 1999, 78, my translation).

Now how serious shall we take our feeling when we come to “a strange country with entirely strange traditions” and when we sometimes “cannot find our feet with them” (*Wir können uns nicht in sie finden*, PU II, 223, see quote above)? Is this an illusion? Or is there really something inner that is “covered up” by a language and its use? Wittgenstein even says that we “do not understand the people” even “given a mastery of the country’s language”. It seems that we must share their culture and ways of life and not just know their language in terms of vocabulary and grammar. But what do we gain by this insight? How shall we relate to such other people? In the passage just quoted above from the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* Wittgenstein wrote: “We are here not at all interested in such experiences”. Wittgenstein keeps shifting the focus between the outer and our talk of the inner and he is skeptical about our talk of the inner and about theorizing in general. A problem I see in his emphasizing forms of life, animal-like “drill” (*Abrichtung*), and mere description on the one hand, and skepticism about theory and abstraction on the other, is that both, the emphasis and the skepticism, will not equip us well in dealing with situations of conflict when we come to such other countries, or in general, when we meet people with whom we “cannot find our feet” (*in die wir uns nicht finden können*). But we sometimes have to act in such situations. By sharing the planet earth with others, we have to take them into account in legal and moral ways. I will make this more explicit by referring to a longer passage from Werner Stegmaier.

At the end of his essay “*Zwischen Kulturen. Orientierung in Zeichen nach Wittgenstein*”, Stegmaier writes: “Foreign signs are visible as signs. The room for interpretation they leave allows us to gradually take part in foreign cultures” (*Fremde Zeichen sind als Zeichen sichtbar. Ihre Deutungsspielräume ermöglichen, sich mit der Zeit in fremde Kulturen einzuspielen.* Stegmaier 2001, 66, my translation). About such foreign signs that are strange to us he writes: “Because we do not understand them, we feel at-

tracted by them. ... We try to develop general rules for using such signs. But according to Wittgenstein such rules can only be developed within our own forms of life and culture. If we find our feet with them [*Wenn wir uns in andere finden*, an allusion to PU II, 223, quoted above], it will always be *us* again, who merely find *ourselves* in others. To put it differently: We only ‘see’ the signs of others without ‘having’ them. They remain the signs of others. If we take them up, we will have other signs and make more or less different uses of them, which those others find more or less acceptable, or not acceptable, without telling us.” (Stegmaier, 66, my translation). I think he puts this very well. But it seems to me that this still does not answer the question of how to proceed in situations of conflict.

Stegmaier writes optimistically that we can “gradually take part” (*sich einspielen*) in other cultures. There is truth in this. But we should not be too optimistic and underestimate the fact that our time and abilities are limited. We cannot all learn Chinese, and even learning Chinese might not be enough. Chinese speakers might still be “enigmatic” to us, as long as we do not share their cultures and forms and patterns of life. We should also notice that some habits and forms of life simply *logically exclude* each other, such as the habit of going to bed early and the habit of going to bed late. Sometimes we cannot “have” it both ways. To put it in Stegmaier’s words, we can at best “see” but not “have” both signs (see quote above). I give another example: We cannot *both* (a) intuitively follow the advice of our older brother *because* it is our older and not our younger brother, and at the same time (b) intuitively take his advice as a piece of advice *no matter whether* it comes from our older or our younger brother. In China one traditionally feels in the former way; one has been educated in this way. But I cannot do that. I cannot feel this way. Even though I know that there are completely different expressions for “older brother” (哥哥 *gege*) and “younger brother” (弟弟 *dídi*), or “grandmother on your father’s side” (奶奶 *nǎinai*) and “grandmother on your mother’s side” (外婆 *wàipó*), and even though I kind of know that there are differences in how one should relate to these people, I cannot do it properly because I do not feel in the right way. I do not have the know-how. I have not been “drilled” properly. I “cannot find my feet with them” (*ich kann mich nicht in sie finden*). Hence I see a serious limit in the idea of “taking part” (*sich einspielen*). We should notice that on top of our limitations regarding time and energy to take part in other forms and patterns of life, it is also sometimes questionable whether we should even try to take part, for instance when it comes to forms of life that involve what we would call corruption, suppression, and nationalist ideologies.

Of course there are basic biological features that we all share and that we might want to call basic “forms of life”. But this does not help much. Reference to biological features will be insufficient, if we want to avoid conflicts, as we can see from the animal realm. I think we also need abstract ideas, such as ideas of fairness, justice, and human rights, ideas that aim at universals. These do not come from our basic animal nature. They are not just given forms of life that we follow blindly, but they arise through dialogue, foresight, and reflection. At least they had better arise in this way and not through drill and blind force. Today there are unfortunately economic, religious, and all kinds of other forms of war, and we should not say they are language games that must be accepted and cannot be questioned. Instead it seems to me that at this point questions of morality should enter the scene and should be made more explicit. Pointing back to your own language game as some kind of rock bottom will not be sufficient,

nor will be describing a foreign language game while believing we can do this without prejudice. I mean this theoretically as well as morally and practically. Hans-Julius Schneider in his essay “*Offene Grenzen, zerfaserte Ränder: Über Beziehungen zwischen Sprachspielen*” has emphasized that we can “move between” different language games and that we can do so without the need of some kind of meta language-game as *tertium comparationis* (Schneider 1999, 145). From Wittgenstein, Schneider says, we can learn that language games have open and fuzzy borders. But as far as I can see, the discussions building on Wittgenstein have remained rather vague and unhelpful in this respect. I think one will easily slide into relativism if one avoids abstract thought. I don’t think that Wittgenstein was a relativist. But his way of emphasizing mere description and forms of life as rock bottoms invites relativism. The same is true regarding his being silent about morality and his avoiding theorizing. To avoid relativism, in theoretical and practical matter, I think abstract thought is necessary (see Wenzel 2012).

Joachim Schulte very well explains how Wittgenstein thinks that language games and forms of life are something “primary” (Schulte 199, 158) and need to be “accepted” (156). But I do not agree that it would be “superfluous and confusing to justify the everyday and primitive language game that we teach our children” (169), at least not always. There have been language games that we should not have taught our children. History can testify to this. In the very last sentence of his essay, Schulte says both that we should “leave it at these basic facts” and “make something out of their presentation” (*aus ihrer übersichtlichen Darstellung etwas ... machen*, 170). But what exactly should we make out of them? This unfortunately is not said, and this is exactly where his essay ends.

Philosopher and social anthropologist Ernst Gellner has argued that although we often have different views, we all live in one world. Gellner notes that anthropologists who return from field trips to very distant cultures usually do not report complete failure of comprehension. He writes that “on the often rather *a priori* reasoning of relativist philosophers, who start out from doctrines such as the ultimacy and self-sufficiency of ‘forms of life’, we might have expected such failure to be much more common. It is success in explaining culture A in terms of culture B which is, in the light of such a philosophy, really puzzling. Yet shelves groan with the weight of such [relativist] books” (Gellner, 1982, 185f). I hope I have not added to this weight.

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# Against Grand Illusion. Some Remarks on Constructivism Coinciding with Realism

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## Abstract

I am first going to refer to Wittgenstein's position, proposed in the *Tractatus*, which he calls solipsism. This solipsism coincides with realism. This, along with the idea of the philosophical I, will be my point of departure for investigating the constructivist thesis that the apparent world is – as A. Noë calls it – a grand illusion. I will argue that the idea of grand illusion is burdened with a category mistake. On this ground I will go back to Wittgenstein in order to show how constructivism can coincide with realism.

## 1. Introduction

In the *Tractatus*, Ludwig Wittgenstein proposes quite a perplexing philosophical position: solipsism *coinciding with realism*. One might argue that, similarly, there should be white things that are in fact black, and black things that are in fact white. And this is exactly the case, I would argue. Recall the well-known optical illusion where the same horizontal bar, seen against a background, seems to progress from dark grey at one of its extremes, to light grey at the other, depending on the color gradient in the background. In my view, Wittgenstein says that the sharp dichotomy of *mind and world*, thus also of *solipsism and realism*, is an illusion, just like in case of the bar.

## 2. The Philosophical I

Following Descartes, I used to think that mind is the locus of thoughts and subjective ideas or sense data, whereas the (external) world is a compound of physical (extended) objects having only primary properties. However, Wittgenstein says, if I try to *isolate* my subjectivity, isolate what constitutes me and only me, from everything that is external (*Tractatus* 6.631), it turns out that I have to put on that list also my own body along with all my sensations caused by external objects. I have to isolate myself from my social environment, and thus also from the way I talk about myself. Suddenly it turns out that this method of isolation leaves nothing – no “solid” substance that might be called an “I”. Wittgenstein concludes:

5.631 The thinking, presenting subject; there is no such thing (...) (Wittgenstein 1922, 74).

But on the other hand:

5.641 (...) The I occurs in philosophy through the fact that the “world is my world” (Wittgenstein 1922, 75).

Call 5.641 solipsism if you wish. The position is, however, quite outrageous due to its radical isolation of the subject:

5.64 Here we see that solipsism strictly carried out coincides with pure realism. The I in solipsism shrinks to an extensionless point and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it (Wittgenstein 1922, 75).

How is reality *co-ordinated* with the subject? Wittgenstein's answer could be called transcendental in the Kantian or Husserlian sense:

5.641 (...) The philosophical I is not the man, not the human body or the human soul of which psychology

treats, but the metaphysical subject, the limit—not a part of the world (Wittgenstein 1922, 75).

The world is always, as T. Crane (2001) nicely puts it, the *world for me*. I differ from a stone or a table precisely because there is a way the world *is for* me, and it makes no sense to speak of such a way *for* stones and tables. I am a constant and necessary *point of reference* for everything I call a *world*.

If, however, the subject shrinks to a point, there is no Cartesian, Lockean, Humean or finally Russellian machinery of ideas or sense-data, out of which the world could spring as a kind of hologram or projection. As long as the subject is a point, the phrase “inside the subject” makes no sense at all. And if so, the subject *cannot* – as it were – *produce* the world, build it up from internal sense-data. The world is *not* and *cannot be* made up by the mind – thus we obtain realism.

The philosophical I is the limit of the world. This means that it is like an eye in relation to the field of vision (5.633). The eye does not create any realm, however, one cannot call anything a field of *vision* if there is no eye to which it is ascribed. In an analogous way, the mind, conceived of as the philosophical I, does not produce the world, but the very *idea of a world* is inconceivable if one dismisses mind. A world is essentially “a world *for*”.

## 3. No Illusion

There is an idea that the apparent world is – as A. Noë (2002) puts it – a *grand illusion*. Noë provides interesting quotes, where the illusory character of the experienced reality is explicitly enounced. Let me cite one of them:

despite the poor quality of the visual apparatus, we have the subjective impression of great richness and ‘presence’ of the visual world. But this richness and presence are actually an illusion (...). (O'Regan 1992, 484)

It is not clear who “we” is in the above statements. I am going to use the first person. Let me try to formulate the thesis on grand illusion in the following way (the ellipses in brackets stand for further descriptions):

(C1) I perceive the rich, colorful, resounding, tasty, (...) world of macroscopic, stable, continuous, (...) objects, processes, (...), *but in reality* there are no colors, sounds, etc., but only simple physical entities, complexes built up from them, and causal connections, e.g. fractional causal chains between physical entities in the world, waves of light, and receptors on the retina.

First, note that (C1) is constructed along the same lines as the following:

(C2) I perceive the horizontal bar as progressing from dark grey to light grey against the background progressing in the opposite direction, *but in reality* the color of the bar is the same in each of its parts.

“Anything said is said by an observer” – says H. Maturana (Maturana/Varela 1980, 8), and this is true of both (C1) and (C2). In (C2) I perceive the bar against the progressing background and the bar in normal circumstances, and I can describe both experiences. If so, then I am in a position to *compare* one perception with the other and to judge the illusory character of the first *according to accepted standards*. However, in (C1) I am in a different situation, referring to the *entire perceivable domain*, “co-ordinated” – as Wittgenstein would put it – with me; to *my world* as a whole. If so, then unlike in (C2) the description of reality cannot disregard a particular experience, but must somehow disregard the entire experiential domain. However, I am not in a position to give such a description since I cannot experience reality *as if it were unexperienced* by me. I cannot attain – as T. Nagel (1989) brilliantly calls it – a *view from nowhere*, or some God’s eye perspective.

Someone might argue, that (C1) is not the proper formulation of grand illusion – instead of one general claim, grand illusion is characterised by the sum of all possible descriptions of more modest illusions, quite like (C2):

(C3) I see in front of me the green forest against the cloudy sky *but in reality* there are portions of physical particles and waves of light that have fractional causal connections with receptors on my retina.

If the landscape which consists of green forest and cloudy sky is a modest illusion that together with other similar illusions establishes *the* grand illusion, it must differ somehow from (C2), i.e. from illusions that have nothing to do with the grand one. One such difference seems to be clear. When it comes to the grand illusion, objective reality is sharply distinguished from all subjective components. Hence, the *objective* – *subjective* opposition has to be distinct also in the case of (C3). In other words, I have to perform what Wittgenstein calls isolation. In this context two objections come to mind.

First, whether this setup is actually feasible. (C3), like (C1), confronts two descriptions – one known as subjective, and one known as objective, based on science. Does the change in the *range* of illusion, i.e. that it no longer refers to the whole world co-ordinated with me, but only to a particular perception, change in its *nature*? If (C3) is a modest contribution to the grand illusion, then the alleged objective description of a particular fragment of reality has to be clear of any subject-involving traces. This is a paradoxical demand, as the very idea of *description* contradicts it.

It is perfectly unquestionable that some, admittedly very high degree of objectivity is achieved in mathematized empirical disciplines, but these disciplines are still bound to the experiential domain – if not yours or mine, then surely to an inter-experiential domain of consensus. Hence all such modest illusions happen to what Wittgenstein calls the empirical *I* located inside the domain of experience or higher-level domain of consensus. The illusory character of each modest illusion is revealed when the empirical *I* moves inside the domain in search of another position. One position reveals, as it were, the illusion-generating character of another position. However, when it comes to the grand illusion, I don’t move inside the experiential domain, since the *domain itself* is judged to be illusory. If so,

then grand illusion cannot concern the empirical *I*, but rather what Wittgenstein calls the philosophical *I*. So, it seems that (C3) is no less problematic than (C1).

But suppose for the sake of this argumentation that isolation is feasible. What then? I’m going to show that (C3) is burdened with a category mistake in the sense of G. Ryle (1949). Let me suppose that this notion is familiar.

If the Wittgensteinian isolation is successful, then we have: on the one side, say, brute reality, and on the other, pure phenomenality, i.e. the realm of subjective views of reality, of phenomena, qualia or “what is it like” (differences between these categories do not concern us here). Note that (C3) is a comparison. But what kind of items *can plausibly be compared*? Black and white are colors, so they can naturally be compared. One man can be compared with another man. A painting can be compared with another painting, but a painting can also – say a portrait of a man – be compared with the man with regard to e.g. the proportion of the eyes, nose and mouth. This is because both the portrait and the man *look* some way, and these “looks” are the material of an observer’s comparison. By “looks” I mean metaphorically all *modes of presentation* of an item. However, in (C3), due to successful isolation, all “looks” (and all observers) are moved to the side of pure phenomenality. Reality that is clean and clear of any reference to an observer – however outrageous it may sound at first – *does not look in any way*. In other words, the category of a “look” (mode of presentation) is inapplicable to reality after isolation.

Admittedly the bond between *being* and *looking* (*presenting*) seems so natural that we can hardly disconnect them. However, if you want to sharply distinguish grand illusion from reality you have to disconnect them, and – surprisingly enough – this was clear to one of the first proponents of grand illusion, namely Plato, who nevertheless did introduce (in *Theaetetus*) the category of a *divine* “look” – one established together with the world by the Creator, and probably at first designed only for him (Berkeley’s idea of God’s constant perception is an interesting corollary).

Hence, how on earth can I compare, in (C3), *the way reality looks to me* and *reality itself*, if the latter does not look (present itself) in any way? *Looks can only be compared with other looks* (Berkeley has brilliantly used this argument against the conception of primary properties). Thus (C3) is burdened with a category mistake, i.e. it combines in one sentence expressions referring to two incomparable items belonging to different categories. Finally, if there is no comparison, nothing can be called an illusion.

#### 4. Concluding Remarks: Constructivist Realism?

An idea, quite similar to grand illusion, comes from constructivist conceptions based on second-wave cybernetics (e.g. Von Glasersfeld 2001, Von Foerster 2003) and the idea of autopoietic systems (e.g. Maturana/Varela 1980). But there is one crucial difference. These constructivists are perfectly aware of the fact that there are *no looks* in reality conceived of without reference to observers. This is clear when H. von Foerster introduces the so-called *principle of undifferentiated encoding*:

The response of a nerve cell does *not* encode the physical nature of the agents that caused its response. Encoded is only ‘how much’ at this point on my body, but not ‘what’ (Von Foerster 2003, 215).



And then he comments:

Although surprising, this should not come as a surprise, for indeed 'out there' there is no light and no color, there are only electromagnetic waves; 'out there' there is no sound and no music, (...); 'out there' there is no heat and no cold (...). (Von Foerster 2003, 215)

The only problem with this is that although there is no look, *there is a comparison*, as he writes, between *what is in experience* and *what is "out there"*. But how is this comparison possible? Exactly *what* is compared?

From the Wittgensteinian standpoint the opposition of pure phenomenality (the domain of "looks" or modes of presentations) and reality that is clean and clear of phenomenal, observer-involving aspects, is an illusion. It is like the bar that looks differently against different backgrounds. If we move this opposition to another background, it turns out that there is no opposition. If so, then the ideas of grand illusion and constructivism "coincide with pure realism". This is because the *I* in constructivism (5.64) "shrinks to an extensionless point and there remains the reality coordinated with it" (Wittgenstein 1922, 75). But since all constructivist arguments are still valid, this is quite an outrageous realism. *A constructivist realism?*

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# A Note on the Origin of Rhees' *Synthese* Edition of "Bemerkungen über Frazers *The Golden Bough*"

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## Abstract

This paper outlines the origins of Rhees' *Synthese* edition of Wittgenstein's remarks on Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, as inferred from correspondence between Rhees and von Wright. The reconstruction draws attention both to Rhees' own transcriptions of Wittgenstein's remarks on Frazer in MSS 110 and 143 and to the importance thereof for Rhees' editing of the *Synthese* edition. The paper illuminates and illustrates Rhees' work as one of the executors of Wittgenstein's Nachlass.

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, R. Rhees' three editions of Wittgenstein's remarks on Frazer's *The Golden Bough* have become the subject of renewed interest and discussion. This is illustrated e.g. by the recent publication of various monographs (the latest by M. Brusotti), an issue of *Wittgensteiniana* devoted to the theme, new translations of the remarks into Spanish and Danish, and a number of recent conferences. In discussions about Rhees' three editions, it has been pointed out, for example, that Rhees' dating of Part II can be questioned, and that Part II of the edition consists of two parts rather than a single unified text. Other themes of interest have included Rhees' editing of Part I in the 1967 *Synthese* edition, and his later shortening of Part II in the English translation that appeared in *The Human World* in 1971. Rhees' third edition of the remarks is the well known bi-lingual Brynmill edition from 1979. Several of the issues now under debate were raised by A. Pichler and A. Orzechowski in 1995, while other questions relating to Rhees' editions of the remarks have been raised in response to the recent publication of Moore's notes on Wittgenstein's lectures from 1930 to 1933. Moore's notes demonstrate that Wittgenstein was discussing and criticising *The Golden Bough* in May 1933. Many of the recent discussions of Rhees' editions are affected by a certain misunderstanding or simplification. It is assumed that Rhees' editing and organisation of Wittgenstein's remarks on Frazer in Part I of the first edition in *Synthese* reflect a certain degree of "arbitrariness". It is pointed out that the selection of remarks that Rhees made for Part I is marred by the omission of several relevant comments from MS 110. Indeed: "Die von Rhees edierte Bemerkungen weicht vom Original gravierend ab." More generally, it has been asserted that the edition "contains deficiencies and misreadings". Such criticisms generally assume that Rhees based the *Synthese* edition directly and exclusively on Wittgenstein's own manuscripts, and more specifically on the respective remarks in MS 110, TS 211 and MS 143. Another claim has been that it is clear from Rhees' editing of Part I in the *Synthese* edition, "dass der erste Editions-Teil der publizierten 'Bemerkungen über Frazers Golden Bough' nicht einfach TS 211 entnommen ist, sondern durch Rush Rhees in eigenständiger und eigenmächtiger – wenn auch kompetenter – Editionsarbeit zusammengestellt wurde". In other words, the supposition is that the *Synthese* edition represents a set of remarks that were "initially compiled" by Rhees.

While essentially correct, these comments bear every sign of being a simplification, which I wish to elucidate in the following. Firstly, I shall briefly outline the story behind the origin of the *Synthese* edition, drawing attention to the

context of Rhees's broader editorial work when preparing the version of Wittgenstein's remarks on Frazer that would become the *Synthese* edition. When we reconstruct the origins of the *Synthese* edition, it becomes clear that underlying the text of the *Synthese* edition are two manuscripts in Rhees' own hand, one of which is Rhees' transcription from MS 110 of selected remarks on Frazer, a selection Rhees made himself (and which I shall refer to in the following as the MS 110 Frazer transcription), the other being his transcription of the so-called thirteen loose sheets (MS 143) (which I shall refer to henceforth as the MS 143 Frazer transcription). These two transcriptions by Rhees serve as bridges or intermediate links between Wittgenstein's manuscripts (MS 110, TS 211, MS 143) and the final text of the *Synthese* edition. In other words, Rhees prepared the *Synthese* edition not directly from and solely on the basis of Wittgenstein's own manuscripts, but rather from two transcriptions he had made, one of selected remarks from MS 110, and the other of MS 143 in its entirety, while also assimilating TS 211, 313-322. It is these preliminary manuscripts/transcriptions, or "connecting links", in Rhees' preparation of the *Synthese* edition to which I shall draw attention. The following "archaeological" account of the origin of the *Synthese* edition is based on correspondence between Rhees and von Wright, today in the keeping of the Finnish National Library and the von Wright and Wittgenstein Archives (WWA), Helsinki, and on the two transcriptions by Rhees, now kept at the WWA, with the catalogue signature / box no. "Wittgenstein 143".

## 2. Rhees' MS 110 Frazer transcription, 1962

After publishing *The Blue and the Brown Books* in 1958, Rhees turned his attention to Wittgenstein's work of the early 1930s. A recurrent theme in the correspondence between Rhees and von Wright is the question of whether or not to publish the so-called Moore Volume (TS 209) and the Big Typescript (TS 213). In 1964, Rhees' work from this period culminated in the publication of *Philosophische Bemerkungen*. It was while preparing this volume, and hence also during the period when he was mapping Wittgenstein's various accounts, both new and old, of the sentence, language and "the relation of Sprache and Wirklichkeit" post *Tractatus*, that Rhees came across Wittgenstein's scattered remarks on Frazer in MS 110. In September 1962, Rhees wrote to von Wright: "With regard to the genesis of the Brown Book and of the Untersuchungen: I am enclosing a copy I have typed (badly) of some remarks Wittgenstein makes in the course of the last 123 pages of Manuscript Volume VI [MS 110], during June and July 1931." Rhees adds: "If we are looking for the origin of the

use of 'language games' as a philosophical method, then I think that one source or one influence was this reflexion on the analogy of metaphysics and magic, and on Frazer's misunderstanding of the magic about which he was writing" (25 September 1962).

In other words, having become aware of the existence of the remarks by mid-1962, Rhees proceeded to make a selection from them, which he then transcribed. His selection is based on a number of criteria, including the themes of the remarks (Frazer, magic, language and pictures, analogy and philosophy), and Wittgenstein's own notations in the margin. One of the main ideas behind Rhees' selection is the assumption that the remarks are primarily concerned with questions that have to do with the philosophy of language rather than with the nature of anthropology or with the philosophy of religion. Rhees' transcription extends to sixteen pages and begins with the heading "Wittgenstein 19.6.31" (the date of Wittgenstein's first remarks on Frazer). Rhees' selection of remarks from MS 110 differs in several ways from the selection Wittgenstein himself made in TS 211, one of them being that it includes remarks about "the primitive forms of our language" and "philosophical mistakes". At that point, Rhees was still unaware of the existence of Wittgenstein's own selection in TS 211. After reading Rhees' transcription of the remarks on magic and Frazer "with great interest indeed" (31 January 1963), von Wright suggested that they should include them in their plans for publications. Rhees agrees, feeling that the remarks throw light on Wittgenstein's departure from his *Tractatus* views, thus constituting a valuable contribution to the complex discussion about how he arrived at the *Philosophische Untersuchungen*. Rhees writes to von Wright: "I do not think people will begin to appreciate the *Untersuchungen* until they see the discussion from which it has come" (25 September 1962). Rhees and von Wright then discuss how best to present the remarks on Frazer. One possibility would be to incorporate them in a preface; alternatively they could "form another Appendix to the book [PB]" (31 January 1963). In February 1963, i.e. roughly six months after sending his MS 110 Frazer transcription to von Wright, Rhees writes: "I am uncertain what should be done with the remarks about magic and Frazer. I think they ought to be published, and I do not think they should be published by themselves – since this would give rise to queer sorts of misunderstandings" (14 February 1963). Rhees' reservations about incorporating the remarks in any of their on-going publication plans eventually led to an indefinite postponement of publication. Nevertheless, the transcription was soon circulating among various colleagues. About a year later, in spring 1964 Rhees reconsidered the situation, this time proposing that the comments could become part of "a smallish volume", together with *A Lecture on Ethics* and selected observations on other related subjects. In April 1964, Rhees wrote to von Wright: "I had been thinking of a smallish volume which might include this [*A Lecture on Ethics*] together with the remarks on Frazer, for instance (which were written about a year later), and some related remarks of about this same time (there are at least two longish ones beside the remarks on Frazer). And it might include some of the later scattered remarks upon religion and upon 'value' (Lebensweisheit, or call it how you will)" (22 April 1964). Here the stories of the origins of *Bemerkungen über Frazers 'The Golden Bough'* and of *Vermischte Bemerkungen* (1977) coincide. Von Wright included all the remarks from Rhees' transcription (with the exception of a few) in a collection of Wittgenstein's remarks on various general topics that he put together in 1965 to 1966, a collection which later became *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, but which at that time was "not intended for publication". *A Lecture on Ethics* was

published separately in January of the following year, 1965. Consequently, Rhees' new plans for publication of the remarks on Frazer had once again come to nothing. Two years had passed since their discovery.

### 3. Rhees' MS 143 Frazer transcription, 1964

After the publication of *Philosophische Bemerkungen* in 1964, Rhees began studying the Big Typescript and exploring possibilities for its publication. The subsequent years of work culminated in the publication of *Philosophische Grammatik* in 1969. In other words, in the years after 1964 Rhees continued his study of Wittgenstein's "middle period" and hence also of the many and various manuscripts from the early 1930s. As is widely known, Rhees believed that, despite its book-like appearance, TS 213 was never intended as a work for publication, but was rather an ordered collection prepared for a further stage of development. In the summer of 1964, Rhees received a letter from G. E. M. Anscombe containing the so-called thirteen loose sheets of Wittgenstein's notes on Frazer. Referred to today as MS 143, these sheets would eventually form Part II of Rhees' *Synthese* edition. At the beginning of November 1964, Rhees wrote to von Wright: "I am sending you a copy of the early letter to Ramsey, and also of the later notes on Frazer, which I have typed from the pencilled pages which Elisabeth sent me. At least I believe they are later than the 1931 lot. And Elisabeth seemed to think they belong to notes which he made while he was living in her house" (1 November 1964). On receiving the loose sheets, Rhees gave them his full attention, preparing a transcription of the remarks in mid to late summer 1964. It is this manuscript that he sent to von Wright in November of that year. Rhees' transcription consists of eight pages and is preceded by a header and a short "preface": "Wittgenstein: pencilled notes on Frazer, on loose sheets. / The numbers on these sheets evidently refer to pages in the abridged edition of *The Golden Bough*. Wittgenstein's copy of this was given him by Raymond Townsend in July, 1936. The earlier notes on Frazer were entered in Manuskriptband VI [MS 110], in June, 1931. I doubt if Wittgenstein had a copy of the *Golden Bough* at that time. Drury has told me that he used to read aloud from Frazer to Wittgenstein. For this reason, I imagine that these pencilled notes are later – after July, and very likely later still. / Rush Rhees". Von Wright does not comment on the submitted transcription and neither does it figure in his aforementioned collection of remarks from 1965–66. Rhees did not return to his earlier unsuccessful plans for a publication of the MS 110 Frazer transcription, although this new material could well have prompted him to do so. In 1964, Rhees put aside both his transcriptions in order to concentrate on the extensive work of reconstructing and editing *Philosophische Grammatik*. Quite possibly he had abandoned the whole idea of having the material published.

### 4. TS 211, 313-322

Two years later, in the latter half of 1966, Rhees was still working on *Philosophische Grammatik*, with the aim of publishing material that would illustrate the development of Wittgenstein's philosophy in the period between *Philosophische Bemerkungen* and *Philosophische Untersuchungen*. In the course of this work, he read through TS 211, and was surprised to discover that Wittgenstein had himself compiled a selection of his own remarks on Frazer from the earlier MS 110. Wittgenstein's selection makes up a well-defined and independent section of ten pages (TS 211, 313-322), which occur roughly in the middle of the

771 pages of TS 211. Wittgenstein's selection of remarks differs in several respects from Rhees' MS 110 Frazer transcription, despite notable similarities between the two transcriptions. Realising that Wittgenstein himself had separated out these remarks as distinct and limited in scope, Rhees promptly returned to the idea of releasing the material, but this time allowing himself to conceive of it as an independent publication. Some six months later, Rhees informed von Wright of his discovery and his deliberations. In a letter Rhees wrote to von Wright in March 1967 we read: "There were other things I wanted to say, but I had better send this on pain of sending nothing at all. / I will ask one question, though – because I have had in mind to ask it for so long. Do you think that *Synthese* or maybe *Inquiry* would publish *The Notes on Frazer* (in German) as an article? As I say, I have had this in mind for six months. I was interested just now to see that the notes are included in (what I am calling here) the First Typescript [TS 211], separated in a definite way from the rest of the text, but within the general paging. There are two changes in the order of paragraphs, and a few paragraphs are omitted. These are the original notes, from Band VI [MS 110]. If it were an article, then I think the later notes [MS 143], which Wittgenstein wrote when he was staying at Elisabeth's, should be printed together with them. Together these would be about the length of an article. – If neither *Synthese* nor *Inquiry* wanted it, we could try one of the German periodicals. But I think it might be better if we could have it appear in one of the multilingual ones. I should like to have these notes published soon, if possible. They could be included in a volume later, of course. / Yours, Rush Rhees / When I said *Synthese* I believe I should have said *Theoria*. But I am confused, and I do not want to wait until I have been to the library to check" (21 March 1967).

## 5. The *Synthese* edition, 1967

Thus the discovery that Wittgenstein had included his MS 110 remarks on Frazer in TS 211, where they featured as "separated in a definite way from the rest of the text, but within the general paging", prompted Rhees to return to the idea of publishing the 1931 remarks supplemented by the later thirteen loose sheets (MS 143). Rhees abandoned the various ideas he and von Wright had previously discussed, of incorporating the remarks in a foreword or including them as an appendix or publishing them in a separate book that "might include some of the later scattered remarks upon religion and upon 'value'". In other words, Rhees no longer had any reservations about publishing the remarks on their own. The fact that Wittgenstein himself had separated out this material from MS 110 and presented it as a discrete section in TS 211, together with its limited physical scope (even when supplemented by MS 143), justified its publication as an article in a periodical. This does not imply that Rhees had thereby abandoned his basic assumption that the remarks should be regarded as an extract, or as examples, from the philosophy of language enquiry that played a part in "the genesis of the Brown Book and of the *Untersuchungen*". On the contrary, for Rhees the remarks had to be viewed in the context of the philosophy of language descriptions and understood not least in light of Wittgenstein's later "use of 'language games' as a philosophical method". Now, however, the context of the remarks could be presented more indirectly, since the wish to have "these notes published soon, if possible", and as a separate article, was also warranted by the planned and imminent publication of *Philosophische Grammatik*. In Rhees' view, the "Bemerkungen über Frazers *The Golden Bough*" illustrates one of the many

*Denkbewegungen* leading up to the insights in *Philosophische Grammatik*. For this reason, they should be published before *Philosophische Grammatik*, which in Rhees's view documents the central phase of Wittgenstein's post *Tractatus* development, leading up to *The Blue and the Brown Books*. – Rhees assumes, both then and later, that Wittgenstein's remarks on Frazer are primarily concerned with linguistic philosophy. In the "Introductory Note" he wrote a few years later for the 1971 *Human World* edition of the remarks, Rhees writes: "Why should Wittgenstein discuss Frazer's account of the rituals and magic of primitive people? Not because it throws light on religion. Wittgenstein mentions religion in his introductory remarks, but as part of his general discussion. [...] – And clearly he is not discussing history or anthropology. We could say he wrote partly from an interest in the 'mythology in our language'."

In early April 1967, Von Wright responded to Rhees' discovery and enquiry with a letter in which he writes: "Thank you very much for your letter of 21 March with the detailed and interesting description of the newly found Wittgenstein typescripts. I wrote immediately to Hintikka, who is Editor of *Synthese*, about Wittgenstein's notes on Frazer. To-day I received his reply. He is delighted at the thought of publishing the notes (in German). He is looking forward to receiving the article from you, in due course" (5 April 1967). Meanwhile, and perhaps as early as the end of March, Rhees had started editing Wittgenstein's remarks with a view to their separate publication. He must have finished the work by May or perhaps June. In other words, Rhees prepared the complete manuscript for publication in *Synthese* relatively fast. And in doing so he relied in part on the MS 110 Frazer transcription that he had made in 1962, in part on the MS 143 Frazer transcription he had made in 1964, and in part on Wittgenstein's own compilation of his remarks on Frazer in TS 211, 313-322, from 1932. Consequently, Rhees' editing of Wittgenstein's remarks on Frazer in the *Synthese* edition can only be clarified and understood when we consider the similarities, discrepancies and compatibilities between these three manuscripts. It is this insight that is overlooked in the widespread criticism of Rhees' editorial work and decisions that I mentioned at the outset. In his *Synthese* edition, Rhees reproduced all the remarks from TS 211 (with the exception of one remark) while also taking into consideration Wittgenstein's own terse editorial instruction ("zwei Bemerkungen" (TS 211, 322)). The "Introductory note" of the *Synthese* edition represents an expanded version of the short preface he had written earlier ("Wittgenstein: pencilled notes on Frazer, on loose sheets") for his MS143 Frazer transcription. Part I of the publication consists of Wittgenstein's own selection from TS 211, to which Rhees adds – at the beginning and the end – remarks from his own transcription of MS 110, remarks which Wittgenstein himself had omitted in TS 211. Rhees does not, however, include all those sections from his own transcription which Wittgenstein had omitted. Part II of the *Synthese* edition is based on Rhees' MS 143 Frazer transcription, which is why the remarks in the former are arranged in the order they were given in the latter, and also contain the same misreadings. In addition, Rhees supplemented Part II with a number of quotes from *The Golden Bough*.

In mid April 1967, a week after receiving von Wright's letter, telling him that Hintikka "is looking forward to receiving the article from you, in due course", Rhees wrote to von Wright: "Thank you very much for writing to Hintikka and for sending me his address. I have started putting the text together, in the light of Wittgenstein's own typed version [TS 211, 313-322], and I hope to be able to send it to Hin-

tikka before too long" (13 April 1967). Another letter he wrote to von Wright about six months later makes it clear that "Bemerkungen über Frazers *The Golden Bough*" was published in late summer 1967. The letter contains a handwritten postscript. Rhees says: "I will send you further offprints of the Notes on Frazer in a separate packet. I am very sorry that I left out a word on page 242" (16 September 1967).

### Acknowledgements

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# Kant and Hölderlin: Radicalizing the Critique of Metaphysics

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## Abstract

In *Judgment and Being*, Hölderlin defines Being as a complete unity which functions as a precondition of judgment, yet is not available to judgment. The contradiction that arises when one subsequently attempts to reach Being in the realm of judgment – i.e., in thought – seems to preclude the execution of a sensible metaphysics of Being. In this paper, I analyze how the contradiction between judgment and Being relates to the contradictions which Kant exposed in traditional metaphysics. Through this comparison, I show that the analyzed contradictions follow similar patterns, and arise for similar reasons. Moreover, I argue that Hölderlin could not follow Kant in his solutions of the antinomies – which implies a radicalized critique of metaphysics on Hölderlin's part.

## 1. Introduction

Today, the *Critique of Pure Reason* is still praised mainly for its rigorous criticism of what Kant calls 'dogmatic metaphysics'. The positive positions which Kant defends in the book are less readily accepted, especially regarding his aim to create a system of reason, or a science of metaphysics. In this paper, I want to argue that Friedrich Hölderlin too was unable to accept Kant's strategy of securing the regulative use of pure reason in metaphysics. That is, Hölderlin's analysis of thought and its transcendental conditions, as written down in the fragment *Judgment and Being*, does not allow for the kind of rational activity which Kant attempted to secure. Thereby, Hölderlin radicalizes the Kantian criticism of reason.

In order to argue for this reading, I will first give a very short exposition of Hölderlin's take on the contradictory relation between thought and absolute unity. Subsequently, I will introduce Kant's critique of dogmatic metaphysics and explain how the error of transcendental illusion leads into a situation of irresolvable contradiction, which Kant describes in the *Antinomy of Pure Reason*. Next, I will argue for a similarity between this contradiction and the contradiction between judgment and Being. Connectedly, I will point out a similarity between pure reason's demand for absolute totality/the unconditioned, and Hölderlin's conception of Being. Finally, I will explain why Hölderlin cannot follow Kant in his solutions to the antinomies, and why this implies an extended critique of metaphysics on Hölderlin's part.

## 2. Judgment and Being

In *Judgment and Being* Hölderlin explicitly distinguishes that which is the ground of all judgment (Being, complete unity) from the grounded activity (judgment, separation). (StA IV 216f) This activity, judgment, connects predicates to subjects by distinguishing between different elements and subsequently judging "this is (not) that". In reflecting on the distinction between the difference which characterizes the structure of judgment, and the complete unity of Being, a problem arises: the unity of Being that we presuppose as ground of judgment, cannot be expressed in judgment. This is because as a transcendental condition of judgment, Being on principle transcends judgment. That is, the element of unity of the identity-judgment  $A=A$  is no complete unity, because this statement first separates A (subject) and A (object) before it synthesizes them. Complete unity and difference come to contradiction as soon as one attempts to reach the first through the second.

Hence, in philosophical thought, the only way to accept Being as a presupposition for judgment is to define it as that which escapes definition, yet makes definition possible, because it is the necessary condition of being able to say that A is B. All other more substantial postulations of it – e.g. as ontological category, or as rational principle – are made impossible by the structure of judgment. If this 'definition' of Being lies at the heart of the structure of judgment, and if this structure is the structure of our consciousness and knowledge<sup>1</sup>, then it becomes hard to see how we can either say something about 'Being' or adhere to 'it'.

## 3. The Antinomy of Pure Reason

According to Kant, the main fault of traditional/dogmatic metaphysicians is to not recognize the distinction between the fields of reason and understanding. Because they ignore this distinction, these philosophers deem it possible to generate knowledge by applying concepts of the understanding to objects of ideas (*noumena*). This conflation of the two fields is what Kant calls "transcendental illusion". To avoid this mistake, Kant examines the ideas that stem from reason, and more specifically, the wrong types of judgments we make when we conflate objects of reason with objects of experience. Kant engages in this exercise because he holds a regulative use of reason's tendency towards total unity to be an unavoidable element of human rationality, and a necessary condition of a system of reason, and of metaphysics as a science. (KrV A339/B397, A407/B434) This is because reason unifies judgments of experience by ordering them according to its principles in the infinite whole of possible experience. The critique of reason has to secure this use.

In the *Antinomy*, Kant deals with reason's demand for absolute totality with respect to series of conditions – in space and time as well as in the field of *noumena*. The four antinomies that Kant distinguishes arise when the four classes of categories of the understanding are subjected to what he calls "the main principle of reason": "If the conditioned is given, the entire series of all conditions, and consequently the absolute unconditioned, is also given, whereby alone the former is possible." (KrV A409/B436, A305/B362 – A309/B366, cf. Grier 2006, 196-199, Allison 2006, 329-332) In other words, if the conditioned is given, reason searches for the condition which makes it possible, and the condition of this condition, in infinite regression.

<sup>1</sup> Premises which are based on the interpretation of judgment and Being as necessary and exclusive conditions of consciousness.

Since the conditioned is given to us in intuition, as an appearance in space and time, the antinomies follow from applying the main principle of reason to the sensible objects represented in the pure forms of intuition. (KrV A411/B438)

I will present the antinomy that is connected to the first of the four cosmological ideas to exhibit reason's dialectic. In the search for the absolute totality of the infinite chain of conditions in space and time we find a thesis and an antithesis. The thesis claims that the series has to have a beginning. The antithesis claims that the series has to be infinite. To be able to conclude that their claims must be right, both positions argue indirectly: they assume the opposite thesis, deduce a contradiction, and show the result to be absurd. Hence, they prove that the negation of the conclusion must be adopted – yet then, this antithesis performs the same *reductio ad absurdum*, shows the thesis to be impossible, and proves the correctness of what has just been proven false. (KrV A426/B454 – A429/457) The result is a balance of mutually eliminating theses that are both true; a skeptical equipollence that, if no fallacy can be exposed, traditionally leads to a suspension of judgment.

So, the thesis and the antithesis are both true and false: true because the other is false, and false because they are inherently contradictory, hence impossible. In this way, the contradiction inherent in the object of this cosmological idea (the totality of an infinite series in space and time) leads to two sound arguments that stand in contradiction. The result is that we can affirm nor reject the thesis that the world is infinite as regards space and time.

In Hölderlin's *Judgment and Being* we find a similar pattern. On the one hand, when we form a judgment affirming Being, this judgment contradicts the conditions of its own possibility: Being as something that cannot be judged. On the other hand, when we form a judgment rejecting Being, this judgment denies its own condition of possibility. Hence it is contradictory and thus no judgment at all. So, we can affirm nor reject the thesis that Being is a necessary precondition of thought. The reasoning that leads to this conclusion is very akin to that of the presented Kantian antinomy: the proof of the thesis lies in the impossibility of the antithesis and vice versa. That is:

Thesis: Being is a necessary condition of judgment. For if there would be no ground for the unity expressed in synthesis, then neither separation nor synthesis would be possible. That is, judgment itself would not be possible. Therefore, Being has to be postulated.

Antithesis: Being cannot be postulated. For if a judgment would be performed in which the complete unity of Being is postulated, then this judgment would violate its own nature: separation of elements, and consecutive synthesis. That is, it would contradict one of its transcendental conditions, difference. Therefore, it would not be a judgment at all, and it would not postulate Being.

Now Kant's solution to the antinomy of reason is well-known: transcendental idealism distinguishes between the noumenal world as 'object' of an idea, and the phenomenal world as standing under the conditions of the two pure forms of intuition. In experience, we may therefore search for an infinite continuation of series of conditions. And yet our own finite situation does not allow us to know whether this series *really* is infinite or not, because the totality of the series is no object of experience. This totality – the noumenal world – can only be an idea that regulates our rational conduct. Reason represents it as if it were an object of knowledge. This enables us to attempt to rationally order as much as possible our knowledge with reference to

the idea of a complete system. Yet even though reason is able to think the unconditioned and complete infinite series, the result of its reasoning, when it is applied to the conditions of experience, does not prove instructive. (cf. Ameriks 2006 285-291)

#### 4. Judgment and Being; antinomy of pure reason?

Is Kant's solution applicable to the contradiction that lies at the heart of judgment? In the remainder of this paper I will argue that while the contradiction between judgment and Being is very similar to Kant's antinomies, a metaphysics of Being cannot be secured through Kantian critique. The main reason for this is that in Hölderlin's theory of judgment, the contradiction cannot be recognized as an illusory result of a wrong use of reason. This is because it is the product of the postulation of judgment's very own transcendental conditions. In the following, I will further explain this point in order to conclude that Hölderlin has radicalized Kant's critique of metaphysics.

Kant never denies reason the capacity to think the unconditioned, never mind the contradictions which result. Even though he accuses dogmatic philosophy of conflating the domain of reason with the domain of the understanding, he does not regard reason as incapable of thinking the objects of the ideas as *noumena*. According to Kant, the most dangerous characteristic of reason is its power to *think anything* without being restrained by empirical evidence. This is a critique of rationalism that focuses on the dangers that come with the wrong use of the *strength* of reason (cf. KrV A669/B697). It stands in stark contrast with Hölderlin's critique, which diagnoses the *weaknesses* of our human capacities when doing metaphysics.

The explanation is this: in the search for the conditions of its possibility, judgment is confronted with a more severe limitation than Kant attributes to reason: the unconditioned qua *noumenon* – Being – cannot be captured in judgment. And thus the distinction which Kant draws between *noumena* and *phenomena* to secure reason's immanent use, and to regulate its transcendent use, does no longer help. The Kantian distinction is traced back to a more radical opposition: between what we are able to think, and that which is inaccessible to thought. Being is referred to a completely transcendent realm, not merely inaccessible to the sensibility, but also to reason. Hölderlin's problem is not solved by saying that reason can be used regulatively to think the unconditioned as a *noumenon*. For Hölderlin, no judgments can even be executed in the field of *noumena*, because the unconditioned escapes all judgments. Suggesting a regulative use of reason in this field therefore does not help. To support this, I will point out why the Kantian solutions to the antinomies do not work in Hölderlin's case.

In the mathematical antinomies, the thesis and antithesis are recognized as stemming from a contradictory concept (the totality of the world of sense), and can thereby both be dismissed as objects of knowledge. We could never check their truth or falsity in experience. In the case of the concept of 'Being', this is not an option: Being is a necessary condition of judgment, so however contradictory it is in judgment, it cannot be thereby dismissed. So, judgment on this matter cannot be postponed – as *judgment* cannot be postponed, and both the thesis and anti-thesis of this antinomy are necessary conditions of judgment's possibility.

In the dynamical antinomies, reason shows the contradiction to be an apparent one, because the two theses operate on different levels: the first is valid on the level of *phenomena*, the second can be thought by reason on the level of *noumena*. Could a similar move solve Hölderlin's problem? One could say that it is impossible to transcend the structure of judgment merely on the level of rational thought, and not on the level of (some kind of) feeling. The problem, however, is reinforced when it is acknowledged that the theory on judgment is a theory on the possibility of consciousness in general. Arguing for a Kantian distinction – e.g. between reason and feeling – would therefore imply that we would argue for the possibility of a level of non-consciousness. Granting the subject a faculty to be active on this level would therefore be as self-contradictory as granting that absolute Being is the complete unity of subject and object.

This is not to say that Hölderlin's contradiction does not fit the structure of the antinomies. It has in common with the *Antinomy* the mutual incompatibility of theses, and the aim of providing insight into our limitations. And certainly, the solution to the dynamical antinomies does hint at routes that were chosen to do metaphysics after Kant, and explain our contact with the Absolute: accounts of intellectual intuition, aesthetic sense or immediate feeling that in some way provide us with a field and a capacity to be active in this field. Nevertheless, when the result of *Judgment and Being* is accepted, a solution cannot lie in merely distinguishing between *fields* or *capacities*. The one field in which we are really interested, that of Being, is necessarily contradictory to us.

So, Hölderlin extends Kant's critique of metaphysics, since he shows that in the area that he considers the core of metaphysics, the one thing which we cannot do is avoid self-contradiction. While Kant presents theses and antitheses which confront us with the limits of our capacities in doing metaphysics, Hölderlin presents *the thesis* of metaphysics (in which the Absolute is posited) as essentially self-contradictory. Furthermore, even though Kant makes clear that no knowledge could be the result of the transcendent use of reason, he still holds reason to be able to think absolute completeness as a regulative idea. Hölderlin, by contrast, shows that this is inherently impossible, i.e., that absolute unity cannot be thought.

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# On a New Defense of the Description Theory

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## Abstract

Accordingly to the traditional description theory (descriptivism) of proper names, the meaning or sense of a name can be given by means of a description. The theory has fallen into disrepute due to intense criticisms, most famously, by Saul Kripke. Recently, in his book *Truth by Analysis*, Colin McGinn mounts a new defense of the description theory. According to McGinn, philosophy is the a priori search for the essence of things by means of conceptual analysis. Naming, therefore, can only be analyzed in terms of essences. The error made by the traditional description theory is focusing on contingent empirical descriptions. To rectify the error, McGinn puts forward a theory that analyzes a proper name by means of a description of the essence of the referent, arguing that it can withstand Kripke's criticisms. This article aims to show that there are some serious difficulties with McGinn's theory.

Accordingly to the traditional description theory (descriptivism) of proper names, the meaning or sense of a name can be given by means of a description. The theory has fallen into disrepute due to intense criticisms, most famously, by Saul Kripke (1972). Recently in Chapter 8 ('The Sense of Names') of his book *Truth by Analysis* (McGinn 2012), Colin McGinn mounts a new defense of the description theory. According to McGinn, philosophy is the a priori search for the essence of things by means of conceptual analysis. Naming, therefore, can only be analyzed in terms of essences. The error made by the traditional description theory is choosing contingent empirical descriptions. To rectify the error, McGinn puts forward a theory that analyzes a proper name as a description of the essence of the referent, arguing that it can withstand Kripke's criticisms. This article aims to show that there are some serious difficulties with McGinn's theory.

## Conceptual Analysis: McGinn's Style

1. As McGinn understands it, there are several different types of 'conceptual analysis', but in his book he focuses chiefly on compositional analysis in the traditional sense. To help understand McGinn's theory of naming, some of his main theses about conceptual analysis are stated as follows (hereafter all page numbers refer to McGinn 2012 unless indicated otherwise):<sup>1</sup>

(C1) Philosophy is the a priori search for the essence of things by means of conceptual analysis. (3)

(C2) Conceptual analysis consists in identifying the constituents of a concept and extracting the necessary conditions that together suffice for the concept to apply. (93)

(C3) Essence is what being of a certain kind consists in, or the what-it-is-to-be of a thing. (4)

(C4) The identity of a concept turns on which property it denotes or refers to, thus concepts track objective essences and can be a route to reality. (65, 67)

(C5) A concept incorporates knowledge of the reference. (67)

(C6) In conceptual analysis, we investigate things under a concept or by means of a concept, as opposed to experimentally or empirically. (68)

(C7) Conceptual analysis is coming to have explicit knowledge of what we already know implicitly (by virtue of our possessing the concepts in question), guided by what we know implicitly. (68)

## McGinn's essence-descriptivism

2. Let us call McGinn's theory 'essence descriptivism'. Focusing on personal names as McGinn's exposition does, we can state the main points of the theory, in the briefest terms, as follows: (McGinn 2012, Ch. 8)

D1. Persons have individual essences.

D2. Naming and essence go hand in hand: the sense of a name is an individual concept, which applies uniquely to a particular person.

D3. Names are rigid designators because individual concepts apply uniquely and necessarily to the persons in question.

D4. To analyze a name is to construct a definition of an individual concept by means of necessary and sufficient conditions for being a particular person.

D5. Naming requires the provision of descriptions that specify such conditions, which constitute individual essences.

D6. Such descriptions of essence give the deep sense of names. A speaker knows the deep sense only implicitly. It requires conceptual analysis to make this implicit knowledge explicit.

D7. The branch of philosophical theory concerned with personal identity is where we should look in order to construct of a proper description theory of personal names.

D8. Reference can be achieved through linguistic division of labor and reference borrowing.

3. McGinn claims that his theory avoids the problem of rigidity (D3). It is widely agreed, however, that among Kripke's arguments, the strongest is the semantic argument, or the *arguments from ignorance and error*, accord-

<sup>1</sup> For the sake of economy of space, most of these theses, and those in the following section, i.e. (E1)-(E8), are formulated by mixing quoting and paraphrasing. The inferential relation among the theses in each group is obvious enough to require no indication.

ing to which there are intuitively successful cases of reference where<sup>2</sup>

[Error] The descriptive analysis implies wrong conclusions about what the names refer to.

[Ignorance] The speakers lack the conceptual resources that the descriptive analysis requires them to have.

4. According to (D6) and (D7), a proper description theory of names should be informed by a true theory of personal identity. This does not mean, McGinn thinks, he needs to take a stand on the issue of personal identity: 'my point is just that whichever of these theories [of personal identity] (or others) might be true, *that* is what constitutes the analysis of personal proper names' (111). To show how his theory works, he does elaborate it in a way that allows him to discuss the rigidity problem and the semantic argument in more concrete terms. The way he does that is to assume that the bodily account of personal identity is true 'for ease of exposition' and use it to articulate a simple analysis of personal names, which he then refines by borrowing from the causal theory of reference. This expository strategy he adopts, as will be seen, turns out to be take a crucial place in our criticisms below.

### McGinn's casual descriptivism

5. According to the simple essence-descriptive theory, 'implicit in every personal proper name is a description of the form "the person with body *b*"' (113). It's easy to see that this simple theory will not work as we do not normally name a body. When the body in question is an object of our acquaintance, we may resort to such descriptions as 'the person with *that* body'. Still, not all users of a name have such acquaintance. McGinn looks to the *causal theory of reference*, due to Kripke and Donnellan (1972), for a solution:

When I use the name 'Plato,' the description that is implicit in my understanding is 'the person whose body was at the origin of that causal chain,' where with the demonstrative I refer to the chain of speech acts that originates in the baptism of Plato... and continues on through the centuries to the uses of 'Plato' today. The '*b*' term is thus 'that body,' where 'that body' here is equivalent to 'the body at the origin of that causal chain.' (116)

This in effect transforms McGinn's theory into a kind of causal descriptivism (as suggested by Lewis 1984, Kroon 1987, Jackson 1998). The causal theory of reference is *not* a theory of sense but one that explains reference. Causal descriptivism adapts the basic idea of the causal theory by considering a use of a name *N* to have the *sense* of a description like 'the individual standing in relation *R* to this token of *N*', where *R* is a certain link regarded as suitable by the causal theory of reference.

6. McGinn is convinced that '[his] theory will have no problem with rigidity'. I agree that McGinn's account, *in its simple form*, can avoid the problem, for, assuming the body theory of personal identity, the description

(D1) the person with body *b*  
is rigid because '*b*' is a name. Assuming that demonstrative phrases are also rigid, 'the person with *that* body' denotes Plato rigidly when *that* body is *b*. McGinn's causal

descriptivism proposes, however, a *complex* description for the analysis of 'Plato':

(D2) the person with the body at the origin of that causal chain.

Presumably McGinn thinks that (D2) is rigid, but consider the following case:

I first heard about Plato from a book by Will Durant. Let '*C*' be the causal chain that *actually* connects my word 'Plato' to Plato. In possible world *w* Plato exists but Durant's book does not. '*C*' does not exist in *w*, so the description (D2\*) '*the person with the body at the origin of C*' fails to pick out Plato at *w*. (D2\*) therefore does not rigidly denote Plato.

7. It feels odd to have to point this out, but such a test requires almost no ingenuity to come up with given that one understands what rigidity is (i.e., referring to the same object with respect to all possible worlds *where it exists*).<sup>3</sup> It is true, 'the person with origin *o*' is rigid, for the simple reason that '*o*' is a name. 'The body at the origin of that causal chain', however, is not a name, so it is wrong to think (D2) or (D2\*) is rigid. Might McGinn have been misled by the demonstrative phrase '*that* causal chain', which, like 'that body', is rigid? It is debatable, however, that a causal chain must be individuated by its *actual* origin. At any rate, there surely are worlds like *w*, in which Plato exists and in which *that* causal chain does not, no matter how a causal chain is individuated.

### A dilemma

8. Let us call 'the essence-description-[X] theory' the essence-description theory of person names incorporating a particular theory, *X*, of personal identity. Now how does the essence-description-body account articulated by McGinn fare with respect to the semantic argument? Here, one may point out a standard objection to causal descriptivism. Causal descriptivism requires speakers to be able to provide a description that explains reference and that the explanation is correct. 'It requires that everyone who designates—i.e., everyone—has a theory of designation, *and that the theory is right*'. (Devitt and Sterelny 1999, 61) This demands too much of the conceptual competence of the speakers and raises *new* problems of ignorance and error. McGinn seems to think that his theory can deal with the new problems by appealing to implicit knowledge (C7) and reference borrowing (D8). Such an appeal, I believe, is futile, but arguing for this would require too much space. More importantly, however, such an argument would be quite unnecessary if the dilemma I present below is sound.

9. It is of utmost importance to note once again that McGinn's reply to the semantic argument is made under the *assumption that the bodily theory of personal identity is correct*. That assumption may be false. So, even if it is granted that the essence-description-body account can handle the new problems of ignorance and error in the way he suggests, McGinn's job of breathing new life into descriptivism is not yet done unless he does, or at least show that he can do, (S1) or (S2):

S1: to show that the body theory is true or is the best account of personal identity; or,

<sup>2</sup> Here I am rephrasing Stalnaker's succinct formulation in (Stalnaker 2008, 12)

<sup>3</sup> Button performs a similar test of rigidity in his review of McGinn's book (Button 2013). He did not try to explain why McGinn has got it so wrong. I cannot help venturing a conjecture, as presented shortly.

S2: to show that, with respect to other accounts of personal identity that we may reasonably consider true, the new questions of ignorance and error are answerable in a similar way.

10. (S1) is very difficult to achieve, if achievable at all. There are well-known difficulties in establishing the superiority of the body, or for that matter any other major, theory of personal identity, not least because the problem of personal identity is not a single issue but a set of related issues concerning persistence, personhood, self, the 'evidence problem', and population (Olson 2003). Moreover, Theodore Sider (2001) has argued vigorously that the problem of personal identity is *unresolvable* and is a case that reveals the *limits* of conceptual analysis. If Sider is right, (S1) is not achievable and, what's worst, given D6 and D7, the very analysis of personal names is impossible!

11. Let's consider (S2). McGinn argues as if he can say: 'This is how my theory can answer the questions of error and ignorance if the body theory is true; just do the same for any other theory of personal identity of your choice.' He writes:

we find a number of different suggestions about what constitutes a person: her body, her brain, her memories, her character, her individual consciousness. Thus Cleopatra.... might be individuated by her memories ..., or she might simply be a particular center of consciousness (an irreducible mental subject). I might formulate these theories as follows: either I am *this body* or *this brain* or I am the bearer of *these memories* or I am identical to *this consciousness*. (111)

But things are not as simple as that.

12. Suppose we assume instead the memory theory. Parallel reasoning suggests that the sense of a personal name, according to McGinn, should be analyzed as 'the person with memory set *m*' (compare 'the person with body *b*') or 'the person with *these* memories' (compare 'the person with that body'). Does this sound even initially plausible as the basis of a descriptive account of personal names? I can conceive what it would be like to dub a body in a baptism or demonstratively refer to a body; it defies my imagination to conceive parallel cases for memory. More importantly, it is difficult to see how such cases, even if describable in a coherent way, can be relevant to our actual practice of using personal names. In saying that Cleopatra might be individuated by her memories or character or be a particular center of consciousness or a particular brain, McGinn does not seem very sensitive to the difficulties or puzzlements that will *certainly* arise – difficulties and puzzlements that may not arise in the context of the body theory – if he is to try to construct a descriptive sense for 'Cleopatra' accordingly. Given (or to the extent) that the psychological theory is worth considering as a rival of the bodily theory, these difficulties are real and McGinn cannot put them aside as if he has also dealt with them in

his discussion of the theory in the context of the body account. The same can be said of the brain theory or other rival theories one may reasonably consider.

13. Hence, there are serious problems in constructing even a *simple* version of the essence-description-[memory] account of the sense of personal names. Things will only get more difficult if one tries to construct a *causal*-descriptive version in order to engage fully with the semantic argument. Again, the same can be said of other rival theories one may reasonably consider. The strategic assumption that the body theory is correct, as we can see now, has helped conceal many serious difficulties McGinn would certainly have encountered had he chosen to make a different assumption about personal identity when elaborating his theory. No wonder it is the body theory he assumes 'for ease of exposition'. So, despite what McGinn has said about the causal essence-description-[body] theory, there is no reason to think (S2) is attainable.

14. McGinn's descriptivist case for personal names is therefore highly incredible. What's more, we name a great variety of objects other than persons. There is no reason to think that difficulties analogous to those raised above will not also arise with respect to other kinds of names. McGinn's new defense of descriptivism, I therefore conclude, is an unsuccessful one.

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# Caring Standpoint Theory: A Tentative Project of Epistemizing Care

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## Abstract

This paper aims to unite the ethics of care and feminist standpoint theory into what I call caring standpoint theory (CST) so as to comprehend why and how care values are internally constitutive to the knowledge production and scientific objectivity. To that purpose, I propose an account of what CST is under the rubrics of its distinctive way of knowing, methodology and conception of strong objectivity. First, CST as care-knowing is similar to connected Knowledge much inspired by maternal thinking. Second, CST attempts to study up from the dalliness of women's lives in different class, race and nationality, where caring works mostly done by women incubate caring habits and caring virtues (patience, humbleness, sensitivity, particularity, receptivity, and empathy) which, in turn, are conducive to the development of intellectual virtues. Third, CST is a project of epistemizing care to narrow the great divide between ethics and epistemology.

Since the 1970s and 1980s, the ethics of care and feminist standpoint theory have been two of the leading feminist theories, and both theories are greatly inspired by women's marginal social positions as caretakers in households and in care-related work across all levels of society. Both theories have challenged mainstream (malestream) moral traditions and mainstream (malestream) scientific paradigms to make alternative moral and scientific research models plausible. For the past three decades, care ethicists and standpoint feminists have been criticized from all sides (feminists and non-feminists), and both theories have gone through major theoretical revisions to meet these criticisms. Despite these efforts, both theories are still considered marginal when compared with dominant research disciplines. Until recently, the ethics of care was considered a supplement to virtue ethics (Slote 2007) or subsumed under the framework of virtue epistemology (Dalmyia 2002). Intemann (2010, 794) suggests that standpoint theory merges with feminist empiricism into what she calls feminist standpoint empiricism. As an alternative, I propose a tentative project of merging the two theories so as to acknowledge the distinct voices of both.

This paper aims to unite the ethics of care and feminist standpoint theory into what I call caring standpoint theory (CST). In the paper, I propose a tentative account of what CST is under the rubrics of its distinctive way of knowing, methodology and conception of strong objectivity.

## 1. CST Epistemology: Care-Knowing as Connected Knowledge

At first glance, CST continues Dalmyia's (2002) project of epistemizing care to narrow the great divide between ethics and epistemology. According to Dalmyia (2002), a scientist who cares for others should matter epistemically, as the underlying character that goes along with taking care seriously should also be "relevant for the epistemic evaluation of her scientific beliefs" (47). Moreover, Dalmyia (2002) holds the view that care-knowing can potentially be integrated into the general framework of virtue epistemology, as caring ways of knowing have a "character-type" that is conducive to scientific inquiry.

Given that Dalmyia's project of epistemizing care is understood as why and how a knower should care, CST, as I propose, is the other way around, i.e., it addresses the question concerning why and how anyone who is engaged in taking care of others has advantage, rather than disadvantage, in knowing the truth. So understood, CST is ut-

terly different from Dalmyia's project of epistemizing care which fits well into the framework of virtue epistemology in particular, and the orthodox view of epistemology in general, both of which keep intact the conception of a knower as being autonomous, independent, and impartial. Care matters, according to Dalmyia (2002), to the knower for the pursuit of the justified scientific beliefs. By contrast, CST, highly inspired by the ethics of care, is devoted to the exploration of caring ways of knowing without leaving intact the orthodox notion of a knower.

CST, and Held (2006) in particular, would generally indicate that to take care seriously could lead to a paradigm shift from the worldview of individuality toward a worldview of interdependent relationships. Held writes the following about such a shift:

The ethics of care values caring relations rather than merely caring persons in Slote's sense of persons with caring or benevolent dispositions...Noticing interdependencies, rather than thinking only or largely in terms of independent individuals and their individual circumstances is one of the central aspects of an ethics of care. (Held 2006, 52f)

As the passage clearly shows, the major difference between CST and orthodox views of knowledge and virtue epistemology lies in their basic grounding. CST has caring relationships as its foundation, whereas virtue epistemology prioritizes an autonomous and independent (moral) subject similar to Cartesian subject, whose "route to knowledge is through private, abstract thought, through the efforts of reason unaided either by the senses or by consultation with other knowers" (Code 1991, 4). In contrast to the adversary model of reasoning favored by separate knowledge (Moulton 1983; Belenky 1991; Code 1991); care-knower, according to CST, values caring dispositions embedded and embodied within interpersonal relationships (instead of abstract reasoning) that would become the paradigm for cognition.

According to CST, care-knowing is not merely to be understood as connected knower who "shifts the focus to other people's ways of thinking" (Belenky 1991, 115), but also is to be grasped as embodied practices of taking care of others, the art of caring performance in knowing how to meet the needs of others at the right way and the right time. Taken together, care-knowing is founded on the priority of relationship over individual autonomy. The priority of relational ontology is not only understood as the vulnerable human existence in need of caring about and being

cared for; but also, following Heidegger, it is grasped as the ontological structure of our Being-in-the-world as Being-with (Freeman 2011).

One corollary from the priority of relational ontology, to my contention, is a massive makeover of the value placed upon the ideal knower, who, as Russell (1912) notes, is similar to God's-eye view. The ideal knower marks the greatness of intellectual virtues, such as freedom, impartiality, impersonality, pure contemplation, reason, universal citizenship, and, above all, open-mindedness (i.e., the enlargement of the self in the universe), all of which unduly, to my belief, expose the inferiority of values acquired from doing petty works (e.g., intuition, partiality, emotion, context-sensitivity and narrow mindedness). Another corollary from taking care to be the paradigm of cognition, as I will point out in the following, is to restore epistemic justice of those who are engaged in taking care seriously.

## 2. CST Methodology: Care-Knowing as Situated Knowledge from Women's Standpoints

According to CST, insofar as social locations systematically shape and limit what we know, i.e., social abilities and competencies that have been acquired construct, in turn, the reality of the world. More specifically, CST is modeled on "the logics of caring practices", by that I mean caring dispositions that have been acquired through being engaged within the field of caring work; the embodiment of the caring habits (*habitus*) by repetitive and constant exercises of providing care; the art of excellent caring performances that looks natural at the surface, yet in fact, are social abilities and competencies that have been taken for granted as if they are inborn nature (Skeggs 1997; Hirvonen 2014). Being deeply embedded (i.e., embodied) in caring for others leads to a circumspective mastery of the world, stimulates the core of intuitive and experiential awakening, moves away from transcendental moral guidance to examine the relevant contextual details in particular human situations, and, above all, deepens empathy, which leads us to desire the best for others who are entirely different from us. As Harding (1991, 121) points out, knowledge produced from women's lives "can decrease the partialities and distortions in the picture of nature and social life provided by the natural and social sciences"

However, despite the importance of women's standpoints, care-knowing remains marginal to the orthodox view of the ideal knower. Judged from the knower-from-nowhere view, knowledge that results from seeing from somewhere can only be accidentally true at its best and totally false at its worst. In addition, although ethicists who acknowledge that proper ways of seeing cannot ignore the affective feeling that is closely tied to women's care practices (Blum 1994; Little 1995; Belenky 1997), critics who believe in the God's-eye view find that empathy for the needs of the closed ones is of little moral worth when compared with an equal concern for all. Worse yet, while leading scientists believe that the influence of the social background of value (e.g. religious, political, ethical) judgments on scientific justification is irrelevant at best and at worst harmful to the pursuit of truth, a project aiming at taking care values to be the integral parts of scientific objectivity is, to their judgment, simply false.

Simply put, putting either on the witness stand or the public forum, women's testimonies have always been mocked as emotional, context-dependent, illogical and narrow-minded, all of which are the results of taking care works in the private household. For one thing, as women's

paid works (e.g., nanny, babysitter, housekeeper, elementary teacher, nurse, secretary, bio-lab technician, and psychological consultant) are likened as the extension of their unpaid work at home, women's works in different class, race, and nationality share structural similarity. To be exact, despite the differences between housework and professional paid labor, these differences might only exist in terms of degree, not in kind. As a result, women worldwide have suffered epistemic injustice as small-minded persons along with their confined bird's-eye vision in doing petty work. For CST, the way to restore epistemic justice of women's knowledge production is not the route through the abstract reasoning and moral reflection without here and now as both Dalrymple (2002) and Fricker (2007) have done; instead, CST attempts to restore epistemic injustice that has been harmful to women by acknowledging the values of care good to all as co-existing Being-With without alluding to the naturalness of women's femininity.

In the last section of this paper, I will explain how caring values can also be good for the advancement of science.

## 3. CST Objectivity: Epistemic Privilege of Strong Objectivity

CST acknowledges the greatness of women's work and recognizes that intellectual and moral virtues are systematically formed within specific social locations. For CST, knowledge is socially situated here and there, and some of the social locations are more privileged in forming epistemic and moral virtues. Nonetheless, CST denies the view that social groups are of equal epistemic significance and proposes that women's socially situated standpoint is epistemically advantaged when compared with that of other social groups. Social locations in which women works shape moral caring disposition, conscientious motive, sensitivity, responsiveness, empathy, compassion, and trust, all of which are caring values ingrained in seriously embodying the caretaking relationship.

As shown in the above section, as women's paid jobs are likened to be extensions of the care work done at home, the former professional skills, such as sensitivity to details, and responsibility at work, are "a second order habitus that builds on the primary habitus acquired since early childhood in the social environment of the family". (Hirvonen 2014, 39). In fact, women have been the task force for collecting, recording and analyzing scientific data (Eisenhart and Finkel 1998). Scientific breakthroughs are certainly unlikely without the repetitive and tedious experiments done by female researchers. Women's intellectual sustainability has been reliable in justifying scientific hypotheses. More importantly, women's intellectual receptivity, which results from their humility out of taking of petty work, makes them open to views that differ from their own, and in so doing, women are less subjective in their knowledge claims because they acknowledge the diverse intellectual authorities of different epistemic communities.

According to CST, strong objectivity is fact constituted by care-laden values. In the case of cell studies, Weasel (2001, 431) no longer sees cells in isolation as guardians of separation, protectors of a sacrosanct orderly interior from a hostile and dangerous outside. Instead, through the values of connection and interrelationship, she is able to see cell membranes as accomplishing continuity within the cellular environment while remaining distinctive (Weasel 2001, 431). Seeing the cell in relative terms and focusing on cellular membranes as dynamic interfaces, Weasel can understand the function of nucleus in a different light. Weasel's research project is similar to the work of Barbara

McClintock, whose “feeling for the organism” enables her to “study maize by shortening the distance between the observer and the object being studied” (Rosser 1992, 81).

Viewing cancer in a relational context, Weasel (2001) provides an alternative explanation of cancer as “defects in biochemical pathways communicating developmental decisions that result in a cell misaligned with its surroundings, developing into a cancerous growth” (Weasel 2001, 433), followed by the treatment alternative to the current “seek and destroy” treatment tactics. Weasel (2001) proposes a holistic approach for cancer treatment, which treats “cells with compounds that enable them to grow to maturity, completing their normal life cycle which had been interrupted and reversing the cancerous condition” (Weasel 2001, 434). Citing clinical cases of acute promyelocytic leukemia as evidence, Weasel believes that alternative treatment has proven more effective in curing cancer than the traditional “seek and destroy” tactics.

In light of transforming scientific research by acknowledging that fact is care-laden, CST will continue the important work of Holland (2001), Rosser (1992, Sherwin (1996), Spanier (2001), and Roy (2004), to name just a few.

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# Beschreibung subjektiven Erlebens im Lichte des Privatsprachen-Arguments

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## Abstract

In den Philosophischen Bemerkungen spricht Wittgenstein vom Gesichtsfeld und den darin gegebenen phänomenalen Gegenständen wie dem „Gesichtskreis“. Diese Gegenstände fallen unter das sogenannte Privatsprachenargument des späten Wittgensteins: Der Sprecher einer privaten Sprache kann sich selber nicht erklären, was seine Worte bedeuten. Inwiefern aber ist eine Beschreibung subjektiven Erlebens, wie sie in den Bemerkungen angestrebt wird, auch unter den Bedingungen des Privatsprachenarguments möglich? An einem Beispiel wird gezeigt, dass der Beschreibung subjektiven Erlebens nichts abgehandelt werden muss.

Aus der (imaginären) Diskussion zwischen mittlerem und spätem Wittgenstein ergibt sich eine Reihe von Fragen, die die Beschreibung von subjektivem Erleben betreffen. Ich beginne damit, die Diskussion zu skizzieren.

Wittgensteins *Philosophische Bemerkungen* sind in vielerlei Hinsicht näher an gewissen Strömungen des logischen Positivismus als an den *Philosophischen Untersuchungen*. So unterscheidet er in den *Bemerkungen* zwischen einer primären phänomenalen, und einer sekundären physikalischen Sprache. Die sekundäre ist dabei eine Konstruktion aus der primären. Aussagen über physikalische Gegenstände wie „Die Karotte liegt unter dem Liegestuhl“ lassen sich also analysieren in Aussagen über das phänomenale Gegebene. Was genau dieses phänomenale Gegebene für die *Bemerkungen* ist, ist mir nicht bekannt. Sollen sie unanalysierbar sein? Dann könnte z.B. der visuelle Sinn dadurch beschrieben werden, dass angegeben wird, welche Punkte einer zweidimensionalen Ebene welche Farbe haben. Falls es nicht auf die Analysierbarkeit ankommt, dann kann man auch von Figuren und Farbflecken sprechen. Dies wird die für uns wichtige Redeweise sein. Wenn Hänchen einen Liegestuhl sieht, dann ist ihm ein Farbfleck von einer bestimmten Gestalt gegeben, bzw. ein Konglomerat von solchen Farbflecken, ein Konglomerat, das mit dem Verstreichen der Zeit durch verwandte Konglomerate ersetzt wird.

Eine Motivation, die dafür spricht, von einem Gesichtsfeld zu sprechen, ist Folgende. Hänchen schaut von seinem Schreibtisch auf und sieht im Fenster einen Baum. Natürlich weiss er, dass der Baum grösser ist als das Fenster. Aber wenn man die Perspektive betrachtet, aus der Hänchen die Welt sieht, dann erscheint das Fenster *in dieser Perspektive* grösser als der Baum. Wittgenstein spricht nun davon, dass das Fenster grösser *ist* als der Baum (in einem anderen Sinn von „grösser“ als im physikalischen Sinn). Das phänomenale Gegebene im Gesichtsfeld würde also dieser zweiten Redeweise von grösser und kleiner einen Sinn verleihen (vgl. PB 100f).<sup>1</sup>

Wittgenstein ist im Weiteren an der Logik dieses Gesichtsraumes interessiert und kommt zum Ergebnis, dass es eine „logische Eigentümlichkeit“ der Erfahrung ist, dass sie verschwommen ist (vgl. PB 263). Einen Punkt vorne-

weg. Es macht für den Wittgenstein der *Bemerkungen* keinen Unterschied aus, ob er über die Logik der Erfahrung oder über die Logik der Erfahrungsbegriffe spricht. Denn für ihn müssen (wie im *Tractatus*) die Form der Welt und die Form der Sprache einander entsprechen (vgl. PB 85). Und hier kommen wir zu dem eingangs erwähnten Gesichtskreis. Der ist nicht ein auf Papier gezeichneter Kreis, sondern eben ein Kreis im Gesichtsfeld, ein Kreis, wie er einer Person erscheint. Wittgenstein findet nun bemerkenswert, dass dem Gesichtskreis eine ganze Klasse von gezeichneten geometrischen Figuren entspricht. Diese Figuren, nehmen wir an, sind so fein gezeichnet, dass wir mit blossen Augen keinen Unterschied zu einem echten Kreis feststellen können. Nur mit zusätzlichen Hilfsmitteln wie einer Lupe oder einem Elektronenmikroskop können wir Abweichungen erkennen. Die Klasse der geometrischen Figuren, die wir als Kreis sehen ist indes nicht scharf begrenzt. Bei einigen dieser geometrischen Figuren werden wir zögern, sie einen Kreis zu nennen, bei anderen werden wir zu verschiedenen Gelegenheiten verschiedene Urteile abgeben.

Diese ganze Rede von Gesichtskreisen und einer primären, phänomenalen Sprache ist dazu angebracht, den späten Wittgenstein aufs Tapet zu bringen. Denn die primären Phänomene, die unserer Sprache ihre Bedeutung geben sollen, sind etwas grundsätzlich Privates. Niemand anderes als ich selbst hat meine Sinnesdaten. Also ist die Sprache, die ich spreche, und die aus diesen Sinnesdaten konstruiert ist, eine, die grundsätzlich nur ich verstehen kann. Diese Position ist nur schon aus dem Grund unplausibel, weil wir uns dann nicht über unsere Empfindungen verständigen könnten. Vielleicht könnte man allerdings mit Hilfe von postulierter psycho-physischer Kausalität und interpersoneller Analogie eine Ersatz-Theorie zimmern.

Ich möchte mich allerdings auf das sogenannte Privatsprachenargument konzentrieren.<sup>2</sup> Hier eine Skizze davon, wie ich es verstehe. Unter einer privaten Sprache wird nicht eine solche verstanden, die nur einen Sprecher hat (wie die von Robinson Crusoe, oder die vom letzten Mohikaner), sondern eine, die grundsätzlich nur von *einem* Sprecher verstanden werden *kann*. Wenn man von einem Argument spricht, dann muss man hinzufügen: elenktisch. Denn im Grunde geht es darum, dass Wittgenstein einem Gesprächspartner, der behauptet (oder darauf verpflichtet

<sup>1</sup> Es kommt noch eine zusätzliche Komplikation dazu: Wittgenstein spricht davon, dass „grösser“ selbst im Gesichtsraum zwei Bedeutungen hat. Man könnte versuchen, das so aufs Wort zu bringen: Einerseits erscheint Hänchen der Fensterrahmen als grösser als der entfernte Baum. Andererseits gehört es zur Wahrnehmung des Baumes als dreidimensionaler Gegenstand, dass er im Vergleich zum Fenster grösser ist. Deshalb sieht Hänchen den Baum gleichzeitig als grösser und als kleiner als das Fenster.

<sup>2</sup> Ich halte Schroeders Interpretationsvorschlag für hilfreich, der in den §§243-315 der *PU* eine ganze Reihe von Argumenten mit Bezug auf Empfindungen sieht, und nicht nur das „Privatsprachenargument“. Das in der Diskussion so genannte Argument nennt er das „Kein-Kriterium-Argument“. (Schroeder 2006, 210).

ist), dass er eine Sprache spreche, die nur er verstehen könne, aufzeigen will, dass dieser in ein Spannungsfeld gerät. Entweder kann er sich selber nicht erklären, was seine privaten, vorgeblichen Begriffe bedeuten. Oder er nimmt Rückgriff auf eine Erklärungsweise, die auch andere verstehen können und nimmt seiner Sprache somit die Privatheit. Nehmen wir an, Hänschen sei beeindruckt vom Klang eines Schneebesens und dass er ihm den Namen "E" gibt. Wie könnte er sich selber die Bedeutung von "E" erklären? Wenn er sagt: "'E' ist der Klang eines Schneebesens", dann hat er bereits öffentlich verwendete Wörter benutzt. Wenn er einen Schneebesen zum klingen bringt und dabei das Zeichen "E" ausspricht, dann ist diese Erklärung für andere ebenfalls verständlich. Wenn Hänschen die Worte der öffentlichen Sprache nicht verwenden darf, da sonst die Privatheit verloren ginge, bleibt ihm noch übrig, sich selbst eine private hinweisende Erklärung zu geben.

Diese hat aber ihre eigenen Tücken. Wie Wittgenstein schon zu Beginn der *Untersuchungen* ausgeführt hat setzt eine erfolgreiche hinweisende Erklärung schon einiges voraus. Unter welches Sortal fällt das, worauf hingewiesen wird? Wenn dies nicht durch den Kontext oder die Äusserung selber klargemacht wird, könnte die zeigende Geste auf *irgendetwas* zeigen: Auf die Form, die Farbe, die Anzahl der hingewiesenen Gegenstände, etc. Weil aber Hänschen keine Sortale zur Verfügung stehen, "Empfindung" oder "Geräusch" gehören ebenfalls zur öffentlichen Sprache (und diese Sortale mittels einer hinweisen Erklärung aus dem Nichts zu erschaffen wäre auch nicht einfacher), kann seine hinweisende Erklärung nicht eindeutig bestimmen, was er mit "E" bezeichnen will. Deshalb scheitert auch dieser Erklärungsversuch. Was bedeutet "E"? – Nun, es könnte eine ganze Reihe von Dingen bedeuten. Allerdings nicht in dem Sinn, dass wir nicht wissen, welche von den verschiedenen Bedeutungen das Wort hat, sondern in dem, dass die Bedeutung des Wortes logisch unbestimmt bleibt. Wenn Hänschen im Folgenden einen bestimmten Rhythmus als "E" bezeichnete<sup>3</sup>, oder Geräusche im Allgemeinen, oder Geräusche die mit Metallgegenständen hergestellt werden, oder sogar eine bestimmte Farbe, dann stünde dies in keiner Weise im Widerspruch mit seiner Erklärung. Die Erklärung ist unbestimmt, und liefert darum kein "Kriterium für die Richtigkeit" (PU §258) einer zukünftigen Verwendung von "E".

Dass hinreichende Erklärungen nicht dazu taugen, eine Sprache *ex nihilo* zu erschaffen ist eine Charakteristik, die auch eine nicht-private Sprache wie die natürliche Sprache betrifft. In dieser Hinsicht ergeben sich zwei Fragen: Wie kann ein Kind eine Sprache lernen? Und wie kann Sprache evolutionsbiologisch bzw. naturgeschichtlich entstehen? Wittgensteins Sprachauffassung scheint nahezulegen, dass diese Dinge verunmöglicht werden. Um eine sehr grobe Antwort auf diese Schwierigkeit zu geben: (zumindest beim Menschen) schliesst Abrichtung die Lücke. Bevor nach einer Benennung gefragt werden kann, muss das Kind erst lernen, den Ausdruck korrekt auszusprechen, und lernen, bestimmte wortlose Sätze auf bestimmte

Gegenstände anzuwenden (oder bei bestimmten Wünschen einen bestimmten Satz auszusprechen). Abrichtung besteht in der Wiederholung von Sprechsituationen verbunden mit Sanktionen (positiven wie negativen) bei erwünschtem und unerwünschtem Verhalten. Das Fragen nach dem Namen eines Gegenstandes wird ebenfalls durch Abrichtung gelernt. Abrichtung wird einerseits erleichtert und andererseits überhaupt erst möglich gemacht durch gewisse Tendenzen der biologischen Menschlichen Natur, insbesondere der Fähigkeit, Fähigkeiten zu erlernen.

Die zweite Frage nach der evolutionsbiologischen Entwicklung ist aus folgendem Grund schwieriger zu beantworten. Abrichtung setzt voraus, dass es eine asymmetrische Beziehung zwischen Lehrer und Schüler gibt. Der Lehrer muss die Möglichkeit haben, den Schüler zu sanktionieren, sowie zumindest die Fähigkeit haben, das vom Begriff Bezeichnete in seinem Wahrnehmen und Handeln zu unterscheiden. Im typischen Fall des Spracherwerbs verfügt der Lehrer über qualitative höhere Fähigkeiten. Er ist bereits in vollem Besitz der Sprache, und könnte auf die Frage "Was tust du gerade?" antworten: "Ich bringe ihm bei was "Liegestuhl" bedeutet". Naturgeschichtlich kann es allerdings keinen solchen Lehrer geben, da sich hier natürlich die Frage des ersten Lehrers stellt. Die Spezies Mensch hat also ihre erste Sprache(n) nicht durch Abrichtung gelernt. Um eine ganz grobe Antwort zu geben: Die Frage nach dem Ursprung der sprachlichen Fähigkeiten verliert sich im Graubereich zwischen sprachlichen und vorsprachlichen, rein diskriminatorischen Fähigkeiten.

Man könnte nun fragen: Warum kann sich Hänschen nicht einfach selbst abrichten? Und hier kommt die oben erwähnte Asymmetrie ins Spiel. Man könnte vielleicht davon reden, dass man sich selbst dazu abrichten kann, aufhören zu rauchen, seine Vorgesetzten freundlich zu grüssen oder abends die Zähne zu putzen. In diesen Fällen ist der Zweck der Abrichtung allerdings nicht, eine neue Fähigkeit zu vermitteln, sondern eine Schwäche des Willens zu bewältigen. In solchen Fällen besteht also keine Asymmetrie in Bezug auf die Fähigkeiten von Schüler und Lehrer. Aber damit der Lehrer dem Schüler eine Fähigkeit durch Abrichtung vermitteln kann, die der Schüler nicht besitzt, muss der Lehrer bereits über diese Fähigkeit verfügen. Offensichtlich ist dies ein Ding der Unmöglichkeit wenn Schüler und Lehrer in einer Person zusammenfallen. Dem Begriff einer Privatsprache kann also auch nicht durch Selbst-Abrichtung Sinn verliehen werden.

Zurück zu den beiden Wittgensteins. Der Späte könnte nun in Bezug auf den Begriff "Gesichtskreis" fragen, ob dieser überhaupt eine Bedeutung hat. Für den mittleren Wittgenstein soll ja der Gesichtskreis ein Begriff sein, der zur phänomenalen und damit primären Sprache gehört. Das beinhaltet auch, dass die Messmethoden, die man an gezeichnete Kreise anlegen kann, nicht auf Gesichtskreise anwendbar sind. Die Spitze des Zirkels kann nicht in den Mittelpunkt des Gesichtskreises gesteckt werden, der Radius kann nicht mit dem Lineal gemessen werden (das Gesichtslinéal wird grösser, wenn man es den Augen annähert). Was heisst es dann noch, hier von einem Kreis zu Sprechen? In der Geometrie wird ein Kreis definiert als Menge aller Punkte mit einem bestimmten Abstand von einem bestimmten Punkt (dem Mittelpunkt). Wie aber kann man von einem Abstand sprechen, wenn man ihn nicht messen kann? Man könnte nun versuchen, sich selbst eine hinweisende Erklärung zu geben. "Diese Gestalt ist ein Gesichtskreis." Der gewöhnliche Begriff der *Gestalt* beinhaltet aber auch, dass er der Messung zugänglich ist. Bleibt also nur "Dies ist ein Gesichtskreis." Und hier kommt die oben erwähnte Unbestimmtheit ins Spiel. Der mittlere

<sup>3</sup> Dass Hänschen einen Rhythmus als "E" bezeichnen kann, setzt voraus, dass "E" Bedeutung hat (was ich im Gegebenen Fall bestreite). Es handelt sich also um kontrafaktische (oder "kontra-mögliche") Überlegungen. Man könnte vielleicht an eine ähnliche Situation denken: Ein Beobachter bemerkt, dass Hänschen immer dann "E" in seinem Notizbuch vermerkt, wenn ein Rhythmus erklingt. In diesem Fall würde Hänschen also "E" anders verwenden, als er sich vorgenommen hatte (wobei er es sich privatim gar nicht vornehmen konnte) und zwar so, dass dessen Bedeutung für andere verständlich ist.

<sup>4</sup> Man kann sich auch vorstellen, dass ein Schüler seine erste Sprache durch blosses Beobachten von Sprechern erlernt. Aber auch hier gibt es eine Asymmetrie der Fähigkeiten. Oder im Falle einer vollständigen Kopie eines sprachbegabten Menschen erübrigt sich die Frage nach dem Spracherwerb. Denn dieser verfügt bei seiner Erschaffung bereits über sprachliche Fähigkeiten.



Wittgenstein kann sich also selbst nicht erklären, was ein Gesichtskreis ist.

Bedeutet das auch, das es überhaupt keinen Sinn gibt, in welchem von einem Gesichtskreis gesprochen werden kann? Die Struktur der bisherigen Argumentation ist offensichtlich nicht geeignet, ein so weitreichendes Ergebnis zu stützen. Denn es wurde ja nur gezeigt, dass, was der mittlere Wittgenstein unter einem Gesichtskreis verstehen will, keinen Sinn ergibt. Aber warum sollen wir überhaupt von einem Gesichtskreis sprechen? Aus der zu Beginn angegebenen Motivation, nämlich die persönliche Perspektive auf die Welt zu beschreiben. Der Fensterrahmen erscheint grösser als der Baum, die runde Münze sieht elliptisch aus, der Triangel erscheint lauter als das Schiffshorn.

Ein alternativer Vorschlag wäre, das logische Verhältnis von Gesichtskreis und gezeichnetem Kreis genau umgekehrt zu deuten wie die *Bemerkungen*. Der gezeichnete Kreis wäre dann primär, der Gesichtskreis sekundär. Was als gezeichneter Kreis durch Messung bestimmt werden kann erscheint uns (dem Subjekt) mal als Kreis, mal als Ellipse (je nach Winkel). Genauer:

**Blickwinkel:** Ein Kreis aus dem Blickwinkel  $\beta$  erscheint wie eine Ellipse aus dem Blickwinkel  $\alpha$  (bei gleicher Entfernung).

**Entfernung:** Ein Kreis der Grösse  $\gamma_1$  erscheint aus der Entfernung  $\varepsilon_1$  wie ein Kreis der Grösse  $\gamma_2$  aus der Entfernung  $\varepsilon_2$  (bei gleichem Winkel).

Mit anderen Worten: die subjektive Perspektive kann mit Hilfe der Gesetze der Optik beschrieben werden, oder, wenn man will, mit Hilfe der Kunst der perspektivischen Zeichnung. Die Rede von Gesichtskreisen hätte dann z.B. folgenden Sinn: "Ich weiss zwar, dass diese Münze eine kreisförmige Fläche hat, was mit geometrischen Methoden festgestellt werden kann. Aus meiner Perspektive allerdings erscheint mir diese Fläche als Ellipse, bzw. so, wie mir eine geometrisch konstruierte Ellipse aus dem horizontalen 90° Winkel erscheint."

An dieser Stelle möchte ich zwei Komplikationen aufführen. Sie hängen beide mit dem Primat der aufrichtigen, nicht im Kontext eines Schauspiels gemachten Ausdrucks-Äusserung zusammen. Das Primat besagt, dass das letzte Kriterium, ob z.B. eine Person Schmerzen hat, darin besteht, ob ihre Schmerzens-Äusserung (im Fall des natürlichen Schmerz-Ausdrucks: "Aua!") aufrichtig ist. Wenn es keine Gründe gibt, an ihrer Aufrichtigkeit zu zweifeln, und wir uns nicht im Kontext eines Schauspiels oder eines Witzes oder der Ironie befinden, dann ist die Äusserung ernst zu nehmen und entsprechend danach zu handeln. Auch das Fehlen einer Verletzung von Gewebe ändert daran nichts.

Analog dazu könnte man eine erste Komplikation konstruieren. Eine Person behauptet, dass ihr ein Kreis aus *allen* Winkeln so erscheint, wie ein Kreis aus der Standard-Perspektive (aus dem horizontalen 90° Winkel), wenn sie eine bestimmte Droge genommen hat. Der Umstand der Droge legt nahe, dass es eine kausale Erklärung für das Ausser-Kraft-Setzen der perspektivischen Gesetze gibt. Nehmen wir weiter an, dass sich diese Anomalie verlässlich durch Einnahme der Droge reproduzieren lässt. Dieser Fall würde also bloss nahelegen, dass das subjektive Erleben bzw. Sehen durch andere kausale Faktoren mitbestimmt wird.

Die zweite Komplikation nimmt die Idee des Primats wieder auf. Was, wenn bis zum Tag des jüngsten Gerichts, unter Einsatz von allen erdenklichen wissenschaftlichen Mitteln, kein kausaler Faktor gefunden wird, der eine Anomalie erklären könnte? Nehmen wir an, dass Hänschen angibt, dass für ihn Kreise mit dem Wechsel der Perspektive nicht anders aussehen. Nehmen wir weiter an, dass es keine Gründe gibt, an seiner Aufrichtigkeit sowie an der Normalität des linguistischen Kontextes zu zweifeln, dass er nicht unter Drogeneinfluss steht, und dass auch keine Anomalie in Hirn oder Augen festgestellt werden kann. Dann gilt: Es gibt keine kausale Erklärung für Hänschens Bericht. Aber wir müssen ihm glauben. Können wir aber verstehen, was er uns sagt? Schliesslich lassen sich seine Behauptungen nicht kausal nachvollziehen. Die Antwort ist: Ja. Denn die Beschreibung<sup>5</sup> von Hänschens subjektivem Erleben setzt nur voraus, dass eine Verbindung zu geometrischen Messmethoden besteht. Wenn Hänschen ruft "Sieh mal, ein Kreis!" und wir aus unserem Blickwinkel, und aus seinem, keinen Kreis erkennen können, wir aber einen auf Papier gezeichneten Kreis finden, und dieses Muster reproduziert werden kann, können wir daraus schliessen, dass Hänschen die Welt anders sieht als wir sie sehen. Solange sich ein vorgeblicher Unterschied in der Beschreibung subjektiven Erlebens im Handeln manifestieren kann, ist es ein verständlicher Unterschied. Sobald aber sich ein vorgeblicher Unterschied subjektiven Erlebens nicht im Handeln manifestieren *kann*, enthebt er sich der Sinnhaftigkeit. Deshalb kann es nicht überraschen, dass es Farbenblinde, aber keine Farb-Inversen oder Ton-Inversen gibt.

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<sup>5</sup> Indem ich hier von Beschreibungen rede, hat es vielleicht den Anschein, dass ich damit Wittgenstein widerspreche (vgl. PU §290), zumindest aber Glock (*mutatis mutandis*): "Reports of aspect-dawning are not descriptions, [...] but AVOWALS, spontaneous reactions to what we see" (Glock 1996, 39). Allerdings bin ich erstens der Meinung, dass ich mit dem Hinweis auf das Primat des aufrichtigen Ausdrucks der logischen Eigentümlichkeit der Beschreibung subjektiven Erlebens genüge getan habe, und zweitens, dass Wittgenstein nicht vor dem Wort "Beschreibung" warnt, sondern vor einem bestimmten Bild davon (vgl. PU §290-1).

# On the Influence of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* on Toulmin's Philosophy of Science

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## Abstract

The paper discusses Toulmin's ideas in the philosophy of science – mainly as set out in *The Philosophy of Science* (1953) – in juxtaposition with Toulmin's reading of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. It claims that three themes present in the *Tractatus* had an influence on the core of Toulmin's ideas about scientific explanation: first, Wittgenstein's use of the term "*Bild*" – interpreted, after Hertz and Boltzmann, as "a model", also a mathematical one; second, the active, not passive, element in our forming a model (expressed in Proposition 2.1); and, third, the account of the system of mechanics as a kind of formal net (*resp.* "models") with possibly different shapes of "meshes" (the passages from 6.34 on). Thus, Toulmin's thinking of scientific theories as based on the "modes of representation", or "ways of representing", corresponds well to his understanding of the concept of *Bild*/model in the *Tractatus*.

On the influence of Wittgenstein on 20th Century philosophy of science fairly much has been written so far. Typically, in the expositions of this subject, the following interpretative schema recurs: *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* constituted an important inspiration for logical positivism – despite Wittgenstein's reservations about the Vienna Circle philosophy (McGuinness 1979) – whilst Wittgenstein's later thought, mainly the *Philosophical Investigations*, contributed somewhat to anti-positivistic, radical, or even relativistic visions of science (such as those of Kuhn, Hanson and Feyerabend) or to the so-called "the strong programme" in the philosophy of knowledge (Bloor, Barnes). In this context, Stephen E. Toulmin is often regarded – along with Kuhn, Hanson or Feyerabend – as a protagonist of relativism (Bocheński 1965; Motyka 1980). In this paper, by discussing the case of Toulmin, I shall argue for the opposite: that the essential inspiration for him in advancing his ideas about physical science came also – irrespective of the alleged relative consequences – from his reading of the *Tractatus*.

Within the studies on Wittgenstein Toulmin is widely known, among other things, as a co-author (with Allan S. Janik) of the book *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (Janik/Toulmin 1996, first published in 1973), placing the philosopher's thought and life against the cultural, political and intellectual background of Hapsburg Empire, and thus interpreting Tractarian ideas in close relation with that historical context. He was a student of the author of the *Tractatus* in Cambridge in 1941, and later 1946-47, "coming to his work primarily from the standpoints of physics, philosophy of science and philosophical psychology" (Janik/Toulmin 1996, 11). Certainly, Wittgenstein was the figure to have introduced him into philosophy and to have had a great impact on his future thought; and, in fact, in many of his books, Toulmin kept declaring his great debt and commitment to this philosopher. What sort was this impact of, when it comes to his thinking about science, is to be explored here. As a philosopher of science Toulmin is known, first of all, from his book *Human Understanding* (Toulmin 1972), intended as an *opus magnum* of his whole work on the development of scientific concepts, where he sets out in detail the evolutionary account of the history of *Naturwissenschaften*. But of great importance are also his two earlier and smaller books: *Foresight and Understanding* (1968) and *The Philosophy of Science* (1953). The latter is to be focused on below.

The structure of the argument in this paper is the following. First, Toulmin's account of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* will be sketched out from the angle of philosophy of science. Next, taking Toulmin's book *The Philosophy of Science* (1953) as the subject for the analysis, the relation between his reading of *Tractatus* and his own ideas will be shown. This whole argument is based on two major assumptions that should be indicated and shortly discussed in advance. The first one concerns the reasons for our choosing *The Philosophy of Science* as the basis for an examination. Despite its being an early Toulmin's work on the subject (1953), the main ideas of this book are mostly in accordance with his later complete elaboration of the theme in *Human Understanding* (1972). Thus, it may be treated as a representing the main aspects of Toulmin's conception – at least those that are relevant to our task. The second assumption concerns our treating Toulmin's account of Wittgenstein as set out in *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (1972) as applicable to his earlier considerations presented in the *Philosophy of Science* (1953). We take that the core of Toulmin's understanding of the *Tractatus* – at least what concerns the question of classical mechanics and the role of representation in language and science – was mostly formed as early as in the time of writing this book. In *Wittgenstein's Vienna* this was elaborated in an explicit, deepened form, tied with historical and cultural context, and supplemented by considerations on the importance of the ethical, for the most part inefficable side of our lives and cognitive activity (Propositions from 6.41 on, which we, of course, will not take into account here). Thus we find this assumption justified.

## Toulmin's Wittgenstein

To cut a longer story short, in the aspects that interest us most, Toulmin's reading of the *Tractatus* draws on his conviction that Wittgenstein, when constructing its Propositions, remained not only under the inspiration of Frege and Russell – whom he explicitly mentions in the *Preface* – but also, on a par, was preoccupied by problems posed by physicists Heinrich Hertz and Ludwig Boltzmann – whom he refers to later several times. The main problem Hertz and Boltzmann dealt with was the nature of representation of the world that science gives us and that makes possible for us to understand the physical reality. But while these physicists worked on the representation of the world by physics, Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* aimed at universaliz-

ing that approach “in such a way that it became applicable to all discourse; and he had been able to execute the very *bildliche Darstellung der Welt* that, in virtue of its isomorphic character, went far beyond a mere metaphorical description” (Janik/Toulmin, 184). As the framework for this extension he found it appropriate to use Frege and Russell's propositional calculus.

For Toulmin the key question in his approach to the *Tractatus* is to understand properly the German word “*Bild*” as used in this book, rendered in English as “picture” (in the so called “picture theory of meaning”). The term “picture” applied to the conception of language strongly suggests that “propositions” mirror the “facts” as if they were sort of photographs, or mental images, of them. Such an interpretation, however erroneous, had been for a long time widespread in the Anglo-Saxon philosophical world and stems from their looking at Wittgenstein through Machian empiricism and the Vienna Circle logical positivism, instead seeing it essentially in Hertz's and Boltzmann's heredity (Janik/Toulmin 1996, 145). What is wrong in such an account is the passive, reactive character of our “picturing” the world in propositions. In fact, Toulmin says, Wittgenstein discusses this question in active and constructive terms, which is clearly rendered in Proposition 2.1 of the *Tractatus*: “*Wir machen uns Bilder der Tatsachen*”. This proposition translated into English by Pears and McGuinness as: “We picture facts to ourselves” (Wittgenstein 1963, 15) means that a *Bild*/picture is something which we produce as an artifact, “just as the painter produces an ‘artistic representation’ of a scene or person, so too we ourselves construct, in language, ‘propositions’ having the same forms as the facts they picture” (Janik/Toulmin, 183). Accordingly, Toulmin insists, we had better “think of linguistic *Bilder* as ‘deliberately constructed verbal representations’ instead of (...) the much looser English term ‘pictures’” (*ibidem*). In his last book, *Return of Reason*, when commenting the Proposition 2.1, Toulmin finds it legitimate to *paraphrase* it as: “We fashion for ourselves representations of states of affairs” (Toulmin 2001, 74).

Apart from the active character of our *Bild*-forming, Toulmin puts stress on the continuity of the usage of the term “*Bild*” in Hertz and in Wittgenstein. What is characteristic of Hertz's notion of *Bilder* is that they are representations in the sense of logical or mathematical constructs being formally in accord with the world, not – as it was in Mach's empiricism – in the sense of the mere reproductions of sensory experience (Janik/Toulmin 1996, 183–184). In view of that, the word “*Bild*”, both in Hertz and in Wittgenstein, should be understood as representation rather in the sense of “model” than in that of “picture”. (Actually, Wittgenstein himself says in Proposition 2.12: “A picture is a model of reality”) In this context, for example, the Proposition 4.014:

A gramophone record, the musical idea, the written notes, and the sound-waves, all stand to one another in the same internal relation of depicting that holds between language and the world. They are all constructed according to a common logical pattern (...) (Wittgenstein 1963, 39)

is better intelligible. The models are to be understood as *representations* in the sense of *Darstellungen*, not the more subjective *Vorstellungen* (which, again, Mach had in mind). Therefore, According to Toulmin's reading, it is just “models” that are able to *represent* the “facts”, possibly being also mathematical, not necessary pictographic ones.

The *Bilder*/models provide us with the logical structure of language that allows us to know in advance the possibility,

or impossibility, of certain configurations of objects. In the *Tractatus*, they present situations “in logical space, the existence and non-existence of states-of-affairs” (2.11), which assert, or deny, some logical connections between symbols, and thus between some objects in the world. In other words, the models constitute the *a priori* structure of the language, in which certain propositions can have a sense, and some other cannot have (Toulmin, Janik 1996, 185–186). Our actual asserting a particular true proposition must proceed within the *a priori* logical space, being determined by the *Bilder*, or models, of reality. Of course, in the Tractarian vision of language, there exists an “isomorphism” between the formal scaffolding of the language and the structure of the reality itself. In science, we also deal with formal, *a priori* models to be put into relation with experience – for example such deductive systems as Newtonian dynamics. They, in themselves, constitute logical space which a concrete physical or chemical proposition must be placed in. As Proposition 6.341, referring directly to Hertz's *The Principle of Mechanics*, says:

Newtonian mechanics, for example, imposes a unified form on the description of the world. Let us imagine a white surface with irregular black spots on it. We then say that whatever kind of picture these make, I can always approximate as closely as I wish to the description of it by covering the surface with a sufficiently fine square mesh, and then saying of every square whether it is black or white. In this way I shall have imposed a unified form on the description of the surface. The form is optional, since I could have achieved the same result by using a net with a triangular or hexagonal mesh. Possibly the use of a triangular mesh would have made the description simpler: that is to say, it might be that we could describe the surface more accurately with a coarse triangular mesh than with a fine square mesh (or conversely), and so on. The different nets correspond to different systems for describing the world. Mechanics determines one form of description of the world by saying that all propositions used in the description of the world must be obtained in a given way from a given set of propositions—the axioms of mechanics (...) (Wittgenstein 1963, 137–139).

What is important here with such models or representations, that it seems to be possible for us to employ different “nets” – simpler or more complex – to describe the world, depending on the aspects they are able to capture.

## Wittgenstein in Toulmin

In *The Philosophy of Science* (1953) Toulmin seems to develop his vision of physical sciences on the base of the above Tractarian themes. The recurring problem in this book is the difference between natural history – which can find its theoretical support in *quasi*-Machian empiricism – and physics – that represents the world in the way Hertz, Boltzmann and Wittgenstein spoke about, i.e. by advancing some models of reality and by further working on them. According to Toulmin, the core of physical discovery is our introducing a novel “way of representation”, or “mode of representation”, that allows us to see the old phenomena in a new way (Toulmin 1953, 17 and further). This mode of representation constitutes a sort of formal, *a priori* framework within which one is able to state physical facts, to advance particular empirical hypotheses, laws and theories. What is characteristic of the ways of representing is that they are not directly deducible from experience, instead, they are actively molded human constructions (analogical to the Hertzian models/*Bilder* Wittgenstein took up in *Tractatus*, 2.1). The representation may have a pictorial

form – as it is, for example, in geometrical optics that treats light-ray as a straight line – but it does not have to. It may also be a mathematical model. The essential thing is that it allows us to employ some new inferring techniques in our examination of the phenomena (Toulmin 1953, chapter 2). This corresponds to Toulmin's understanding the concept *Bild* in the *Tractatus*.

Apart from that, the fragments concerning Newtonian mechanics from 6.3 on (to which Toulmin refers in his book, in the supplementary section "Suggested reading"), especially those from 6.34 to 6.3611, have their noticeable counterparts in Toulmin's book. Where Wittgenstein talks about various formal "nets" (with differently shaped "meshes") to be possibly used to describe the world, there Toulmin considers theories built on different modes of representation – such as, in the field of optics, geometrical optics with the principle of rectilinear propagation of light, wave-theory or corpuscular theory of light. All of them are applicable within a certain scope of phenomena, although we cannot say of any that they are simply true. In fact, they all constitute some specific ways of our seeing the phenomena. This, of course, leaves another question open: when and on what grounds can we employ a particular, chosen theory? And a more general one: how does it come about that one "mode of representation" gains more approval among the scientific community than another, and thus becomes a promising starting point for further investigations? Toulmin tries to answer to them both in *The Philosophy of Science* and, furthermore, in his later books. But these are no longer Tractarian themes.

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