

The Notion of Philosophy in Wittgenstein's Later Writings

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Wittgenstein's later view of philosophy centres on the claims that philosophy can make no discoveries and that philosophy should aim to describe the use of language. This thesis explores the hypothesis that these claims arise from the account of the nature of the internal relation in the later writings. The thesis falls into three parts. The first part examines the picture theory of representation in the Tractatus; it is argued that the theory takes its shape from Wittgenstein's early view of internal relations. The grounds for the rejection of the picture theory in the later writings are discussed; the argument against a private language is held to be based on the objections to the picture theory.

The second part of the thesis looks at the account of internal relatedness given in Wittgenstein's later writings. The failure of the picture theory leads to a non-realist account of the internal relation. A proposal to preserve realism based on a causal theory of representation is rejected and Kripke's account of Wittgenstein's position is criticised. The notions of a grammatical rule and a practice are the keys to the later theory. Grammatical rules depend on the existence of natural reactions to and with signs; such natural reactions constitute a practice, and only within such a practice are there internal relations. Wittgenstein's view of psychological states is explored against the background of the notion of a practice.

The third part of the thesis examines the doctrines on philosophy in the light of the account of internal relatedness which has emerged. It is argued that if this account is correct, there is no room for philosophical inquiry to discover objective truths. But if Wittgenstein's negative doctrines on philosophy are supported by these arguments, the same is not true for his proposals about the proper ambitions of philosophy: the task of describing rules of grammar is unproductive because there is no room for an interesting notion of a violation of a rule of grammar. Moreover, it is argued that Wittgenstein misadvertises the method one is to employ to reveal violations of grammatical rules. Finally it is asked whether the later account of philosophy suffers the same problems as beset philosophy in the Tractatus: can the negative doctrines really be stated? A way out of this problem is suggested.

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LATER WRITINGS

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CONTENTS

Preface	ii
List of Wittgenstein's works cited	iv
Chapter 0: <u>INTRODUCTION</u>	
0.1 The Theses on Philosophy	1
0.2 Scientific Philosophy	8
0.3 Logic	16
Chapter 1: <u>RULES AND PICTURES IN THE TRACTATUS</u>	
1.1 Explaining Understanding	22
1.2 Transparency	28
1.3 Simples	37
1.4 The Logic of Depiction	46
1.5 Expressions, Variables, Forms	55
1.6 Philosophy and Nonsense	61
Chapter 2: <u>PICTURES AND INDETERMINACY</u>	
2.1 Indeterminacy	66
2.2 Indeterminacy by Pictures by Identity	75
2.3 The Indeterminacy of the Determining Relation	81
2.4 The Indeterminacy of Pictures	90
2.5 Private Understanding	96
Chapter 3: <u>A SCEPTICAL SOLUTION?</u>	
3.1 Alternatives to Intellectualism	109
3.2 Externalism and Realism	114
3.3 Kripke's Sceptical Solution	126
3.4 Inversion	133
3.5 Primitive Inclinations	139
Chapter 4: <u>GRAMMAR AND NATURAL REACTIONS</u>	
4.1 Introduction	145
4.2 Grammar and Meaning	147
4.3 Grammar and Understanding	154
4.4 Natural Reactions	163
4.5 The Unimportance of Naturalism	175
4.6 Grammar and Privacy	186
Chapter 5: <u>DISCOVERY AND DESCRIPTION</u>	
5.1 Introduction	190
5.2 Logic and Discovery	193
5.3 Convention and Commitment	200
5.4 Violating the Rules of Grammar	212
5.5 Describing the Rules of Grammar	224
Chapter 6: <u>ACQUIESCENCE</u>	
6.1 Foundations	238
6.2 The Right Attitude	247
Bibliography of Works Cited	255

PREFACE

When I first read the Philosophical Investigations, the passages on philosophy were amongst those few that I thought I understood. This is not to say that I had the least idea why Wittgenstein held such radical views on the proper ambitions and methods of philosophical inquiry, and I could find very little in the mass of Wittgenstein scholarship that addressed these theses. This struck me as very odd: here was a philosopher widely regarded as amongst the most important of the age saying that philosophy could not do those very things that philosophers took themselves to be doing, but few had seriously attempted to explore why he should have said such things. Over the last few years a number of interesting things written on these claims have been published--I am thinking in particular of sections of Baker and Hacker's commentaries, Kenny's paper, 'Wittgenstein on the Nature of Philosophy', and more recently, the last chapter of Hilmy's book The Later Wittgenstein. But it still remains true that here, more than in any other area of Wittgenstein's work perhaps, a great deal remains to be brought to light and assessed.

When I started work on this thesis one thing struck me as clear: that the grounds for the claims about philosophy are to be traced to the other doctrines developed in the later writings. This supposition requires a commentator on the theses on philosophy to gain a clear view of these other doctrines. Here there was far more help available. In particular I have been indebted (in different ways) to Kripke's Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language, Crispin Wright's

Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics, and the various writings of Baker and Hacker. Despite these works, it appeared to me that many important points remained to be clarified. In places the disagreement between what is presented here and in these other writings is in the structure of arguments whose conclusions are not disputed, but in other places the disagreement is deeper, concerning the right account and the evaluation of positions Wittgenstein intended to take. The major differences concern the nature of the picture theory, the notion of a rule of grammar, the idea of a practice, and consequently, how to understand the theses on philosophy. Earlier drafts of this thesis attempted to explore these differences in detail, but it became apparent that I could not both do justice to these others' views and set out and argue for what I take to be the right views within the space available. That these others' views are not discussed here does not mean that they play no role; in many cases it was through thinking about these accounts that ideas found here were formed.

I have relied almost entirely on Wittgenstein's published works. The one exception is the Big Typescript chapter on philosophy, which I have used in a translation by Hanjo Glock.

In writing this thesis I have been fortunate to have been supervised by Michael Dummett, Gordon Baker, and Jonathan Barnes. All three gave generously of their time and energy to help me to clarify the ideas presented here.

Works by Wittgenstein cited (with abbreviations used)

- NB Notebooks 1914-16, ed. G.H. von Wright and G.E.M. Anscombe, tr. G.E.M. Anscombe; 2nd. edition, University of Chicago, 1979.
- PT Prototractatus, ed. B.F. McGuinness, T. Nyberg, G.H. von Wright, tr. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness; Routledge, 1971.
- TLP Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, tr. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness; Routledge, 1971.
- 1930-1932 Lectures
Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1930-1935, ed. D. Lee; Blackwell, 1980.
- 1932-1935 Lectures
Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1932-1935, ed. A. Ambrose; Blackwell, 1979.
- W Ludwig Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle, ed. B.F. McGuinness, tr. J. Schulte and B.F. McGuinness; Blackwell, 1979.
- PR Philosophical Remarks, ed. R. Rhees, tr, R. Hargreaves and R. White; Blackwell, 1974.
- PG Philosophical Grammar, ed. R. Rhees, tr. A.J.P. Kenny; Blackwell, 1974.
- LFM Wittgenstein's Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics, Cambridge 1939, ed. C. Diamond; Harvester, 1976.
- RFM Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics, ed. G.H. von Wright, R. Rhees, G.E.M. Anscombe, tr. G.E.M. Anscombe; 3rd edition, Blackwell, 1978.
- BB The Blue and Brown Books, 2nd edition, Blackwell, 1969.
- PI Philosophical Investigations, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and R. Rhees, tr. G.E.M. Anscombe; 2nd edition, Blackwell, 1958.
- Z Zettel, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright, tr. Anscombe; University of California Press, 1967.
- OC On Certainty, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright, tr, D. Paul and G.E.M. Anscombe; Blackwell, 1969.
- LC Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Beliefs, ed. C. Barrett; Blackwell, 1970.
- CV Culture and Value, ed. G.H. von Wright, tr. P. Winch; Blackwell, 1980.
- BT Big Typescript (Typescript 213), 1933.

If someone believed that he had found a solution to the 'problem of life', and wanted to say, now everything is altogether easy, he would only have to remind himself that there was a time when this 'solution' had not been found, but even then it was possible to live; in this light the solution that has been found appears to be a coincidence. And this is how it is in logic. If there were a 'solution' to the logical (philosophical) problems, we would only have to remind ourselves that at one time they had not been solved (and even then it must have been possible to live and think).

Wittgenstein, Big Typescript, p.420.

CHAPTER 0: INTRODUCTION

0.1 The theses on philosophy

Around the early 100's in the Philosophical Investigations Wittgenstein announces, with virtually no argument, a number of theses concerning the aims and methods of philosophical inquiry. For our purposes these can be divided into the negative and the positive. Here is a list of the central claims.

The negative theses are these. Philosophy should not aim to penetrate phenomena (§90), nor aim for complete exactness (§91), nor intend to provide a complete analysis of the hidden essences of things (§§92, 97). There should be no theorising, for nothing hypothetical is of interest to the philosopher (§109). There should be no metaphysical uses of words (§116) or philosophically-inspired revisions in the use of language, and philosophy cannot uncover foundations for the correct use of language (§124). The philosopher's task is not to resolve contradictions (§125), to explain or deduce anything (§126), or to advance debatable theses (§128, see also §599).

The positive theses are these. The philosopher should offer reminders about the kinds of (non-philosophical) statements made (§90), striving thus to impart a perspicuous view of the use of words (§122). What is required is a description of the actual use of language (§124), and a clear view of how contradictions arise (§125). Agreement in all claims made by philosophers (§128) will arise from the clarification of what we ordinarily overlook (§§129, 132). Intermediate cases or objects of comparison will help to make clear the similarities and dissimilarities in the uses of language (§§122,

130). The ambition is to bring about the complete disappearance of philosophical problems (§133).

Many of these claims, both negative and positive, were taken verbatim into the Investigations from the Big Typescript, sections 86-93 (the chapter called 'Philosophie'). The statements not carried over from this earlier discussion are of a piece with those Wittgenstein preserved in the Investigations. So, the Big Typescript tells us, the expectation of new discoveries is one of the greatest obstacles in philosophy (p.419); philosophers use everyday words in an "ultraphysical" sense (p.429); and philosophical utterances usually violate rules of grammar (p.430). The proper task of philosophy is there said to be to reject wrong arguments (p.409); in surveying grammar and linguistic facts arguments are made transparent (p.421). Philosophical problems can be solved completely by the clarification of the use of language (p.422). By such means there is the possibility of calm and methodical progress (pp.431-2).¹

Whereas the negative theses centre on the denial of discovery by philosophy, the positive theses hold out a clear view of grammar as the true ambition of the philosopher. The discovery in question is of

¹ The Big Typescript dates from 1933. Predecessors of the first 188 sections of the published Philosophical Investigations can be found in a 1936 revision of the Brown Book (notes dictated in 1934-5). This revision was the basis for yet further revisions, the published version of Part I of the Investigations not taking shape until 1945. (Part II arose out of manuscripts written between 1946 and 1949). (I take these details from von Wright's 'The Origin and Composition of Wittgenstein's Investigations' in Luckhardt (ed.) Wittgenstein: Sources and Perspectives. For the history of the Big Typescript, see Kenny's 'From the Big Typescript to the Philosophical Grammar' in his The Legacy of Wittgenstein, and Hilmy's The Later Wittgenstein pp.25-40.) It is possible of course that those comments in the earlier work not taken over into the later work were ones which Wittgenstein had come to believe were incorrect. This would be wrong I think (here I agree with Hilmy, pp.37-8); it is hard to discern any doctrinal differences between those comments taken over into the Investigations and those not.

new truths about how the world is, can be, or must be. We should not wait upon "new, unheard of disclosures" (BT p.419)--"In philosophy we do not draw conclusions. 'But it must be like this!' is not a philosophical proposition" (PI §599). In particular there can be no discovery by philosophy of the essences of things, of explanations of phenomena, or of foundations to language use. Moreover there can be no discovery of what it is we really mean (BB p.28), or what it is possible to think (PI §109). There is no call to revise what we say in the face of new discoveries, for the problems of philosophy "are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known" (PI §109). As Wittgenstein puts the matter at BT p.406 "philosophy does not lead me to any renunciation, since I do not forgo saying anything, but rather I give up a certain combination of words as meaningless". The distinction here is between finding out that a statement is false, but still sensible, and discovering that it has no sense. There is no revelation that the philosopher has been speaking falsely--the real truth of the matter now having been discovered--but, instead, the problem with philosophical utterances is that they lack sense.

Looked at through the notion of discovery these negative claims have a certain internal coherence, but this should not persuade us that this offers much of an idea of what is going on. Some difficult questions have to be answered before things become clear.

Wittgenstein allows that important phenomena can be overlooked to the detriment of philosophy (PI §129), so what sort of discovery is being ruled out? What is the foundationalism being denied? And the utterances of philosophers do not strike one as senseless in the way that gibberish is senseless, so what does the charge of senselessness

come to here--what criterion of sense is being invoked? The situation is the same for the positive theses. On one level they seem to tell a straightforward story. The grammar once described, a perspicuous view of language is afforded, and the problems of philosophy are completely solved. Without the need for arguments or hypotheses, by quietly weighing the linguistic facts (BT p.431, Z §447), one can cure all philosophical illnesses (PI §255). The descriptivism--as I will call it--demands answers to a number of questions. What is the "actual use" of language? What is a grammatical rule and what is it to violate such a rule? How is one to arrive at the correct description of these rules, the actual use, or the linguistic facts, so that the result will be agreed as correct by all?

The answers to questions like these seeking clarification of the theses on philosophy are not to be found in the passages in which the theses are announced. Neither, I suggest, are they going to be made manifest by a closer study of Wittgenstein's actual method of philosophising in his later writings. That method is of course superficially distinctive. The aphoristic style can be taken to reflect the rejection of theorising, and the concern with what is and what would be said in various (sometimes hypothetical) circumstances no doubt reflects the doctrinal emphasis on the actual use of language. Likewise the paucity of explicit conclusions is in line with the negative doctrines. But this much convergence between the doctrines and the method in fact employed is overshadowed by a great deal of obscurity in the method employed on the one hand, and, on the other, by clear contrasts between Wittgenstein's actual practice and his doctrines. So, for example, although explicitly stated conclusions are rarely drawn, on occasion they are introduced

dramatically, a line of thought summed up in a resonant slogan--'To follow a rule' is a practice (PI §202); the mathematician is an inventor, not a discoverer (RFM p.99); an 'inner state' stands in need of outward criteria (PI §580)--to name just a few which will occupy us later. These are theses both difficult to understand and, one might expect, whose truth is in need of argumentative demonstration. And if the arguments for these theses are not to be found sunning themselves on the surface of the text, there are very many other arguments, for less dramatic conclusions perhaps, to be readily spotted. We should further note that the aphoristic style is no essential element of the Investigations; in the Preface to that work Wittgenstein confesses to the wish to have been able to "weld my thoughts together" into a linear exploration of the issues.

I am not suggesting that no insight into the content of the theses on philosophy is to be gained from studying the approach Wittgenstein in fact adopts. Attention to the dialectical structure of particular language games, for example, will no doubt lead one to some insight into the notion of the actual use of language. Still less am I agreeing with Michael Dummett's assessment:

It is true that Wittgenstein's work is full of very general remarks about what philosophy is, such as that philosophy should propound no theses, or at least none that could be questioned. This is probably the weakest part of his work, and doubtless affected his manner of presentation; but there is nothing in what he says on any other topic the arguments for which presuppose the acceptance of these views, and indeed it seems to me that his actual practice belies them--it is, e.g., quite easy to formulate philosophical theses which Wittgenstein advanced.²

Dummett is inviting us to accept not just the claim that, on

² 'Oxford Philosophy', reprinted in Truth and Other Enigmas, p.434.

occasion, Wittgenstein transgresses his doctrines on philosophy, but the thesis that these doctrines play no essential role in any other part of his philosophy. This, if true, would be extraordinary. The comments on philosophy in the Investigations are no mere tentative suggestions, "after-the-fact musings" (as Fogelin absurdly suggests³). These passages, like the rest of the work, evolved through numerous drafts and redrafts, shufflings and redealings. To find such a gulf between these comments on philosophy and the method in fact employed would be to credit Wittgenstein with an unusual capacity for perseverance in a misrepresentation of his own investigations.

If attention to Wittgenstein's actual method is no sure guide, how then to advance to a clear grasp of the content of the theses on philosophy? Dummett proposes that the substance of the later writings is not constrained by the doctrines on philosophy. This would be remarkable. But it would be no less remarkable if it were the case that the doctrines on philosophy were not constrained by the substance (not the method) of the later writings. If this is right, there is an obvious route to explore when hoping to clarify the content of these doctrines, for when one sees clearly why a thesis is true, or why a philosopher thinks that it is true, one sees what the thesis says. To find the grounds for the doctrines on philosophy will be to understand what they say as well as why they are said. Moreover--the suggestion is--these grounds are to be found amongst the other doctrines of the later work. A clear understanding of the theses on philosophy will then be bound up with gaining a clear understanding of the other themes in the later philosophy.

³ Wittgenstein (2nd ed.) p.143.

This suggestion will be sharpened in the following sections of this Introduction. One might however object that a paradoxical situation must arise if the content of the theses on philosophy can only be uncovered by finding an argument for it. First, until the content of a thesis is clarified one cannot be sure what the thesis is for which one is seeking an argument, so one cannot be sure when one has found such an argument. And second, until one knows what is allowed as good grounds for the theses on philosophy one cannot tell whether the theses are established (so what they really say). The first point is perhaps strictly correct. The reply is that the exegesis required demands that one brings the theses and their supporting arguments into a sort of reflective equilibrium--whatever content initially discernable in the theses on philosophy has to be compared with those theses which can be sustained by arguments reasonably attributable to Wittgenstein, so that the overall reading is the most comfortable fit of argument and theses. This is a problem of any exegetical undertaking. The second worry is particular to one who charges that argumentative procedures should be revised. Either this thesis is based upon the revised grounds on offer, in which case it cannot persuade one who is as yet unconvinced that the thesis is correct that the thesis is indeed correct; or the thesis is based on the unrevised grounds, hence the justification is insufficient to demonstrate the truth of the thesis if the thesis is in fact correct. This problem is more challenging than the first. The right reply I think is to hold that the grounds sought for the theses on philosophy are unrevised, and to show that this sort of justification is sufficient to establish those theses. This response to the paradox, if available, will allow the discussion of the worth of

Wittgenstein's theses to be philosophical, meaning by that that they can be assessed by whatever procedures and methods are currently found acceptable by philosophers. The worth of such an unrevised route to the theses on philosophy will be assessed in Chapter 6.

0.2 Scientific Philosophy

The hypothesis offered in the last section was that the grounds for the theses on philosophy are to be found amongst the other doctrines which Wittgenstein supports in the later writings. We can be more precise than this: in this section I will suggest that there is an obvious place to look for these grounds.

It will prove helpful at this point to introduce the notion of scientific philosophy. Wittgenstein's theses on philosophy had in mind Russell's proposals for a scientific philosophy and similar proposals from members of the Vienna Circle.⁴ I will look briefly at these manifestations of the scientific spirit below. But this scientific conception of the proper ambition and method of philosophical inquiry is not limited to these past proposals I believe. Most of the philosophy that is practised today in Anglo-American philosophy departments takes this scientific picture as its self-image. In criticising scientific philosophy, one would be criticising contemporary philosophy. This will become apparent, I

⁴ Hilmy, in Chapter 6 of his The Later Wittgenstein, provides a largely historical study of Wittgenstein's opposition to the scientism of James, as well as that of Russell and the Vienna Circle. Baker and Hacker, in Chapter 4 of Wittgenstein: Understanding and Meaning, give a notion of scientific philosophy a central role. The notion I describe in the text is different from, although overlaps with, that employed in these other accounts. (The idea of a scientific philosophy has a longer history than this of course. Familiarly, Kant's ambition was to put metaphysics on the "secure path of a science", Critique of Pure Reason, Bxviii-Bxix.)

think, as the notion of scientific philosophy is more clearly defined.

An essential characteristic of what I will be calling 'scientific philosophy' is discovery. Scientific philosophy, like natural science, aims to make discoveries. To make a discovery is to reveal a hitherto unknown objective truth, I am taking it, a truth which was no less true prior to its discovery. It is the nature of this objectivity that we must explore.⁵

Scientific philosophy has both an ambition and a method. If the ambition is to reveal objective truths, there is such a discipline as scientific philosophy only if there is a method such that, when applied correctly, the results obtained are the objective truths sought. The procedures which constitute the method of inquiry of scientific philosophy are logical; so, the claim is, by means of logic one can hope to uncover objective truths. A philosophical inquiry with the ambition of discovery can be called 'scientific' because it shares that goal with science. One might think that, in addition, such a philosophical inquiry has another claim to be called 'scientific', for in adopting a logical method of inquiry, philosophy has been graced with those virtues found in the method of the natural sciences. Russell made this methodological claim for philosophy to be awarded the title 'scientific' in his 1914 paper, 'On Scientific Method in Philosophy'.⁶ He there calls on philosophers to apply to philosophical problems "certain broad principles of method which have

⁵ This notion of objectivity might be called discovery-independence to contrast it with objectivity as human-independence. The point of stressing the former notion rather than the latter will become clear below.

⁶ Reprinted in Vol. 8 of his Collected Papers, pp.57-73.

been found successful in the study of scientific questions" (p.57). The method of philosophy is logical, and by the "division [of problems] into distinct questions, of tentative, partial, and progressive advance, and of appeal to principles with which, independently of temperament, all competent speakers must agree" (p.73), philosophical investigation will be rewarded by discoveries. In philosophy "patience and modesty ... will open the road to solid and durable progress" (p.73).

A part of this methodological comparison with natural science does not go very deep: the suggestion is just that a philosophy committed to logical inquiry will be as successful in revealing objective philosophical truths as the methods of natural science are successful in making scientific discoveries.⁷ But the suggested methodological scientism of philosophy also recommends specific natural-scientific procedures as recipes to be adopted in philosophy. The problems should be broken up as far as possible and addressed individually, the solution to the wider problem emerging from these piecemeal investigations; like the scientist the philosopher should advance by proposing and then testing hypotheses, so making ever better approximations to the truth; and the philosopher, like the scientist, should approach problems in an orderly way, classifying

⁷ Michael Dummett seems to mean no more than this when he suggests that (a particular type of) philosophical inquiry can take on the characteristics of science:

I am maintaining that we have now reached a position where the search for such a theory of meaning can take on a genuinely scientific character; this means, in particular, that it can be carried on in such a way, not, indeed, that disputes do not arise, but that they can be resolved to the satisfaction of everyone, and, above all, that we may hope to bring the search within a finite time to a successful conclusion. ('Can Analytical Philosophy be Systematic, and Ought it to Be?', Truth and Other Enigmas, p,454.)

phenomena and making inventories of results, thus providing a solid basis for future work by himself or others.

The possession of these methodological scientific virtues is not an essential part of what I am here calling 'scientific philosophy'. All the same, I think that notion should be defined in terms of both of method and ambition.⁸ To approach closer to the essential characteristics of scientific philosophy we can focus on the method with which philosophy aspires to discover objective truths.

The inquiries will be logical: the philosopher is primarily concerned with asking whether certain notions are coherent, or whether one proposition follows from others.⁹ This is not to say that the ambition of philosophy is always to discover logical truths. That would be misleading, confusing means and ends. A parallel mistake would be to claim that the natural scientist's interest is always in discovering causal connections. A geologist, for example, might set himself the task of finding out the crystalline structure of a mineral. To this end he employs a known causal relation in reasoning like this: if doing X to the mineral causes phenomenon Y, the crystalline structure is Z. In the same way the philosopher's conclusion might not be of the form, necessarily p. Rather, the necessity (like the causal connectedness) is employed in the method by which the conclusion, p, is reached. The conclusion perhaps depends upon a necessary truth--that if q is true then so is p--and

⁸ "I am not aiming at the same target as the scientists and my way of thinking is different from theirs" (CV p.7). (The scientists in questions are "typical western scientists", amongst whom Wittgenstein would certainly include scientific philosophers.)

⁹ This does not conflict with saying that the philosopher's primary purpose is discovery or explanation. Logical inquiry is the means by which correct explanations are discovered and tested.

an interesting argument would be one in which there was some antecedent reason for thinking q true, so justifying the belief in p .¹⁰

Logical inquiry then is used as a method of discovery (a method of generating insights, as well of assessing and justifying claimed discoveries). Scientific philosophy aims at objective results, I have said; but in order to be able to make discoveries it must be the case that there is an objective method as well. One has a method for making discoveries only if applying the proposed procedures in the right way makes a belief in the truth of the results more justified than not. If something is a method of discovery there must be a verifiable distinction between the correct and incorrect application of the method, but the criterion for correct application of the method cannot be that it gets the right results (this is only a criterion for using this method rather than another). This is to say that there must be a question of whether the method has been applied correctly which is independent of whether it is believed to have been applied correctly, and that this question of correctness can be settled independently of whether the result of the application (believed to be correct) is true or false. The objectivity of the result of the method is one thing, the objectivity of the application of the method another. We are interested both in the objectivity of the results of logical inquiry, and the objectivity of the process of logical inquiry.

We have to assess two claims made about any philosophical inquiry then. First, the method of inquiry is applied correctly. Second, the

¹⁰ On the nature of philosophical conclusions, see R. Harrison, On What There Must Be, Chapter 1.

result of the inquiry is true. If the first claim is false, the inquiry holds out no justification for a belief in the second. On the other hand, if the first claim is true, the second is justified only if the inquiry is sound (and if any premises involved are true). A sound method just is one that tracks the truth: valid argument is truth-preserving (by definition), so can be used to discover new truths. If scientific philosophy is characterised by its commitment to objective truths open to discovery by logical inquiry, it is also committed to the objectivity of the method of inquiry--there must be a distinction to be made between a conclusion seeming to follow from the premises and really doing so. The only reason one can have for thinking a philosophical claim true (in most cases) is that it is the result of a correct application of logical principles.

A characterisation of scientific philosophy in terms of the objectivity of results would include Russell as a scientific philosopher. In addition to the methodological scientism proposed for philosophy, Russell expresses a strong commitment to a scientism of ambition--philosophy, like natural science, aims to discover objective truth. These truths are truths about the world. Whereas the scientist studies the actual properties of the world, the philosopher focusses on the essential properties of things: "philosophy is the science of the possible", Russell stresses, "an inventory of possibilities". So it is that logic consists on the one hand of "those very general statements which can be made concerning everything without mentioning any one thing or predicate or relation"; on the other hand, it is concerned with logical forms, "i.e. with the kinds of properties that may occur, with the various types of facts, and with the classification of the constituents of

facts" (p.65).

Defining the notion of scientific philosophy in terms of its commitment to the discovery-independence of the results of logical inquiry will in addition accommodate philosophy as that was understood by the Vienna Circle, something Wittgenstein's doctrines on philosophy certainly had in mind.¹¹ For the positivists, the results of philosophical inquiry say nothing about the world. Ayer can be the spokesman here:

... the propositions of philosophy are not factual, but linguistic in character--that is, they do not describe the behaviour of physical, or even mental, objects; they express definitions, or the formal consequences of definitions. (Language, Truth and Logic, p.57.)

"Philosophy is a department of logic" (p.57), and all logical claims are analytic, but

When we say that analytic propositions are devoid of factual content, and consequently that they say nothing, we are not suggesting that they are senseless ... They call attention to linguistic usages ... and they reveal unsuspected implications in our assertions and beliefs. (pp.79-80)

And of course there is still a method of logical inquiry: the philosopher is interested in the consequences and implications of the linguistic rules we have conventionally adopted. And if this method is to allow determinate clarifications of what is meant, and so "reveal the structure of the language" (p.62), the method must be objective.¹²

¹¹ See Hilmy The Later Wittgenstein pp.210-214.

¹² The positivists styled their inquiry as 'scientific' of course. This had at least two facets. First, it contended that philosophy was to be at the call of natural science rather than metaphysics. Carnap defined the project as: "The researches of applied logic or the theory of knowledge, which aim at clarifying the

Philosophy with the ambition of Russell and that sharing the aims of the positivists exhaust the field of philosophical discovery: either philosophical inquiry aspires to discover how the world really is independent of human conventions, or it aims to reveal the true structure of the language in which we talk about the world (so making clear what we take the world to contain). Both projects depend on the objectivity of the method of inquiry with which the truth is tracked. If logical investigation were denuded of all objectivity both projects would be forlorn of course--whatever seemed to be right would be right. There is no reason to suppose at this point that the objectivity of logic is an all-or-nothing thing: different degrees of objectivity might be distinguishable. In this case it would be possible that something short of a denial of all objectivity for logic is still too weak to sustain a philosophical inquiry dedicated to the making of new discoveries (about language or about the world). Just how much objectivity for logic is needed to sustain such philosophical inquiry will be explored later.

The point I wish to take from this discussion of scientific ambitions and methods in philosophy is this: it is overwhelmingly plausible that the source of Wittgenstein's doctrines on philosophy is to be found in his discussion of the objectivity of logic. The negative doctrines centre on the denial of discovery by philosophy;

cognitive content of scientific statements and thereby the meanings of the terms that occur in the statements by means of logical analysis". ('The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language', in Ayer (ed.), Logical Positivism pp.60-61.) Second, this was accompanied by a scientism of method. Reichenbach's 1951 positivist manifesto, The Rise of Scientific Philosophy, to take an obvious example, echoes Russell in its call for "a philosophic method as precise and dependable as the method of science" (p.308), and mentions specific natural-scientific procedures which should be adopted in philosophy.

the possibility of philosophical discovery depends upon the existence of an objective logical method; Wittgenstein's writings, both early and late, explore the nature of logical truth; and the later work tends towards a restriction on the scope for the objectivity of logic. The hypothesis that there is a route from the account of logic in the later writings to the doctrines on philosophy is the subject of this thesis.

0.3 Logic

Wittgenstein's writings, both early and late, explore the nature of logical truth. It is perhaps more accurate to say that his work, early and late, is centred on the exploration of this notion. This might be thought a curious claim, but in defending it, a framework for the ensuing discussion of logic will emerge.

One might object: Wittgenstein was concerned with many other things apart from logic--the nature of propositional attitudes¹³, how words have meaning, the scope and ambitions of mathematics, to name some of the most important. But, for Wittgenstein, these issues are themselves fundamentally logical. This is not to say that they are all concerned with inference of course; but in a wider sense of the term 'logic', the logical features of these subjects are apparent. This is perhaps best seen if we move from talk of logic to talk of internal relations. This latter notion we can understand in the sense offered in the Tractatus. There one learns that "A property is internal if it is unthinkable [undenkbar] that its object should not

¹³ Using this term does not imply any commitment to an analysis in terms of propositions (whatever they are) as the real objects of attitudes. (The term 'thought' will sometimes be used to cover all the attitudes.)

possess it" (4.123). An internal relation between two objects is a relation holding between the internal properties of each. So we can say that a relation R holding between two objects X and Y is an internal relation if and only if it is possible for X not to be R -related to Y only if either X or Y has changed in its internal properties. Deductive connectedness is one such internal relation, but internal relations are crucially involved in representation by thoughts and words, and in the procedures of mathematics. The last claim is obvious; less so perhaps is the dependence of representation on internal relatedness.

A thought is internally related to what it is a thought of or about, Wittgenstein holds (we will inquire later if this is right). If, for example, I hope that the train from London will arrive before five o'clock, nothing but the train from London arriving before five o'clock can fulfil that hope. Other things might make me as happy as I would have been had the train from London arrived before five, but these can at most remove the hope, not fulfil it. And an assertion is internally related to what makes it true. So if I say that the train from London is late, what I say is made true only by the train from London being late. If my assertion is not made true by that circumstance then the assertion was not that the train from London is late.

The internal relations found in representation by thought and language are not relations between what can be used to express the thought or the meaning. No internal relation holds between the words, 'The train from London is late', and the state of affairs in which the train from London is late. This of course makes these relations no different from those internal relations characteristic of

inference or mathematical reasoning. A proposition p might follow from another q , but the sign ' p ' does not follow from the sign ' q ', any more than the sign ' 6 ' is necessitated by the sign ' $2+4$ '. Just as it is the thought behind, or meaning of, an expression which is internally related to the object of thought (the object or state of affairs thought about) or the state of affairs asserted to hold, one will readily say that inferential relations hold between the meanings of the terms employed, or the propositions the terms express.

What then are these meanings or thoughts or propositions which can enter into internal relations with (perhaps non-existent) objects and states of affairs? This is the problem of internality--as I shall call it--of which Wittgenstein's discussion of inference, mathematics, thought and meaning are different facets. The problem of internality is also presented in another way by Wittgenstein--as the problem of rule following. A rule determines what is in accord with it, and moreover does so internally. So one might say that to have a thought of an object or to speak of the object, or to deduce something from something, is to employ a rule determining that it is this which is determined as the represented object or the proposition deduced. This of course is just the same problem of internality in a different guise, not a solution to the problem. It is not the expression of a rule which is internally related to that which is in accord with it, but something further--that which the expression of the rule expresses, perhaps. Any account of internality will be an account of logic in the sense in which that is the foundation of scientific philosophy. Revealing the nature of the logical method employed in philosophising is the goal, but the account of internality will be explored by looking to its development and

manifestation in Wittgenstein's discussions of representation and logical and mathematical reasoning.

The general direction of Wittgenstein's treatment of these phenomena is by now clear perhaps, although many important details remain to be filled in and the significance of what is on offer assessed. Here is a sketch of two approaches to the problem of internality. The first holds that internal relations are genuine. That is to say that in each of the cases mentioned there really are two things, related internally. So, for example, there is one thing, the belief that *p*, and another thing, the possible state of affairs *p*, and the problem is to see what the relation can be such that the first is essentially about the second. The second approach is to hold that the relation is only apparent. One taking this line would deny that the belief that *p* is a thing which has some relation to a possible state of affairs. Having the belief that *p* is no inherent state of a person (in the same way that being valuable is not an inherent property of a gold bar), but, rather, one is said to have the belief that *p* when one comes to stand in some relation to *p* (as gold is said to have value when there is a market for it). Something like the first account is properly ascribed to the Tractatus I think, and it would be widely agreed that something like the second is to be found in the later writings. But this contrast is in need of a great deal of clarification--as it stands it leaves room for many different accounts of what is really going on, particularly in the later writings.

This thesis falls into three parts. In the first two chapters the structure of the Tractatus account of representation (and to a lesser

extent inference) is explored and criticised. The picture theory of language, I suggest in Chapter 1, is motivated by a clear recognition of the need to sustain internal relatedness between what is said and the world. In this light the theory emerges as more sophisticated in structure than is often recognised. But the account, however elegant, is flawed. Wittgenstein's central criticism of this theory in the later writings is contained in the thesis that all pictures can be variously interpreted. Chapter 2 explores the grounds for this claim: they are by no means as apparent as they are often taken to be. The argument against a private language is held to be dependent on the claim that pictures fail to sustain internality.

The second part of the thesis, Chapters 3 and 4, inquires into what should then be said about internality if the picture theory is false. In Chapter 3 I ask first whether the need for internality--at least in representation--is established. To this end a causal theory of representational content is considered. But, it is argued, the demand for internality is well-founded, and causal theories are to be avoided. Second, Kripke's account of (what he calls) Wittgenstein's "sceptical solution" to the problems left by the failure of the picture theory is discussed. The account is confused at places, and simply wrong in others, but the discussion clarifies the options to be explored in Chapter 4. Here Wittgenstein's notion of grammar is brought to centre-stage: internal relatedness, he holds, is a matter of the application of grammatical rules. What these are and how they are to be followed is clarified. The resulting account is naturalistic--logical practices are constituted by instinctive behaviour towards signs.

In the third part of the thesis the significance for scientific

philosophy of the nature of internality revealed in Chapter 4 is investigated. In Chapter 5 I argue that there is an argument available from the practice conception of internality to the denial of scientific philosophy. The negative doctrines on philosophy are explored in the light of this argument. The later sections look at the positive doctrines, Wittgenstein's descriptivism. Here matters are less straightforward. Arguments are offered which indicate that, if the argument for the negative doctrines is right, there is no room for a project of therapeutic philosophy founded upon describing the actual use of language. Moreover, even if such a task were worthwhile it could claim none of the virtues Wittgenstein appears to advertise it as having. Chapter 6 explores the proper attitude to the theses on philosophy and their supporting arguments.

CHAPTER 1: RULES AND PICTURES IN THE TRACTATUS

1.1 Explaining Understanding

One understands a language only if one knows the rules for the correct use of the terms of the language. One who can point to the correct mountain and say, "That is called 'Mont Saleve'", will be said to have grasped the rule for the use of the term 'Mont Saleve'. To say this much is I think to say nothing controversial. Controversy enters only when one debates the significance of the claim that understanding a language involves grasping rules. I have in mind two sorts of significance. First, the claim may be taken functionally: one follows the rule for 'Mont Saleve' just if one uses the term correctly. So it can be easily verified if one is following a linguistic rule; indeed, that is just what a man in the street is doing when he concludes that another has failed to understand an expression. Contrasted with this, the claim may have an explanatory significance. Here rule-following is taken to be an account of how it is one uses terms correctly, not just a clarification of what is meant by saying one understands. In this case there is a process of following rules distinct from the correct use of expressions of the language.

The two sorts of significance are not exclusive. The thesis that to understand a language is to follow rules can have a functional and an explanatory significance at the same time. One might concede that the concept of understanding is to be explicated not by an explanatory account of rule-following but in terms of the sort of activity of language-mastery pointed to in the functional thesis. To understand the claim, "Jean-Paul understands the term 'Mont Saleve'",

is to know that it is true only if Jean-Paul can do certain things; no notion of "rules hidden in the medium of the understanding" is needed. All the same, this does not by itself rule out a philosophical inquiry into the grounds for this capacity. It might be that an a priori investigation can reveal constraints that any explanation of this functional capacity must meet. The Kantian question, how is understanding possible? is left open.¹

The concern in this chapter and the next will be with one particular type of explanatory account of understanding.² This will be called intellectualist. The account holds that the rules which one follows provide reasons for one's linguistic behaviour; an understander knows the rules of the language and can make judgements about the correct use of language on the basis of that knowledge. This ratiocination precedes and explains the 'manifestation' of the judgement at the time of utterance.

According to the intellectualist account, the rules of a language establish criteria of identity for the objects to which the signs

¹ Ryle writes: "[Descartes] had mistaken the logic of his problem. Instead of asking by what criteria intelligent behaviour is actually distinguished from non-intelligent behaviour, he asked: 'Given that the principle of mechanical causation does not tell us the difference, what other causal principle will tell it us?' He realised that the problem was not one of mechanics and assumed that it must therefore be one of some counterpart to mechanics. Not unnaturally psychology is often cast for just this role." (The Concept of Mind p.21.) Fodor in The Language of Thought (p.47) points out that studying the logical geography of psychological concepts does not stand in the way of a conceptual inquiry into the foundations of intelligent behaviour.

² The account to be discussed is inadequate, and is widely-agreed to be so. The concern here is to see the role of such an account in Wittgenstein's early thought, so better to appreciate the significance of its inadequacy for the later development of his thought.

refer.³ One knows these criteria, and so can judge whether a statement ('That is Mont Saleve', for example) is correctly made. The structure of these rules--identifying rules--can be explored further.⁴ We can compare the following rules: (a) Mont Saleve is that mountain to the right of the jet d'eau; (b) the Casino is that building to the left of the jet d'eau; (c) the Cathedral is that building to the left of the Jardin Anglais. That which a rule identifies--Mont Saleve, the Casino, the Cathedral--can be called the determined object. Rules (a) and (b) have in common the use of the jet d'eau as part of the rule identifying the determined object. This common element can be called the determining sample. The rules (a) and (b) differ however in the determining relation to the sample they invoke--to the right of and to the left of the sample. Rules (b) and (c) differ in determining sample but share a determining relation. We can conclude: an identifying rule is pair of determining sample and determining relation.

To understand a language is, on this account, to grasp rules which connect signs to the world. The form of an intellectualist explanation of these connections can be portrayed thus:

Diagram 1

's'----<determining sample, determining relation>----s

FIRST
CONNECTION

RULE

SECOND
CONNECTION

³ Reference to objects is the example of a subsentential connection discussed throughout this chapter.

⁴ Not all rules are identifying rules of course: 'The Cathedral is that building next to the Casino' is to be distinguished in this respect from 'Don't feed the ducks'. Identifying rules are just those which offer criteria of identity and these are the only rules which will concern us here.

This is a mediating account of understanding a language: the rule mediates between the sign 's' and the object s, identifying that object to which the term can be correctly applied. In virtue of one's association of signs with mediating rules and one's ability to employ the rules, one understands a language.

If this is the general form of an intellectualist explanation of language-mastery, intellectualist theories can be distinguished by the answers they give to three questions: (i) what is the determining sample? (ii) what sustains the second connection? (what is the determining relation?) (iii) what sustains the first connection?

One attempt to answer these questions might be this: the sign is associated with a thought, and that object which the thought represents is that which the sign signifies. This suggestion is not entirely worthless--it holds that understanding a language is an extension of having the capacity for thought, language arising from an association of signs with mental entities.⁵ But it offers no account of the determining relation, the representing of objects by thoughts being no less in need of explanation than the signifying of objects by signs. And of course we will want to know what sort of association holds between signs and thoughts.-

A second set of answers--Frege's--appears to offer more to go on. A profound suspicion of "psychologism" moved Frege to take thoughts out of the mind and place them in a third realm open to the purview

⁵ "The signs of our language seem dead without these mental processes; and it might seem that the only function of the signs is to induce such processes, and that these are the things we ought really to be interested in ... We are tempted to think that the action of language consists of two parts; an inorganic part, the handling of signs, and an organic part, which we may call understanding these signs, meaning them, interpreting them, thinking." (BB p.3)

of all. The objectivity of thought thus ensured, these objects--Sinnen--act as "routes to" the referents of signs. Each understander "associates" signs with Sinnen.⁶ It is obvious that this is no improvement on the previous view. If thoughts are objects, what determining relation can hold between these objects and those objects of which the first are thoughts? (If, as is sometimes suggested, Fregean senses are descriptions, no forward step is taken. A description is either a sign or something related to a sign which specifies its content. In the first place, no account of how language is understood would be offered by invoking descriptions; and in the second place, the nature of such a content-specifying entity is just what the notion of sense was intended to reveal.) And, if thoughts are objects (albeit in a third realm), what association of a sign with a thought can occur which does not depend on a prior account of how thoughts can be identified? Quite what is being offered here is a mystery.⁷

⁶ 'On Sense and Meaning', in Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege, pp.56-78.

⁷ Professor Dummett points to such difficulties and others to suggest that the temptation to read Frege as offering an explanatory mediating model of objectivity should be resisted. See for example The Interpretation of Frege's Philosophy Chapter 3. (But see also Frege: Philosophy of Language (2nd ed.) pp.155-157.) Whilst Dummett agrees that for Frege, "To know the sense of a proper name is to have a criterion for recognising, for any given object, whether or not it is the bearer (referent) of that name" (Frege: Philosophy of Language, p.229), he believes that it would not be inconsistent to ascribe to Frege the view that "A model for the sense of a word of some particular kind does not seek to explain how we are able to use the word as we do; it simply forms part of an extended description of what that use consists in" (ibid p.681). Dummett's suggestion that sense is not introduced as a "hypothesised psychological mechanism," (ibid) but as an "extended description" of those capacities required from one who is to be correctly ascribed understanding, locates Frege's notion at the functional level--it is part of the concept of understanding a term that one has such and such capacities. It is not to the point to speak to the exegetical issue here. Our concern is with the possibility of the explanatory project that Dummett, in

A third way of putting flesh on the intellectualist skeleton we might call Lockean. Understanding consists in associating a sign with an idea, and the idea is of that object it resembles. Like the other two accounts the determining sample is the thought of the object--to think of an object is to have an idea--but now representation by thoughts is explicated. If we take mental images to be examples of ideas, and if the properties of these images are like the properties of certain objects and not others, then images, so thoughts, so the associated signs, represent the former objects and not the latter. This version of the intellectualist explanation is one which Wittgenstein was particularly interested in in his later writings. So at the beginning of the Blue Book he states it thus:

If I give someone the order "fetch me a red flower from that meadow", how is he to know what sort of flower to bring, as I have only given him a word?
 Now the answer one might suggest first is that he went to look for a red flower carrying a red image in his mind, and comparing it with the flowers to see which of them had the colour of the image. (p.3)

The motivation for the later discussions of the resemblance version of an intellectualist explanation of language-mastery was no doubt in part its prevalence in the empiricist tradition. But, more than this, Wittgenstein was spurred by the fact that an explanation much like this was fundamental to the Tractatus conception of language and the world. In arguing in the later work against "pictures by similarity" and "explanations by means of identity" he is confronting the central doctrines of the Tractatus. The next section clarifies the framework of the Tractatus account of representation.

Frege's name, eschews.

1.2 Transparency.

Language takes care of itself, Wittgenstein claims in the Notebooks (p.43).^a The content of this claim is given in three theses announced in that early work and, I will argue, carried over into the Tractatus.

First: "We can say straight away: Instead of: this proposition has such and such a sense [Sinn]: this proposition represents such and such a situation" (NB p.8); "The proposition itself sunders what is congruent with it from what is not congruent" (NB p.25); "the proposition represents the situation--as it were off its own bat" (NB p.26).

Second: "The point is only that the logical part of what is signified should be completely determined just by the logical part of the sign and the method of symbolizing" (NB p.19); "Sign and relation determine unambiguously the logical form of the thing signified" (NB p.43). "The sign and the internal relation to what is signified determine the proto-picture of the latter" (NB p.46).

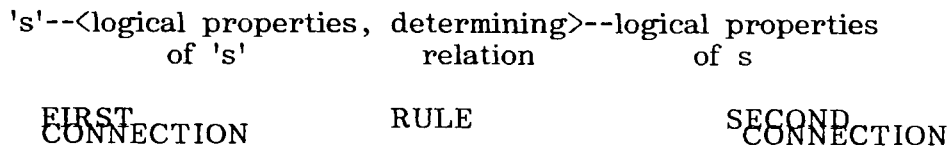
Third: There is a logical identity between the sign and the thing signified (NB p.3); "If sign and thing signified were not identical in respect of their total logical content then there would have to be something still more fundamental than logic" (NB p.4); "the signs must themselves possess all the logical properties of what they represent" (NB p.11).

The first group of statements announces what can be called the directness thesis: a proposition by itself suffices to determine the

^a Logic also takes care of itself (NB p.1, TLP 5.473). The central focus in this chapter is on the Tractatus account of representation, but at various points I will indicate important similarities between this and the theory of inference in that work.

This cannot be right however. There is nothing about signs qua arbitrary "scratches" which allows them to identify that to which they refer. To understand the idea of a proposition in the directness thesis in the way proposed by Tractatus 3.12 is to end up in an implausible position. To avoid this, the notion of a proposition in the first group of quotations from the Notebooks might instead be understood in terms not of a sign qua scratch, but in terms of the "logical part" or "logical properties" of the sign. It is this which stands in an internal relation to the thing signified by the scratch, and which is identical to the logical property ("part", "form", "content") of what is signified. This suggestion can be represented thus:

Diagram 3



This is a lot less exciting than the previous suggestion perhaps, but unlike that suggestion it is not immediately implausible. What we are told by the internality and identity theses is that the logical properties of 's' identify the logical properties of s internally, by an identity relation. This leaves us in the dark first about the nature of these logical properties (of both 's' and s), and, second, the nature of the first connection.

This suggestion does capture the structure of the picture theory

of representation in the Tractatus, I will argue.⁹ In the remainder of this section I will explore the grounds for the internality and identity theses. This will prepare the way for the account offered in 1.3 and 1.4 of the logical properties of signs and things. What should be said about the connection between the sign and the rule consisting of these logical properties and the identity relation will be discussed in 1.5.

The internality thesis says that the determining relation is an internal relation. To see why the determining relation must be like this we can look to Wittgenstein's argument at Tractatus 2.0211-2.0212.

If the world had no substance, then whether a proposition had sense would depend on whether another proposition was true. In that case we could not sketch any picture of the world (true or false).

The need for the world to have substance will be discussed in the next section, but the situation the argument invokes--the sense of one proposition depending on the truth of another--is revealing for the internality thesis. Let 'p' be a propositional sign, and S be that determining sample which identifies the truth conditions p of 'p'. The question now is: how is S related to p? If the determining relation R is external, to know the truth conditions of 'p' one would have to know a contingent truth, that it is p (not q or r ...) which is R-related to S. So whether the sense of 'p' is p, or, indeed, whether 'p' has any sense at all, depends on a further truth. But which further truth? If the truth conditions of the expression, 'p is

⁹ As will become clear, the definition of a proposition in Tractatus 3.12 should be taken to refer only to the logical or essential properties of the propositional sign (see 3.34).

R-related to S' are determined by something T which is externally R-related to truth conditions q, to know the sense of the expression one would have to know the contingent truth, that it is q which is R-related to T. This launches us onto a vicious regress: to know the sense of any proposition one has to be able to know the truth of a further proposition (or a further thought), but to know this truth one has to know the truth of a yet further proposition ...

This problem does not arise if the determining relation R is an internal relation. If the determining sample S is internally related to the truth conditions p of 'p', one who knows S and the relation R, thereby knows what the conditions p are like. One who questions whether it is p that is R-related to S demonstrates his ignorance of the nature of the relata or the relation in question, as surely as one who questions whether something is two miles long is shorter than something which is three miles long is ignorant either of the lengths or the notion of one length being shorter than another length; nothing in addition to the lengths is needed to be able to make the judgement--no further, contingent, facts need be known. If propositions are to be able to say anything, the determining relation must be internal, so the relation must hold between the internal, or logical, properties of the determining sample and that which is determined.

At Notebooks p.4 Wittgenstein appears to link the internality thesis with the identity thesis: "if sign and thing signified were not identical in respect of their total logical content then there would have to be something still more fundamental than logic". The thought might be taken to be this: unless there were an identity in logical content between sign and thing signified, the sign could only

signify if some additional (more fundamental) fact about the relation were invoked; but unless this additional fact could be represented by a sign identical to it in logical content, a yet further fact would be needed ... This is just the regress noted above; here though the conclusion one is invited to draw is stronger--not just that the relation between sign and thing signified must be internal, but that it must be the identity of logical content.

This conclusion is perhaps not forced upon us at this point, but this is not to say that it is possible to suggest a counterexample--a relation different from the identity relation which could establish an internal relation between the logical properties. Given that we as yet have no idea of what these properties are, we can have no idea of what sorts of relation can hold between things, except, of course, that there must be some relation of (qualitative) identity. Identity will fit the bill, for the identity of logical properties is an internal relation.¹⁰ The status of the identity thesis will become clearer when the relata are explored in the next section.

The three theses from the Notebooks discussed in this section constitute what I shall call the transparency theory of representation. The central thought is that the internality of representation arises through the identity of the logical properties of signs and what they represent: in a slogan--internality through identity. According to the Tractatus, pictures too are transparent. "There must be something identical in a picture and what it depicts,

¹⁰ The logical properties of the determining sample are logical properties of the sign, so the suggestion still postulates an internal relation between the sign and the thing, the logical (internal) properties of which are identical. But I will inquire below (in 1.5) in what sense the logical properties in question are really properties of a sign.

to enable the one to be a picture of the other at all" (2.161), and one can see from the picture alone what it represents--the picture "reaches right out" to the world (2.1511). It is this transparency of pictures which is the point of the comparison of a proposition with a picture. The comparison is made at 4.021:

A proposition is a picture of reality: for if I understand a proposition, I know the situation that it represents. And I understand the proposition without having had its sense explained to me.

Like pictures, propositions show what it is they represent (4.022), so that "one can actually see from the proposition how everything stands logically if it is true" (4.023). And, again, like pictures, this transparency is ensured by an identity between properties of the sign and properties of what is represented. In this respect, propositions are pictures.¹¹

In uncovering the transparency theory of representation in the Tractatus one is in a position to notice a striking unity in that work, for the theory of inference therein is likewise founded upon the demand for internality through identity. A brief glance at the central doctrines of the account of inference will make this likeness apparent.

First, the propositions of logic cannot be justified by anything in the world, for "Logic is prior to every experience" of the world (5.552; see also 5.551, 5.5521 and 6.13). By looking to the world one can at most discern accidental truths, but the truths of logic are essential (6.1232, 6.3). It follows that truth-functions are not material (5.44)--"there can be no representatives of the logic of

¹¹ Blackburn also uses the term 'transparent' in this context; see his Spreading the Word, pp.39-50.

facts" (4.0312). Second, laws of inference cannot justify inferences (5.132). If p follows from q because of some law R , one has to be able to infer from R that p follows from q ; but what justifies this rule of inference?¹² Third, it follows that the truth of a proposition of logic must be apparent from its constituent propositions alone: "When the truth of one proposition follows from the truth of others, we can see this from the structure of the propositions" (5.13). Inspection of the propositions themselves will suffice to judge the internal relations holding between them. 5.1363 sums up this thought in claiming that "If the truth of a proposition does not follow from the fact that it is self-evident to us, then its self-evidence in no way justifies our belief in its truth". If the evidence for the claim that a logical proposition is true is not the structure of the proposition, the evidence for this claim must be related to the constituent propositions only contingently, as a symptom, and one could then be mistaken as to whether the proposition were true even though these symptoms were correctly grasped. Thus the truth of the proposition would not follow from--be guaranteed by--the holding of the symptoms. Such a guarantee is afforded only when the structure of the proposition--an internal property of the proposition-- is the basis for the judgement. Fourth, the truth-table notation is that which reveals the structure which is required for one to see the truth of logical propositions. If p follows from q , the logical properties (form) of p --its truth-possibilities--is contained within the logical properties of q (5.121); in the limiting

¹² "What justifies the inference is seeing the internal relation. No rule of inference is needed to justify the inference, since if it were I would need another rule to justify the rule and that would lead to an infinite regress" (1930-1932 Lectures, p.56).

case, when p is materially equivalent to q , "they are one and the same proposition" (5.141). ("If the truth of one proposition follows from the truth of others, this finds expression in relations in which the forms of the propositions stand to one another", 5.131.) The truth-tables provide a way of representing the logical properties of propositions; this notation renders perspicuous the connections between propositions by allowing one to see the connections--similarities and dissimilarities--of signs. From these representations of the propositions one can read off the internal relations between propositions.

These Tractarian doctrines are well-known.¹³ The central thought is that if there is to be knowledge of inferential connections between propositions, these connections must be transparent. The propositions (logical properties of propositional signs) must be internally related, and this rules out appeal to some extra thing standing between (or over) the propositions forging the connection (there would then have to be something "still more fundamental than logic"). Nothing must mediate between a proposition and the situation it represents. And as with the account of representation, the internal relation is sustained by the identity relation. Propositions are individuated by their truth-grounds, and relations of (truth-functional) entailment are revealed as relations between truth-grounds. If the truth-grounds are identical the propositions are equivalent, and if part of the truth-grounds of p (those structures in which p is true) is identical to part of the truth-grounds of q (if q is true in all the structures in which p is true), p implies q .

¹³ Which is not to say well understood. But it is not to the present point to delve more deeply into Wittgenstein's theory of inference.

So it is that an internal relation between propositions is "an immediate result of the existence of the propositions" (5.131). An internal relation between propositions "expresses itself" (4.125) just as a proposition shows what it represents.¹⁴

The purpose in looking to the early writings is to understand how Wittgenstein believed internal relatedness should be explained.¹⁵ The internality of both representation and inference is founded on a relation of identity between logical properties. The task now is to spell out what these logical properties are.

1.3 Simple

According to 3.34 a proposition has both essential and accidental features: "Accidental features are those that result from the particular way in which the propositional sign is produced. Essential features are those without which the proposition could not express its sense". We are concerned to uncover these essential features (logical properties), those which will be internally connected to that which they represent. The process by which the essential properties of a proposition are revealed from amongst the accidental properties of the propositional sign is that of analysis (4.002, 4.0031), and "the analysis of propositions must bring us to elementary propositions" (4.221). Elementary propositions--the

¹⁴ The relation is transparent in each case, but the relata are not the same: inferential relations hold only between complex propositions--truth-functions of elementary propositions (see 4.211).

¹⁵ That Wittgenstein takes representation to require an internal relation has been pointed out by others (see Hacker's 'The Rise and Fall of the Picture Theory', pp.90-91, for example). The present concern is with how this requirement is to met in the Tractatus. As will become clear, most accounts of the details of the picture theory (including Hacker's) fail to address this issue.

essential `residue` of our everyday signs (Umgangssprache 4.002)-
-will contain only those properties of the everyday signs which are transparent. It is the elementary proposition which is a picture, binding the everyday sign to the world.

Given that as yet all we know about an elementary proposition is that it must be transparent in the way expressions of ordinary language are not,¹⁶ what further can be deduced? We can give the following characterisation: elementary propositions contain simple names. Here is the argument.

There must be rules--pairs of logical properties of propositions and the identity relation--which are internally related to that which they determine. This conclusion from the previous section has a corollary which we might call the unchangeability condition: there must be identifying rules which cannot change. If rules are internally related to the states of affairs they identify, there is no change in the world which is not noticeable by some rule - all change is against the background of rules. So, in particular, it only makes sense to say that a rule has changed if there is a further rule identifying this first rule.¹⁷ But it follows that it makes no sense to say that all rules can change, for there would be no standard against which to measure change. Hence there must be rules which

¹⁶ The doctrine is that the process of analysis reveals the logical properties of the everyday signs. Hence there is a sense in which these signs are themselves transparent, but the transparent properties are hidden by the accidental properties of the propositional sign. This account of the connection between a sign and its logical properties is incoherent I think (see 1.5 below). To avoid the problems the official doctrine leads to, I shall write as if the everyday sign has no transparent properties.

¹⁷ The transparency theory is an account of thought content too (see below, this section), so it cannot make sense to think that a rule has changed if there is no further rule.

cannot change.

If the determining sample of a rule consists of the essential properties of a sign, it follows from this argument that not all signs can change (except in their accidental properties). This is the demand for Tractarian simple signs: "The requirement that simple signs be possible is the requirement that sense be determinate" (3.23). If the determining sample is a complex it is possible that some components of the sample exist whilst others do not; hence one would need a criterion of identity for the existence of component (and hence the complex). At length however, by the argument of the last paragraph, there must be unchangeable criteria--rules with unchangeable determinants--and, as all complexes exist contingently, these determinants will be simple.

The elementary proposition itself will not be this simple determinant--the notion of analysis introduced above indicates that the result of analysis is not just a name but contains names as well as elements signifying an arrangement of the objects to which the names refer. If the proposition itself cannot be simple, the demand for simplicity must be met at the level of the components of the proposition; hence the proposition must contain simple names.

In addition to the need for simple names, the internality of representation thesis together with the unchangeability condition introduce the conclusion that the form of the world cannot change - there must be substance, or Tractarian objects (2.027). This is the conclusion of the argument at 2.0211/2. If a proposition is to have determinate truth conditions, the relation between the proposition and these truth conditions must be internal; and if determining rules cannot change, it cannot make sense to presume that that which the

rules determine can change. Hence the world must have an unchangeable form--if the rules of chess cannot change, those games of chess which are possible cannot change. Allied to an atomistic ontology--facts are constituted by objects in combination--it follows that objects are simple. We might here echo 3.23 in saying: the requirement that there be simple objects is the requirement that sense be determinate. The existence of both Tractarian names and objects is a condition for there to be sensible propositions. Simple names and objects are the consequences of blocking the regress of rules to employ rules which threatens the possibility of sense. Rules must give out if there is to be sense, but when they do give out the senses which can be expressed are frozen.¹⁸

These arguments afford two conclusions however. One should distinguish those objects an elementary proposition is about from that which the proposition says about those objects. There is then a call for some features of the proposition to represent objects, and a call for other features of the proposition to represent the relation between the objects. The arguments allow that there must be simple names signifying simple objects; but we should also conclude that there must be simple features of elementary propositions signifying the relations between simple objects. Moreover, an elementary proposition is internally related to what it represents, hence, one might think, the simple names and the simple features representing the relation between the named objects are internally related to the

¹⁸ This argument from sense to substance has nothing to do with vagueness. Griffin in Wittgenstein's Logical Atomism (pp.65-70) and Fogelin in Wittgenstein (pp.14-17) are amongst those who take vagueness to be the issue (although both admit to uncertainties about this approach). The problem of determinacy here is that of how any sense at all is possible, not how any sharp sense is possible.

objects and the relation between the objects respectively.¹⁹ And if the transparency theory of internal representation were correct, one could look for something in the names, and something in the features signifying the relation between the objects, which are shared by the objects and the relations between the objects respectively.

Wittgenstein discerns something in the elementary proposition which transparently pictures the relations between objects in what is represented. According to 4.221, elementary propositions "consist of names in immediate combination" (emphasis added). The lesson here is just that expressed at Notebooks p.26 where Wittgenstein says that the connection between the elements of the picturing proposition "is not a relation but only the holding of a relation" (see also the more familiar echoes in 3.1432, and NB pp.109-110). The point is that there will be no feature of the elementary proposition standing for the relation between the objects represented by the proposition; the representation of the relation is achieved by the relation between the simple names in the elementary proposition. The ambition of the transparency theory is of course to analyse the standing for relation in terms of a transparent showing or picturing relation. So, Wittgenstein holds, features standing for relations between objects drop out in favour of relations between names which show what is said.²⁰

¹⁹ The ambiguity of 'proposition' is carried over to that of a name. It is not the name qua scratch which is internally related to an object, but the logical properties of the name--what Wittgenstein at 3.3411 calls the "real name". This distinction is explored in 1.5 below. In what follows I assume that Tractarian names are not to be individuated by their orthographic properties.

²⁰ It is of course notoriously unclear how a relation between simple names in an elementary proposition can be identical to a relation between objects in the world. This obscurity has persuaded some that it is wrong to understand elementary propositions to

We can distinguish two transparency theories of representation. A weak theory claims that only the way in which an elementary proposition represents a relation between objects is transparent; the connection between the simple names and simple objects is not transparent. A strong transparency theory claims that both representing relations--that holding between the proposition and the relation between simple objects, and that holding between the simple names and the simple objects--are transparent, based that is on an identity of properties of elementary propositions and states of affairs.

The issue of central concern in the next two sections will be whether the strong thesis is right to hold that the name-object relation is explained by an identity between the internal properties of a name and an object. The issue is a vital one here for this reason: if the strong theory is not to be attributed to the Tractatus the transparency account of representation is taken by that work to be one means amongst others by which representation can take place and so internal relatedness explained. The account of the main lines of argument in that work given here would have then to be reconsidered in the light of alternative means of representation. On the other hand, if the Tractatus does contain a strong theory, the exegesis offered so far can be held more confidently. The name-object relation is then a crucial test for the present account of

contain only names for particulars (see Pears, The False Prison pp.120-142, for a comprehensive discussion of the issue). This attitude appears to me to be unjustified, but the details of the debate must remain unexplored here. The argument of the next section will be that if there is a way in which the relations between objects can be transparently pictured, there is a straightforward way in which the objects themselves can be pictured. For the purposes of that argument I will assume that both concatenations of names and configurations of objects can be given a linear representation.

Wittgenstein's early thought.

In the following two sections I will offer some detailed arguments in support of the attribution of a strong picture theory to Wittgenstein. Before turning to these arguments, it is valuable to clarify the stance the weak theory is forced to adopt to naming. The weak theorist might adopt one of two exegetical positions. The first--suggested by Black--is that there is little or no attempt to explore the name-object relation in the Tractatus. The second--offered by Anscombe and Hacker--is that connections of names and objects are forged by human thought.²¹

Neither suggestion is attractive. The first suggestion asks one to believe that Wittgenstein, having appreciated the problems in a non-transparent notion of representation, having worked through to the need for picturing as the basis of representation of the relations between Tractarian objects, having read Über Sinn und Bedeutung, should have found little of interest in the name-object relation. But such a belief is surely fabulous.

Anscombe writes thus: "The correlating [of name and object] is not something that the picture itself does; it is something we do" (Introduction p.68). Likewise, Hacker sees a need for "a mechanism of a psychological nature" in the Tractatus, "to project lines of projection onto the world" (Insight and Illusion, first edition,

²¹ Black, Companion p.116, (see pp.90-91 for a full statement of the weak doctrine); Anscombe, Introduction pp.68-69; Hacker, Insight and Illusion, 1st edition, p.51. Two writers who support a strong theory are Griffin in Wittgenstein's Logical Atomism, and Goldfarb in 'Objects, Names and Realism in the Tractatus' (unpublished paper). The account of Tractarian names I offer here is broadly similar to suggestions made by Ishiguro in 'Use and Reference of Names', but the motivation of the present account is different from hers. (I make no attempt to chart the points of agreement and divergence: the detailed discussion that task would require would be incompatible with the place of the present chapter in the overall project.)

p.51). Some act of mind connects names and objects, thereby establishing by a sort of ostensive definition a rule sufficient for the correct use of the names. This we can call a projectivist view of reference. Here are two reasons for thinking that it is not properly attributed to the Tractatus.

Elementary propositions are pictures. According to the projectivist view, connections have to be forged between simple names and simple objects before combinations of simple names become pictures. But the problem with projectivism is that it offers no explanation of how an act of mental projection can establish a reference relation between a simple name and a simple object--it is not an alternative to a transparency account of naming, but no account at all. To see this, assume that some act of projection assigns the name N to the object O. This establishes a connection between N and O only if it gives rise to the capacity to use N to refer to O. That is to say, the proposition must establish a rule for the correct use of N. But in what does grasp of this rule now consist? What is it one takes from the projection which explains how is it that on a future occasion one will be able to take O to be the referent of N? Projectivism gives no answer here. The options available are these: either the simple name is associated with some entity which (internally) identifies O; or the name itself succeeds in identifying O. To adopt either of these options is to go beyond projectivism into an explanation of what understanding a language consists in. The comparison of a proposition with a picture is a contribution to an explanation of understanding of course. One who holds to a weak picture theory will allow this, but this one should not then seriously propose that a weak theory is allied in the

Tractatus with a projectivist theory of naming. This should arouse the same incredulity that Black's proposal provoked--could Wittgenstein really have been satisfied to leave naming unexplained after having seen the need for a transparent connection between the structure of a proposition and the relation between simple objects?

The second reason for believing that projectivism misrepresents the Tractatus account of simple names is to be found in what Wittgenstein says about propositional attitudes. To project a simple name onto a simple object one has to think about that object. But we learn at 5.542 that "'A believes that p', 'A has the thought p', and 'A says p' are of the form "'p" says p': and 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". The state of affairs p is a fact; the propositional sign 'p' is likewise a fact (3.14); hence in "'p' says p", a fact is being correlated with a fact. The point of the passage is that A's attitude towards p is to be analysed not as a relation between an undifferentiated object A and the fact p, but in terms of some fact about A and the fact p. Just as 'p' pictures p, so is about p, the fact about A that A has the thought p will be a fact which pictures p: "thinking is a kind of language", Wittgenstein claims at NB p.52 (one that "it would be a matter of psychology to research", NB p.130).

The suggestion then is that thoughts and propositions are equally pictures of what they represent. In this case a dilemma arises for the projectivist. Either the thought only weakly pictures its content, or it strongly pictures it. If the former were true, thinking of objects rather than their relations would require some elements of the thought to have been given content by some sort of

projection onto the objects; but this could not be a mental act, for that would presuppose that one can think of objects. At some point, the content of a thought of an object must be independent of any act which forges the connection between thought and object. And this points in the direction of a transparency theory of content. On the other hand, if a thought is transparently of objects (not just the relations between objects), and thought and propositions are equally pictorial, a proposition too transparently represents objects.

1.4 The logic of depiction.

In this section I outline what I take to be the account of the transparent connection between a simple name and a simple object to be found in the Tractatus. I first state the theory then seek to defend its attribution by close attention to the text.

Sign and thing signified share logical properties (NB p.11). If the strong transparency theory were true there would be logical or essential properties of simple names in virtue of which they specify objects. The distinction between logical and non-logical properties of sign is a distinction between symbols and signs. A sign is just that which "can be perceived of a symbol" (3.32), and the symbol is said to be that which contributes towards the determination of the truth conditions of propositions (3.31, 3.34-3.3411). This logical part of the sign-as-scratch--the part that enters into the rule--should be seen as the "sign-in-the-sign" (NB p.18), or the "real sign" (NB p.55, 3.3411). That "essential thing about the sign" which cannot be altered without altering its sense (NB p.51) is just the symbol (4.465). In the transparency theory of inference a notation was sought which would make the logical properties of (complex)

propositions manifest, allowing the automatic comparison of propositions. The truth-tables played this role. Likewise a transparency theory of representation must seek a way of uncovering the representing symbol--the logical properties of the sign--revealing the sign-in-the-sign for measurement against the world.

The strong picture theory supposes that simple signs have logical parts. In seeking to uncover these essential properties of simple signs, we should look at the simple objects to which they refer. An object is picked out in virtue of its form: "sign and relation determine unambiguously the logical form of the thing signified" (NB p.43). It follows that if there is a transparency theory of reference--one founded upon the identity thesis--the sign must share a logical form with the object it determines. Yet we have a clear definition of the logical form of an object--its possibility of occurring in states of affairs, configurations of simple objects (2.0141, 2.0272). To specify the totality of states of affairs in which a simple object can occur is, we might think, to describe the complete form of that object. But just as a state of affairs is a configuration of simple objects, an elementary proposition is a concatenation of simple names (4.22). An obvious step is to understand the form of a simple name as its possibility of occurring in elementary propositions. We might now suppose that to specify the totality of elementary propositions in which a simple name can occur is to describe the form of that name. Transparency in reference is assured if the form of a simple name is the same as the form of the simple object to which it refers.

According to this suggestion, the form of a simple name and the form of a simple object are defined holistically. Each is specified

in terms of other names and objects whose forms in turn can be specified only with reference to the first-defined names and objects. There is an interlocking and self-supporting system of names and a similar system of objects.²² Hence the form of one simple name can only be given in terms of the forms of all the simple names in that system; likewise, the form of one simple object can only be given in terms of the forms of all the simple objects in that system. An analogy will help us to fix ideas. The king in chess is defined in terms of its moves on a chess board, but also holistically in terms of what pieces in what situations it can threaten and be threatened by. If in watching a game of chess played with unconventional pieces we seek to identify the kings, we shall need first to be able to identify the values of other pieces, but, in turn, these will be clear given only that others are clear. No one piece can be conclusively identified without previously having identified other pieces. Hence to be able to judge that the game is chess (and not some variant using the same board and moves) one must grasp the systematic interrelatedness of the pieces.

We can distinguish between the construction of the king in any game of chess--its shape and the material from which it is made--and the underlying form of the king, this being specified by its place in the system defined by the rules of chess. This place is revealed by looking beyond the material properties of the piece to its essential properties, so that two games are both games of chess if they share these systematic properties. In the same way, the form of a simple

²² In what follows I shall assume that the forms of all names (and so of all objects) overlap. That is, there are not two or more sets of names (objects) so that each member of each set is fully definable in terms of the other members of its own set.

name is not essentially tied to the accidental (and non-relational) properties of the signs employed in a language, but rather to the places of the signs in the holistic system. We seek some way in which the structure of the system of simple names and that of the system of simple signs can be revealed. Here is a suggestion. First we represent each elementary proposition and each state of affairs as an ordered set whose members are the constitutive simple names and simple objects respectively. The form of a name N can be only incompletely specified if the forms of the other names with which it can join in elementary propositions are not defined, so this specification definition will encompass all the elementary propositions in the language. Let us then consider the set S of all those ordered sets of names constituting the language; the name N will occur in only some of these. The form of an object O is, for the same reason, to be specified by the set T of ordered sets of objects representing the totality of possible states of affairs.

Given the sets S and T we can define what it is for the name N to refer to the object O . If there is a (type) assignment of the objects occurring in T to the names occurring in S which assigns O to N , and substituting objects for names in S according to this assignment rule produces the set T from the set S (and vice-versa), then and only then is N the name of O .

The sets S and T specify holistic structures; the identity of holistic structures then consists in there being a transformation of S into T and vice-versa by some assignment rule. An identity in the form of N and O holds only if there is such a transformation--the identity of the parts of S and T then depends upon the identity of the structures by which they are defined.

This, I suggest, is the transparency theory of representation by names to be found in the Tractatus. The internal relation between a sign and what it signifies is assured by an identity relation holding between the form of a sign and the form of an object. One who knows the form of a name and the form of an object thereby knows if the name signifies that object.²³ But this strong picture theory has not yet been shown to be Wittgenstein's. Indeed, he nowhere explicitly says that a name has logical properties and that these are to be construed holistically. A defence of the attribution of this theory to Wittgenstein will have to uncover a commitment to the theory in other utterances in that work. The following four Tractarian doctrines provide support of this sort.

(i) A name has essential properties. The essential features of a proposition are those in virtue of which the proposition expresses its sense (3.34); that is, they constitute the form of the proposition. The form of a proposition can be shared by more than one proposition (identified by their accidental properties)--one form is common to all those propositions which express the same sense (3.341). Moreover, "one could say that the real name of an object was what all symbols that signified it had in common" (3.3411). What all the symbols that signify some one thing have in common is a form identical to the form of that thing; if the thing commonly signified

²³ Wittgenstein says at 4.026: "The meanings of simple signs (words) must be explained to us if we are to understand them. With propositions, however, we make ourselves understood". This I think does not count against the suggestion that Tractarian names are transparent. If that suggestion is right, this passage can be taken to be making the point that "elucidations" of the simple signs are needed, and once these are given, the meanings of propositions in which the signs occur need no further explanation. Elucidations are examples of how the names are used--demonstrations of that use rather than statements of the form, 'N' stands for N. (See the discussion of 3.262 below.)

is an object, the form common to all the symbols must be the form of the object. But the form of an object is signified by a name--the real name of the object, that lying behind the everyday signs employed to refer to the same object. Hence 3.3411 indicates that there are names which have essential properties--logical forms--in virtue of which they represent objects.

(ii) The rules of logical syntax must be justifiable without reference to the world. According to 3.344, the rules of logical syntax will determine classes of co-signifying symbols; so from 3.341 we should conclude that these sets will correspond to symbols with the same sense. Hence the rules of logical syntax will differentiate between symbols with different representational forms. (This conclusion is warranted despite the fact that the point of 3.344 is illustrated in 3.3441 by what is in common to truth-functional combinations of elementary propositions.) "It must be possible to establish logical syntax without mentioning the meaning [Bedeutung] of a sign", Wittgenstein claims at 3.33. The reason is clear: if what the sign represents cannot be seen from the sign alone, but instead the sign has to be given sense by defining it as having such-and-such truth conditions or referent (as the projectivist account suggests, for example), the nature of the link between sign and thing signified suffers from the need for some further, external, element. If this problem is to be avoided there must be transparency--"only the description of expressions may be presupposed" in constructing logical syntax, in particular, descriptions of the "logico-syntactical employment of expressions". In determining sets of like-sense symbols, logical syntax will identify that which is common to the symbols; but, as seen above, a real name is held to be

such a common element, hence there will be rules of logical syntax governing names. The constraint upon how these rules of syntax are constructed will therefore cover the rules for names; but that constraint is motivated by the need for transparent representation; hence names are taken to represent transparently in virtue of their logical forms.

(iii) Propositional signs must have a mathematical multiplicity.

According to 4.04, propositional signs must possess the same "logical (mathematical) multiplicity" as the situations they represent. One who found only a weak picture theory in the Tractatus might take the content of this claim to be exhausted by the first sentence of 4.04, "In a proposition there must be exactly as many distinguishable parts as in the situation that it represents". This would be wrong: the demand for logical or mathematical multiplicity is to be understood as an expression of the holistic version of the identity thesis--representation is possible in virtue of the identity of a system of signs and a system of objects. The strong (holistic) theory has it that names have no autonomous reference--no representing capacity other than in virtue of their roles in the interlocking system of signs. This mirrors Wittgenstein's claim that logical constants take their significance from their systematic employment within complex propositions: logical constants have no autonomous significance (they do not autonomously refer, for example). This thought is expressed at 5.555: "when there is a system by which we can create symbols, the system is what is important for logic and not the individual symbols"; again, "All that is required is that we should construct a system of signs with a particular number of dimensions--with a particular mathematical multiplicity" (5.475). To insist upon

mathematical multiplicity just is to state the need for a system in which symbols are given life (in virtue of being moves[~]); in invoking mathematical multiplicity Wittgenstein is then denying an autonomous significance to signs. If this holistic understanding of the notion of multiplicity is right, its employment in the discussion of representation in and around 4.04 invites the conclusion that a like denial of autonomous significance is at hand. A propositional sign represents in virtue of the significance of its parts, each of which has a "particular number of dimensions". The call for identical multiplicity in 4.04 is made in the name of the elementary proposition of course; but the idea of a holistic articulation of parts of an elementary proposition can only mean a holistic definition of the names in that proposition. Hence the demands for a proposition to possess a mathematical multiplicity is a recognition that names possess a holistic form (in virtue of which they represent).

(iv) What primitive signs represent can be elucidated by propositions employing those signs. The class of primitive signs includes names (3.26/261); the primitive name is the simple name suited for a role in an elementary proposition. But the object to which such a name refers cannot be specified by a statement of the form: "[~]N[~] refers to N". Either the sign [~]N[~] transparently picks out N or it does not. If it does, the statement makes no sense (see 1.6 below); if it does not, the statement is worthless. Hence no such specification of what primitive signs represent is possible. However, 3.263 suggests that the content of a primitive sign does not transparently show itself in that sign--looking to the sign alone will not assist at all with seeing what it represents. Rather,

propositions using the primitive signs ("elucidations") are needed to display the meanings of the signs. This of course is what would be expected if the holistic account were true--simple names have no autonomous content, but take significance from their occurrences in elementary propositions (their "logico-syntactical employment"). The suggestion then is that in looking to those propositions in which a name can occur, one can discern the form of the name, hence its meaning.

Taking 3.263 to teach this holistic lesson avoids a paradox one might think arises: if elucidations are "propositions that contain the primitive signs" whose meaning is being explained, the elucidatory propositions "can only be understood if the meanings of those signs are already known". One can only understand to what N refers if one first knows the truth conditions of some claim such as $F(N)$; but one cannot know those truth conditions unless one first knows the reference of N ; hence one cannot know to what N refers. But rather than supporting this conclusion, the holistic reading would have 3.263 resolving the paradox. To grasp the reference of N one indeed has to grasp the form of N ; that is to say, one must know those propositions in which N can enter. But in grasping those propositions one can see the forms of the names they contain, and so see the objects each name signifies. Given a non-semantical ability--the ability to recognise the various combinations into which simple signs can enter--one can determine the semantic properties of the signs. So indeed one can know the meaning of any proposition only if the meanings of the component names are known; and these can only be known by understanding other propositions in which the names are used. But this circle can be broken into if the ambition is to

discern the possible occurrences in propositions of names. The form of one name is given only by the forms of others, and all forms are to be surveyed only in the totality of propositions. This survey made available, the meanings of the names and the meanings of the propositions are made apparent.

1.5 Expressions, variables, form.

Wittgenstein writes at 3.3411: "So one could say that the real name of an object was what all symbols that signified it had in common. Thus, one by one, all kinds of composition would prove to be unessential to a name". The last section pointed to the logical properties--the essential composition--of a name, the real name hiding behind the everyday signs employed in natural languages. This is the name's place in the holistic structure constituted by the totality of elementary propositions. According to 3.341, "What is essential in a symbol is what all symbols that can serve the same purpose have in common"; different symbols can mark the same place within the holistic structure hence share the same essential properties.²⁴

At 3.31 Wittgenstein defines an "expression" as "everything essential to their sense that propositions can have in common with one another"; an expression is "the common characteristic mark of a class of propositions" (3.311). An elementary proposition takes its sense from the places of its components within the holistic system of

²⁴ The distinction between a sign and symbol comes under strain here: symbols, unlike signs, are governed by logical syntax (3.32's), so all symbols serve the same representational purpose. The difficulty here arises from Wittgenstein's talk of the symbol as itself a sort of sign--something which signifies (3.3411). This way of looking at symbols is discussed below.

simple names, according to the transparency theory; hence an expression must mark this sense in some way. According to 3.313, an expression is presented by means of a propositional variable "whose values are the propositions that contain the expression"; and the propositional variable presents---in the most general case---a logical form (3.315).

The notion of an expression is not easy to grasp - for a reason I discuss below - but the general motivation is clear. Just as the transparency theory of inference sought a perspicuous notation by which to reveal the logical connections between propositions, so the transparency theory of representation seeks to make representational connections apparent by revealing the logical properties of the representing signs. The suggestion is that this will involve a variable notation. However, the description of the transparency thesis in the last section made no use of such a notation, employing only ordered sets of names. We need then to understand Wittgenstein's suggestions in the 3.3's to be sure that the account in the last section is on the right track.

In the previous section it was assumed that an elementary proposition could be represented like this: $\langle MNO \rangle$ where M, N and O are simple names. To specify the forms of these names in a transparent way, the set of all the elementary propositions in the language is constructed. Assume that we have a three proposition language represented by the set $S = \{ \langle MNO \rangle, \langle NM \rangle, \langle ON \rangle \}$. The form of the name M is given by M's place in the structure that S represents. M (and N and O) should be taken as an arbitrary scratch (not a real name); the possibility of employment of that scratch in the language is the form of that scratch, the essential property of the sign. To

bring out this form from behind the surface of the "accidental" notation it is helpful to consider another language with the same form. The form of each language can be specified as that which is in common. So the set $T = \{\langle PQR \rangle, \langle QP \rangle, \langle RQ \rangle\}$ represents the structure of a language different from that in S . S and T have the same holistic structure however--there is an assignment to the members of S (T) which transforms S into T (T into S). In particular, M and P --both conventional signs--have the same form. So M and P share a real name. To arrive at this common feature one has to abstract from the conventional signs, and this abstraction, one might think can be marked by means of a variable: what M and P have in common is what can be represented by a propositional variable which can, taking M and P as arguments, deliver as values those propositions in which M and P occur. More specifically, the thought is that from the set S one can abstract the function $S(x)$ which is understood to be satisfied by any conventional names which can be substituted for x in the set $\{\langle xNO \rangle, \langle Nx \rangle, \langle ON \rangle\}$ thus producing all and only the well-formed propositions in which the conventional name can occur. The variable x defined here is held to specify the form of M by transcending the accidental properties of the scratch.

This specification of the propositional variable is inadequate as it stands, for $S(x)$ cannot be satisfied by the sign P as that is defined by the set T , even though T has the same form as S . The problem here is that $S(x)$ is defined in terms of the conventional signs N and O which do not occur in the structure T : if S and T represent different languages, the elementary proposition $\langle PNO \rangle$ makes no sense, hence does not satisfy $S(x)$.

The amendment needed is clear enough: the propositional variable

defining the form of a name must arise from taking all the conventional names in S as variables. The propositional variable in question then is of the form $R(xyz)$, satisfied by any conventional names which can be substituted for x , y and z in the set $\{\langle xyz \rangle, \langle yx \rangle, \langle zy \rangle\}$ thus producing all and only the well-formed propositions in which the names can occur. There is no restriction of the substitutions to one language now, hence $R(xyz)$ can be satisfied by P , Q and R as defined by the set T .

It appears then that the transparency theory of the last section can be stated in Tractarian terms using variables to mark the places in a holistic system. The account in the last paragraph seems, on the surface anyway, to reflect the suggestion of 3.315, that to discern the logical form of a proposition--that in virtue of which it pictures--one must turn into variables all the signs in a propositions that have "arbitrarily determined meanings".

But one may be forgiven for wondering whether this variable notation really offers a more perspicuous account of the form of a language than the specification of the last section which employed only conventional names. The motivating worry here is just this: the variables x , y and z are themselves conventional signs marking places in a holistic structure. They have no more claim than M , N and O to be real names. If anything can fit that bill it will not employ a sign of any sort, for all signs are conventional; rather, the real name will be a place which can be filled by conventional signs. It is misleading then to seek an expression (or symbol) for what is in common to conventional signs. Wittgenstein seems to recognise just this difficulty at 3.316: "What values a propositional variable may take is something that is stipulated. / The stipulation of the values

is the variable". We are to take the call for a variable as no more than the recognition of that which is in common between all those propositions which would satisfy the variable; the variable itself is of no interest. But this is just to deny that there is a perspicuous notation for that in virtue of which transparent representation is possible.

This leads us finally to the problem anticipated on a number of occasions. If "the signs must themselves possess all the logical properties of what they represent" (NB p.11), and signs represent in virtue of their essential or internal properties, how are the logical properties of signs related to the signs of everyday language? Those signs which transparently represent do so in virtue of their relational properties: they can be combined with other signs in well-formed propositions, and these possibilities of combination are the transparent pictures. A sign's possible combinations, or form, is said to be an essential or internal property of the sign. It follows then that all different languages have the same signs, for all languages have the same essential properties. But all languages have some accidental properties--some 'vehicle'--so languages differ in some characteristic, for example the shape of these vehicles. The problem is not just a notational one of course--not one that can be brushed aside by Wittgenstein's concession to ordinary usage in distinguishing between a sign and a "sign-in-the-sign", or between a sign and a "real sign". According to the Tractatus there is some a priori route from the everyday signs to the underlying real signs--analysis reveals the logical properties of the everyday signs. But the relation between everyday signs and their forms is obscure. An obvious suggestion about how the relation might look will arise from

the chess analogy described earlier. The relation between a sign and its form was compared with that between the material properties of the king in chess and its essential property, that which makes it the king. This latter property is specified by the rules governing the use of the piece, and this use is defined in terms of other pieces in the game. But the relation between the material king and its use is of little help now. The form of the king is the use of the king, but the form of an everyday sign is not to be found in the use of that sign. The whole problem with everyday signs is that they do not respect the rules of logical syntax--signs and symbols do not stand in a one-to-one relation (3.325). When Wittgenstein says that "In order to recognise a symbol by its sign we must observe how it is used with a sense" (3.326), this cannot point to a procedure for moving from everyday signs to elementary propositions in the sense that studying the moves of a chess piece is a procedure by which to judge whether it is the king. The analogy with the chess piece can be used only to illuminate the form of a simple or real sign, but this presupposes some route from the everyday signs to real signs.

Part of the obscurity here comes from the talk of 'logical' and 'accidental' properties of signs. If the defining feature of the king in chess is the role it can play in games of chess, it would be odd to talk of this material property of the piece as a property of the essential thing--the role. It is far more sensible to separate the two things, the piece and the role, and agree that whereas this piece has this role, the connection is accidental. In the same way it would be best to distinguish everyday signs (essentially scratches) from real signs (defined by their holistic interaction with others), and admit that there is an accidental correlation between tokens of each

type. This suggestion is that the logical properties of 's' appealed to as the defining sample for the rule identifying the referent of 's' (see diagram 3. in 1.2 above), are not to be understood as essential properties of the sign 's'. Instead, the logical properties of a sign are to be taken as those things which determine the content of the sign, mediating between the sign and its content.

This account would be fundamentally Fregean: the sign is somehow associated with a mediating sample (a combination of simple names, not some entity in a third realm), and the sample acts as a route to the content of the sign. But can this be what Wittgenstein really intended? The first passage from the Notebooks quoted above appears to be a direct rejection of Fregean explanation: "We can say straight away: Instead of: this proposition has such and such a sense [Sinn]: this proposition represents such and such a situation" (NB p.8). If a proposition were that with which a propositional sign were associated and which determined what the sign represents, it would be unclear what the sense could be that Wittgenstein is here ruling out. But if this quotation is in fact claiming that the propositional sign can itself be the determining sample (see diagram 2. in 1.2 above), no coherent account of how this is possible emerges in the Tractatus. Wittgenstein's real intentions can only be guessed at, but unless the distinction between signs and real signs is understood as the previous paragraph indicates, little sense can be made of the suggestion that propositions are pictures.

1.6 Philosophy and nonsense.

The Tractatus doctrines on philosophy--and their difficulties--are well-known. The aim of this section is to describe the

connection between the thesis that the propositions of philosophy are nonsensical and the transparency theory of representation. The intention is not to undertake an exploration of the resulting paradox, but to provide a statement of doctrine which will afford a clear contrast with a later discussion of the Investigations attitude to philosophy.

Philosophy, characteristically, deals with essences; in the case of the Tractatus, the essential, internal, or formal properties of language and the world. But it is nonsensical to assert or deny "by means of propositions" that formal properties obtain (4.122, 4.124). Hence the propositions of the Tractatus are nonsensical (unsinnig)(6.54), as are most philosophical utterances (4.003).

The thesis of the inexpressibility of formal properties is announced at 4.12: "Propositions can represent the whole of reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it--logical form". An argument for this conclusion is sketched in the second sentence of 4.12, but before looking to that it is important to be clear about the thesis it is intended to support. What, in particular, is meant by saying that the propositions of philosophy do not represent (darstellen)?

It might be thought that the notion is to be explicated by the distinction with showing, for whilst logical form cannot be represented it can be shown (4.121); it "expresses itself in language", although it is not expressed by us (4.121); nor is it said (4.1212), nor asserted (4.122). These comments may lead us to think that there is nothing unfamiliar here: the distinction is between what the propositions of philosophy can say and what they can show, and this is an application of the general lesson of the transparency

theory of representation--all designation is by showing ("A proposition shows its sense", 4.022). Understood as an application of this principle, to deny that a philosophical proposition can represent anything must be read to deny that there is a non-pictorial \sim standing for \sim relation by which elements of philosophical propositions connect with the world.

This reading would be quite wrong. If the ban on representation by philosophical propositions is simply an expression of the transparency theory, to say that a philosophical proposition cannot represent would not be to say that it had no sense. The thesis of no representation of formal properties must be more interesting than this if it is to support the charge of nonsensicality. Rather than claiming that philosophical propositions, like all other propositions, must picture what they are about, the thesis should be understood to be claiming that philosophical propositions cannot picture: they show nothing, hence have no sense. What philosophical propositions seek to say--by showing, if at all--is in fact shown by other, non-philosophical, propositions. The thesis of the nonsensicality of philosophical propositions is the thesis that such propositions can show nothing; alternatively, formal properties cannot be pictured.

4.12 has an argument for this thesis: "In order to be able to represent [show] logical form, we should have to be able to station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic, that is to say outside the world". The idea of being outside logic is no doubt an allusion to the predicament in which one finds oneself when holding to a mediating account of representation--an account according to which to say " $\sim p$ is true iff p " is to say something true or false in

virtue of some state of affairs in addition to the proposition itself. In such a case there would have to be "something still more fundamental than logic", as NB p.4 puts it (see 1.2 above). No state of affairs in addition to the proposition 'p' and the state of affairs p could allow the proposition to represent p--such mediation leads to the surrender of sense. And the transparency theory (the upshot of denying mediation) cannot allow content to expressions such as "'p' is true iff p". If the proposition $\sim p$ has F says that the state of affairs p has the logical form F, if the proposition is true, the form of p is F. But the proposition $\sim p$ has F has sense in virtue of its formal identity with the state of affairs in which p has F; so $\sim p$ has F says, effectively, "that state of affairs with the form F has the form F ", and this is to say nothing. Wittgenstein claims: "Roughly speaking, to say of two things that they are identical is nonsense, and to say of one thing that it is identical with itself is to say nothing at all" (5.5303). In the same way, to say that a proposition $\sim p$ has the form F is empty : to say " $\sim p$ has F" is to say, effectively, "that sign with the form F has the form F". So logical form can be sensibly attributed neither to language nor to the world.

The predicament that this argument introduces is familiar enough: the doctrines of the Tractatus say nothing if they are true, so one must acknowledge a class of truths which are both unspeakable and unthinkable (the transparency theory is also a theory of thought content). It is not to the present point to meddle with the mystical. The conclusion to be stressed is that the Tractatus thesis that

philosophy is nonsense is a direct conclusion of the transparency theory.²⁵

²⁵ The argument of W. Hart (in 'The Whole Sense of the Tractatus') for the non-showability of logical form depends on the premise that "any sign for the logical form of p [a state of affairs] that has the logical form of p would say some about itself; it would be a sign for something it has itself" (p.287). Yet if this were a flaw it would be one shared by all sensible propositions for they show the logical form they share with a state of affairs (4.121). So by Hart's argument they are signs for something they have, so say something about themselves. This supposed self-reference cannot then be held to be the criterion by which formal propositions (and those alone) are held to be nonsensical.

CHAPTER 2: PICTURES AND INDETERMINACY

2.1 Indeterminacy

An intellectualist account of language-mastery holds that one's knowledge of the conditions of correct use explains (and does not just consist in) one's ability to use words correctly. That the sentence 'p' is true if and only if p is explained by the fact that 'p' is R-related to p, let us assume. When a person X understands p by 'p', one might adduce the fact that 'p' is R-related to p in explanation. The intellectualist account holds that, in addition, the explanation of X's understanding has to invoke the fact that X judges that 'p' is R-related to p. The Tractatus claims that the relation R is that of a structural identity between a fact associated with 'p' and p. The fact with which 'p' is associated is the determining sample of a rule which identifies p; the relation of structural identity completes the rule.

An intellectualist explanation of language-mastery is threatened by two regresses. First, if a rule identifying the truth-conditions of a sentence fails internally to determine these conditions, a further rule will be needed to specify the conditions of correct application of the first, and unless this second rule is unambiguous a third will be needed, and so on. Second, if to identify the rule one needs a further rule, and this in turn needs a yet further rule ... there could be no identification of identifying rules. The first regress raises the issue of the determinacy by a rule: how must a rule identify truth-conditions if no other rules are to be called upon? The second regress concerns the issue of the determinacy of a rule: how must a rule be identified if no other rules are to be

called upon?

To stop the first regress there must be rules which are internally-identifying, rules which cannot fail to identify what they do. To stop the second regress there must be simple rules, rules which can be incorrigibly identified using no further rules. The Tractatus supplies rules which have both these properties. The forms of signs internally identify the forms of their objects by having the same internal properties as those objects. And the forms of signs are simple, allowing and needing no identification by further rules. The need for the determinacy by rules and the determinacy of rules is the primary motivation for the transparent-picture theory.

According to Tractatus 4.023, "one can actually see from the proposition how everything stands logically if it is true". The transparency account fulfills this condition, for one can simply see that structural identities hold. How is the seeing here to be understood? One might suggest that one sees the identities in just the way that one sees the solution to an arithmetical problem. But this is not possible. Such seeing requires the thought that the identity relation between sign and thing signified holds, but such thoughts are nonsensical according to the Tractatus (see 1.6 above). This is just the sort of thing which has to show itself because it cannot be grasped in thought. So the nonsensicality of formal utterances requires that the seeing is in some sense visual. This of course is improbable in the case of representation by signs; for representation in thought the consequences are absurd. The thought T is the thought that p because of a structural identity of T and p, and if one has to judge that this identity holds, but this judgement is itself not a thought (which in turn must be judged to be the

thought that ...), there must be some preconceptual faculty of seeing, and some preconceptual seer--one for whom the thoughts are transparent pictures. "I objectively confront every object. But not the I", Wittgenstein claims at Notebooks p.80. There must be some I which employs pictures but which is not itself to be pictured.¹

This sort of transcendentalism speaks against any intellectualist account of content, it would appear. This problem arises even if the relation between the picturing fact (the thought, or the fact associated with a sign) is internally related to what is pictured--an internal relation has still to be judged to hold, and this requires a transcendental judger. The question to be addressed in this chapter is, rather, this: can Tractarian pictures suffice to introduce the internal relations upon which representation depends? If the answer is negative, an intellectualist account cannot be based on picturing. The focus on this problem of intellectualism is in line with our overall ambition: to understand Wittgenstein's later account of the internal relation.²

According to the Tractatus, pictures determine off their own bat. So propositions, which are pictures, determine their own content--that state of affairs which is structurally identical to the proposition. In the later writings Wittgenstein denies that pictures,

¹ Hacker in Chapter III of Insight and Illusion (1st edition) traces the similarities between Wittgenstein's conception of a transcendental ego and Schopenhauer's notion of the eye which sees everything except itself.

² We should note that at this stage the demand for the internal relation derives from a constraint imposed by the intellectualist account--the need to stop the regress of rules to determine the correct application of rules (see 1.2 above). There is however a requirement for an internal relation between thoughts and propositions and their contents quite independent of the intellectualist explanation of representation. This will be explored in 3.2 below.

so propositions, can determine in this way. This claim I will call Wittgenstein's indeterminacy thesis. It is clearly stated in a number of places, among them these:

... a picture, whatever it may be, can be variously interpreted. (Z §236)

... the picture plus the projection lines leaves open various methods of application...(PG p.213)

... one is tempted to imagine that which gives the sentence life as something in an occult sphere, accompanying the sentence. But whatever accompanied it would for us just be another sign. (BB p.5)

The point of the first two claims is clear enough: if the picture with the projection lines (determining relation) fails to identify a unique state of affairs this is because the picture does not stand in an internal relation to that (or any other) state of affairs. The complaint in the third quotation is that nothing mediating between a sentence (a sign) and its truth-conditions--a picture for example--can avoid the very problem which inspired the mediating model. A sign itself does not serve to identify its truth-conditions, and, the suggestion is, no mediating entity can have any greater powers of determination. What is being sought to mediate between the sign and the world is something which can constitute a criterion of identity or rule, something which can internally identify the object or state of affairs signified by the sign. A rule is something distinct from the words that might be used to express it: the words have to be interpreted in a certain way to arrive at a rule, and different ways of taking can lead to different rules. But a picture, according to the indeterminacy thesis, is like a rule-sign rather than a rule--it expresses a rule, and this relation is not internal.

If the thesis of the indeterminacy of pictures is correct, the

intellectualist explanation of understanding must be rejected. If the regress of rules to identify the correct application of rules could not be stopped by transparent rules,

no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule ... if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here. (PI §201)³

In the absence of a candidate for a rule which could transparently determine the intellectualist model must be surrendered, for if pictures do not introduce internal relatedness it is unclear what could play that role.⁴ In this case, Wittgenstein claims, we would have to recognise that following a rule is a practice (PI §202). This suggestion will be taken up in the next two chapters; the concern here is with the grounds for the indeterminacy thesis.

The thesis needs to be clarified before its grounds can be sought. That which determines the content of sign or thought is, according to the intellectualist account, a rule, a pair of

³ This is what might be called the strong indeterminacy thesis: every action is in accord with every (pictorial) rule. At PI p.208 Wittgenstein points in the direction of a weaker thesis: for every (pictorial) rule there are at least two dissimilar actions in accord with it (for it is possible to set limits on what one can see in a schematic cube, so be guided by in that cube. The argument in the next few sections is largely by example: if an example (or type of example) of indeterminacy is demonstrated and if this is itself significant, no attempt will be made to show that there are no counterexamples to a strong thesis.

⁴ Rules are internally related to what is in accord with them. So the indeterminacy thesis must be directed at putative explanations of what rules can be such that they stand in internal relations to features of the world. So the indeterminacy thesis is not claiming an indeterminacy of rules, but of candidates for the role of rules (candidate determining samples and relations). But I think no confusion should arise if the qualification 'candidate' is dropped; in particular, the expression 'pictorial rules' (see below) should be understood to refer to pictorial candidates for rules.

determining sample and relation. To claim that all candidates for the role of rules can be variously interpreted would be to say one (or more) of these things:

- (a) even given a determinate identification of the determining sample and determining relation there can be no determinate identification of what falls under the rule;
- (b) there can be no determinate identification of the determining relation;
- (c) there can be no determinate identification of the determining sample.

To insist upon (a)--the indeterminacy by the rule--is to claim that such supposed-rules are not internally-identifying; to uphold either (b) or (c)--the indeterminacy of the rule--is to deny that there are such simply identified rules. Which of the three complaints is made against the pictorial rules (pairs of pictures and the similarity relation) in the Tractatus? The quotation from Zettel above gives little help,⁵ but the complaint in BB p.5 appears to be that even if the mediating thing accompanying a sign can be determinately identified it cannot determinately identify what the sign signifies. But this leaves it unclear whether this is because the determining relation is ill-defined or because there is no determinacy by even a well-defined rule. PG p.213 suggests that given both the sample and the relation it can still be questioned what is to be picked out. But this reading cannot support too much weight: if there were an indeterminacy of the rule, the consequences might reasonably be expressed in terms of an indeterminacy by the rule.

In the next three sections I will explore whether there are

⁵ Particularly in the light of Tractatus 2.1513: "So a picture, conceived in this way, also includes the pictorial relationship, which makes it into a picture".

indeterminacies of the types (a) to (c) in pictorial rules. The last section of the chapter argues that the indeterminacy thesis is at the centre of the case against a private language. Throughout the chapter the focus will be on a picture theory much more simple in structure to that of the Tractatus. First, it will be assumed that the theory offers no account of the connection between words and pictures; the problems of the first connection will be ignored, and the theory taken to be at best an explanation of how determinate pictorial identification is possible. If the picture theory fails to sustain this second connection no link can be forged between signs and the world even if the first connection could be ensured.⁶ Second, the pictures in question will not be logical forms understood as the holistic interactions of modally simple components. Instead we will look to the shared properties of actual pictures and properties of objects and states of affairs in the world. Much of Wittgenstein's discussion of pictures in the later work proceeds in such a way.⁷ The

⁶ If pictures were to suffice internally to identify objects, one might think that the first connection could be established by a natural disposition to associate words with pictures. Dispositions to associate words with mental pictures would be enough to overcome the objection of BB p.5, that to obey the order, 'Imagine a red patch', one must have first imagined a red patch.

⁷ This will have the consequence of directing our attention away from the understanding of mathematical terms, so from the sort of argument Kripke uses to establish what he calls Wittgenstein's "sceptical problem" (Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language, Chapter 2). Mathematical language is of course a very weak example for the picture theory for it is unclear what the determining samples (such as that for '+') can be. The strongest ground for the theory is the representation of parts of the world which can be identified visually. For these cases, Kripke's sceptic appeals to Goodman's 'grue'-like difficulties (ibid pp. 20, 42-43), but the supposition that Wittgenstein's indeterminacy thesis comes to the same thing as Goodman's riddle of induction can be tested only when Wittgenstein's arguments are revealed. The appeal to Goodman's help is of little value at this stage then.

If Kripke's "sceptical problem" is the indeterminacy thesis—the claim that nothing, including picturing, can serve internally to

objections discussed are directed at the basic idea of the picture theory--the thought that the determination of the content of thoughts and words can be sustained by an identity of properties of the relata. If this basic idea cannot be supported for the simple picturing discussed, the greater sophistication of the Tractarian relata will not allow that picture theory to escape the conclusion. Third, the main focus will be on non-mental pictures, not mental pictures. But I will keep in mind that the theory, if it is to explain how we think of and speak about things, must at some point take the step from non-mental to mental pictures.

We should also note here that Wittgenstein discusses two notions of picturing in the later writings: picturing which depends on an identity between properties of a picture and what it pictures, and picturing which depends only on the holding of a similarity relation. So one target is what Wittgenstein calls "explanation by means of identity" (PI §350), the thought that there cannot be an indeterminacy in interpretation because the identity relation uniquely determines the right interpretation (PI §215). On the other hand, the focus on occasions is the use of a "picture by similarity" to determine the content of utterances and thoughts. At Blue Book pp.36-37 for example, such a picture is assessed for its worth as

identity an object (state of affairs, course of action, etc.)--the scepticism here does not come to very much. Kripke's sceptic inquires of each hypothesis about what a rule really is whether it is possible that the entity suggested can be differently interpreted. If a hypothesis is to succeed, the entity proposed must internally identify--it must not be so much as possible that one can differently interpret it. Hence in adducing possibilities of misinterpretation the sceptic is employing standards of justification for the hypotheses which are uncontroversially well-suited to the task. This scepticism is quite different from that Wittgenstein is concerned with in On Certainty for example (a point to which Baker and Hacker, amongst others, are blind--see their Scepticism, Rules, and Language pp.5f, 53-55).

that which makes it the case that the object of thought "cannot be questioned" (see also PG p.146).

A pictorial rule with similarity as the determining relation would not suffice. This is not the familiar claim that the similarity of a pictures and an object is not sufficient for the picture to be of the object.⁸ In the Blue Book Wittgenstein holds that "An obvious, and correct, answer to the question: 'What makes a portrait the portrait of so-and-so?' is that it is the intention [of the painter]" (BB p.32). Putnam too argues that the intention that P represent O is a necessary condition for P being a picture of O. Whereas a person's line drawing of Churchill may be and have been intended to be a picture of Churchill, the result of the passage of ants through ink and across a sketch pad, although indistinguishable from the artist's product, would not be a picture of Churchill.⁹

Let us allow that there are good reasons for thinking that a picture's similarity to an object is not sufficient for it to be of that object. But this does not damage a picture theory founded on similarity for that is not concerned with the ability of the similarity relation to track the of-ness relation. The concern of the picture theory is with an account of how objects in the world are identified as the content of expressions or attitudes. If similarity were insufficient for of-ness it could still be possible that for every different object there was a distinct picture by similarity. Some pictures by similarity would not be pictures of their resembling object--there might be no intention to have made that picture one of the object perhaps--but this would not prevent these pictures being

⁸ See Goodman's Languages of Art, Chapter 1, for example.

⁹ Putnam, Reason, Truth and History, pp.1-5.

used to identify objects. If there is such picturing, the of-ness relation can be ignored here.

But there is no such picturing. The similarity relation is too weak to suffice. Something one yard long is similar in length both to something thirty-six inches long and something thirty-seven inches long. An identifying rule taking the yard length as determining sample would have to move to some relation such as most similar to to overcome this problem. But this is to go from picturing by similarity to picturing by identity. The discussion in this chapter will be of this latter notion.

2.2 Indeterminacy by pictorial rules

If a determining picture and determining relation are determinately identified, can it be that the ensuing rule fails to identify determinately? A picture identifies its object by sharing certain properties with that object, according to the picture theory. The identity in question cannot have to hold between all the properties of a picture and the thing pictured of course, for then pictures could be used to identify only other pictures. If the picture theory is not to be so quickly defeated, the identifying identities must hold between some particular properties of pictures and properties of things. The thesis of the indeterminacy by pictures must hold that no set of specified properties of pictures can, by the identity relation, determinately identify some feature of the world.

We can distinguish two routes leading towards this conclusion. The first starts from the thought that there are some properties of things which cannot also be properties of pictures. The second route starts from the thought that even for those properties of things

which can also be properties of pictures, a rule consisting of a picture and the identity relation does not serve to guide one to particular properties of things. The first suggestion is clearly apparent in the Investigations. Some have taken the second suggestion to be found there too. I will discuss each in turn.

At PI p.54 Wittgenstein writes:

I see a picture; it represents an old man walking up a steep path leaning on a stick.--How? Might it not have looked just the same if he had been sliding downhill in that position? Perhaps a Martian would describe the picture so. I do not need to explain why we do not describe it so.

The argument is this: there can be no picture by identity of a man walking up a hill which is not also a picture by identity of the same man sliding down the hill for there is a property--direction of motion--which cannot be pictured. Hence all pictures are indeterminate in respect of direction of motion.¹⁰

Here are two further arguments, the first concluding that size is not a property which can be pictured, the second claiming the same for shape. A picture hanging on a wall might be of an area of water;¹¹ the width of the water in the picture might be about 10 inches, but the shape might be identical to that of both a 2 feet wide puddle and Lake Geneva. The shape in the picture cannot be used to identify Lake Geneva rather than the puddle, for the size of the determined object cannot be found in a picture by identity. The second argument is this: shapes in pictures are in two dimensions, hence can be at best pictures by similarities of profiles of three-

¹⁰ The point of the last sentence of the quotation will become apparent in Chapter 4.

¹¹ A picture by identity of the water of course; this qualification is to be understood in what follows.

dimensional object--a picture of a cube for example can at best be a picture by similarity of a cube seen from a particular direction.¹²

But a picture of a cube will also be a picture of a two-dimensional shape (a profile of a cube), so there is an indeterminacy in the pictorial identification of dimensionality.

If the direction of motion, size and dimensionality of things cannot be determinately pictured, every material thing has some properties which cannot be pictured. It follows that all pictures can be taken in various ways, for no picture can specify whether it is of some thing with such-and-such direction of motion (size, shape) rather than some other direction of motion (or no motion at all). It does not follow from this argument that there can be no pictorial identification of features of the world, for those properties which can be pictured (profile for example) can (for all that has been so far said) be determinately identified. Still, the conclusion would be enough to cast doubt on the worth of a picture theory.

Are these arguments successful? An obvious response to the challenges is to find some pictures which do have the properties all pictures are charged to lack. It is not hard to see what these might be. First, if one restricts oneself to still pictures there can be no picturing by identity of motion (hence direction of motion). But one can picture a man walking up a hill rather than a man sliding down the hill by means of a picture in which the picture-man is moving upwards (relative to the other picture-elements).¹³ So, likewise, one

¹² A 3-D object has the profile S iff there is a 2-D hole with the shape S such that the object can pass through the hole leaving no room on any side.

¹³ That is, one of the properties of the picture is that it (or something in it) moves--not just that it represents something moving. I will talk of the non-representational properties of a picture as

can allow the size of the pictured water to be pictured by identity by the size of the picture-water. One can tell what is a picture of a puddle and what is a picture of Lake Geneva by comparing the size of the picture-water with the puddle and the lake. And if pictures can be allowed three-dimensions, a picture can by identity be of a cube rather than of a cube profile.

Of these suggestions, this second is the most implausible, practically speaking. But practicality is not the issue here. A convincing objection to these responses is however that there is no possibility of having mental pictures with these properties. It is clear that one who has a mental picture of a man going up a hill does not have a picture-man moving. There is the appearance of a man moving up a hill (even perhaps the appearance of a picture-man in picture-motion), but nothing in fact is moving. To suppose this is so would be to confuse the appearance of a property with a property of the appearance. This complaint is not limited to those properties invoked to escape from objections like that of PI p.54: mental pictures have no properties in common with objects or states of affairs in the world, a fortiori are not pictures of such objects or states of affairs because of an identity of properties. This line of thought completely undercuts the picture theory of course. It is logically possible that language-mastery should proceed with non-mental pictures and the relation of identity perhaps, but this is not the basis of how we in fact use language; hence there must be some

picture-properties (see PI p.194): so a picture which moves is one with picture-motion. Sometimes it is simplest to identify a non-representational property of a picture by means of what it represents; so a picture by identity of a man contains no man, but only some properties identical to those possessed by the man (shape perhaps); this shape can be called the picture-man.

explanation of how language is possible which does not depend on picturing.

The picture theory is quickly shown to be inadequate then. But our ambition should move us to inquire more deeply into Wittgenstein's claim that all pictures can be variously interpreted. It is striking that the statements of the indeterminacy thesis are not limited to the claim that all mental pictures can be variously interpreted; the argument of PI p.54 for example does not mention mental pictures at all. So a wider argument against pictorial explanation of internal relatedness is to be expected.

It is not clear how the argument of PI p.54 can support a wider criticism of picturing, but the other route mentioned above to the conclusion that there is an indeterminacy by pictures does promise more. The claim there was that even if pictures have determinate properties, these, with the identity relation, are insufficient to allow determinate identification of properties of things. One who attributes this conclusion to Wittgenstein will probably be thinking of the argument found in Investigations §139.

What really comes before our mind when we understand a word? --Isn't it something like a picture? Can't it be a picture? Well, suppose that a picture does come before your mind when you hear the word 'cube', say the drawing of a cube. In what sense can this picture fit or fail to fit a use of the word 'cube'? --Perhaps you say: 'It's quite simple; --if that picture occurs to me and I point to a triangular prism for instance, and say it is a cube, then this use of the word doesn't fit the picture.' --But doesn't it fit? I have purposely so chosen the example that it is quite easy to imagine a method of projection according to which the picture does fit after all. The picture of the cube did indeed suggest a certain use to us, but it was possible for me to use it differently.

The point of this train of thought, according to PI §140, is to call attention to "the fact that there are other processes, besides the

one we originally thought of, which we should sometimes be prepared to call 'applying the picture of a cube'. The claim is that the rule consisting of the picture-cube and the relation of fitting fails to identify the cube rather than the prism--both can be taken to fit the picture-cube. Of course, if this were true, it would not demonstrate that pictorial rules fail to determine internally, for the relation in question in the picture theory is that of identity, not fitting. One who trusted in the picture theory could brush aside the example in §139 as irrelevant.

All the same, §139 might be thought to present at least a significant challenge to the picture theory: does the same indeterminacy not arise if one substitutes the identity relation for that of fitting? The answer, I think, is that it does not and cannot show this much. To see why this is so, consider first a picture-square, and two shapes, a square and a circle. Given the instruction, pick out that which is identical to the picture-square, there is no possibility of one heeding the instruction but picking out the circle. One who did pick out the circle would thereby demonstrate either that he did not understand the instruction, or that he misperceived the picture or the shapes. This is to say that when the determining properties of a picture and the determining relation are determinately identified, there is no possibility of misapplying the pictorial rule. In the same way, I suggest, it is not possible that one should heed the picture-cube and the identity relation and arrive at the triangular prism rather than the cube. One who selected the prism would, again, demonstrate an ignorance of either the

instruction or the elements between which was asked to chose.¹⁴

If this is right, §139 does not point to an indeterminacy by determinate pictorial rules. What then does it do? The point becomes clear in §§140-141. What §139 prompts us to say is that term 'fits' is ambiguous. This is not an indeterminacy in a pictorial rule, but a problem with the sign 'fits'. However, if the ambiguity of the sign cannot be removed by a pictorial criterion distinguishing the different determining relations to which 'fits' can apply, this would amount to a form of indeterminacy relevant to the picture theory. And §141 makes just this charge: no way of disambiguating 'fits' by determinately identifying different relations will succeed. But this now becomes an argument about the identification of the determining relation, and not a question about determinacy by a determinate rule; this failing will be explored in the next section.

2.3 The indeterminacy of the determining relation

If the determining relation cannot be determinately identified there are no determinately identifying rules. Wittgenstein might be taken to be suggesting that there is an indeterminacy of the

¹⁴ If the picture-cube were just a picture-cube-profile (rather than the picture (a) below), it is possible that it should be identical to both a profile of a cube and a profile of a triangular prism, for these share profile (b) below:



But if this were Wittgenstein's point it would not be an interesting one: that some pictures can be variously interpreted is unsurprising. (This is why the duck-rabbit case can teach no general lesson about the indeterminacy of pictorial rules--that a duck and a rabbit share a profile does not mean that a duck and a rabbit cannot be individuated by means of pictorial rules.) If on the other hand the picture-cube were like (a) one might fail to see an identity between that and the cube, but nor would one then see an identity with the triangular prism.

determining relation. So, if a determining relation is a projection from a picture to an object, "describe whatever process (activity) of projection we may, there is a way of reinterpreting this projection" (BB p.33). If, for example, one were to draw lines between picture-cubes to indicate that a picture-cube should be used to identify a cube and not a triangular prism, "Can't I now imagine different applications of this schema too?" (PI §141). The suggestion is that there can be no determinate specification of a determining relation: in particular no picture or schema is guaranteed to guide a person's attention to the intended relation rather than to some other. This is not just a point about communication--that given a picture of a determining relation there is no guarantee that the one to whom one seeks to impart a lesson takes the lesson correctly. Rather it is a point about lessons taken: no pictorial lesson--even the intended one--can, even if carefully attended to, determinately identify a determining relation. Even if communication were fully successful, to have learned the intended lesson cannot be explained by having grasped a picture.

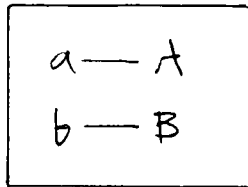
Arguments for this indeterminacy are not hard to find. The determining relation in question--identity (of certain properties)--is pictured with difficulty. To specify that a picture should be used to pick out that which shares properties with it, the best one can do, it would appear, is to employ projection lines, perhaps using a schema like that suggested in PI §141. A specification of the determining relation must identify a relation between properties of a picture and an object by connecting the two in a picture. Only thus is the relation specified (as opposed to being left implicit for one to pick up on--by coming to realise that these things have the same

shape, for example.) But--the claim has it--projection lines do not wear their interpretation on their sleeve. Three arguments might be called upon here. First, if schemas employ arrows to guide one's attention, the direction in which these are to be followed is not self-evident. It is possible that one should take a schema's lesson to be that one should proceed in the direction opposite to the arrow (PI §85, PG p.94). Second, a person might take a schema to be a specification of what one ought not to do: do not pick out a cube but something else. Third, the projection lines might be understood in a permuted way (PI §§86, 162-3; PG pp.90-94); it is possible to imagine one applying a schema but taking a deviant lesson from it.

Of these three arguments only the third presents a strong challenge to the picture theory. The two other cases allow that the picture of the determining relation succeeds in determinately identifying something. The arrow might be taken in the wrong way but it still connects the same things as it would have done had it been taken correctly. Likewise, if the schema is taken to indicate what not to do, it is allowed that there is at least a determinate identification of that which should not be done. This leaves to pictures a limited, but still of course significant, identifying role. Pictorial identification will have to be supplemented with an account of how what is done with the pictorially-identified thing is determined, but a causal story of some sort might suffice here. The third argument differs importantly from the other two in postulating a permutation of the connections that the schema would ordinarily be taken to represent. If such deviance is possible in an application of the schema, even a limited determinate identification is not possible.

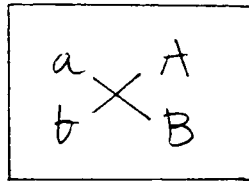
But this third argument needs more care than it is usually given. The central problem is to show that the permuted responses to a schema can arise from that schema in the right way: not every sort of deviant response is relevant to the determinacy of the relation. We need a schema to focus on. Let our question be this: can one confronted with the chart (picture)

Chart (1)



respond in a way which we would ordinarily describe as being in accord with the following chart?

Chart (2)



This deviant response, to be relevant to the picture theory, must arise in virtue of chart (1)--the chart presented to the actor. If this is not so there is no reason to say that this chart fails to determine how the person is to act. However, it is not enough to make the deviance interesting that one goes on in virtue of the chart (1) and behaves in accordance with chart (2). One's deviant action could depend crucially on chart (1) but in the wrong way. In the first place one might be trained to react to the stimulus of chart (1) by acting in accord with chart (2)--a simple Pavlovian response may have been inculcated. And in the second place, it might be that although chart (1) enters into one's deviant action as a reason and not as a cause, it does so as only one reason amongst others. One could for example be employing a higher-order rule of the form: given a chart such as (1) you should understand the connection between the columns

to be permuted as described in a chart like (2).

In both these cases one might be said to be acting deviantly in virtue of chart (1), but both sources of deviance are irrelevant to the present thesis of the indeterminacy of determining relations. The picture theory need claim no more than this: there is a specification of a determining relation which, when used as a reason for action (the selection of a determining relation) and as the only reason for action, determinately identifies that relation. This form of the indeterminacy argument points to the conclusion that no specification of the relation can be better off than a sign referring to that relation. No sign identifies its referent by its own devices; only when associated with a rule is its content identified, and different associated rules give the sign different conditions of correct use. But because the chart can be the basis for various responses it does not follow that it is no better than a sign. What remains to be shown is that without an added interpretation the schema determines no one course of action (does not determine "off its own bat").¹⁵

The problem then is to demonstrate whether or not there is the possibility of going on differently in the right way. We might proceed in this way: frame a sentence asserting the possibility, then ask if it makes good sense--ask whether the sentence is misuse of the words involved or not. This method for discerning conceptual irregularities is the one on which Wittgenstein rests his case for

¹⁵ A picture which could be used to identify the Town Hall could be used to stand for a quite different building given a further rule; and the same picture might (for some reason) cause me to point to the Post Office. The picture does not compel me to identify the Town Hall then (see PG p.94). But the picture theory need only claim that one disposed to respond to the picture as a picture (and not as a symbol or a cause) could not then use it to identify anything other than the Town Hall: if one sees it as a picture at all one must see it as a picture of the Town Hall.

the possibility of relevantly deviant responses. So, when he is inquiring whether the picture-cube can lead to a triangular prism, he takes the argument of PI §139 to have "called our attention to (reminded us of) the fact that there are other processes, besides the one we originally thought of, which we should sometimes be prepared to call 'applying the picture of a cube'; "'There is another solution as well' means: there is something else that I am also prepared to call a 'solution'" (§140, emphases added). And in PI §163, faced with one who responds deviantly to a chart, Wittgenstein suggests "Surely we should call this too a derivation by means of the table". No reason is given for why we should say this; the appeal is to what we would say if we are to be speaking English.¹⁶

We should note that this confessional method of inquiry requires a prompt--the sentence with which our knowledge of the language is engaged. Of course, 'He goes on deviantly in a relevant way' is too unrevealing to be helpful here. For the exercise to work a more mundane expression is needed. The quotations above suggest two terms which might be taken to signify this right sort of in-virtue-of relation: "applying" a schema, and "deriving" the thing to do from the schema. That these are suitable prompts might be supported by reflecting that neither a caused response to a schema nor a use of the schema in conjunction with a higher-order rule would ordinarily be called either "an application" or "a derivation" from the schema. This is patently clear for the caused response. And it would be wrong to talk of applying a symbol defined by the key to a map (rather than applying the key itself); but this is just a case where something is

¹⁶ The nature of this method of inquiry into conceptual connections will be explored further in 5.5 below.

employed in conjunction with a (higher-order) rule. The same point can be made for deriving something from such a schema or symbol.

We are invited to conclude then that a competent speaker of English would admit that "He applied the schema in chart (1) and acted in such a way that we would describe by chart (2)", and "He acted in accord with chart (2) having derived the way to act from chart (1)", are sensible--that, as a matter of empirical fact, no competent speaker would cavil at their use. If the circumstances the sentences report are possible, it follows that chart (1), the supposedly determinate specification of a determining relation, cannot determinately identify the relation.

It is hard to make this argument convincing. First, it is not the case that the terms "application of" and "derivation from" signify only that way of acting in virtue of a schema which is relevant to the indeterminacy in question. The comparison with the key to a map is not compelling here. This case is indeed like that where the schema is read in conjunction with a rule (such as: given a chart like (1) act so that you are in accord with chart (2)), but the difference in complexity between chart (1) and the map symbol is important. The difference can be put like this: if the deviant result is going to arise from the use of chart (1) it arises because of the structure of chart (1); something about that chart must be significant--must explain why the deviant behaviour is as it is. The case is perhaps clearer if we consider a deviant response like that in §163 where the whole alphabet is permuted. This is a permutation of the chart and a permutation requires some structure to permute. There is no sense in which a symbol used in a map can itself be permuted. But given that there is something a permutation of which

instructs the deviant behaviour, one can it seems talk of the non-permuted schema--chart (1) for example--being applied, of the result being derived from it. The deviant result is an application of and a derivation from the chart: this is not the full story of how one goes on in virtue of a chart, but at least a sensible part of it.

This objection indicates that the possibility of deviant applications of the schema would not entail the possibility of the right sort of deviant applications--the sort of deviant applications sufficient to demonstrate indeterminacy. There is however a second, and further-reaching objection to the argument for the indeterminacy of relations. The conclusion the argument tries to reach is not available, for there is no possibility of deviantly applying a schema in the right way. Simply, it is wrong to conclude that speakers of the language will detect no irregularities in the prompting expressions.

If the prompts are spelled out further this becomes clearer. To apply the schema deviantly but in the right way means to apply the schema alone: no additional rules determining how to respond to the chart are to be employed. The schema, off its own bat, must lead one astray. A case Wittgenstein introduces at PI §237 throws light on what this sort of deviance must look like.¹⁷ There we are asked to imagine one who appears to pay heed to a line--drawn on a piece of paper perhaps--keeping one point of a compass on the line and drawing another line with the other compass arm; yet as the line is traced he opens and shuts the compass "apparently with great precision, looking at the rule [the line] the whole time as if it determined what he did". What now if we cannot see any regularity in his movement of the

¹⁷ A similar case is found at PG p.92.

compass: would we say he was following a rule? "Here perhaps one really would say: 'The original seems to intimate to him which way he is to go. But it is not a rule!'. Without a regular response to the line, the line does not serve as rule of which his action is an application. But why is it that it is so hard to determine any regularity here? The answer is obvious: there is too little structure in that which is being heeded--the line--to establish the isomorphism of structure between the line and response needed for regularity. We cannot see how it is that the person could find this much instruction in the line. This is not to deny that the person is going on in the way described in virtue of the line. It is possible for example that he is proceeding with some higher-order rule of the form: given a rule like this, open and shut the compass in this way. But this cannot be a deviant application of the line alone--the line alone cannot determine that this is what should be done.¹⁸

This lesson should be heeded in the case of charts (1) and (2). How is it that one can find enough in chart (1) to instruct one to act as described by chart (2)? Where in chart (1) does it say to go on in the way of chart (2)? These questions are ones that would quickly arise if a person were to claim to have deviantly applied chart (1). Of course one can see how the chart (1) might be employed in conjunction with an additional rule directing the deviant response, but, the problem is, it is not possible to see chart (1)'s lesson as being chart (2). One who responded to (1) in the way of (2) and said by way of explanation, "but that's just the way I see (1)", would not be understood. That would be a very odd thing to say we should think, for it cannot be that simple. There must be some more

¹⁸ The full point of PI §237 is discussed in 4.6 below.

complex route from (1) to (2) because (1) alone is too little articulated to explain the process.

This is not much of an argument; rather it indicates that if the confessional method is employed with a wider prompt than Wittgenstein suggests--a fuller description of what the right sort of deviance would look like--the response will not support the thesis of the indeterminacy of determining relations. What the line of thought suggests is that deviant applications of schema are possible only in conjunction with additional rules, but the picture theory is damaged only if the schemas or pictures can be deviantly applied without the assistance of further rules.

2.4 The indeterminacy of the determining sample

The argument explored in the last section sought to establish that a determining relation cannot be determinately specified: that such a specification--if it were to use a schema--would be open to different interpretations. Here I will look to an argument for the thesis that no determining sample can be determinately identified if samples are pictures. If this were true there would be no determinacy by a rule containing the picture for how the picture were taken would determine what is identified by the rule.

There is a straightforward argument for the indeterminacy of pictures. No criterion can be given for what in a picture is relevant and what is irrelevant to identification, and, furthermore, no criterion can be given for the boundaries of a picture--what is in the picture and what is not. These problems are not just problems of language-teaching. For sure all ostensive teaching can be misinterpreted--as PI §28 points out--but the point here is (to

repeat) stronger, namely, that whatever lesson is taken from an ostensive teaching, be it the intended one or not, that a lesson has been learned is not to be explained by postulating an association of a sign with a picture. What is in question is an explanation of language-mastery not language-learning.

Say we have a picture of a red circle, this picture supposedly guiding by identity the use of the term 'red circle'. The picture-colour and picture-shape are the same as the colour and shape of a red circle of course. But if the picture consisted of a red circle on a white background, one employing the picture might take the colour of the background to be relevant to what should be identified. The background might be taken to be relevant in one of two ways: first, a person might take the background colour to indicate that one should pick out a red circle against a white background; second, a person might take the significance of the white background to be that one should pick out two red circles (on whatever background). In each case the background colour interferes with the supposed lesson, we might say. In the first place the interference is pictorial: that is, the interfering feature--the white background--interferes via the identity relation, it being another factor taken into the calculation of what is identical to the picture. In the second case the interference is not pictorial but must arise by the use of a rule of the form: if the background is white, pick out two of the things pictured (if it is blue pick out three ...etc.). For the reasons given in the previous section such non-pictorial interference can only operate via a higher-order rule. We should be perplexed by the one who, using the picture alone, identified two red circles and passed by one, claiming to see the picture in that way. There is not

enough in the picture itself to give such an instruction; so every application of the picture must be via an additional rule. And, as before, this renders the deviant response irrelevant to an assessment of the picture theory. The issue is whether the picture alone can be deviantly applied in the right way.

But pictorial interference is relevant to indeterminacy. This background interference can be contrasted with another case. One shown the same picture in a blue context--the picture being placed against a blue wall perhaps--might take the blue to be relevant. This interference by context--from something we would say is external to the picture--can be both pictorial and non-pictorial, and, again, the latter is irrelevant. All pictures have backgrounds or contexts, so no pictures can escape internal or external interference. But both external and internal pictorial interferences are relevant to the picture theory for they indicate that there can be no specification of what is pictorially significant--too much is available, and this competition for significance renders pictures (and so what it is they are used to identify) indeterminate.

One might seek to reply to this argument in this way: it is not that we must employ a criterion to determine what is significant and what is just noise, but that we have, it so happens, a natural disposition to pay heed to just some features of pictures and shut out others. On this account, the first connection of the mediating model of language-mastery¹⁹ is forged by a causally-grounded disposition to associate a sign with certain features of a picture, not by means of a criterion (itself a picture) of these determining features. This relation, confessedly external, would not stand in the

¹⁹ See Diagram 1 in 1.1 above.

way of an internal identifying relation holding between these features and the world.

This suggestion cannot work. If the relevant features of the picture are picked out in this way it must be possible to explain why these features are picked out at the expense of other, potentially interfering, features. There must be some property possessed by the relevant features and not by the interfering features which will contribute to this explanation. But it is difficult to see what this could be. One might seek to teach a person the meaning of 'green' by pointing to a green circle. But the circularity of the sample might interfere with the lesson taken. If the naturalistic response to the problems of interference is right, the one being taught might have a natural disposition to look to the colour at the expense of the shape, so to take the sample in the way intended. But this cannot be a general hypothesis, for if one had a natural disposition to heed colours and shut out shapes, no samples could be used to teach the one the use of shape terms. If all shapes have some colour, the person will always shield out the shape and concentrate on the colour. The cost of this naturalistic proposal would be to prevent shapes being pictured.

It might be that natural dispositions to select between colour and shape are more subtle than this however. It is not that one has dispositions to select colour over shape (or vice-versa), but, instead, one is blessed with differential dispositions towards different colours and shapes. The situation might look something like this perhaps: one has a disposition when faced with a sample green circle to select the circularity as the determining property; when faced with a sample green square, on the other hand, one naturally

focusses on the green. And there can be a sample of squareness because when confronted with a sample red square one will concentrate on the squareness; and, to complete the range of samples, one is prompted by a sample red circle to select the red. So now one can have determining samples for colours and shapes, and all are associated with signs by natural dispositions. But this suggestion cannot work. To determine whether something is properly called 'a green circle' by using these samples, one could not employ just the sample green circle, for that would dispose one to select only something circular. To identify a green circle one would have to employ in addition the sample green square. This is just wrong though--one can employ a sample of a green circle to identify green circles, as well as use the same sample to identify green things (of whatever shape) and circular things (of whatever colour). There are no differential dispositions such as this story postulates.

To deny that colour and shape, or colours and shapes, can be the properties of samples on which one has natural dispositions to focus is not to say that pictures have no properties towards which one has dispositions of the sort suggested. It is clear that one is naturally inclined to focus on the foreground activity in a picture rather than the background, for example. The claim is just that the inclinations cannot be discriminating enough to be of use to the picture theory. If one is inclined to look to a shape in the foreground of a picture which, for example, is circular, this is not in virtue of the circularity of the shape (for a circle might also be found in the background). The inclination is rather to be explained in terms of the relative size and prominence of position of the shape in the picture, and dispositions to select in favour of these properties are

insufficient to assist the naturalistic reply to the problems of shielding determining features of pictures from interference.

The conclusion should be this: an intellectualist explanation of how one can think or speak about some state of affairs cannot be founded on pictorial rules. What such rules pick out can always be variously interpreted because all pictures can be variously interpreted. This means that the grasp of pictorial rules cannot explain how it is that one can identify and reidentify states of affairs; if it did happen that on all the occasions when one was confronted with some picture one picked out the same object, this success would not be explained by the properties of the pictures. So the uniformity of language-use--the consistent connection of a name with one state of affairs--cannot be explained pictorially. Moreover, the use of pictorial rules cannot allow that one can either think about or speak of a circle rather than a circle of a particular colour. All pictures of circles are pictures of circles of a particular colour (or absence of colour if they are transparent), and if content is given by a picture's properties one could not think of or speak about a circle without thinking of or speaking about some determinate colour. Thoughts and statements are more fine-grained than pictures, one might say.

If an intellectualist account of the content of words and thoughts cannot rest on transparent picturing, the intellectualist project should be given up. To sustain an internal relation between a statement and its truth conditions and a thought and its object, the account is driven to look for a rule serving as a criterion of content identity, such that given a grasp of the determining sample and knowledge of the determining relation, one can be in no doubt as

to the content determined. The sample cannot itself stand in need of further interpretation if this is to be possible--it must wear its significance on its sleeve. If no further interpretation is to be possible, one has to be able to see the properties in virtue of which the determining sample identifies some object or state of affairs. That is just to say that the sample must be a picture by identity--it must exemplify the properties which are employed to identify objects or states of affairs, and not just stand for them. And if this is so, the determining relation will be an identity of these exemplified properties. To admit that pictures are insufficient is to admit that no internally identifying rule or criterion can be found. Otherwise put, the possession of thoughts and meanings cannot be found to consist in the grasp of any type of thing, for no things can be found to stand in those relations to the world in which thoughts and statements can stand. The next chapter starts to explore the consequences of the failure of intellectualism.

2.5 Private Understanding

One cannot use pictures by identity to speak about or think of properties of the world, for presented with any picture, one can interpret it in different ways, so use it to identify different things. The indeterminacy of pictures tells against the use of non-mental pictures to track the world in words and thoughts. Mental pictures fared even less well than non-mental pictures. They cannot be pictures by identity of things in the world because they cannot have the same properties as things in the world (see 2.2 above). But if there are no mental pictures of things in the world "what about the language which describes my inner experiences and which only I

myself can understand?" (PI §256)--can a private language be founded on transparent picturing? Mental pictures are not forbidden from playing a role here: the properties of inner experiences which must be shared by their transparent pictures are sensational properties, and mental pictures can have these. When I have a mental picture, one thing might appear square and another circular, even though there is in fact nothing square or circular.

There can be no private language founded on mental pictures by identity, Wittgenstein argues. The flaw in such a private language is just that discerned in a language founded on non-mental picturing: the pictorial rules invoked can all be variously interpreted.

(Parallel arguments hold for pictorially-based private thoughts of course, and I will not mention these separately.) Moreover, the source of this indeterminacy is the same: there is an indeterminacy of the determining sample--that which is held to have the same properties as the thing spoken of. The argument for this conclusion is to be found in those sections usually taken to shelter the private language argument--§§258 and 265 in particular--I will argue. I will first state what I take the argument to be, then defend the claim that these sections contain no stronger an argument than this.

At §258 we are introduced to one who baptises a sensation with the sign 'S', intending thereby to establish a rule for the correct use of the sign: a sensation is to be called 'S' if and only if it is the same as the baptised sensation. For this rule to serve as a guide to the correct use of the sign, it must be that one can remember it correctly: it must be that "this process brings it about that I remember the connexion [between the sign and the sensation] right in the future". But, Wittgenstein claims, there is here no criterion of

correctness, and "whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'right'". The complaint appears to be that the private linguist has no criterion for remembering the rule correctly, so has no justification for his belief that this new sensation should be called 'S'.

The same point is held by many to be the crux of PI §265. A process of checking a memory of a table (a rule for translating the word X by the word Y) by calling up another memory "has got to produce a memory which is actually correct. If the mental image of [the second memory] could not itself be tested for correctness, how could it confirm the correctness of the first memory?" The only criterion the private linguist has for the correctness of his supposed-memory of the baptismal rule is another memory; but any other memory must itself be tested before it can confirm the first memory. The private linguist has only his memories to go on however, so he cannot confirm his memory of the baptismal rule. Hence his memory cannot justify his use of 'S' to refer to a new sensation.

This we can call the checking argument. It requires that unless the linguist can check his memory of the rule then he is not justified in his application of the term 'S'. The problem with this argument is that it has to explain why the private linguist's inability to check the correctness of his memory of the rule tells against the memory being correct. If it is correct, the linguist can apply the term 'S' in just that way he undertook to at the baptism. That his memory can be false does not mean that it ever is, nor that he cannot rely on it. One can readily admit that if he were to misremember the rule he would not use the sign 'S' as he intended; but the checking argument has to dig deeper to show that he cannot

remember. At this point, the suspicion is that the argument falls back on some uninteresting form of memory scepticism.²⁰

The checking argument demands that the linguist be able to check the correctness (truth) of his memory of the rule. This concern with correctness can be contrasted with a concern with the content (truth conditions) of the linguist's memory. Instead of asking how the linguist can know if his memory of the baptismal rule is correct, the question would become, how is it that his memory--veridical or not--is of the rule established at this baptism ceremony? Wittgenstein is alive to this latter issue. He asks at Zettel §664:

... supposing that memory were an audible voice that spoke to us--how could we understand it? If it tells us e.g. 'Yesterday the weather was fine', how can I learn what 'yesterday' means?

A memory is internally related to what it is the memory of. If memory were an audible voice, speaking in signs, unless one knew the content of the signs one would not have a memory of anything. If signs do not suffice as internal representations of what is remembered, what does?

An obvious suggestion is that a memory represents pictorially:

It is as if I carried a picture of an object with me and used it to perform an identification of an object as the one represented by the picture. Our memory seems to us to be the agent of such a comparison, by preserving a picture of what

²⁰ The checking argument is found in two forms. First, with the premise that the linguist must be able to check his memory against something other than a memory; second, with the premise that the check must be against a memory at least different from that memory being checked. The latter condition characterises the argument from Kenny in Wittgenstein pp.191ff., and Hacker in Insight and Illusion (1st. ed.) pp.234-236 ("... if I have a hazy memory that 'S' means this exemplar,, there is no memory against which I can check this in order to know the meaning of 'S'"). Fogelin in Wittgenstein (2nd. ed.) pp.179-183, and Craig, in 'Meaning, Use and Privacy', Mind xci (1982), are amongst those pointing to the difficulties with the checking argument (their objections tell against both forms of the argument).

has been seen before, or by allowing us to look into the past (as if down a spy-glass). (PI §604)

If memory pictures are to explain internal representation by memory, they must be transparent--picturing their object by an identity of properties. Failing this there will be a regress of rules to determine the content of the memory pictures. However, "The memory-image and the memory-words stand on the same level" (Z §650). This is to echo the lesson of Blue Book p.5 of course: anything accompanying the sign "would for us be just another sign". If remembering were to consist in the possession of pictures, and not just words, this would be no advance, for pictures, as much as words, can be variously interpreted.

The suggestion I am making is that this inadequacy of a pictorial account of memory content is the failing attributed to the private linguist. If the linguist is committed to pictorial memories there is no explanation of how he can remember the baptismal rule correctly. The situation is the same as that described in the last section. Just as a picture containing a green circle can be used to identify a circle on some occasions, and something green on others, so the possession of a memory picture does not explain how one can remember a particular feature of an experience rather than other, essentially associated features. The private linguist's memory pictures will contain too much to allow them to identify the content of memories.

How this is we shall soon see. But it should first be noted that the very idea of the content of memories of previous experiences being established by pictures by identity is an odd one. It is clearly false that a memory of an earlier pain must itself be painful, or that to remember a curious flavour requires that one

experience that curious flavour again. The memory of the earlier pain might cause pain, and it might even be possible that the memory of the flavour cause an experience of that flavour, but these are only effects of the memories and are not essential to their content. This is not to say that the content of one's memory is never given by means of an experience like that remembered. One's present pain may determine the content of a memory because it might provoke the thought: this pain is the same as that I had yesterday. And one's memory of a view might rest upon one's ability to conjure up a mental image of the scene ("when I close my eyes I can see the countryside spread out before me, just as I saw it then"). Remembering thus does on occasion have experiential or sensational properties, and this might be thought to identify by an identity of properties the content of the memory.²¹

Let it be granted that the private linguist can have a memory picture by identity of the baptismal rule established by his ostensive definition of a sensation. The baptised sensation can be remembered by a memory with the same sensational properties as the baptised sensation, and the term 'S' is correctly applied to whatever new sensation feels the same as this memory sample. Say then that the sensation baptised was a pain. So the sensation of pain on which the linguist concentrated his attention at the baptism is what a memory of the pain (a component of the memory of the rule for the use of 'S') has to share. It is however impossible to isolate the painfulness of any particular sensation of pain from other features

²¹ "Remembering has no experiential content", Wittgenstein says at PI p.231, . The context makes clear that this does not deny that memories can have sensational properties; rather it denies that there is any experience which identifies a memory that p as the memory that p (any Russellian "feeling of pastness" for example).

of the pain--its location in the body, its quantity (a slight pain, an unbearable pain), or its quality (a dull pain, a sharp pain), for example. Any act of ostensive definition must be directed towards a particular pain--"that, and things like it, are called 'pains'"--not towards what all pains have in common, their painfulness. But any such ostension can be as misunderstood as an ostensive definition of 'green'. One might for example take the ostension to identify the quantity of the feeling, so come to believe that an unbearable itch and an unbearable tickle should be called painful. Again, one might think that the term refers only to pains in the left knee (the location of the baptised sensation), or either knee, or in a leg, or in the lower half of the body ... One might say of course, the private linguist will not be confused here; he intends to name the sensation, not its quality or quantity or location. This claim is unhelpful. If the content of his intention is assured by a picture, he cannot intend to name the sensation and not its quality, etc. And if the memory of the sensation is to be a sample of the sensation, any sample of pain must be a sample of a particular pain, so one with some quality, quantity and location. So this sample can be differently interpreted each time it is called up; on one occasion it could be taken to determine that 'S' should be used of an unbearable sensation, on another a pain in a knee ... There is nothing in the memory picture which can chose between these interpretations, and no other picture, if one were available, could restrict the range of interpretations. In this case, whatever will seem to be the right interpretation of the memory picture will be right--there is no criterion for the correct way to take the memory.

The conclusion of the argument is not that there can be no

private language, however. Rather it is that if such a language had to be founded on picturing, there could be no such thing. The private linguist (like the one who can speak of more than his own experience) cannot rest the content of his utterances on his possession of pictures. If the private linguist had a language he would have to be able to speak of one thing rather than another--make claims about the state of his knee rather than the state of his leg. This directedness cannot be sustained by connecting the linguist's signs to transparent pictures, for pictures, by their very nature, cannot picture the one state of affairs--a pain in the knee--and not others--the pain in the leg There is no way to shield some properties from other, interfering, properties.

This leaves it an open question whether a private language can be founded otherwise than on transparent picturing. I see no direct route to this conclusion. But there is an indirect route. This would show, first, that if a private language had to be founded upon a picture theory of representation, there could be no private language; and second, that the most plausible account of representation to take the place of the picture theory leaves no room for private understanding. The second step would reduce the temptation to espouse the possibility of privacy in proportion to the plausibility of the alternative account of representation on offer. Wittgenstein takes the alternative to the picture theory to be centered on the notion of a practice. This will be explored in the next two chapters, so to follow the suggested strategy will be to postpone a final verdict on the possibility of any private language.

Such a strategy will seem to some to have got matters the wrong way round. Adopting this approach means that the rejection of privacy

cannot feature as a constraint employed in the formulation of the alternative account of representation. This is contrary to the many readings of the Investigations which take the key question to be--if there is no privacy, how is understanding possible? I am suggesting on the other hand that problem is--if the picture theory is false how is understanding possible? The best test of this objection will of course be the result of following the suggested strategy. But something more can be said now to indicate the strategy's worth. Certain passages in the Investigations are often taken to express an argument with the conclusion that no private language--however founded-- is possible. The passages--particularly §§258 and 265--are notoriously hard to understand; if there is an argument to be found here it is well hidden. If a plausible reading of these passages can be found in the light of the indirect strategy suggested here then the onus will be firmly placed on the one who rejects it to come up with a more direct case against privacy.

The key element of the present reading of these passages is that very little of the argument goes on therein: neither §258 nor §265 offers a self-contained argument against privacy. Rather, I suggest, both assume the truth of the thesis that all picture are indeterminate: conclusions are drawn from this thesis but the thesis itself we should take to have been established elsewhere. The central passage in this regard is §265. If good sense can be made of this, the reading of other passages in the area will become clearer. The next four paragraphs are a paraphrase of §265.

"Let us imagine a table ... which exists only in our imagination." What goes on when I remember a rule of translation learned from a dictionary? It might be like this: a picture or image

of how the page of the dictionary looked occurs to me. But this would be of no use, for all such pictures or images can be variously interpreted; the memory-picture can be no guide to the truth of the matter--how the dictionary is--for it is no more a representation of that truth rather than some other. Such a picture would no more justify a particular translation than would an imagined page of the dictionary--neither is in the right relation to the truth of the matter.

"But justification consists in appealing to something independent ..." If the memory-picture doesn't determine what is being represented, what one claims to remember will be whatever situation one takes the picture to be representing. For something to justify one's belief that one is recalling one situation rather than another, different, situation, that thing must be independent of such takings. This is to say that a memory-picture, to justify, must determine "off its own bat"--not leave itself open to different interpretations.

"'But surely I can appeal from one memory to another'." But there is room for justification by independent memories, an interlocuter objects. One can justify a memory by appeal to other memories--the memory of a train's time is tested against one's memory of how the time-table looked for example. Why is more needed by way of independence than this?

"No; for this process has got to produce a memory which is actually correct ..." The interlocuter's reply misses the point. This process--the one the interlocuter describes--needs to find a memory which is correct if the memory of the train's time is to be justified. But the present issue is rather this: how is it so much as possible to have memory-experiences which are either true or false

(have content)? The charge against the picture theory of memory is that it cannot get as far as identifying that situation against which the memory could be tested or assessed for correctness. Room has to be made for this possibility before the process of confirmation the interlocuter describes is possible.

This reading for the most part speaks for itself. Two points might be noted however. First, it is clear that the picture theory of memory is implicated here. The table exists in the imagination as a "mental-image". Second, if the concern were with justifying the truth of the memory, the analogy with buying two copies of the same newspaper to see if the reports in the first were true is tight; but the same analogy holds, if less closely, with the thought that it would be absurd to call upon a second memory-picture to check the content of the first.

If this reading is right §258 might be understood as follows. The point of the baptismal ceremony is that in the future I remember the rule for the use of 'S'. But if memories are pictures the truth-conditions of any memory are indeterminate. This is to say that no claim of the form: 'this memory is true iff p' is justified, and this is just to say that there is no criterion of correctness for the memory. The memory-picture fails to identify a content, hence is not open to assessment--even by an omnitemporal God--as correct or incorrect.

Finally, good sense can be made of the argument of §288. Wittgenstein there claims that a criterion of identity for a sensation, if needed, would introduce the possibility of misrecognising the sensation. So one might know what 'pain' means--associate the term with a particular criterion of identity--but,

absurdly, be able to be wrong about whether some sensation is a pain: "The expression of doubt has no place in the language-game; but if we cut out human behaviour, which is the expression of sensation, it looks as if I might legitimately begin to doubt afresh". This argument might be taken to turn on the possibility of misremembering the criterion for pain. But such memory scepticism would be unconvincing. We should rather take the point to be this: no criterion can determinately identify the pain because all criteria can be variously interpreted. So there is a possibility of error--one might not call 'pain' what should be called by that name. So, again, private criteria are undercut by their indeterminacy.

The proposed reading of the case against privacy--essentially that it relies on the indeterminacy of memory pictures--makes good sense of §§258, 265 and 288. This I take to be a strong ground for thinking that the strategy proposed in this section is correct. The next two chapters explore what must be said about representation if the picture theory is false.

CHAPTER 3: A SCEPTICAL SOLUTION?

3.1 Alternatives to Intellectualism

The picture theory in the Tractatus provides an account of how one keeps in touch with the world, being an explanation of language-mastery, thought-content, and inferential success. A connection is forged between words and objects because words are associated with pictorial criteria for the objects; one has the expectation that N is going to arrive because the expectation contains a pictorial criterion identifying N; and sound inference is facilitated by the recognition that one picture is contained within another. But if the thesis of the indeterminacy of pictures is correct--if all pictures can be variously applied--there is no hope for intellectualism: that requires internally-identifying and incorrigibly-identified criteria, and only pictures can give so much as the impression of identifying some part of the world off their own bat.

If the picture theory is false, what options remain available? These can be distinguished by their relation to two theses: first, that a person X means p by an utterance, or has the thought that p, or infers p from q, is logically independent of the attitudes and reactions, actual or possible, of other people towards X, and of other attitudes or reactions which X himself has or might have; second, there are human-independent facts in virtue of which assertions, attitudes and inferences can be true, fulfilled, or sound. The first thesis I will call realism about intentional content.¹ The second I will call realism about the (non-intentional)

¹ The characterisation is good only for first-order intentional states. If I remember my previous expectation that p, my memory is internally related to that previous attitude.

world. Four positions are made available by these theses. These can be considered in turn.

First, realism about intentional content and about the world. The question here is of course this: how can these real intentional states track the elements (real and actual) of an objective world? An alternative to the intellectualist account--the only alternative, it appears--is that the relation between a person's intentional states and the contents of the world is causal. This is not just the thesis that one can track the contents of the world because one's mental states are caused by the world--that one is for example caused to form one's beliefs because of one's causal relations to the world. This thesis is obviously true. What in addition is required if an appeal to a causal connection is to provide an alternative to intellectualism is an account of what it is for one's intentional states to have the content they do--to be towards or about some states of affairs rather than others. What is wanted, that is, is a causal theory of what intentional content consists in, not just a causal account of how intentional states arise.

Second, realism about intentional content but not about the world. This would be a form of conventionalism. Judgements about what there is in the world are made from within a means of representation (conceptual scheme) which itself is neither in accord with or out of line from how the world really is. The problem of tracking the world is solved by giving up a human-dependent world. All the same, one's beliefs about what the world contains, the meanings of one's words, and the inferences one makes, can be self-standing, independent of other attitudes and reactions in the way the realist about intentional content requires.

This second option has the difficulty of the first without its prospects. We stand in need of an account of how it is that even relative to a conceptual scheme one can have determinate intentional content.² The intellectualist story cannot be told here, and a causal account might appear to get too little grip if realism about the world is denied. If one's belief that there are causal connections between events is part of the framework through which the world is viewed, this foundational belief is not then itself caused (hence not given content) by a perception of the causal connectedness of events. This argument is far from conclusive as it stands, but its details need not concern us here. Like the first option, the second depends on a causal theory of content. Only if we find that to be coherent will it be time to choose between these first two options.

Third, realism about the world, but not about intentional content. This option would liken a human ability to keep track of the world to that of a plant, perhaps. A plant says nothing (even if it were to utter words), has no beliefs, and makes no inferences. Tracking the world in the case of a plant just means reacting successfully to the changing environment--opening and shutting with the movements of the sun, putting out new shoots when nourishment is short, and so on. These responses might be explained in intentional terms: the plant believes that the sun has risen, wishes to increase opportunities for pollination, so it opens its leaves. But the plant does not really have these attitudes.

² Majoritarianism about rule-following is an example of this second option. If the right way to continue with a rule is that way the majority goes with the rule, the question: in what does rule-following consist? is left unaddressed. A new rule is suggested--do what the majority does--but no story is offered about how one can heed this rule.

This option holds that "nothing literally has any intrinsic intentional mental states".³ John's belief that London is bigger than Oxford is not a part of "the true and ultimate structure of reality". What is more, according to some non-realists about content, what intentional states can be ascribed to a person will vary with the ascriber's perspective. Putnam stresses this stronger thesis: "Belief-desire explanation belongs to the level of what I've been calling interpretation theory. It is as holistic and interest-relative as all interpretation."⁴ Dennett too is happy with the stronger claim: to ascribe attitudes is to adopt an "intentional stance" towards a person, and different intentional stances can be successfully adopted by different people towards the same thing at the same time. The move from the weak thesis--the denial of content realism--to the stronger thesis--the indeterminacy of content--is hard to resist. In explaining actions intentionally it is often quite unclear which of various competing explanations is the right one, even to the actor. If realism about content is false there is in such circumstances no longer a temptation to say that there must be a single correct explanation.⁵

³ Searle, 'The Myth of the Computer', p.57, referring to Dennett's views (and quoted by Dennett, The Intentional Stance, p.288).

⁴ Putnam, 'Computational Psychology and Interpretation Theory', in his Realism and Reason, p.154.

⁵ This route to an indeterminacy of content is premised on the denial of content realism, unlike Quine's indeterminacy of content thesis which is taken to be grounds for the rejection of content realism. Dennett argues from non-realism about content to indeterminacy of content in The Intentional Stance, essay 4 and pp.314-321. In the essay, 'True Believers', he defines "interpretationism" as the view which "likens the question of whether a person has a particular belief to the question of whether a person is immoral, or has style, or talent, or would make a good wife. Faced with such questions, we preface our answers with 'well, it depends on what you're interested in', or make some similar acknowledgement of

Fourth, realism neither about intentional content nor about the world. Like the third option, this account has it that an attribution of content is a 'stance' rather a report of a real state of affairs. The intentional content attributed will be further dependent on the ontological possibilities conventionally recognised by the attributor. A person is 'interpreted' or taken to have an attitude with such-and-such content just as non-intentional states of affairs are taken to hold. A theory of truth for intentional ascriptions and statements about the world will need to explicate this notion of taking: what does taking to be true consist in? under what circumstances are these statements taken to be true? who needs to take them as true?

There are good reasons to believe that Wittgenstein is offering a version of this fourth account of intentional states and the world. The key notion here is that of a practice: "Following a rule' is a practice", Wittgenstein asserts at PI §202 in response to the "paradox" of intellectualism. One natural first gloss is this: one follows a rule only when one is taken to follow a rule--when one acts in such a way that other reactions of a particular sort occur. This is to understand the proposal to be non-realistic about intentional content. The need for other reactions denies the self-standing nature of intentional states taken above to be essential to realism. (There is no suggestion thus far that the practice must involve more than one person. The definition of realism about intentional content

the relativity of the issue." (The Intentional Stance, p.15). He there retreats from an interpretationism so baldly stated, holding that there are constraints on attitude ascriptions to be respected; but elsewhere he is quite happy to allow that his acknowledgement of "functional indeterminacy" allies him with Putnam's interpretationism (see ibid p.348).

allows that realism can be denied without making X's attitudes dependent on others' attitudes.⁶) Moreover, according to this option the states of affairs which can be the objects of intentional states are as much the product of the practice as the intentional states. What there can be (or procedures for discovering what there can be) and what there can be thought do not depend on the state of the world or peoples' minds independent of and antecedent to a practice.

The most developed attempt to specify what such a practice might consist in Wittgenstein's writings--to detail who must take a statement to be true, when and how--is by Kripke. His "sceptical solution" to the problems bequeathed by the failure of intellectualism is a helpful starting point for assessing this fourth option.

The only plausible suggestion on offer for preserving realism about intentional content in the face of the rejection of intellectualism is a causal theory of content. If this is not available we can conclude that both options one and two should be rejected. A causal theory of representation is explored in 3.2. The third option, it turns out, cannot be kept apart from the fourth. This will become clear when we turn to the form a non-realist account of content can take. The next chapter will explore Wittgenstein's version of the fourth option. To prepare the way for that, this chapter discusses Kripke's version of Wittgenstein's account. This discussion is rewarded by determining what possible positions are

⁶ Kripke says of Wittgenstein's "paradox" that it shows that there is "no fact about an individual considered in isolation" that he means one thing rather than another by some utterance. This is a denial of realism about content, as that is understood here. Kripke however takes it that only within a communal practice can one have determinate intentional states--that content is other-dependent.

open to the non-realist about content and the world. In 3.3 I outline Kripke's sceptical solution; in 3.4 I explore a key notion--inversion--in greater detail; and in 3.5 I argue that Kripke's suggestion cannot do as it stands, and that the amendments needed cannot be accepted by Kripke.

3.2 Externalism and Realism

Realism about intentional content was characterised above in terms of the logical independence of intentional states from other attitudes and reactions. Thus a realist about X's belief that p will hold that that belief is self-standing, a matter of some state of X, the possible state of affairs p, and nothing more. If this view of belief is coherent it must allow room for these two properties of beliefs: some behaviour can be explained in terms of the possession of beliefs, and a belief that p is internally related to the possible state of affairs p.

The state of X in virtue of which X believes that p cannot be the possession by X of some criterion by which to identify p. But if this is so, and if the internality of belief is to be preserved, one is lured towards the conclusion that there is no explanation of what it is for a person to have an attitude which involves a self-standing, practice-independent state of mind. What an intentional state could possibly be such that it internally represents a certain state of affairs becomes obscure. If the realist can give no explanation of the internality of intentional states, realism about such states must be given up.

In the face of this argument for non-realism about intentional states there seems a plausible move to explore: deny that such states

must be internally related to their contents. If this externalism can be made coherent there will be no pressure to give up realism about intentional states. Whether such externalism is a possibility is the subject of this section. I will argue that externalism about intentional states is inadequate; there are strong grounds for thinking it would misrepresent our notion of the content of these states. I will focus here on belief as the example of an intentional state. The structure of the argument will be this. First-order beliefs--beliefs with non-intentional contents--are corrigible. Beliefs whose content is that a first-order belief has such-and-such content--higher-order beliefs--are, it is argued, incorrigible. An externalist cannot accommodate both first-order corrigibility and higher-order incorrigibility.

Internalism can be characterised thus: there is no way of recognising an attitude except as the attitude that such-and-such is/be the case. This thesis can be put in terms of the status of beliefs about the content of first-order attitudes (attitudes that is whose content is itself not intentional). So, if B1 is a particular first-order belief and B2 a belief about B1, then the claim that there is an internal relation between B1 and some (possible) state of affairs p can be spelled out in terms of the following claims:

(A) Necessarily, X has the belief B1 if and only if X has the belief that p.

(B) Necessarily, if X believes B2 that X's belief B1 is the belief that p, then the belief B1 is the belief that p.

Theses (A) claims that the belief B1 is individuated by its content; thesis (B) claims that the higher-order belief B2 is incorrigible. If (A) is true there is no specification of B1 except as the belief that

p; and if this is so, any higher-order belief in which B1 figures will be a belief in which the belief that p figures, so the belief that the content of B1 is p is incorrigible.⁷

Wittgenstein holds to (A) and so to (B). Russell's Analysis of Mind account has attitude content determined by an external relation--that which I want, for example, is that which as it happens will remove my wanting.⁸ "If I wanted to eat an apple, and someone punched me in the stomach, taking away my appetite, then it was the punch I originally wanted", Wittgenstein objects (PR p.64)⁹ The implication that Wittgenstein is parodying is that one could be wrong about the content of one's attitude: "The strange thing"--that missed by Russell--"is expressed in the fact that if this is the event I expected, it isn't different from the one I expected" (PG p.134). This is to commit Wittgenstein to thesis (B). Thesis (A)--for expectations, but the point should no doubt be generalised--is directly expressed in this passage:

It seems as if the expectation and the fact satisfying the expectation fitted together somehow. Now one would like to describe an expectation and a fact which fit together, so as to see what the agreement consists in But when one wants to describe these two one sees that, to the extent that they fit, a single description holds for both. (PG p.134)

There is no description of an attitude except as the attitude that

⁷ There is no rejection here of unconscious beliefs--B1's for which there are no B2's. Thesis (B) is held to apply only to those B2's there are.

⁸ "[An] initial mental occurrence involving discomfort is called a 'desire' for the state of affairs which brings quiescence" (Analysis of Mind p.75). Hilmy, in Chapter 4 of The Later Wittgenstein, explores Wittgenstein's unpublished discussions of Russell's account, as well as the similarly-inspired theory of Ogden and Richard's The Meaning of Meaning.

⁹ See also Cambridge Lectures 1930-1932 p.9 and PG p.134.

such-and-such, no description of it which leaves its content open to discovery, awaiting the word that the attitude is in fact crucially related to p rather than q.

The absurdity of an utterances such as, 'I believe that I believe that p is the case, but I might be wrong--it might be q that I believe to be the case', and 'I believe I have a belief, but I've no idea what it's a belief about', appears a compelling reason to accept that beliefs are internally related to the state of affairs which would make them true. If one were to make these utterances we would I think be confused--it is not obvious what is being said. This confusion is an indication that there is a conceptual problem here, that the concept of a belief is being misapplied. This is not a conclusive argument for internalism for sure, but it does indicate that the onus is very much on the externalist to make good his thesis (internalism is the default option here).

The externalist must hold that if it is true that one has no belief B1 without also believing that B1 is the belief that p, that this is at best an empirical truth, one which can be imagined not to hold. Likewise, any incorrigibility of higher-order beliefs there is contingent, not removing the logical possibility that a higher-order belief is false. The focus in what follows will be on the incorrigibility of beliefs.

The externalist holds the following to be the case: there is some external relation R such that

(C) B1 is the belief that p iff B1 is R-related to p.

What sort of thing is R-relatedness? It has to be a causal relation of some sort--only if this is so can externalism hope to support

realism about attitudes. The reason is this: say that the property of B1 being the belief that p was only a relational property of B1. This would be to say that B1's being that p makes no difference to the actual state of B1; in particular, it makes no difference to the causal powers of the state B1. If the only difference between B1 being the belief that p and B1 being the belief that not-p were relational--if the difference in belief were not to correspond to a difference in the non-relational state which the believer were in--that one believed that p could not enter into an explanation of one's behaviour. This would be enough to disqualify the account from being an account of belief.

It follows then that for (C) to support realism about intentional states, B1 being R-related to p must bring about a change in B1, and a different change from that brought about by B1 being R-related to a state of affairs different from p, which is to say that the R-relation must be some sort of causal relation. Externalist realism must amount to a causal theory of content. So we have the thesis

(D) B1 is the belief that p iff B1 is causally related to p.

There is no shortage of such theories at the present time.¹⁰ What has been widely recognised is that (D) cannot be understood in the following way:

(E) B1 is the belief that p iff B1 is caused by p.

The causal relation required to sustain a causal theory of content is

¹⁰ Causal theories of content have recently been suggested by a number of writers, most particularly: Stampe, 'Towards a Causal Theory of Representation'; Dretske, Knowledge and the Flow of Information; Fodor, Psychosemantics; Papineau, Reality and Representation.

not simple causation. Wittgenstein pointed out the flaw in (E) which has impressed many contemporary writers:¹¹

If when a language is first learnt, speech, as it were, is connected up to action--i.e. the levers to the machine--then the question arises, can these connections possibly break down? If they can't, then I have to accept any answer as the right one; on the other hand if they can, what criterion have I for their having broken down? For what means have I for comparing the original arrangement with the subsequent action? (PR p.64)¹²

If a causal account of content were right then there would be no room for false beliefs. The point can be illuminated by this example: if the cause of my belief B1 were the mountain Schiehallion, by (E) B1 would be the true belief that I am seeing Schiehallion. But no other mountain can be mistaken for Schiehallion for, if I see Farragon, the belief B1* so caused will, by (E), be the true belief that I am seeing Farragon. To persist with a causal theory of content it will be necessary to distinguish a more sophisticated account of the causal connection between p and B1 than (E) admits. That is to say that some causal relation of the right sort, r-causation let us call it, is needed, such that

(F) B1 is the belief that p iff B1 is r-caused by p.

The notion of r-causation must allow it to be the case that a token

¹¹ Stampe (op cit.) pp.48-60; Fodor (op cit.) pp. 101-111; Papineau (op cit.) pp. 57-84. Stating the thesis as in (E) covers over the problem of individuating one of the causes of the belief--the fact that p--rather than the fact that one's eyes were open, or the fact that one was looking in one direction rather than another ... This problem will receive no discussion here however.

¹² "To understand a thought means to be able to translate it according to a general rule. For example, playing a piano from a score. But the score does not cause us to play as we do; if it did there would be no right and wrong way of playing" (Cambridge Lectures 1930-1932 p.44).

of the belief B1 is r-caused by Schiehallion but caused by Farragon and not Schiehallion. This token would then be the false belief that the mountain I see is Schiehallion. The connection between r-causation and causation will have to amount to something like this. Tokens of p cause tokens of B1, and tokens of q cause tokens of B1, but tokens of q can cause tokens of B1 only because tokens of p can cause tokens of B1. Tokens of type p are then non-derivative causes of B1, whereas q's are derivative causes. So to say that a token of B1 is r-caused by p but caused by q is to say that p's are the non-derivative causes of tokens of B1, but that this token of B1 is caused by q.¹³

The point of introducing r-causation is just that it allows the corrigibility of first-order beliefs by denying that if p r-causes B1 then p must be an actual state of affairs. Not surprisingly then, if r-causation determines the content of higher-order beliefs it also ensures the corrigibility of these beliefs. If B2 is the belief that B1 is the belief that p, it might be that B2 is r-caused but not caused by the belief B1 that p. This is to say: tokens of B1 which are the belief that p non-derivatively cause tokens of B2, but tokens of B1 which are the belief that q, say, derivatively cause tokens of B2. Content is settled by non-derivative causal links, so in this case B2 is the false belief that this token of B1 is the belief that p.

What arguments can the causal theorist muster to support this rejection of the incorrigibility of higher-order beliefs? We can

¹³ Fodor stresses this need for a causal asymmetry to explain false beliefs (Fodor op cit.); Dretske's suggestion amounts to the claim that this asymmetry derives from the process of learning a language; and teleological suggestions (Stampe's and Papineau's for example, op cit.) find a functional basis for the asymmetry.

consider two objections to this incorrigibility.

First, an argument from the possibility of misunderstanding. Here is a situation which invites us to say that a higher-order belief is false. Let X's belief B2 be the belief that X's belief B1 is that translation is indeterminate. However, X's careless attention to Quine's writings has led him to believe that the thesis of the indeterminacy of translation is just that thesis which, unbeknown to X of course, Quine calls 'the underdetermination of translation'. So, as it happens, X's belief B1 is not that there is indeterminacy of translation--X, let us assume, has never entertained this idea. So X's belief B2 that his belief B1 is that there is indeterminacy is a false belief. He wrongly believes that what he believes is that there is indeterminacy of translation.

To rescue the causal theory this example will have to be open to generalisation. The causal theory holds that all higher-order beliefs are corrigible, so there have only to be some B2's for which (B) holds if the causal theory is to be falsified. It is not obvious that the example can be generalised. However, the validity of the localised conclusion drawn from this example should be contested before one inquires into its generalisability. The example does not succeed in identifying a corrigible higher-order belief. The content of B1 is ex hypothesi that there is underdetermination of translation (coupled perhaps with the belief that this thesis is that usually referred to by the words 'indeterminacy of translation'). But, if this is so, what reply could X give to the query, what is it you believe that you believe? If X says (as he surely will), 'that translation is indeterminate', given our understanding of the content of his first-order belief we should take him to be referring to the

underdetermination of translation, so take his belief B2 to be a true belief, the belief that his belief B1 is that translation is underdetermined.

It is clear in this case that X's belief B2 is not the belief that B1 is that translation is indeterminate, for it was determined that X did not have as much as the idea of the indeterminacy of translation, and just as one has no belief B1 about ideas one does not grasp, so one has no belief B2 about beliefs B1 with ungrasped ideas. But what if we lift this restriction, allowing that X believes both that translation is underdetermined and that it is indeterminate? Can X now believe B2 that this particular belief B1 is that translation is indeterminate? This situation might be like this: if X--an expert in Quinean philosophy--is writing a paper about underdetermination, and Y knows this, but Y hears X say to Z that he is writing a paper about indeterminacy, is there any circumstance in which Y will say that X falsely believes he is writing about indeterminacy? I think not. If X just casually says that he is writing about indeterminacy we should suppose that this was a slip of the tongue. If X persists in this report when invited to correct himself we would I think be confused--does he think that underdetermination and indeterminacy come to the same thing? has he changed the topic of his paper? is he perhaps getting too old for this sort of work? This confusion, and these hypotheses, indicate that we would not accept the explanation we are being offered--that X has a false belief about the content of his thoughts. Far from demonstrating room for corrigible higher-order beliefs, this train of thought buttresses the argument offered above for the incorrigibility of these beliefs.

A second objection to the incorrigibility thesis might come from

one attracted to arguments of the Twin-Earth variety. A person X believes that what he calls 'water'--the stuff around him with certain macrophysical properties--is thirst-quenching. As it happens this stuff is H₂O, yet X and all those in his society have no notion of physical chemistry. That it is H₂O is enough, according to some, to make it the case that X's belief that water is thirst-quenching is the belief that H₂O is thirst-quenching. Now it happens that one night all the H₂O on Earth changes its structure to XYZ (under the influence of some external factor--cosmic radiation say--rather than a process of change essential to H₂O) but leaves the macrophysical properties unchanged. The next morning, according to these same believers in "wide" beliefs, X's belief that the stuff around him with these macrophysical properties is thirst-quenching is the belief that XYZ is thirst-quenching. X, however, having no more inkling of XYZ than H₂O, believes that his belief that XYZ is thirst-quenching is the same belief as his belief of the previous day that H₂O is thirst-quenching--he is aware of no difference. It follows that he has a false belief about the contents of his first-order beliefs.

There is a long and a short reply to this argument. Both replies turn on this claim: if X's belief that p is a different belief than his belief that q then it must be possible that his believing p will cause him to behave differently than will his believing q. All differences in belief content must be possible differences in the believer's behaviour. If this principle is true the argument of the last paragraph fails, for the behaviour towards the stuff with these macrophysical properties is the same. A narrow belief is one which respects this principle; a wide belief is one which does not. The long reply to the argument would be to support the claim that the

principle is unrestrictedly valid--that there are no wide beliefs. I have some sympathy with this: I am not convinced that Twin-Earth argument should prompt us to say that a person's relation to states of affairs for which that person has no recognitional capacity is a relation of belief. But: what's in a name? The short and ecumenical objection to the argument of the last paragraph allows that there are wide beliefs but takes note that the principle of behavioural differentiation captures another, different but not incompatible, notion of belief. None I think would deny that there are narrow beliefs. And the existence of a class of narrow beliefs is enough to blunt the argument. This is not to argue that these beliefs about the content of narrow beliefs are incorrigible, but to point out that, for all the present objection to incorrigibility demonstrates, there is no reason to think that the previous arguments for incorrigibility are wrong about narrow beliefs.

We can, lastly, look to another move the causal theorist might make instead of trying to establish the corrigibility of higher-order beliefs (so to weaken the internalism). This is to hold that higher-order beliefs are incorrigible and that the causal theory can recognize that fact. To do this the causal theory becomes 2-track, holding that the content of a first-order belief is the r-cause of the belief, but that the content of a higher-order belief is the cause of the belief. The move from causation to r-causation for first-order beliefs was just to make room for the corrigibility of those beliefs, so to move back to causation for higher-order beliefs is to remove that corrigibility.

This 2-track theory cannot work. A realist about beliefs has to see the formation of a belief as a change in the non-relational state

of the believer; only thus can beliefs enter into explanations of a person's behaviour. But a problem arises for higher-order beliefs given the present account of their content. For one to come to believe B2 that the belief B1 is p, a change in the believer's state must be caused by the fact that B1 is p. However, if a state can be so changed by this cause, it is logically possible that the very same change can be brought about by other causes. In particular, it is possible that a non-intentional state of affairs q should also cause the state caused by the fact that B1 is p. That which is caused is the token belief B2; but what would be the content of a token of B2 caused by q? There are three answers:

- (a) B2 is the belief that q;
- (b) B2 is the belief that B1 is the belief that p;
- (c) B2 has no content.

None of these options is acceptable to the 2-track theory. Option (a) makes B2 into a first-order belief if it is any belief at all, but, according to the theory, it need not be the first-order belief that q, for the content of first-order beliefs is given by r-causation not causation. Option (b) rejects the second track of the proposal for it denies that the actual cause of a higher-order belief token determines the content of that token.

It follows from (c) that something in addition to the cause of the state B2 is required to determine the content of the state. Either the addition needed to give B2 content is an addition to the actual state of the believer, or it is a relational property of the believer. The realist about beliefs must hold the former. But, according to (c), for X's belief B2 to be the belief that B1 is the belief that p it is not enough that X be in the state B2 which q can

also bring about; X must be in a state B2* which can only be caused by the fact that B1 is the belief that p. But there is no such state. For any state of X, whatever its complexity, it is logically possible that it be caused by some non-intentional state of affairs. So the only type of addition to B2 which cannot be brought about in this way is the addition of a relational property to B2, but to characterise the content of B2 by such an addition would be to give up realism about higher-order beliefs.

I conclude that there is no way to save realism about attitudes by holding that attitudes are only externally related to their contents. They are not; so it is not realism about attitudes which is rescued here.

3.3 Kripke's Sceptical Solution

In Chapter 2 of his Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language Kripke develops what he calls a "sceptical paradox": "When I respond in one way rather than another to such a problem as '68+57', I can have no justification for one response rather than another" (p.21). This conclusion is of course paradoxical, for it implies that "there can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word" (p.55). Wittgenstein offers a solution to this paradox (p.60), but a "sceptical solution" not a "straight solution":

Call a proposed solution to a sceptical philosophical problem a straight solution if it shows that on closer examination the scepticism proves to be unwarranted; an elusive or complex argument proves the theory the sceptic doubted ... A sceptical solution of a sceptical philosophical problem begins on the contrary by conceding that the sceptic's negative assertions are unanswerable. Nevertheless our ordinary practice or belief is justified because ... it need not require the justification the sceptic has shown to be untenable. (p.66)

This way of putting the matter--in terms of Wittgenstein announcing, accepting, then "by-passing" a paradox by means of a sceptical solution--has troubled a number of commentators.¹⁴ The point can be put differently, however, avoiding these supposed problems. Thus the conclusion introduced by the phrase "This was our paradox" (§201) is simply this: if language-mastery is possible only given an intellectualist foundation, then, given the indeterminacy thesis, language-mastery is not possible. The response to this is clear enough--deny the conditional premise, and, if possible, find the true foundations for language-mastery. A straight response to the argument would be to deny the indeterminacy thesis, and the sceptical response is the one suggested, which "concedes" that the intellectualist model is wrong.

The "main problem" the failure of intellectualism leaves us with is "'How can we show any language at all (public, private, or what-have-you) to be possible?'" and, "So put, the problem has an obvious Kantian flavor" (p.62, n.48). Kripke's solution to the problem¹⁵ can be characterised by two features: first, it champions an "assertability conditions" theory of meaning over a truth conditions theory; second, it offers an account of what the assertability conditions must be if language is to be possible. The first feature is tantamount to the rejection of realism about both intentional content and the non-intentional world; the second feature puts flesh on the non-realist bones, explaining how a non-realist practice with

¹⁴ See for example Malcolm's caricature of Kripke's project on pp.162-3 of his Nothing is Hidden.

¹⁵ Kripke offers only an exegesis of Wittgenstein's views, not committing himself to their correctness. But for ease of expression I will talk of Kripke's solution.

language is possible. We can look to these features in turn.

Assertability conditions vs truth conditions.

The sceptical solution to the Kantian problem is founded on "the change in Wittgenstein's philosophy of language from the Tractatus to the Investigations" (p.71). The fundamental idea of the former work is (according to Kripke) that the meaning of a declarative sentence is given by its truth conditions, those facts the obtaining of which will make the statement true (p.72) But in the Investigations,

Wittgenstein replaces the question, 'What must be the case for this sentence to be true?' by two others: first, 'Under what conditions may this form of words be appropriately asserted (or denied)?'; second, given an answer to the first question, 'What is the role, and the utility, in our lives of our practice of asserting (or denying) the form of words under these conditions?' (p.73)

The shift from truth to assertability conditions in the case of the meanings of mathematical statements represents a rejection of Platonism: given that the notion of an objective fact that '68+57=125' is called into question, the idea that the statement gains its meaning from its relation to that fact is also suspect (p.77). Assertability conditions accounts of meaning take on no commitment to the nature of the entities over which we quantify: "If the use of the expression 'stands for numbers' misleads .. it would be best to think in terms of another terminology, say, that an expression 'plays the role of a numeral'" (p.76). The general lesson is this:

Do not look for 'entities' and 'facts' corresponding to numerical assertions, but look at the circumstances under which utterances involving numerals are made, and the utility of making them under these circumstances. (p.77)

The move to an assertability conditions account of meaning is here premised on a denial of realism about mathematical entities. How though can this move represent a different account of understanding rather than just a shift in what is understood? To know the meaning of an expression is now to be characterised as a grasp of assertability conditions rather than a grasp of truth conditions, but nothing has been said about the problem which motivated the inquiry-- how is any grasp of a rule-like entity possible? The answer of course is that the assertability conditions account is applied to the grasp of assertability conditions: it is offered as a theory of what it is to have an attitude with content as well as a theory of what the content of attitudes is:

Now the replacement of truth conditions by assertability conditions has a dual role in the Investigations. First, it offers a new approach to the problems of how language has meaning, contrasted with that of the Tractatus. But second, it can be applied to give an account of assertions about meaning themselves, regarded as assertions within our language. (p.77)

The point is that the assertability conditions account has to apply to statements of all orders: first-order statements such as '68+57=125' take their meaning from their conditions of warranted assertion, not from their correspondence to facts; second-order statements such as "Jones understands the statement '68+57=125'" get their meaning too from their conditions of justified assertion, not by their correlation with objective (self-standing) states of affairs. Applied to all orders of statement--surrendering for all sentences "the natural presupposition that meaningful declarative sentences must purport to correspond to facts" (pp.78-9)--the assertability conditions account represents a commitment both to non-

realism about the non-intentional world and to non-realism about intentional content. For Kripke both truth (correctness in addition, for example) and intentional content (whether Jones understands addition by 'plus') are dependent on the existence of a practice. How this is we can inquire further when we have explored Kripke's description of the details of the practice.

Specifying the assertability conditions.

Under what circumstances is one justified in saying that Jones means addition by 'plus'? The question has two components: what are the conditions under which Jones is justified in saying that he means addition by 'plus', and what circumstances justify another's judgement that Jones means addition by 'plus'?

Prior to a communal practice there are only subjects' confident assurances that they are going on correctly: "All we can say, if we consider a single person in isolation, is that our ordinary practice licenses him to apply the rule in the way it strikes him". This confident inclination constitutes the first-person's assertability conditions, conditions which "license", "justify", and "entitle" his isolated utterances.

As isolated speakers interact they will react to others' utterances, so "Others will then have justification conditions for attributing correct or incorrect rule-following to the subject", perhaps contradicting in their judgements the subject's licensed judgement of his own correctness. Kripke offers the scenario of a teacher and pupil to dramatise these third-person assertability conditions:

Now, what do I mean when I say that the teacher judges that,

for certain cases, the pupil must give the 'right' answer. I mean that the teacher judges that the child has given the same answer he himself would give. Similarly, when I said that the teacher, in order to judge that the child is adding, must judge that, for a problem with large numbers, he is applying the 'right' procedure even if he comes out with a mistaken result, I mean that he judges that the child is applying the procedure he himself is inclined to apply. (p.90)

The criterion the teacher employs requires some self-knowledge, knowledge of what he himself does or would do in the situation. The first- and third-person conditions are put together in the tale of Smith and Jones:

Jones is entitled, subject to correction by others, provisionally to say, "I mean addition by 'plus'", whenever he has the feeling of confidence--"now I can go on!"--that he can give 'correct' responses in new cases; and he is entitled, again provisionally and subject to correction by others, to judge a new response to be 'correct' because it is the response he is inclined to give. (p.90)

Smith is in the same position, employing the same assertability conditions. Armed only with the license "to give, without further justification the answer that strikes [each] as natural and inevitable" (p.88) both set out to make sense of the other. Smith is to try to see regularities in Jones's behaviour, and vice-versa:

Sometimes Smith, by substituting some alternative interpretation for Jones's word 'plus' [for example] will be able to bring Jones's responses in line with his own. More often, he will be unable to do so and will be inclined to judge that Jones is not really following any rule at all. In all this, Smith's inclinations are regarded as just as primitive as Jones's. In no way does Smith test directly whether Jones may have in his head some rule agreeing with the one in Smith's head. Rather the point is that if, in enough concrete cases, Jones's inclinations agree with Smith's, Smith will judge that Jones is indeed following the rule for addition. (p.91)

A linguistic community is founded upon a shared practice: that is,

each person judges that the others in the practice do and will do what the judger himself does and would do. The conditions of correct use of statements go no deeper than these shared inclinations to judge that one takes such-and-such uses as correct. An obvious analogy here is with the notion of monetary value. It is not the case that gold has the inherent property of being valuable--in Kripke's terms, it would be wrong to think that there is a fact about gold (considered "in isolation" from peoples' attitudes and reactions) that it is valuable. Rather, the value of gold depends upon the existence of a market for gold, a set of peoples' desires and expectations concerning what would be accepted in exchanges. Given such a shared outlook, a monetary practice with gold can exist, but gold has value only within that practice. So too, statements are correctly or incorrectly used only within a practice, the assessment having no firmer support than a shared outlook--shared judgements about what oneself and others would accept as currency in the various important transactions community life requires.¹⁶

The shift from a truth conditional account of meaning leaves us with two questions (p.73)--what are the assertability conditions? and what is the role and utility of these conditions? The answer to the latter question, Kripke suggests, is that these conditions establish a test of trustworthiness:

The utility ... can be brought out by considering ... a man who buys something at the grocer's. The customer, when he deals with the grocer and asks for five apples, expects the grocer to count as he does, not according to some bizarre non-standard rule; and so, if his dealings with the grocer involve a computation, such as '68+57', he expects the

¹⁶ Kripke doesn't employ the analogy but it is particularly conducive to his outlook, for something has monetary value only within a communal practice.

grocer's responses to agree with his own. (p.92)

To attribute the concept of addition to the grocer is to expect and so trust him not to behave bizarrely. Likewise, "when we pronounce that a child has mastered the rule of addition, we mean that we can entrust him to react as we do in interactions such as that ... between the grocer and customer" (p.93). The point of the assertability conditions is not to keep us in track with a practice-independent world, but to keep each practitioner in line with the others, so as to make communal activity possible.

3.4 Inversion

A relational theory of monetary value holds that the reason why gold is valuable is that there is a market for it; the value is not a property which explains why there is a market. The order of explanation is inverted (with respect to money fetishism), and this inversion is characteristic of non-realist theories. So non-realist theory of rule-following will take correctness to be explained by the fact that an action is taken to be correct rather than the correctness being part of an explanation of why the action is taken to be correct. In this section I inquire into the sort of inversion on offer in Kripke's sceptical solution.

A platitudinous observation about our notion of a causal connection between events of type A and events of type B is that if an event e of type A occurs, then an event e' of type B must follow. This, to stress, is not part of a theory of causation, but a report on our practice with the term 'causes'. If this conditional is platitudinous, so too is its contrapositive form: if an event e of type A occurs and is not followed by an event e' of type B, then (all

else being equal) events of type A do not cause events of type B. But according to Kripke, the contrapositive form of the conditional affords a new perspective on the problem of causation.

Although a conditional is equivalent to its contrapositive, concentration on the contrapositive reverses our priorities. Instead of seeing causal connections as primary, from which the observed regularities "flow", the Humean instead sees the regularity as primary, and - looking at the matter contrapositively - observes that we withdraw a causal hypothesis when the corresponding regularity has a definite counter-instance. (p.94)

Kripke gives the example used above and the application of inversion to rule-following in the body of the text (pp.93-95). We can give these a canonical statement as follows.

- (a) "If events of type A cause events of type B, and if an event e of type A occurs, then an event e' of type B must follow", inverts to "If an event e of type A occurs and is not followed by an event e' of type B, then events of type A do not cause events of type B".
- (b) "If Jones means addition by "plus", then he will reply "125" to "68+57", inverts to, "If Jones does not reply "125" to "68+57" he does not mean addition by "plus".

This contrapositional understanding of inversion presented in the text should be compared with the other examples Kripke offers in footnote 76, page 93-4. I will list these in a common format.

- (c) "We cry because we are sorry" inverts to "We are sorry because we cry".
- (d) "We condemn acts because they are immoral" inverts to "Acts are immoral because we condemn them".
- (e) "We accept the law of contradiction because it is a necessary truth" inverts to "The law of contradiction is a necessary truth because we accept it".
- (f) "Fire and heat are constantly conjoined because fire causes heat" inverts to "Fire causes heat because they are

constantly conjoined`.

(g) `We say $12+7=19$ because we grasp the concept of addition inverts to `We grasp the concept of addition because we say $12+7=19$ `.

What is striking about these examples from footnote 76 and the two examples in the text ((a) and (b)) is that the former, by means of including the term `because`, concern the constitutive relation of the two phenomena, whereas the examples from the text have no such commitment. The inversions in (a) and (b) instead offer up evidential connections: they state only that if one event did not occur, then another, different, event did not occur. If the inverted forms in (a) and (b) seem platitudinous, those in (c) to (g) do not. The difference comes down to this: the conditionals in (c) to (g)-inverted and non-inverted--indicate that one phenomenon is a sufficient condition (all else being equal) for the presence of the other--crying for sorrow, condemnation for immorality, etc. in the inverted forms. But the inversions in (a) and (b) make no such claim; rather, the thought there is that the conditions--that there is no constant conjunction and that Jones does not reply "125" are sufficient for the absence of the other phenomenon--causal connectedness and meaning addition by `plus`.

We can call (a) and (b) examples of weak inversion, (c) to (g) representing the strong variety. That Kripke would be quite content with the weak form is suggested in the text following the introduction of the notion of inversion. Gone in these pages (see p.95 for example) is the idea of seeking grounds sufficient for allowing one into the community, and instead we have a test for excluding members, that is a test sufficient for the absence of

understanding. Can the weak inversion represent a viable position? The hope it holds out is of avoiding a commitment to the reductionism seemingly inherent in the strong inversion. Kripke, it might be thought, is here pointing us in the direction of such platitudes as these: "if he constantly gets the answer wrong he doesn't know what 'plus' means", or, "if fire and heat aren't conjoined, one cannot be the cause of the other". Rather than indulge in debate about the nature of the phenomena, the weak inversion directs us towards a description of how we in fact use the terms ('correct', 'cause', etc.), and the utility of these notions. Wittgenstein "simply points out" (p.111) the assertability conditions, and these "illuminate the role and utility in our lives of assertions about meaning and the determination of new answers" (p.112). In thus "reversing priorities", the weak inversion avoids taking a controversial position, retreating to the undisputed facts about how language is used. At the end of the day all Wittgenstein is really offering is platitudes (p.112).

But if this is the hope for weak inversion it cannot be fulfilled for the simple reason that we should not consider weak inversion to offer an uncontroversial account of the use of the utterances in question. To see this we can attend to the following weak inversions we can construct for (c) to (e) (those for (f) and (g) are (a) and (b) of course):

(c1) 'If we are sorry we will cry' weakly inverts to 'If we do not cry we are not sorry'.

(d1) 'If X is immoral it is condemned' weakly inverts to 'If X is not condemned then it is not immoral'.

(e1) 'If the law of contradiction is necessary it is accepted' weakly inverts to 'If the law of contradiction is not accepted then it is not necessary'.

The inversions here might be thought to establish significant publicity constraints on the phenomena of sorrow, immorality and necessity. The strength of these constraints can be measured by the contrast with the observations of common sense. Contrary to the inversion in (c1), we can be sorry without crying (we might have good reason not to display our sorrow); contrary to that in (d1), something can be immoral without being condemned (there is always the possibility of moral error); and contrary to that in (e1), something can be necessary but not accepted as such (Goldbach's conjecture is either necessarily true or necessarily false, but which?). In the inverted forms in (c1) to (d1) there is a clear revision of our ordinary outlook. These weak inversions are far from platitudinous: they do not just "revise our priorities", but introduce substantial and seemingly-false theses.

The interest that these inversions have comes not from the inversion itself but from the choice of the uninverted conditional--contraposition can add no content. Thus to say that if we are sorry we will cry is to state in a misleading way an uncontroversial truth, that when we are sorry we are often disposed to cry. Of course, to make the absence of crying into a sufficient condition for the absence of sorrow, one has to suppress the "all else being equal" clause from the uninverted form in (c1).¹⁷ Similar additional ceteris

¹⁷ The weak inversion of the truly platitudinous conditional comes to this unexciting claim:

(c2) "If we are sorry we will at times and in the absence of countervailing dispositions cry", weakly inverts to "If, when we should be disposed to cry, and there are no countervailing dispositions, we do not cry, then we do not feel sorry".

paribus clauses are left out of the uninverted forms in (d1) and (e1). If something is immoral it will indeed be condemned by one who is in the best possible position to discern the truth of the matter, but there is no guarantee that one has an effective procedure for getting into this position; likewise, we have no guaranteed procedure for discovering necessary truths.

If the weak inversions are interesting, this is because they suggest strong publicity constraints on the phenomena with which they deal. These do not come from weakly inverting platitudes however. Hence some argument is needed for accepting these constraints. It is clear where arguments are likely to come from: the weakly inverted forms are consequences of the corresponding strong inversions. By strong inversion one arrives at the claim that an immoral act just is one which is condemned, a necessary truth just is one accepted as undoubtedly true ... hence it follows that if an act is not condemned we have sufficient evidence for saying that it is not immoral, and if a claim is not accepted as undoubtedly true then that is sufficient evidence for saying that it is not necessary. Furthermore, this is the direction taken by Wittgenstein's rejection of realism about intentional states. The argument against intellectualism finds that there is no state a person can be in such that it could explain how it is that that person is believing that p. Hence, it concludes, a person believes that p because of that person's position in a practice. This argument turns on the way in which intentional states

Kripke does note that these extra clauses are needed (p.95) but does not see that this detracts from the worth of any simple "reversal of priorities".

can be constituted, not on the publicity of thoughts.¹⁸

The conclusion should be that if weak inversion is really platitudinous (a matter of looking differently at everyday phenomena) then it is uninteresting; and if it is interesting it is because it is dependent on a strong inversion. Either way, the focus should be on a non-realism about intentional states characterised by strong inversion.

3.5 Primitive inclinations

If Kripke's sceptical solution is to be taken to speak to what Kripke identifies as the Kantian query--how is language-mastery possible?--it must be taken to employ a strong inversion of the explanatory order. In taking assertability conditions as the foundations upon which content is to be constructed, Kripke's practice theory offers a non-platitudinous explanation. Indeed, far from being platitudinous, Kripke's practice theory is wrong--so I will here argue. To be at all an explanation of language-mastery the account has to be read in a way which is inconsistent with the structure of the sceptical solution. More exactly, I will argue that Kripke's specification of the assertability conditions on which his practice is founded is misconceived. The argument will be this: Kripke's sceptical solution can be an explanation of language-mastery only if the notion of an assertability condition can be naturalised; but the assertability conditions Kripke offers cannot be readily naturalised.

¹⁸ This is not to say that Wittgenstein is never concerned directly with the publicity of intentional states. In 4.6 below I discuss the role of publicity in showing that there can be no private language (however founded).

The key question we need to address is this: what is the relation between a person and the assertability conditions which he employs to judge that he has followed a rule correctly and that others have followed rules correctly? Clearly enough, what the answer cannot be is that the person judges that these conditions hold and that, hence, the assertion that someone goes on correctly is warranted. To answer thus would be to make the relation between the person and the conditions of assertion intentional, but the present inquiry is into the foundations of intentionality.

So what can the relation be? The answer has to be that the person is related to these conditions in a naturalistic way--that a non-intentional connection holds between the obtaining of the conditions and the person's uttering the words, 'He is going on correctly'. The teacher, Smith and Jones are, in the specified conditions, naturally disposed to utter certain words--not yet to mean anything by them, nor to make judgements using them. On such a naturalistic basis must intentionality be built if it is to be built at all; if Kripke's suggestion is not meant in this way it can hope to explain nothing, for it will beg the question at stake.

But Kripke says: "These inclinations (both Jones's general inclination that he has 'got it' and his particular inclination to give particular answers in particular addition problems) are to be regarded as primitive. They are not to be justified in terms of Jones's ability to interpret his own intentions or anything else" (pp.90-91, emphasis added). Likewise, when Smith is seeking to understand Jones, it might be that he is "inclined to judge that Jones is not really following any rule at all. In all this, Smith's inclinations are regarded as just as primitive as Jones's" (p.91,

emphasis added). This notion of a primitive inclination to judge that one is going on correctly--in the first- and third-person cases--might be taken to anticipate the point of the preceding paragraphs. Primitive inclinations to judge are, one might think, natural dispositions to utter words.

But Kripke's assertability conditions cannot readily be naturalised. There is an obstacle to interpreting his account in a naturalistic way. Kripke credits the teacher, Smith and Jones with these assertability conditions for their judgements that others go on correctly: each judges that the other does (and will do) that which the judger does or would do in the same situation. The problem is that if the naturalistic account were what Kripke really had in mind, there would be no reason at all to expect there to be self-reference in the assertability conditions. That is, a naturalistic account of why Smith says that Jones is going on correctly will have no reason to take the form: Smith is disposed to say 'Jones is going on correctly' because Smith is disposed to say 'Jones is doing what I do / would do in a like situation'. This hypothesis would be very curious: there is no good reason to think that Smith's disposition to say 'Jones is going on correctly' is to be explained by this second, self-involving disposition. The alternative hypothesis is that Smith's disposition to say 'Jones is going on correctly' is explained by the same thing that explains Smith's disposition to act in the same way as Jones acts in a given situation. This is not to say that the story could not be such as the naturalised version of Kripke's conditions; but there is no good reason why it should be so, given that the alternative hypothesis has the advantage of economy.

The first-person conditions fare equally poorly. Prior to a

communal practice there is no question of the correctness or incorrectness of utterances. However we can say the following of one in this position:

Jones is entitled, subject to correction by others, provisionally to say, 'I mean addition by "plus"' whenever he has the feeling of confidence--'now I can go on!'--that he can give 'correct' responses in new cases; and he is entitled, again provisionally and subject to correction by others, to judge a new response to be 'correct' simply because it is the response he is inclined to give. (p.90)

Again the conditions are self-involving: one is "entitled" to give a certain result when it appears to one that one's claim is correct--when, that is, one has a feeling that one can reply correctly. This can't be the final description of the situation for such a feeling is an intentional state--it is the feeling that something is the case.) But if we take seriously the self-involvement postulated here, the assertability conditions cannot be naturalised without oddness. There is no reason to say that a natural connection holds between a feeling of confidence and the utterance rather than such a connection holding between some third thing and both the feeling and the utterance. Obviously, the phenomenology of the matter supports the latter hypothesis: no feelings attach to my utterance '1000+2=1002'. As before, Kripke's suggestion is curiously unmotivated if intended to be naturalistic. What reason is there to think that the natural connections can be discerned a priori? The detours through the attributes of the judger come out as (bad) armchair science.

The assertability conditions in the sceptical solution can give no license, entitlement, warrant, or justification--all terms Kripke employs. To speak thus is to engender a confusion. Of course it could be that the assertability conditions Kripke offers on which to found

the practice are conditions which, as it happens, are taken within the practice to license utterances: so one is taken to be justified in saying that a sum is correct if one is confident that it is. But, as it does happen, this corresponds to no feature of our practice-- the notion of a justified because confident assertion is an alien one.¹⁹ But the real problem is that only within a practice can there be license, entitlement, etc. So these notions cannot appear in a foundational explanation of how a practice is possible.

The shift from the use of assertability conditions within a practice to the postulation of assertability conditions as the foundations of the practice can be charted exactly in Kripke's work. The confusion starts on p.74 in explaining the nature of assertability conditions in contrast to truth conditions, Kripke notes a "drawback" to talk of assertability conditions: "For Wittgenstein, there is an important class of cases where a use of language properly has no independent justification other than a speaker's inclination to speak thus on that occasion (e.g. saying one is in pain)" (footnote 63, p.74). He quotes PI §289 in support of this, "To use a word without justification does not mean to use it without right" (although voicing concern about the formulation of "zu unrecht" as "without right"). Kripke undertakes to say in these cases that a speaker does in fact have assertability or justification conditions. This, we may think, is a harmless move if care is taken: that the one who is in pain employs no criterion to judge that he is in pain does not mean that he is wrong to say that he is in pain. This is a report of what goes on within our practice with 'pain': one

¹⁹ Baker and Hacker point out this oddity of Kripke conditions in Scepticism, Rules and Language, p.36.

does not need a criterion for pain to say correctly that one is in pain.

However, when Kripke comes later to the full statement of the sceptical solution we find that the ground has shifted.

The entire point of the sceptical argument is that ultimately we reach a level where we act without any reason in terms of which we can justify our action. We act unhesitatingly but blindly.

This then is an important case of what Wittgenstein calls speaking with "justification" ("Rechtfertigung") but not "wrongly" ("zu unrecht"). It is part of our language game of speaking of rules that a speaker may, without ultimately giving any justification, follow his own confident inclination that this way ... is the right way to respond, rather than another way ... That is, the "assertability conditions" that license an individual to say that, on a given occasion, he ought to follow his rule this way rather than that, are, ultimately, that he does what he is inclined to do. (p.87-8)

It is indeed a "part of our language-game of speaking of rules" that a lack of a rule (criterion) does not imply that one cannot make a right judgement. But the real issue at stake is how language-games are possible (the set of our language-games being our practice). The "sceptical argument" shows that there is no intellectualist foundation for the practice--including the practice of judging one to be correct who follows no criteria. If we undertake to say that when there is a language-game of allowing one to be correct without criteria that this one has assertability conditions, this decision does not allow the notion of such conditions to apply to the situation before there is any practice. Only within a practice are there assertability conditions (including those granted in cases without criteria), hence a practice cannot be founded upon assertability conditions.

CHAPTER 4: GRAMMAR AND NATURAL REACTIONS

4.1 Introduction

The picture theory offers an account of how it is possible for a person to track the world in thoughts and words--to speak about it, to think about it, and to reason securely about it. But the fit between a person and the world cannot be established by picturing, for pictures cannot discriminate between things in the same way as people are able to discriminate between them.

One reaction to this lack of fit is to surrender the idea of objective (self-standing) intentional states, related to parts of the world in a way independent of being taken to be thus related. If some such non-realism about intentional states is refused, it is hard to see how the internality of these states can be preserved. Of course, it is not yet clear how this can be preserved if realism is surrendered. This chapter aims to make Wittgenstein's proposals clear.

Kripke's assertability conditions theory of meaning represents the adoption of non-realism about the world, and the need for an account of the knowledge of these conditions is fulfilled by a reflexive move: an assertability conditions theory of the grasp of assertability conditions. This is to move from non-realism about the world to non-realism about intentional states. But this account demands a third step--an explanation how the assertability conditions themselves are employed, how they license, warrant, or justify assertions. The most plausible direction for this third step, I suggested, would be towards a naturalistic explanation of the grasp and use of assertability conditions.

Kripke's account of the second step--the non-realism about intentionality--does not speak to the main problem at hand, how there can be intentional states standing in internal relations to the world. But the three step structure revealed in studying Kripke's sceptical solution is a helpful framework for exploring Wittgenstein's response to the problems of intellectualism. Corresponding to Kripke's assertability conditions is Wittgenstein's idea of a rule of grammar. The correspondence is structurally close--the properties of assertability conditions are much like those of rules of grammar--but Wittgenstein's account of what rules of grammar there are is vastly more detailed than Kripke's description of the assertability conditions employed in the ascription of understanding and rule following. Indeed, it turns out that the sort of assertability conditions Kripke has in mind--although not the precise ones he employs--are just one sort of rule of grammar.

The notion of grammar is presented here by means of the three step progression. In the next section I discuss--briefly--how rules of grammar introduce non-realism about the non-intentional world; in 4.3 the role of these rules in determining the content of intentional states is outlined; and in 4.4 I argue that Wittgenstein took the third step offered to Kripke, founding rules of grammar naturalistically. I put this forward as no more than a rational reconstruction of the position Wittgenstein holds; I make no claim that it represents a chronological or dialectical progression to be traced in Wittgenstein's writings.

The central question which emerges from the discussion is this: what conclusions should we draw about our ordinary beliefs about intentional states--that we follow rules, have beliefs and desires,

argue, infer and calculate--in the light of the naturalistic non-realism? Are these beliefs perhaps simply false or even senseless? In 4.5 I describe Wittgenstein's attitude that naturalism is, although true, philosophically irrelevant. Philosophical inquiry must go on at the level of these beliefs in logical and mental phenomena. This preliminary exploration of the notion of philosophy takes Wittgenstein's discussion of behaviourism as an illustration.

Finally, in 4.6 I note how the focus on grammatical rules leads to a rejection of a private language, so repaying the debt incurred in 2.5.

4.2 Grammar and Meaning

Speaking a language is a rule-structured activity. In speaking--whether talking about physical objects, making logical inferences, or calculating--we take ourselves to be paying heed to rules specifying the correct use of the terms involved. These rules for the use of language Wittgenstein calls "rules of grammar". In determining what it makes sense to say--distinguishing between sense and nonsense (PG p.190)--these rules constitute a means of representation (PG p.186). So a rule of grammar might run: "It is correct to say 'I know what you are thinking', and wrong to say 'I know what I am thinking'" (PI p.222). But grammatical lessons come in less obvious forms. The claims, 'I can't feel his pain' (BB p.56), 'There really are four primary colours' (PG p.185), and 'There is no greatest cardinal number' (RFM p.133), offer up the grammatical rules: it is wrong to say 'I feel his pain', 'There are five primary colours', or 'There is a greatest cardinal number'. One who breaks these rules thereby manifests his lack of understanding of the terms involved.

But to say this much is to say little of note: few would deny that language is governed by such rules. What Wittgenstein further claims is that utterances which are taken to suggest grammatical rules do only that. Rather than a claim such as 'There is no greatest cardinal number' reporting a fact about the mathematical world and so introducing a rule for the language of mathematics, Wittgenstein contends that the significance of the claim is exhausted by the grammatical rule found in it. The form of these claims is then misleading; seemingly-material statements hide grammatical rules (BB p.55). Rather than report facts about the essence of the world, such claims are only rules for the use of words and so state limits to how the world can be sensibly represented as being. "Essence is expressed by grammar" (PI §371)--grammar is not a reflection of the essence of the world. "To accept a proposition as unshakably certain--I want to say--means to use it as a grammatical rule" (RFM p.170). To be convinced by a mathematical proof for example is to accept a new rule of grammar or a new measure of reality (RFM p.162). The grammar of the language is changed as new connections between terms are established (RFM p.166).

This is to say that the rules of grammar are "arbitrary" or "autonomous":¹

Grammar is not accountable to any reality. It is grammatical rules that determine meaning (constitute it) and so they themselves are not answerable to any meaning and to that extent are arbitrary. (PG p.184)

The rules of grammar are "conventions"; unlike the rules of cookery for example, or the rule 'paint the sky brighter than anything that

¹ 1930-1932 Lectures pp.46-49, 86-87, 94-95; PR pp.53-55; PG pp.63, 97, 110, 184-193; RFM p.162; PI §§497, 520.

receives its light from it', there is no justification of the rules by means of an agreement between the rules or their results and how the world is--rules of grammar are neither true nor false (PG pp.184-7, PR p.54).

Why is there no justification of grammatical rules?² Two types of justification can be considered--discursive and ostensive. In the first case one seeks to justify a rule of grammar by describing how the world really is; in the second case the justification proceeds by one pointing to some part of the world. The first procedure is worthless, Wittgenstein argues:

The rules of grammar cannot be justified by showing that their application makes a representation agree with reality. For this justification would itself have to describe what is represented. And if something can be said in the justification and is permitted by its grammar--why shouldn't it also be permitted by the grammar that I am trying to justify? Why shouldn't both forms of expression have the same freedom? And how could what the one says restrict what the other can say? (PG pp.186-7)

² The purpose of the present inquiry does not demand that these particular arguments for the autonomy of grammar be explored in any great depth. The issue of how rules are followed is independent of that of the status of the rules--conventional or not. The overall focus here is on rule-following; if the case for non-realism about intentional states is correct, it establishes (independently of these present arguments) that correct rule-following does not depend on the human-independent state of the world. The relation between the issues of conventionalism and the nature of rule-following is somewhat like this: lawyers might debate whether a certain principle held to be established by the constitution was in fact intended to be found there by the constitution's framers. The question might then arise whether it is possible to justify any claim about the original intent of the framers. On the other hand, there might also be a concern with the objectivity of applying any legal principle--one intended by the framers or not. One who holds that there is no distinction between correctly applying a principle and being taken to apply that principle will say that the former issue is settled--there is no determinate principle that the framers could have intended. In the same way (as we will see), a non-realist about rule-following will hold that there is no determinate way the world really is which the practice heeds or fails to heed.

The argument might be spelled out in this way. First, one cannot be in a position to say that a rule of grammar is justified. One cannot helpfully say, for example, "the sentence 'there can only be four primary colours' has sense because there really can only be four primary colours", because only if 'there can only be four primary colours' does make sense does this justifying sentence make sense. One who awaited a demonstration that the former had sense would not be contented by this reply. Second, one cannot be in a position to say that a rule of grammar is unjustified. To say, "the sentence 'there are five primary colours' is senseless' because there really can only be four primary colours", is to offer something which itself cannot be justified in order to justify the senselessness of the sentence mentioned. "I would like to say: 'I must begin with the distinction between sense and nonsense", Wittgenstein confesses (PG pp.126-127). Unless some sentences are simply accepted to have sense there can be no discursive justification or criticism of other sentences. These sentences which we begin by taking as sensible-- those which themselves are not open to justification or criticism-- are rules of grammar (disguised perhaps as material hypotheses): "Grammatical conventions cannot be justified by describing what is represented. Any such description already presupposes the grammatical rules" (PR p.55).

This argument is in effect that found in the Tractatus. Wittgenstein there concluded that "We cannot say in logic, 'The world has this in it, and this, but not that'" (5.61). It was held to be impossible to say that a proposition represented such-and-such a state of affairs for "in order to represent logical form, we should have to be able to station ourselves with propositions somewhere

outside logic" (4.12; see 1.6 above). If a proposition is to picture some state of affairs it must have the same logical form as this state of affairs, but then only if one grasped the logical form of the proposition could one know that it was this proposition that a statement about what it represents is about. So either the representation of the means of representation is superfluous or it is useless (PR p.54)--in neither case could it justify the attribution of sense to the proposition. So if one fails to see the forms in the right way there is nothing that can be said to explain his error to him for, any explanation of a language (as opposed to training in a language) presupposes a language: " ... in a certain sense, the use of language is something that cannot be taught And that of course is another way of saying: I cannot use language to get outside language" (PR p.54).

In the Tractatus this argument was held to tell against the possibility of representing the relation between propositions and the world, hence justifying the logical well-formedness of propositions. Despite the fact that it could not be justified, Wittgenstein did not conclude that the means of representation was autonomous from the world, that propositions did or did not make sense depending on their relation to the world. In the Investigations, on the other hand, Wittgenstein holds that the impossibility of giving a justification for the rules of grammar entails that they are not justified by a correspondence with the world. The rules of sense pay no heed--even unsayably--to a pre-established reality.

What though of the prospects for an ostensive justification of grammar? Can ostensive definition not mould our means of representation in the shape of how the world really is?

Wittgenstein's answer is that ostensive definition should itself be regarded as a move within the grammar of a language: "The connection between 'language and reality' is made by definitions of words, and these belong to grammar, so that language remains self-contained and autonomous" (PG p.97). The correlation between objects and names set up by a chart for example "is part of the symbolism" (PG p.97). The argument is just this: ostensive definition can always be misinterpreted (PI §28), for only when the use of a word in the language is clear--when the grammar of the word is clear--can an ostensive definition be correctly followed (PR p.54, PG p.60, PI §30). The lesson taken from the ostensive definition is dependent on what place is prepared for the term in the grammar. The thing ostended, like any sample, has a correct use as a sample only within an established grammatical practice; it cannot stand over and outside the practice as a fixed point by reference to which the correctness of the practice is charted. So ostension cannot justify the use of an expression, for the point of the ostension is not determinate.

Furthermore, the grammar of the language cannot be justified in terms of things more mundane than the logical structure of the world. So, for example, it is not true that the purpose of language is to facilitate communication, as the purpose of cookery is to produce pleasant food. However, "the concept of language is contained in the concept of communication" (PG p.193). If something cannot be used for communication it is not a language, but if some process produces unpleasant food it does not follow that it is not cooking. Language is not then a means to communication (just as remaining unmarried is not a means to staying a bachelor), to be assessed as good or bad to the extent that it brings about that end.

We can allow that the rules of grammar will have the general form: in circumstances C, 'p' is correctly / incorrectly uttered. In the limiting cases C will be all or no circumstances--so, for example, in no circumstances can one say 'There are five primary colours'. The point of the autonomy of grammar is just this: in those rules specifying circumstances of allowed or disallowed utterance, the circumstances cannot be specified in a way independent of the grammatical resources of the language.³ So even in the case of the rule: that is correctly called 'red', the significance of the demonstrative is determined by the explanation it will receive--"the colour, not the shape", for example. Until located within the framework of the language the circumstances of correct and incorrect utterances are not defined. This is to say that we have a "system" or "calculus" of grammatical rules; no utterances are linked directly with a grammar-independent world, for even those terms explained by ostension rely upon other rules of grammar to determine what is being ostended. In stating the circumstances of correct use of a sentence, one is "moving around in the grammatical background of the sentence" (PG p.153), not stepping outside the grammar to compare it with how the world really is. Language is a "network" to which a sentence belongs, the connections being the grammar of the language (PG p.149). To state the circumstances of correct use of a sentence--to specify its place in the grammar--is to give the meaning of the sentence, for a sentence takes its sense from its place in the calculus (PG p.130). But now, "One can say that meaning drops out of

³ Or: "independent of the grammatical resource of any other language" (for one might specify the circumstances for the correct use of a sentence 'p' of one language in a sentence from a different language).

language; because what a proposition means is told by yet another proposition" (PG p.41). There is no thing, the meaning of an expression, which determines that the expression stands in such-and-such relations to the world and to other expressions. Instead, an expression has meaning because it is taken to stand in these relations--"An answer to the question 'How is that meant?' exhibits the relationship between two linguistic expressions. So this question too is a question about that relationship" (PG p.45).

4.3 Grammar and Understanding

If the world is not independent of the means of representation there is no sense in which that means of representation is true or false. Truth or falsity come only within the constraints determined by the rules of an autonomous grammar. From this follows the calculus view of meaning. The referents or truth conditions of expressions are specifiable only in ways that themselves take significance from yet further explanations. Nothing goes without saying--every sign and explanation of a sign is given content by its place in a calculus of rules.

If this is the account of meaning on offer--the meaning of an expression is its grammatical place--what should be said about how it is one understands an expression, grasps its meaning? What is the relation between a person and the meaning-constituting grammatical system which makes it the case that the person understands the term? The answer, one might suggest, will look like this: one grasps a system of rules and these rules internally identify something as the referent of a term. "It is the system of language that makes the sentence a thought and which makes it a thought for us" says

Wittgenstein at PG p.153: I can think and speak about Oxford because I heed the grammatical rules identifying the town.

But this suggestion is hopeless. It leaves us with the question of how it is that rules--any rules, whether autonomous, systematic, or whatever--can be determinately applied. What is needed is an account of rule-following, not just an account of what the rules to be followed are. The suggestion is not Wittgenstein's however; the quotation above from PG p.153 continues thus:

That doesn't mean that it is while we are using a sentence that the system of language makes it into a thought for us, because the system isn't present then and there isn't any need for anything to make the sentence alive for us, since the question of being alive doesn't arise. But if we ask: "why doesn't a sentence strike us as isolated and dead when we are reflecting on its essence, its sense, the thought etc." it can be said that we are continuing to move in the system of language.

The system is not present as a "logical mechanism" might be present, itself making it the case that it is Oxford that is meant because of some power of internal determinacy possessed by the rules of the system. The grammatical rules are not to be just a more complicated version of the intellectualist story, criteria for the correct use of expressions hidden somewhere in the medium of the mind.* But how then is the system related to one who understands so as to explain how it is that he understands?

The answer Wittgenstein offers is that the notion of understanding is exhaustively constituted by the grammatical rules specifying the correct use of the term 'understand'. The grammar of this term, like that of non-intentional terms, is autonomous from

* "What does it mean to use language according to grammatical rules? It does not mean that the rules of language run in our heads as we use language" (1930-1932 Lectures p.48).

that which it treats. Just as the use of the term 'Oxford' is not justified because the rule for its use has carved up the world in the right way--the grammar of 'Oxford' is not how it is because some grammar-independent thing, Oxford, is how it is--so the correct use of 'understand' is not justified by its fit with some pre-grammatical state of affairs, some real understanding prior to and respected by the grammar of the term. Understanding is not a "metalogical" concept (PG p.46), the concept of something which stands outside the grammar of the language determining its correct shape; rather, it is as implicated in the grammar as are the objects which are grasped in thought.⁵ To explore the notion of understanding one must describe the rules governing the use of the term 'understand'; meaning, here as before, is given by use.

This same perspective characterises Wittgenstein's treatment of all intentional notions--thinking, rule-following, inferring, calculating. In each case a logical or mathematical mechanism is denied: there are no propositions, meanings or rules standing over and explaining the practice of believing, following rules, etc. Instead these notions, to the extent they have sense, are granted it by a grammatical practice with the terms. As before, the rules of grammar specify circumstances of allowed and disallowed utterance. To explore this in more detail we can look to two examples--Wittgenstein's discussions of expectation and mathematical reasoning.

First, expectation. To expect N to come is not to be undergoing some process which subsists during the expectation and which forges a

⁵ The claim of PG p.46 is that "'understanding' and 'meaning' are not metalogical concepts". This echoes the statement of PG p.41, that meaning drops out of language (see 4.2 above). Hilmy provides a helpful survey of Wittgenstein's use of the term 'metalogic' in Chapter 2 of his The Later Wittgenstein.

connection between oneself and N's coming. Neither is it the case that some later experience--a feeling of happiness when N arrives perhaps--makes it the case that it was N's coming that I expected. To understand what it is to expect N one must understand the grammar of expectation. One has to ask, "What counts as a criterion for anyone's being in such a state?" (PI §572). In what circumstances would we say that one is expecting N to come? "I may indeed say: to walk restlessly up and down in my room, to look at the door, to listen for a noise is: to expect N.--That is simply a definition of the expression 'to expect N'" (PG p.139). But there is no definition which will suffice for all things expected and for all expectations of the one thing: rather, we must say--that and similar things are expecting someone or something (PG p.141). But in each case of expectation the following is true:

the behaviour of the expectant person is behaviour which can be translated in accordance with given rules into the proposition 'He is expecting it to happen that p'. And so the simplest typical example to illustrate the use of the word 'expect' is that the expectation of its happening that p should consist in the expectant person saying 'I expect it to happen that p'. Hence in so many cases it clarifies the grammatical situation to say: let us put the expression of expectation in place of the expectation, the expression of thought in place of the thought. (PG p.140)

The rules of grammar are rules for transformation or translation; in this case they license one to move from a certain type of behaviour--pacing up and down the room etc.--to an assertion: he is expecting N to come.⁶ This move is not justified by a grammar-independent fact

⁶ "Is there any difference between expecting a man to tea at 4.30 and expecting him at 4.40? The difference may not show itself at all unless you ask or look it up in your diary; and the criterion might be the asking or the looking up ... The criterion is what you say you expect" (1930-1932 Lectures p.101).

about what the person expects; rather, in this grammar, with these autonomous rules, to act in this way just is to be expecting N to come. In the cases in which the behaviour includes the utterance 'I expect N' this is not to be taken as a report or description of some state of the utterer. The statement is an "expression" (Z §53) or "manifestation" (PG p.152) of expecting N (rather than M), but only within the grammatical system of the language.⁷ Within this system, if I imagine the expression of an expectation as the expectation, the connection between the expectation and its object is transparent (PG p.149, BB p.42). But there is no difference in principle between this case and that without an avowal: in both, rules of grammar are what make the connection.⁸

What now of the phenomenon that led to dissatisfaction with an account of attitudes as processes causing one to act in a certain way--the internal relation between the attitude and its content? How is that to be accommodated, if at all, within this grammatical account of attitudes? What makes it the case that it is N's coming that fulfills X's expectation that N will come? "Like everything metaphysical the harmony between thought and reality is to be found

⁷ Of course such a statement can be a report. The point Wittgenstein is making is that such a report does not derive from the reporter's recognition and then description of his state of mind, the expectation that N will come. Instead, only within a grammatical practice does the expression become a report of an expectation. The point is parallel to the one that might be made by saying that gold is not in fact valuable. Clearly, gold is valuable; the claim directs one's attention to a wrong account of the source of that value.

⁸ The substitution of the expression of expectation for the expectation is a "rule of thumb" (BB pp.41-2), a heuristic device designed to dissuade one from postulating a causal process behind the expression. It is not a reductionist thesis ("the expectation is its expression"), although, on occasions, Wittgenstein might seem to be suggesting this. (See 4.5 below for a further discussion of reductionism.)

in the grammar of the language" (Z §55). The rules of grammar allow transformations from certain circumstances--behaviour in some context--to the expression 'X is expecting N'. Yet there are other rules in play here, rules which disallow certain transformations: "And if expectation is the thought 'I am expecting it to happen that p' it is senseless to say that I won't perhaps know until later what I expected" (PG p.140). It is a rule of grammar, and no more, that one cannot say 'he expects N to come but his expectation might be fulfilled by M coming'. This is all the internality of attitudes consists in--we have a rule which forbids an utterance, the rule being autonomous, not justified by some objective state of affairs such as it really being N that X expects (which state of X we should then have to explain). "And the statement that the wish for it to be the case that p is satisfied by the event p, merely enunciates a rule for signs: (The wish for it to be the case that p) = (the wish that is satisfied by the event p)" (PG pp.161-2, emphasis added). To acknowledge the nature of the rules governing the use of 'expects' is to come to resist seeing the relation which an expectation introduces as one that holds between some state of the expecter and some different, but internally related, state of affairs.

Just as the rules of grammar governing talk about the non-intentional world determine the essence of what is talked about--the possibilities that can be found in the world--so the rules of the grammar of intentional talk exhaust the true nature of the states and processes of the mind. Extending the autonomy of grammar to the intentional is to respond to the indeterminacy thesis: the internal relatedness of intentional states does not derive from some logical mechanism possessed by one who has attitudes, utters meaningful

sentences, or follows rules, but is instead bestowed along with the states and processes by the rules of grammar. There are necessarily only four primary colours because it is taken to be senseless to say 'There are five primary colours'. So too, one's attitudes are essentially about their content because it is taken to be senseless to say anything suggesting otherwise. One has no attitude which is not internally related to the content of that attitude; but this is to say that if there is judged not to be an internal relation there will not be said to be an attitude. This claim is disallowed, not because some things--attitudes--forge internal connections with the world, but because this is one criterion we employ for ascribing attitudes.

We can turn, secondly, to what Wittgenstein says about mathematical reasoning. One is inclined to say that an arithmetical equality is true because of the meanings of the terms involved. These meanings--whatever they are--are held to somehow make the equality true. This hypothesis of a "mathematical mechanism" is worthless in the face of the indeterminacy thesis. There is nothing these meanings can be which will make it the case that the equality is true. Whence then the necessity of such claims as ' $15 \times 13 = 195$ '?

Such statements are norms, according to Wittgenstein (RFM p.425 for example); they determine the truth or falsity of empirical statements. If one is given thirteen lots of fifteen apples, and counting them one arrives at 194, then one has miscounted or one apple has been lost. These norms are paradigms for judging empirical facts--there are such facts only because there are these norms. But to say this much is not to deviate from a standard perspective on such equalities. That too would have it that an arithmetical equality

acts as a constraint on the empirical facts, determining what facts there can and cannot be. As before, Wittgenstein's step is to deny that these equalities are themselves open to justification, and this in two ways. First, these equalities are not true in virtue of some correspondence with a realm of objective arithmetical facts, some real arithmetical structure of the world. This might be accepted, but one still believe that ' $13 \times 15 = 195$ ' states a truth, for, even if the statement pays no heed to grammar-independent arithmetical facts it still might be held to be true in virtue of the conventional meanings associated with the signs. Even though it is not true in virtue of the meaning of the signs construed as independent of grammatical conventions, once the conventional rules for the signs are settled, what follows from these rules follows determinately. But even this weaker idea of the truth of the equality is too strong given that there is nothing to sustain the determinacy demanded. The correct account, Wittgenstein holds, is that such equalities are neither true nor false. They are, as the orthodox account agrees, norms for the assessment of empirical states of affairs, but they are not open to justification. Instead, they are also norms in a second sense: rather than the equality following from rules for multiplication, the equality becomes a norm or criterion for multiplication having been performed correctly:

is it imaginable for someone to follow the rule right and nevertheless to work out different results at different times in multiplying 15×13 ? It all depends on what criteria one allows to count for correct following of the rule. In mathematics the result itself is also a criterion for correct calculation. Here then it is unthinkable that one should follow the rule right and should produce different patterns of multiplication. (RFM p.393; see also pp. 317, 319, 324.)

The internal relation between the rule for multiplication and what it

determines is not to be explained by some thing which is the real rule (which is associated with the sign for the rule) which then serves as a criterion for what is and is not in accord with the rule—there are no logical forces reaching out to their objects. Instead, certain things are said to be 'in accordance with the rule', the rule being identified solely by the set of things said to be in accordance with it. Thus one who 'applying a rule' arrives at something not in this set will not have followed the rule correctly (or will have followed some different rule). To say that the result is a criterion for the rule being followed is just to say that there is a rule of grammar running thus: in such circumstances (transforming '13x15' into '190' etc.) it is wrong to say 'The rule for multiplication has been followed' (RFM pp.162, 170 for example). It is unthinkable that rules can be variously applied, not because of a super-strong determination by a rule, but because no deviant applications of a single rule will be acknowledged.

What is on offer here is a strong inversion of the explanatory order.⁹ In adopting the indeterminacy thesis we surrender the idea of a logical mechanism which explains why we behave expectantly or respond thus-and-so to a rule. Instead, we have an expectation and follow a rule because we behave and respond thus. Gone from this perspective is the "preconceived idea of crystalline purity" (PI §108) in logic, logical forces reaching out endlessly though logical space; instead the whole examination is turned around, logical properties being, it now seems, titles bestowed on phenomena by our grammar. Just as gold takes on the property of monetary value only within a practice of exchange, so certain signs become rules and

⁹ See 3.4 above.

certain people become believers only within a practice of employing grammatical rules.

4.4 Grammar and Natural Reactions

The rules of the grammar are autonomous from the non-intentional world: this non-realism is the first step away from the problems of tracking the world. The second step is to acknowledge that there is no self-standing sphere of intentional activity to which our talk of attitudes and rule following must be made to correspond. This is to recognise the autonomy of the grammar of intentional terms. What can be going on in people's minds is determined by the rules of grammar.

A third step is needed. The two taken thus far leave us with this question: what is the relation between one practised in a language and the rules of grammar for that language? The correct use of the language is defined by the rules of grammar, so what one knows when one is a master of the language are these rules, but what does this knowledge consist in? A problem arises in trying to answer this question. We can distinguish between self-standing and relational rule-following. The former is what the second step--the move to non-realism about the intentional--denied is available: one does not follow a rule in virtue of some intrinsic state of mind. In place of this was offered the suggestion that one follows a rule to the extent that one acts in a way which bears a certain relation to a grammar, a set of rules determining the conditions for the correct use of phrases like 'He followed the rule R correctly'. The problem we face now can be put like this: are the rules of grammar heeded intrinsically or relationally? The answer, it appears, is that neither can be the case. To suggest the former is to lapse back into

the mysteries of the logical mechanism. But the latter has its own problems. To follow a rule, the relational account has it, is to be judged to be following a rule on the basis of a rule of grammar. If the relational account held true of following rules of grammar, a further rule would be needed, reference to which must be made if the first rule of grammar is to be followed. And the relational account of rule following will in turn force this second rule of grammar to pay heed to a third... This regress is vicious--for a rule of grammar to be followed a further rule of grammar must first be followed.

The regress can be stopped only by surrendering the idea that all rules of grammar are followed. At some point it must be that one responds to a state of affairs in a way which is not a rule following. At this point one just reacts naturally, without reasons. Rules of grammar are norms, so the suggestion is that we have normative natural reactions. At some point our judgements, 'That's a correct / incorrect use of the rule', 'He understands now', 'That doesn't mean this', and so on, are utterances we are naturally brought to make. These natural expressions go along with a range of normative behaviour--correction, praise, explanation, reinforcement, sanction, and the like. In short, at this level all looks as if one were following a rule of grammar, but one is just naturally reacting in the way that a normative rule, if there were one being followed, would specify.

Wittgenstein takes this step from the autonomy of grammar to naturalism about grammar. This shows most clearly in his characterisation of the nature of the agreement about the use of language that holds between communicating people. At RFM p.342 we learn that "the phenomenon of language is based on regularity, an

agreement in action". This lesson is echoed at RFM p.353: "The agreement of humans that is a presupposition of logic is not an agreement in opinions, much less in opinions on questions of logic". And his 1939 lectures could have left his audience in no doubt as to this point:

There is no opinion at all; it is not a question of opinion. They [the truths of logic] are determined by a consensus of action: a consensus of doing the same thing, reacting in the same way. There is a consensus but it is not a consensus of opinion. We all act the same way, walk the same way, count the same way.

In counting we do not express opinions at all. There is no opinion that 25 follows 24--nor intuition. We express opinions by means of counting. (LFM pp.183-4)

The rules of grammar must be agreed on--there must be agreement in such things as that 25 follows 24 in counting. But this agreement does not arise from the belief that this is the right way to count (we certainly have no opinions about such questions of logic); but neither does it arise from the belief that according to a grammatical rule, unless '25' comes after '24' the procedure cannot be called 'counting'. Rather, the suggestion is, we act in the same way, calling the same things 'counting', in so doing performing a task in itself as free from intentional antecedents as is walking.¹⁰

A more revealing statement of this attitude to agreement is found in the Investigations §§240-242. In §240, agreement on whether a rule

¹⁰ This is not to postulate a causal mechanism to explain why one acts in these ways. The naturalistic proposal attributed to Wittgenstein in this section is just that language-mastery is founded on reactions to and with signs; the qualification 'natural' indicates the absence of prior intentional states explaining these reactions. (Wittgenstein appears to deny that statements of causal connections are ever explanatory. He certainly wants to deny that causal explanations can be foundational accounts of language-mastery: "Causal necessity. The laws of nature are not outside phenomena. They are part of language and of our way of describing things", 1930-1932 Lectures, p.79.)

has been followed is said to be "part of the framework on which the working of our language is based"; the possibility of making true or false statements, giving descriptions for example, depends upon there being such a framework. And in §241, in response to the objection that this makes the truth and falsity of these statements decided by agreement on what is true and false, Wittgenstein replies: "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". The distinction here between saying and the language used is illuminated by Zettel §630 where, discussing a claim to resemblance (the details are not relevant here), Wittgenstein says: "It is manifested only in the expressions which he is inclined to use; not in something he uses those expressions to say". We should take it then that to say something is to utter some sounds with meaning; to use an expression, or to use language, is, by contrast, to construe the utterance naturalistically, as just a sequence of noises. If this is right, the agreement that §241 requires is an agreement in actions--in the sounds made in response to certain circumstances. This is an agreement not in opinions for as yet the signs report nothing, but an agreement in behaviour.

This agreement on the grammar of the language is the "framework" in which true and false statements arise; the agreement is a necessary condition for there to be such a thing as "comparing utterances with reality". PI §242 speaks rather of agreement in definitions. Thus, for example, there must be agreement that a certain definition governs the correct use of some term; so if a certain definition is to be the norm for correctly saying that something is 'one metre long', there must be no dispute over whether

it is this definition, used in this way, that settles the sensible use of such expressions as 'This is one metre long'. This agreement in definitions or rules of grammar is natural, which is to say that there is shared normative behaviour. Until agreement in normative behaviour arises there is no truth or falsity because there is no framework of rules of grammar: the agreement just is agreement on these rules.

We might now say that rules of grammar in fact drop out of the explanation (just as meaning drops out, PG p.41). It is not as though there is agreement that some thing--a rule--is the right one to use, for there is in fact no such thing. To hold that there is, and to trace what it is correct to do to such a thing says should be done is, once more, to crave a logical mechanism. All that is really accomplished by invoking rules here is to speak about a certain pattern of normative behaviour. This behaviour is directed at particular occasions of the use of expressions. If to say that there must be agreement in the rules for the use of 'one metre long' is not to say that there must be agreement that some thing--a rule connecting a certain length with the expression 'one metre long'--is to be employed, the agreement that there is such a rule is to be taken as no more than an agreement in normative reactions to occasions in which someone says such things as 'This box is one metre wide'. To be following a grammatical rule just is to respond normatively, saying 'That's senseless', or by taking the claim to make sense. To stress, agreement in rules of grammar is constituted by agreement in reactions to utterances. Agreement in definitions, if naturalistically construed, is simply an agreement in natural

reactions.¹¹

It appears clear from these passages that Wittgenstein took this step into a naturalistic account of grammatical rules, so avoiding the regress of rules of grammar to heed rules of grammar. But it is also clear that the naturalism introduced here must extend to more than the grammatical rules. If normativity is constituted by natural reactions, the utterances which are the objects of these natural reactions must themselves be the products of natural reactions.

Wittgenstein suggests just this in PI §242:

If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgements. This seems to abolish logic, but does not do so.--It is one thing to describe methods of measurement, and another to obtain and state results of measurement. But what we call 'measuring' is partly determined by a certain constancy in results of measurement.

Not only must there be agreement in normative judgements (agreement in definitions or rules) but agreement in those first-order judgements the well-formedness of which is the concern of the normative judgements. Normative judgements deal with the sense or the absence of sense in first-order judgements, those judgements making true or false statements about how non-intentional things are. But there must also be agreement in these first-order judgements if there is to be a language, Wittgenstein claims. What sort of agreement is this--agreement in opinions or agreement in reactions? If this agreement is indeed a condition for there to be a language--a condition for there to be statements saying anything true or false--

¹¹ One might say, as part of a normative reaction, 'That contravenes the rule for the expression'. But, according to the present account, such a reaction is not backed by a determining rule. In making such a statement one is not diagnosing a failing in the expression, but manifesting one's attitude that it is senseless.

it cannot be an agreement in opinions. A statement of the results of measurement, for example, becomes just that--a statement--only if some relation--agreement--holds between the utterance and some other utterances; only thus does the utterance express an opinion. In itself the utterance says nothing, hence its making sense cannot arise from an opinion. We should conclude then that the first-order judgements 'obeying' the rules of grammar are no less founded on natural reactions than the normative responses directed at them.

This is to reject one understanding of how agreement in reactions acts as a "framework" for a language. This understanding would have it that the meanings of the terms are held in place by natural reactions, and that these terms, their meanings naturalistically secured, can be put to use in making judgements, this activity moving within the naturalistic bounds but, within these bounds, not further naturalistically constrained. But it is not as if we were locked in a room free to move the furniture around as we like. Instead, it is as if the furniture were secured in place, our movements constrained by it as well as by the walls of the room. So our judgements are not only patterned by the shape of the grammar but are shaped by further natural phenomena, the reactions we are naturally inclined to make.

What then is meant by calling the norms a "framework"? Just that they determine the sense of the first-order natural reactions. We have a tendency to make utterances, some of which are in reaction to other utterances. Normative reactions settle which of the first-order reactions are a use of language (so which are candidates for truth or falsity), by allowing certain transformations and disallowing others, thus fixing the place of the first-order utterances in the network of language. This is not accomplished by the natural reactions

establishing rules which, if followed, will give first-order utterances sense. All is on the same level logically--all utterances are the fruit of natural reactions. The way in which the second-order natural reactions constrain the first-order reactions is in selecting which of the first-order reactions make sense and what sense they make. It is this constraint which makes these normative reactions into a framework for sense.

The structure of this thorough-going naturalism, and Wittgenstein's commitment to it, become clearer when we turn away from the concern with agreement to look at specific uses of language. We can consider what Wittgenstein says about two types of utterance--avowals and judgements about third-persons' mental states.

First, avowals. "By nature and a particular training, a particular education, we are disposed to give spontaneous expression to wishes in certain circumstances" (PI §441). But an utterance is the wish that such-and-such be the case only within a grammatical system--in itself, viewed in isolation from a grammatical practice, the utterance has no content. That is to say that the utterance does not report or describe the wish (PI §§582, 585), for only given a practice within which such an utterance in these conditions would be adjudged to say something about a wish is there a wish to be spoken about. The utterance is just the repetition of an expression; this "primitive reaction" is where the language-game begins (PI §290, p.218), not the end of a process starting from and reporting on a self-standing, grammar-independent, mental state. Instead, the utterance should be taken as an "expression" or "manifestation" ("Ausserung") of the attitude. So, "The statement 'I am expecting a bang at any moment' is an expression of expectation. This verbal

reaction is the movement of the pointer, which shows the object of the expectation" (Z §53, see also PG p.152).

To these naturalistic suggestions we should add Wittgenstein's comments at PI §244. A child cries when hurt; this is a "primitive, a natural" expression of pain; but the child is taught "new pain-behaviour", to say, 'I'm in pain', or 'It hurts', perhaps. Here "the verbal expression of pain replaces crying and does not describe it". Familiarly, Wittgenstein presents this account as "one possibility", but it is important to note that this is one possible explanation of how one learns the use of 'pain'. When at §245 Wittgenstein asks, "For how can I go so far as to try to use language to get between pain and its expression?", the point is clear: no account of language-mastery can make room for a report or a description of the pain if this is understood as a state to be identified by means of rules or criteria mediating between the pain and the expression 'I am in pain'. In place of such an intellectualist story, we should conclude that any avowal of pain must be a natural expression. Whatever the ambiguities in the phrase "one possibility", the expressive account of the use of 'pain' is not being called into question. Whatever account of the learning of 'pain' on offer, Wittgenstein's account of the mastery of 'pain' in first-person cases is clear.

Second, judgements of third-persons' mental states. Not only avowals of pain, but judgements that others are in pain are naturalistically founded. Wittgenstein at PI §310 stresses this point in opposition to an interlocuter arguing that there is evidence for a hidden mental state of pain:

I tell someone I am in pain. His attitude to me will then be that of belief; disbelief; suspicion; and so on. Let us assume he says: 'It's not so bad'.--Doesn't that prove that he believes in something behind the outward expression of pain? --His attitude is a proof of his attitude. Imagine not merely the words 'I am in pain' but also the answer 'It's not so bad' replaced by instinctive noises and gestures.

Just as the avowal of pain is to be naturalised--the utterance as instinctive is not in itself saying anything for content is given to the noises only within a normative practice--so too another's response to the avowal is to be taken naturalistically. It too is, at bottom, just the making of a noise. Against a particular background, within a particular practice, these noises become complaints and consolations. Rather than see third-person judgements about pains on the model offered by the behaviourist--as measuring the behaviour against identifying rules or criteria--this suggestion finds in such judgements a "primitive reaction to tend, to treat, the part that hurts when someone else is in pain" (Z §540). This is not to say that there is never an inference on the basis of the other's behaviour (see Z §539); rather, such an inference is made only within a grammatical practice (there is a language-game of inferring, Z §391), and the practice is founded on primitive reactions. "But what is the word 'primitive' meant to say here? Presumably that this sort of behaviour is pre-linguistic: that a language-game is based on it, that it is the prototype of a way of thinking and not the result of thought" (Z §541). Just as clearly as in the case of avowals of pain, the naturalistic account of language-mastery is taken as fundamental. The utterance in itself has no content, reflects no belief and represents no state of affairs; so far it is not a logical entity, no more part of a language any more than the child's cry. Once out in the open, made the objects of transformations and replacements in the

calculus of the grammar, the empty noises become candidates for content--they become sayings, reports or consolations.

This naturalistic viewpoint is expressed particularly trenchantly at Z §545:

Being sure that someone is in pain, doubting whether he is, and so on, are so many natural, instinctive, kinds of behaviour towards other human beings, and our language is merely an auxiliary to, and further extension of, this relation. Our language-game is an extension [Ausbau] of primitive behaviour. (For our language-game is behaviour.) (Instinct.)¹²

Primitive behaviour--pre-linguistic behaviour--becomes linguistic by elaboration into a language-game. The grammatical rules constituting a language-game are not independent of and applied to the primitive noises and gestures; rather, the application of the rules is itself part of the primitive. In reaching a certain elaboration the primitive behaviour becomes a language-game, a way of behaving within which there are normative reactions, so rules which are followed or broken. In this way the linguistic is constructed out of the primitive; there are no unexplained heeding of rules of grammar, so no outstanding understandings of rules. All is naturalised, the calculus being constituted by natural dispositions to make and respond to utterances.

That Wittgenstein's naturalism runs so deep--underpins uses of language at all orders--should not be surprising. At the second step of the progression away from realism it was admitted that a person's

¹² (i) 'Ausbau' might be better translated as elaboration or construction. (ii) In this passage Wittgenstein suggests that "natural" reactions are those without words (the child's cry, for example), which are elaborated (after training perhaps) into linguistic behaviour ('It hurts'). In what follows I use the term 'natural reaction' to include the elaborated linguistic behaviour as well as non-linguistic behaviour of which it is an elaboration.

behaviour (the utterance of 'The box is one metre wide', for example) is not caused by some mental state of understanding. At the third step it was agreed that the rules of grammar which allowed that the utterance was sensible themselves have no determining role. At each step a putative explanation is dismissed and a gap is left: why did one utter the words, 'The box is one metre wide', and the words, 'That series of words is sensible'? The replacement explanation on offer in each case is the same: both are instinctive noises, the products of natural reactions. Logic on this view arises out of (but does not transcend) these natural foundations--signs and natural reactions to signs. All our utterances take their content from their place in the nexus of natural reactions, those stating truths of logic and semantics as well as those speaking about the world. "It is in language that it's all done", says Wittgenstein (PG p.143), but language in all its complexity, construed as part of the natural order of things

This is the full weight of the thesis that "'following a rule' is a practice" (PI §202). The single quotation marks indicate the priority of grammar, reflecting the fact that for one to be following a rule one must stand in a certain relation to a rule of grammar specifying the correct use of the sign 'follows a rule'. But this rule exists only to the extent that there is a certain pattern of normative behaviour, a way of reacting to other behaviour, calling it rule following or not. At all levels there are only natural responses, a natural practice with and towards utterances. To follow a rule is to have a certain pattern of natural reactions against the background of a natural normative practice focussing on the phrase 'follows a rule'.

4.5 The Unimportance of Naturalism

Wittgenstein says, surely rightly, that we take language to be governed by rules (PG p.63). A person's ability to use terms correctly is, we believe, founded on and explained by his grasp of rules. At one point Wittgenstein distinguishes between seeing a phenomenon "from inside" and seeing the same phenomenon "from outside" by an analogy with sitting in a darkened cinema "entering into the happenings in the film. Now the lights are turned on, though the film continues on the screen. But suddenly we see it 'from outside' as movements of light and dark patches on a screen" (PG p.146). What is seen from the one perspective is not seen from the other. From outside one does not see the car chase, and from inside one does not see the movement of the patches.¹³ But in a clear sense what is seen from outside constitutes what can be seen from the inside; the movement of dark and light patches is all there really is--the rest is illusion. Our comparison of language with games played according to rules is, one might think, an "inside" view of language. From this perspective are apparent visible such things as people meaning things, following rules and having attitudes. From "outside", viewed naturalistically, there are reactions to and with signs and noises; one perceives such utterances as 'he means that p', 'he follows rule R', and 'he believes p', but one does not see those phenomena which are brought about by the practice with these utterances. The conviction that languages, like games, are governed by rules is, according to the naturalistic account, an illusion

¹³ At least, not in the same sense of 'sees' in which one sees the car chase.

sustained by the normative practice. The illusion here is double. Not only is the belief that rules are followed false, the naturalist will say, but it is no less illusory to find here a belief of any sort. Both the belief that there are rules and the belief itself arise from within and are constituted by the flux of natural reactions. There is, we might say, an ideology of the mental and the logical, just as according to some we have an ideology of morals, the having of moral sentiments no less than the content of these sentiments being illusions sustained by non-moral phenomena.

Wittgenstein again characterises the difference between naturalism and a belief in logical phenomena in terms of a difference in perspective on the same object at Zettel §711:

There is a way of looking at electrical machines and installations (dynamoes, radio stations etc., etc.) which sees these objects as arrangements of copper, iron, rubber etc. in space, without any preliminary understanding. And this way of looking at them might lead to some interesting results. It is quite analogous to looking at a mathematical proposition as an ornament. --It is of course an absolutely strict and correct conception; and the characteristic and difficult thing about it is that it looks at the object without any preconceived idea (as it were from a Martian point of view), or perhaps more correctly: it upsets the normal preconceived idea (runs athwart it).

To take a mathematical proposition as an ornament is "formalism, but of a good sort" (Z §709, see also PG p.72). What formalists are taken to miss is just the meanings of signs; but when meaning is construed as the place of a sign in a grammatical system--a pattern of transformations and replacements--the formalist can embrace meanings (PG p.40, BB p.4). The "good sort" of formalism is that which takes a mathematical proposition (a contentful sign) to be the sign with its systematic role. This naturalistic conception of the mathematical proposition is "absolutely strict and correct"; one who looks at

mathematicians' activities without a "preconceived idea" will see the signs and their transformations.¹⁴

The preconceived idea here is no doubt that of the "crystalline purity" of logic (PI §108), the belief in a logical mechanism. The impetus towards naturalism grows out of the realisation that there is no such logical mechanism. But it does not follow from this that a belief in logic is simply false. This is a conclusion Wittgenstein resists--"This seems to abolish logic, but does not do so", he writes at PI §242 after indicating that agreement in natural reactions must extend to judgements as well as definitions. A belief in logic does not have to be a belief in a logical mechanism. What logic really is, Wittgenstein holds, is revealed in the grammar of such phrases as 'is a consequence of', 'follows from', 'contradicts'. To the extent that there is a grammatical practice with these terms, logic is not abolished. But this suggests that the distinction between an ideological and a naturalistic account is too simple. We should distinguish two types of belief within the ideological--correct and incorrect. Included in the latter category is the belief in logic as a logical mechanism, whilst a belief in logic the content of which extends no further than allowed by the grammar of logical terms is a correct ideological belief.¹⁵ Given now that the naturalistic perspective is "absolutely strict and correct", and that the ideology of the logical mechanism is absolutely incorrect, what should be said

¹⁴ The clearest statement of this attitude is W pp.103-105 ("The truth in formalism is that every syntax can be conceived of as a system of rules of a game", p.103).

¹⁵ To invoke the cinema analogy again, one might see a film of a car chase; this sequence, taken out of its context in the film, might be taken as a car race. This compound illusion corresponds to an incorrect ideological belief.

about a correct ideology of the logical? What value has this inside account of the world?

Wittgenstein's answer is unmistakable: all philosophical interest pertains to the ideological account of human activities.

Philosophical problems arise within the ideology and must be addressed from within that perspective. Naturalism has no relevance to the sort of philosophical inquiry Wittgenstein is proposing. This attitude is expressed particularly clearly in a number of passages in the Philosophical Grammar. Thus Wittgenstein writes:

We are interested in language as a procedure according to explicit rules, because philosophical problems are misunderstandings which must be removed by clarifications of the rules according to which we are inclined to use words. We consider language from one point of view only. (PG p.68)

Philosophical problems are confusions in our way of seeing the world. We take language to be governed by rules but we make mistakes about what these rules in fact prescribe; we get entangled in our grammatical rules. The task of philosophy is to address these confusions, untying the knots in our thinking by clarifying the prescriptions of the rules of grammar. Hence philosophy--the study of "the particular individual worries that we call 'philosophical problems'" (PG p.193)--must be a grammatical investigation. This is stressed time and again: "the only thing that is of interest to me is the content of a proposition and the content of a proposition is something internal to it" (PG p.63); the philosopher's interest is in what happens "considered as a game"--"we are not interested in any empirical facts about language, considered as empirical facts" (PG p.66); an account of language "as a psychophysical mechanism" is irrelevant, for such an account "stands outside the calculus; but we

need an explanation which is part of the calculus" (PG p.70); "What interests us in the sign, the meaning which matters for us is embodied in the grammar of the sign" (PG p.87).

This account of the source and proper reply to the problems of philosophy will be explored in detail in the next chapter. In the remainder of this section I will outline what is perhaps Wittgenstein's clearest example of an incorrect ideological belief, and the correct understanding of the matter which arises from attention to grammar. The issue is the nature of mental states. Just as logic is in danger of being squeezed between the denial of logical mechanisms and the propounding of naturalism, so too are mental states. But, Wittgenstein holds, there is space enough for logic to breathe; likewise, surrendering a "mythology of psychology" infused by logical mechanisms does not force us to behaviourism. In each case there is claimed to be a middle ground between an incorrect ideology and the complete naturalistic rejection of the ideological. An exploration of this middle ground will serve as an example of Wittgenstein's proposed philosophical method as well as casting light on what is left by way of logic when the non-realist step has been taken.

We can approach the issue by focussing on this argument: if the grammar of psychological terms is autonomous, the conditions for the correct ascription of mental states to others will be the behaviour of these others--all inner states stand in need of outward criteria;¹⁶ and if the criteria or grammatical rules governing an

¹⁶ PI §580--note that it is in fact 'inner states' and not inner states which are said to be in need of outward criteria. The quotation marks have the same significance here as in PI §202 (on which, see the previous section).

expression's use specify the meaning of the expression (PG p.63 for example), it follows that there are in fact no mental states. To say that John believes that Geneva is in France is to talk about the outward state--John's behaviour--which features in the rules for the correct use of the expression 'John believes that Geneva is in France'.

This argument misrepresents Wittgenstein's position. He does indeed hold to the following principles: the meaning of an expression is given by describing its use; understanding (for example) is not a process causing the behaviour which 'manifests' understanding; and one who does not know that certain behaviour warrants assertions with the form, 'John believes that p', does not grasp the meaning of the assertion. It does not follow from these principles, however, that the meaning of an utterance such as 'John believes that p' is equivalent to the meaning of a statement asserting that John behaves in such-and-such a way (or, indeed, some disjunctions of such statements). The mistake the argument makes is to take too crude an idea of the use of an expression. What Wittgenstein intends by the slogan that meaning is use is that the sense of an expression is given by the place of the expression in the system of grammar. This place can be spelled out by describing how the expression is in fact used--the circumstances which allow and disallow its assertion, but also the transformations between this and other expressions which are allowed and disallowed. This whole network of the term's use is what one grasps when one understands the term. In focussing on just the assertoric use in third-person cases the role of behaviour is made paramount, but when we look more widely this motivation towards behaviourism disappears. We can look to two sequences of comments on

behaviourism in Wittgenstein's writings--Investigations §300f and Philosophical Grammar pp.77-87--to throw light on this wider use.

The general outlook Wittgenstein states thus: when John understands the word 'blue' he acts in certain ways perhaps, but

There isn't a further process hidden behind [these actions] which is the real understanding, accompanying and causing these manifestations ... If I am now asked if I think that there's no such thing as understanding but only manifestations of understanding, I must answer that this question is as senseless as the question whether there is a number three. I can only describe piecemeal the grammar of the word 'understand' and point out that it differs from what one is inclined to portray without looking closely. We are like the little painter Klecksel who drew two eyes on a man's profile, since he knew that human beings have two eyes. (PG p.80)

We are here offered four lessons: first, understanding is not a process causing one to act in a certain way; second, it is however senseless to say that there is no understanding, only manifestations of understanding; third, what understanding is is revealed by a study of the grammar of the term 'understands'; fourth, we are inclined to mistake the grammar of the term. What is this understanding distinct from a causal process, but also distinct from the behaviour? Heeding the third lesson will lead to the answer.

It is clear that there is an important distinction between the behavioural criteria for saying that one understands and the understanding for which these are criteria: "What we call 'understanding' is not the behaviour--whatever it might be--that shows us the understanding, but a state of which this behaviour is a sign. And that is a statement about the grammar of denoting such a state" (PG p.84). The point here can be put in this way: the notion of what is being talked about is itself governed by rules of grammar; paying attention to these rules, we will not then say that in

referring to the understanding we are speaking of the behaviour; to claim that this is the case is just to fail to grasp the idea of talking about one thing rather than another. The refusal to countenance this reduction is based on the same principles as Wittgenstein's rejection of reductionist suggestions for logic and arithmetic. The naturalistic account takes logical and mathematical compulsion to be "anthropological" phenomena, but the propositions of logic and mathematics are shielded from the empirical foundations of the practice--"the logical 'must' is a component part of the propositions of logic, and these are not propositions of human natural history" (RFM p.353). Why not? "Why ... should I not say that mathematical propositions ... express matters of experience? Only because they just do not" (RFM p.253). What a proposition expresses is determined by the grammar of 'expresses'. Content itself is an ideological phenomenon: what is correctly called 'the content' of certain signs is determined by rules of grammar. There is then no question of what is really being said by some expression over and above what the grammar allows to be said.

Rules of grammar point to a distinction between behaviour and understanding: so, for example, we say that one must understand before one can act in a way which manifests one's understanding (PG p.45); we say that we can see that a person understands but not see a person's understanding (see PI §453); and, of course, we hold that there is an internal relation between the understanding of a sentence 'p' and what is understood, but not between the behaviour characteristic of understanding 'p' and that state of affairs which makes 'p' true. Only if these grammatical lessons are ignored can one think that behaving as if one understands and understanding are the

same thing. The essence of the world--what there really can be--is expressed in grammar, and, as Wittgenstein makes clear, our grammar does not allow us to elide understanding and behaviour.

So then, one might still insist, what is understanding? It is not a causal process but is different from behaviour, so what is it? At PG p.84 Wittgenstein offers an answer in addition to these grammatical notes: "What we call 'understanding' is a psychological phenomenon that has a special connection with the phenomena of learning and using our human language". But this is not likely to satisfy the desire for an explanation of the nature of understanding: what is a "psychological phenomenon" distinct from a causal process, and what "special connection" can there be between the psychological phenomenon and the learning and use of language? Wittgenstein's whole point here is that these insistent demands for an explanation of the nature of understanding over and above the clarification of the grammar of 'understand' are to be resisted. To demand more than the grammar gives is to demand too much. To ask after what understanding is is like asking what the number three is: in both cases the questions are empty if they are not requests for a clarification of the grammar of the terms. Wittgenstein appeals to an analogy at PG p.85: "The psychological process of understanding is in the same case as the arithmetical object Three. The word 'process' in the one case, and the word 'object' in the other produce a false grammatical attitude to the word". We see the grammar of the term 'understands' and note that understanding is distinct from its manifestation; but this we take to indicate that the understanding is a process which brings about these things which we call 'acting as if one understands'. In the same way we try to distinguish between

mathematical statements including the numeral '3' and the number three which makes it the case that these statements are true or false. Here we are misled by an analogy with the explanations of physics, Wittgenstein believes, thinking that the relation between understanding and its manifestation is like that of cause to effect. This hypostatisation of understanding--seeking something to correspond to the substantive term (PG p.108)--is what lies behind the repeated request for an explanation of what understanding really is.

This analysis of the problem of the status of mental states is addressed in a series of comments around PI §300. At §304 Wittgenstein's interlocutor charges, " '... you again and again reach the conclusion that the sensation itself is a nothing'". The reply is this:

--Not at all. It is not a something, but not a nothing either! The conclusion was only that a nothing would serve just as well as a something about which nothing could be said. We have only rejected the grammar which tries to force itself on us here.

The conclusion referred to is that drawn from the discussion of the beetles in boxes at §293. Such private beetles would not enter into the meaning of the term 'beetle' in these people's language. But does this mean that mental states over and above their behavioural manifestations are nothing, that there are no such things? This would be wrong; to deny that these states enter into linguistic activity as cause to effect (so giving content to the uttered noises) is to deny just one idea of what mental states are, an account fuelled by a mistaken perception of the grammar of mental states. The "not a something, but not a nothing either" echoes the claim in the

quotation above from PG p.80: understanding is not a causal process; but understanding is still distinct from its manifestations. What is being denied is not that there is an inner process of understanding, but one picture of the inner process (§305), that, namely, of understanding as a logical mechanism reaching out through logical space, infusing words with meaning. At §307 Wittgenstein's interlocutor inquires:

"Are you not really a behaviourist in disguise? Aren't you at bottom really saying that everything except human behaviour is a fiction?" --If I do speak of a fiction, then it is of a grammatical fiction.¹⁷

That which is being ruled out as a fiction--that which truly is a nothing--is the logical mechanism. This is the fiction introduced by faulty reflection on or attitude to the true grammar of such terms as 'understands'. But it does not follow from rejecting this false account of mental states that there is nothing but behaviour.

This line of thought is summed up at §308. The challenge of behaviorism arises because we are misled by a false analogy; we are impressed by the fact that we distinguish understanding from its manifestation, and this inspires us with the project of finding out more about what understanding really is. But now we find that there is nothing which a process of understanding can be such that it will explain certain properties of understanding--in particular the internal relation between understanding and what is understood.

And now the analogy which was to make us understand our thoughts falls to pieces. So we have to deny the yet uncomprehended processes in the yet unexplained medium. And now it looks as if we had denied mental processes. And

¹⁷ See also BB p.69: "'Is there then no mind, but only a body?' Answer: The word 'mind' has meaning i.e. it has a use in our language."

naturally we don't want to deny them.

But the right step, the one that prevents the rejection of the explanatory mechanism pushing us into behaviorism, is to point out that it is not mental states--those things we ordinarily talk about, ascribe, and have--which are being denied, but just one philosophical account of what these states 'really' are.

The lesson here is just this: "Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is" (PI §373). To have the grammar of 'understands' clarified, but then to ask, what is understanding really?, is to hanker after a mythology of psychology (PG p.56), an account of an internally determining causal process. And this is just to confuse the conceptual with the causal; the grammar reveals the function of understanding and this function is instantiated in some causal structure. But this realm of causal explanations is of no interest to the conceptual inquiry.¹⁸

4.6 Grammar and Privacy

In 2.5 I suggested that Wittgenstein's rejection of a private language follows the following strategy: first, to argue that a private language founded on an intellectualist account of language-mastery must be surrendered in the face of the indeterminacy of pictures; second, to establish that the correct view of what language-mastery consists in leaves open no possibility of a private language. The first claim was supported by an exegesis of those passages usually taken to harbour 'the' private language argument, in particular PI §§258 and 265. With Wittgenstein's positive account of

¹⁸ I comment further on this account of mental states in 5.2 below.

language-mastery now in place, I will here provide support for the second component of the rejection of privacy.

If we heed the indeterminacy thesis we should characterise a private linguist as one following rules the content of which no one else can know. No explanation of how this is possible is at hand now; we are left with the bare hypothesis of privacy. This hypothesis, to be sensible, must respect the grammar of the expression 'follows a rule'. The alternative to intellectualism, Wittgenstein holds, is the autonomy of grammar; logical phenomena such as rule following are shaped by the grammatical rules for the use of the terms in question. There is now no question of the rules of grammar being right or wrong, corresponding or failing to correspond with some self-standing intentional states or way of the world. So if it is true that the hypothesis of private rule following is disallowed by the grammar of talk of rule following, the hypothesis is empty--it cannot hope to be a statement of how the world is or can be. According to this perspective, the rules of grammar are visible in the quotidian, non-philosophical uses of terms, in the "actual use of language". To solve philosophical puzzles one must pay attention to this use. A helpful strategy in clarifying this use is to invent "intermediate cases" (PI §122), sketching possible situations then asking a competent speaker, does this term extend to this situation? Such situations allow one to chart the network of a term's use, the calculus of allowed and disallowed transformations, so as to pinpoint the sources of philosophical error.¹⁹

Wittgenstein employs just such a strategy to inquire into the

¹⁹ The nature of this method of inquiry is discussed in 5.5 below.

hypothesis of private rule following. At PI §237 we are asked to imagine one applying a pair of compasses to a drawn line, with the one arm of the compasses tracing the line and drawing a second line with the other arm, opening and shutting the compasses as he proceeds, studying the original line with care as if it determined the changes made in the angle of the arms. But we find it hard to see any regularity in the opening and shutting of the compass. Is this private rule follower really following a rule? Wittgenstein concludes that "Here perhaps one really would say: 'The original seems to intimate to him which way he is to go. But it is not a rule'".

At PI §207 Wittgenstein constructs a similar case and here the conclusion is less equivocal. Here we come across a tribe of people who appear to have a language, so much so that if we were to prevent them speaking their behaviour would become disordered. But "when we try to learn their language we find it impossible to do so. For there is no regular connection between what they say, the sounds they make, and their actions". Do these people have a language, private from us? "There is not enough regularity for us to call it 'language'", Wittgenstein replies. If there is no regularity we will not say that it is a language that these people have. We might put this claim thus: regularity is a logically necessary condition for a language; but Wittgenstein will of course say that this is just to remind us of a rule of grammar--one cannot say 'it is a language but there is no regularity'. The point of the example is to elicit the rule, not to set one to thinking about the preconditions for language.²⁰

²⁰ The conclusion of §237 can be read in one of two ways. First, if one is convinced that there is no regularity in the opening and shutting of the compasses then one will perhaps say that the person is not following a rule. Second, the more convinced one becomes that there is no regularity the more convinced one will become that the

There can be no quarrel with this claim about the use of the terms 'rule' and 'language' I think. Wittgenstein adopts this grammatical perspective in PI §261 too, there questioning the hypothesis that the private linguist has a private sensation, or indeed, a private something. These terms, 'sensation' and 'something', are terms governed by grammatical rules; the question is whether in saying that one has a sensation or something that another logically can never be sure of, is to break these grammatical rules. The answer, Wittgenstein takes it, is that these rules are broken.

To support these claims Wittgenstein considers a rich variety of situations and the responses they invite. It is not to the present purpose to explore these further. Instead, the point here is that the inquiry must now be a grammatical one, according to Wittgenstein. We are to explore how expressions such as 'follows a rule', 'has a language / sensation / something', are in fact used, and in this we engage with an instinctive capacity to speak a language rather than an ability to reason a priori with concepts. Once the model of a pictorial private language is removed, one is invited to agree that all questions about what there can be are settled by grammar; and taking up this invitation one is further invited to accept the conclusion that there can be no private language.²¹

person is not following a rule, so that when one is fully convinced that there is no regularity one will be fully inclined to say that there is no rule following. To find the second lesson in the passage will make the conclusion no less forthright than that in §207.

²¹ Wittgenstein writes at PI §199: "Is what we call 'obeying a rule' something that it would be possible for only one man to do, and to do only once in his life? --This is of course a note on the grammar of the expression 'to obey a rule'". (McGinn discusses this and other similar claims in Wittgenstein on Meaning, pp.77-84.) Kripke's thesis that only within a community can there be a language is then to be assessed at the grammatical level. (The thesis I think is wrong, but there is no room to argue that here.)

CHAPTER 5: DISCOVERY AND DESCRIPTION

5.1 Introduction

In 0.1 I divided Wittgenstein's later doctrines on philosophy into two broad categories. First, there are the negative theses; these constitute a critique of what I am calling scientific philosophy, that activity which seeks to discover truths, explain phenomena, and perhaps revise our use of language, all by means of logical inquiry. Second, there is a method offered for revealing philosophical errors. This method--describing the grammar, or the actual use of language--characterises the inquiry Wittgenstein calls 'philosophy', an "heir" to the explorations pursued by the scientific philosopher (BB p.28).¹ A third group of doctrines can here be distinguished. These are diagnostic suggestions. The errors of philosophy arise because we mistake the grammar of terms: we are misled by analogies and similes; we project the means of representation onto the world; we get entangled in rules. In this chapter I will be concerned for the most part with the first and second categories.²

The negative doctrines and the new method championed are independent in this way: it might be that the negative claims are correct and that nothing is to be gained by doing more than describing the grammar of the language. It does not follow from this

¹ It will be clear from the context where the term 'philosophy' is being used to refer to the activity Wittgenstein is championing and where to refer to the activity he is criticising. The distinction is otherwise made here by means of the terms 'new', 'reformed', or 'descriptive' philosophy on the one hand, and 'old', 'reformed', or 'scientific' philosophy on the other.

² Baker and Hacker list and discuss the diagnostic suggestions in Wittgenstein: Understanding and Meaning, pp.481-488.

that there is a worthwhile project of doing as much as describing this use. An argument against scientific philosophy is not of necessity an argument for a descriptivist method. I will first explore the grounds for the negative doctrines, then I will inquire whether there is a good reason to adopt the proposed method.

A critique of the pretensions of philosophical inquiry is likely to take one of two forms. First, it might seek to demonstrate that the instruments of logical inquiry--argument and conceptual analysis--can give no real justification for the conclusions of such an inquiry. Second, one might attempt to show that philosophical theses, the claims for which justification is sought, are not well-formed, having no clear content. If the latter claim were correct there could be no justification of these theses, but the converse does not hold. All the same, philosophy without justification is no philosophy at all, the scientific philosopher will surely say. What we seek from philosophical inquiry are reasons for believing certain claims, just as physics is concerned with the assessment of competing accounts of how the physical world is.

We will concentrate on three claims about philosophy which Wittgenstein accepts:

- (1) philosophy can make no discoveries about what can or must be the case;
- (2) all philosophical utterances break rules of grammar, so are senseless;
- (3) all violations of the rules of grammar can be revealed by employing the descriptive method.

The second claim clearly takes the second critical route--philosophical utterances lack sense, hence they lack justification. If (2) is right, (1) follows immediately of course. But (2) is I

think hard to justify without appealing to (1), and this will be found to take its license from the other critical strategy, showing that no philosophical theses can be justified by logical inquiry. What I will argue is that (1) follows from the account of logic offered in the last chapter. This argument will be given in 5.2. If this line of thought is right it will fulfil the expectation announced earlier--that the most promising route to the doctrines on philosophy is via the account of logic in the later writings.

In 5.3 I offer an argument for a revised version of (1)--that philosophical inquiry can lead to no significant discoveries--which starts from weaker premises than the argument in 5.2. The argument lacks the obvious correctness of that in 5.2, but it does succeed in presenting a strong challenge to a certain frequently-found species of scientific philosopher. This argument too turns on justification, not well-formedness.

The correctness of thesis (2) is explored in 5.4. Some exegetical argument is needed to secure the attribution of this thesis to Wittgenstein. I suggest that to the extent that Wittgenstein does hold this it cannot be a distinct route to the denial of scientific philosophy. Thesis (2) can however be understood to follow from thesis (1), but, I argue, this is at the price of rendering Wittgenstein's proposed method for revealing the errors in scientific philosophy less interesting.

Wittgenstein's new method has the ambition of describing the "linguistic facts", but an argument in 5.4 calls into question the worth of such a procedure. The status of these facts is such that there is no longer a notion of an objective grammatical error. In 5.5 I suggest that even if that conclusion were wrong, the descriptive

approach would be uninteresting: it offers little that is novel by way of method, and some virtues Wittgenstein advertises it as having it does not have.

5.2 Logic and Discovery

Philosophical inquiry, as scientifically conceived, is founded on the investigation of logical properties and relations. Thus a typical philosophical result has the form: because this thing has this property it must be that it also has this property; or, because this proposition is true, that proposition must also be true. These conclusions represent discoveries it is hoped, but this is in one of two senses: either they are discoveries about how the world really is, independent of how people think it is; or they are discoveries about how the world is taken to be, being truths about the conceptual structure born of human invention. These two conceptions of philosophical discovery correspond to two conceptions of the status of logical truth of course. In the first place one might take it that the truths of logic track how things are in the world, such that when one learns the meanings of terms and correctly tracks the determinate relations between these meanings, one is also tracking relations between those things in the world to which the terms refer. Logical relations are truth-preserving because logical inquiry runs parallel to the structure of the world. On the other hand one might hold that logical relations are autonomous from any objective structure of the world--the conclusions of philosophical inquiry are not discoveries about the state of a human-independent world. But still, one might claim, these conclusions are discoveries: the meanings of terms are conventional perhaps, but, once conventionally fixed, determinate

logical relations arise between statements using the terms. Logical inquiry heeds these conventional meanings so uncovering the hidden structure of our view of the world, the conclusions having the implicit form: given that we take this thing to have this property, we must also take it to have that property. In both cases the philosopher will say that he is discovering the essence of the world, although in the latter case he will allow that this essence is not independent of human activities.³

Wittgenstein rejects both conceptions of logical relations and so both conceptions of philosophical discovery. Both demand an incoherent epistemology of logic, depending upon a faculty for grasping an entity associated with a term--its 'meaning' or 'content'--which displays its logical relations to other such entities in an unmistakable way. But there are and can be no such entities. Hence our logical practice cannot track the structure of an independent world; nor does it make sense to find logical powers in conventional meanings, taking understanding a term to be a process determining what must be said if one is to talk sense.

In surrendering the idea of the logical mechanism one is giving up the picture of rules for the correct use of terms reaching out into as yet unexplored realms of logical space. Gone is the idea that once the meanings of terms are settled it is determined on the basis of statements employing those meanings that other (perhaps more interesting) statements must be true. There is nothing left to

³ The distinction is the one which Strawson makes between "descriptive" and "revisionary" metaphysics (Individuals pp.9-11). "Descriptive metaphysics is content to describe the actual structure of our thought about the world", "Aiming to lay bare the most general features of our conceptual structure". The revisionary metaphysician can "produce a better structure" for our thought, one paying heed to how the world really is.

sustain this 'must'. In a passage which could well be taken to summarise the discussion of the last chapter, Wittgenstein puts the point succinctly:

"From 'all', if it is meant like this, this must surely follow!"--If it is meant like what? Consider how you mean it. Here perhaps a further picture comes to your mind--and that is all you have got.--No, it is not true that it must--but it does follow: we perform this transition. And we say: If this does not follow, then it simply wouldn't be all--and that only shows how we react with words in such a situation-- (RFM p.42)

The meaning of a term is not some entity associated with the term, making it the case that the use is correct or incorrect. From the fact that all the trees have been cut down it indeed follows that this tree has been cut down; but this claim, Wittgenstein holds, disguises a rule of grammar, namely, one cannot say 'all the trees have been cut down but one has been left standing'. This rule of grammar is what specifies the meaning of 'all'; if one person were unable to conclude from another saying 'All the trees have been cut down' that this tree has been cut down, the term 'all' in the other's statement would not mean all. To claim that if one proposition is true, another must be true, is to adopt a rule of grammar (RFM p.50), and this is to say that one "reacts with words" in a normative way; an argument is found convincing and this conviction is manifested in action.⁴

The first paragraph of the above quotation states what cannot be going on when one claims to have made a logical inference. The second

⁴ RFM p.309. Wittgenstein there adds, "The 'must' shows that he has gone in a circle". The content of the premise for an inference is affected by those conclusions 'drawn' from it. A new conclusion, once accepted, becomes a criterion for the identity of the premise--what the terms in the premise mean. So to hold a new inference to be correct is to adopt a new criterion for what the premise says.

paragraph indicates what Wittgenstein believes to be happening. From the negative point alone--the denial of the logical mechanism--one can conclude that there is no room for the discovery of truths by logical inference, so no scientific philosophy. If the proper ambition of philosophy is to uncover patterns of logical determinacy, tracing pre-existing inferential connections, then the ambition cannot be fulfilled for, simply, there are no such patterns or connections awaiting discovery.⁵ We believe that in coming to learn the meaning of an expression we grasp a rule which, remaining with us, guides our use of the expression, its conditions of correct assertion and its logical relations with other expressions. If this belief were true there would be some fact in virtue of which statements about inferential connections could be correct or incorrect. Logical inquiry would have objective phenomena to discover, so philosophy would be more than just persuasion--all could wrongly believe that an inference was correct. But there is no logical mechanism, no "reservoir" of understanding from which correct use flows. There is no thing associated with an expression which can explain how one use of the expression is correct and another use incorrect, for all things can be variously interpreted--none suffice to carve out just one channel for the expression's use to follow. Whatever tale one goes on to tell about what in fact is going on when we use an expression correctly, the story so far puts the scientific philosopher out of work because it removes the cloak of objectivity from those things we call 'inferences'. If there is no fact about correctness over and above the undisputed use of the term 'correct',

⁵ Wittgenstein wants to leave room for the discovery of the "actual use" of language of course. This notion is explored in 5.5 below.

there is nothing to which the scientific philosopher is to pay heed. The scientist who, preparing to proclaim his discovery of a new particle, finds that his instrument readings are explained by fluctuations in the electricity supply, and not by sub-atomic phenomena, would not proceed. So the scientific philosopher aware that his 'readings'(the conclusions of his logical inquiry) could not be explained by objective logical phenomena, would give up his endeavour. Just as it might be interesting and rewarding for the scientist to inquire into how fluctuations in the electricity supply could produce these instrument readings, so it might be interesting to ask how one can come to believe that these procedures reveal logical connections between propositions. But, as interesting as this latter problem might be, it is not amenable to logical study, so it is not a problem inviting the participation of the scientific philosopher. His subject matter has been removed and his ambitions wrecked.

If Wittgenstein is right to reject the notion of a logical mechanism, the situation is really no different from that which arises when the notion of a magical process has been shown to be incoherent. It would follow from this incoherence that there is no sensible project of discovering what things have arisen by magic-- there just is nothing to discover. Logical inquiry, like the casting of spells, is based on a false view of the processes of the world; rejecting the logical mechanism is to reject scientific philosophy. The scientific philosopher, like the mathematician, is better seen as an inventor than as a discoverer (RFM pp.99, 111).

Wittgenstein at PI §242 resists the conclusion that to deny the logical mechanism is to abolish logic. But there is a clear and

obvious sense in which logic is abolished. What remains is a shell of what scientific philosophers assumed there to be. Without the logical mechanism we are left with just the ritual forms of logical inquiry, the practices and procedures of argument and analysis: like the magician's 'abracadabra', the philosopher's logical assessments are only going through the motions. In this situation a claim such as 'p follows logically from q' is simply false. If one is to avoid this conclusion it will be necessary to show that the claim does not mean what we ordinarily take it to mean--that p must be true if q is true. But Wittgenstein refuses any reductive move here. It is just false that the content of the statement 'p follows logically from q' should be given by something such as: we are persuaded to believe that if q is true then p must be true (see 4.5 above). It would be equally wrong to hold that the claim is meaningless. It might be that, on inspection, the notion of following from turns out to be incoherent. But it would be absurd to conclude from this that the scientific philosopher is saying nothing when he asserts that p follows from q. (What then is he saying? That if q is true p must be true.)

We should I think be forthright here: scientific philosophy is ruled out because logic is abolished. We believe that there are logical connections, and, moreover, it is impossible to imagine what human life could be like if this were not believed. The terms of logical assessment have a use in our language of course; but once we see that a claim such as 'p is true because q is true' does not describe a connection but rather makes one, we will say that logic has been abolished. This situation has a close connection (more than a parallel) with that in which we are left with mental states. So (as we saw in 4.5 above) Wittgenstein claims that "The word 'mind' has

meaning, i.e., it has a use in our language" (BB pp.69-70), but also that reference to a person's mental states cannot explain that person's behaviour, for there is no process of understanding "accompanying and causing ... manifestations" of understanding (PG p.80). The connection between a mental state and the behaviour we should ordinarily take it to cause is really like that between taste and fashion (BB p.143), or a sewing machine and its function (PG p.105). The second member of each pair is the criterion for the first: the designer's taste has changed because he designs different clothes and the machine is a sewing machine because it makes stitches and not tea. What now should we say of a claim such as: 'John applied for a French visa because he believes that Geneva is in France'? According to the inversion on offer, this is no explanation at all of John's behaviour. I would be wrong to accept it or offer it as such. Just as with logical assessments, I believe that something is true which turns out to be incoherent--there are no entities which could play the role that I take mental states to play. And is this not to abolish psychology, just as logic is abolished? The conclusion appears inescapable. Mental terms have a "use in our language" (just as there is a language game of inference), but not the use we believe them to have--making reference to states of affairs which cause one to act. Giving up this much is giving up on the mental; the forthright conclusion is that Wittgenstein is a behaviourist. He eschews reductionism for sure, but there are no mental states worthy of mention.

Can it be possible that reference to mental states really explains nothing (although we find it explanatory)? When I refer to John's belief to explain his behaviour am I really doing no more than

when I 'explain' why the machine sewed a stitch by saying it is a sewing machine? Wittgenstein might be taken to be offering a hint which might soften the blow here when he says: "But of course experience may show that the specific behaviour of understanding is a precondition for obedience to an order" (PG p.46). There is an internal relation between understanding the order and acting on it, so, on Wittgenstein's account of internality, understanding cannot explain why one acts. But there is no internal relation between certain behaviour--behaviour typical of people who will understand orders when given them--and understanding orders. Could it not be that when we say Jill can follow the order because she understands it that we are averting to the "specific behaviour of understanding" not the understanding, so offering a well-formed explanation? Perhaps, but some tricky manoeuvring will be needed here to avoid driving into the reductionist ditch.

The prospects for a reconciliation of folk-psychologistic practices with Wittgenstein's behaviourism needs a more thorough discussion than there is room for in this thesis. The point I am stressing--that point which introduces this problem--is that it is not possible to rest content with the practices (language-games) of inference and psychological explanation once the logical mechanism is denied.

5.3 Convention and Commitment

The argument of the previous section was premised on the denial of the thesis that logical truths are truths about how things are in a fully-objective world (logic as "ultraphysics") and the thesis that logical truths arise from conventional rules. Both theses require

there to be a logical mechanism, and to deny this mechanism is to deny that there is anything for logical inquiry to discover. In this section I will explore a potentially stronger argument against scientific philosophy. The claim will be that if the first thesis but not the second is denied, it still follows that scientific philosophy is an empty pursuit. That is, if the conventionalist alone were granted a logical mechanism there would still not be enough to warrant philosophical inquiry.

This stronger argument cannot turn just on discovery: if conventionalism is allowed the logical mechanism it needs there is room for the discovery of novel consequences of the rules specifying the proper use of terms. What I will argue is that this sort of discovery is not interesting enough to satisfy those urges moving scientific philosophers. This notion of sufficient interest is less clear cut than that of discovery of course, and the argument will be correspondingly less conclusive. The approach will be to describe what philosophical inquiry would come to if it were based on conventionalism about logic; this I think gives a very different picture of discovery from that to which most philosophers aspire. It is always possible however that some will settle for what little is on offer by way of discovery. I have no argument to show one would be wrong to be satisfied with this lesser discovery; but it seems clear that such an attitude would be very hard to comprehend (just as it would be hard to understand the attitude of one who continued seriously to cast spells after being convinced of their complete inefficacy).

The conventionalist philosopher can discover the objective logical consequences of the rules specifying the conventional

meanings given to terms, but what is the point of inquiring into these consequences? It is tempting to respond to this challenge with phrases such as: the conventionalist philosopher aims to discover that to which we are committed by the rules we have adopted, the structure of our conceptual scheme, or the way we see or think about the world.⁶ These answers make the project sound interesting and significant. But these ambitions, when clearly stated, are unreasonable. The responses come to much the same thing. The third is misleading for in discovering consequences we are discovering at most how we should see or think about the world; until these consequences are acknowledged they can play no role in our attitude to things. Likewise, to be interesting, the second suggestion must be that the philosopher uncovers structural relations between our rules in addition to those so far acknowledged; but this is interesting to the extent that this is the further structure of our scheme, that we take on some commitment to these new consequences because they are developments of the rules which constitute the structure we already acknowledge. Commitment is the key idea in all the responses; the conventionalist philosopher's task is to uncover what consequences we should accept given that they are consequences of our rules.

The commitment in question here is over and above a commitment to consequences following logically from rules. One might hold that one is committed to believing that p is a consequence of a rule R , but R might not be a rule one has adopted. In this case the commitment would be only hypothetical, a respect for the power of the logical mechanism. If this were all the commitment there were, the

⁶ See for example Strawson's comments on the nature of descriptive metaphysics quoted in the previous section.

conventionalist philosopher would be no more committed to the results of his inquiry into the consequences of his concepts or rules than to the results of his inquiry into the consequences of rules he made up for the fun of the logical game or the consequences of rules that other peoples employ. If conventionalist philosophy is to be more than a game or logical anthropology, the commitment introduced by the inquiry must go beyond a commitment to the power of logic: it must be a commitment to the truth of the conclusions, a commitment to take the results of the inquiry as normative because they follow from the rules one employs. We can distinguish these different sorts of commitments as logical and real. A real commitment to a judgement arises from a logical commitment to the same judgement only if this is a consequence of a rule one in fact employs. Only if conventionalism can afford real commitment can conventionalist philosophy command one's serious philosophical interest. However, I shall argue, conventionalism is in no position to allow real commitment: a logical commitment to the consequences of one's rules is not sufficient for a real commitment to these consequences.

It will help to start by looking at a conventionalist account of moral deliberation; the problems of real commitment to judgements thus arrived at will illuminate the sorts of difficulties confronting the conventionalist philosopher.⁷

Moral evaluation, on the conventionalist model, will proceed by confronting the facts of any situation with the rules governing the correct use of moral terms; once all the facts are known, the correct

⁷ This excursion into moral philosophy is intended only as an illustration of some points important to the main line of the present inquiry. For the most part the point is to indicate a problem--that there is a problem is uncontroversial.

evaluation follows as a matter of logic. That is to say, if one grasps the meaning of a moral term--that which determines the correct use of the term--one can be in no doubt whether the term is correctly applied given that one knows that the facts are thus-and-so. Any account of moral deliberation must be able to invest its conclusions with sufficient seriousness: the grounds for a moral conclusion must be so as to make it comprehensible that a person should seek to act on the conclusion even at a significant cost--both long- and short-term--to his own interest. The justification of a moral conclusion must then introduce a real commitment to the conclusion; in the present case this commitment must survive an acknowledgement by the deliberator of the conventional nature of the moral rules used in the deliberation. But moral conventionalism cannot sustain this reflective real commitment. If conventional, the moral rules we in fact have could have been different, or absent entirely, and in neither case would there have been a failure to recognise moral truths. The truth of moral judgements is relative to the particular rules adopted for the use of evaluative terms, and which rules are adopted is arbitrary (in the sense in which Wittgenstein holds rules of grammar to be arbitrary). To acknowledge this relativism is, I think, to recognise no moral commitment to these judgements. (This is not to say that one has no strong commitment of course; one might for example hold that judgements born of conventionalist deliberation on the basis of our present rules should be adopted because they are conducive to a settled, peaceful, coexistence. But this justification is pragmatic and the commitment it introduces is not moral commitment.)

One objection to this claim might be this: the thought that our

rules could have been different should not suggest that we have no real commitment to these consequences. These rules, although conventional, are deeply embedded in our view of the world--what we take people to be, what we take to be the proper ends of life, and so on. To suggest that we have no real commitment to the judgements made using these rules is just phenomenologically false--it is simply not possible to imagine what it would be like not to see the world through these rules. When one faces up to this impossibility one will soon realise that it is absurd to talk of a loss of commitment--it is a conventional rule that one should drive on the left, for example, but I cannot seriously contemplate doing otherwise. This practical commitment is unassailable and (one might say)it is just this sort of commitment which is at stake in moral rules.

Even if this claim were correct, it would be insufficient to help here. Whilst it may require a considerable phenomenological dislocation to contemplate employing other moral rules or to see the world without the benefit of any evaluations, the present criticism of moral conventionalism can be made in a way which does not invite such a great effort of imagination. We can contemplate a conservative change in the moral rules: here is an example. The concept of democratic equality--equality under the franchise--determines who should be able to vote. On the conventionalist account of moral deliberation, to find out how wide the franchise should be one should pay heed to the concept or rule; this settles the issue as a matter of logic. The Victorians, in not extending the franchise to women, could simply have failed to see that the rule in question determined that women are the democratic equals of men. Let us imagine one amongst them pointing out this fact of logic. It happens now that

some, fearful of the consequences of adopting this wider franchise, seek to prevent the discovery becoming widely known; further, to prevent its rediscovery, they insinuate a new rule for the use of the term 'democratic equality' (a new meaning), making it that a person X is democratically equal to a person Y if and only if (as one formerly would have said) X is democratically equal to Y and X and Y are of the same gender. This new rule does not allow the conclusion that women are the democratic equals of men. For the conventionalist of course this rule is no more true or false than the old; furthermore, the change in rules occasions no change in how the world is in fact seen. The new rule guarantees just those judgements that were made (some erroneously) with the old rule up until the discovery of this troublesome consequence; what is different is just this particular consequence, but, ex hypothesi, this was a discovery acknowledged by very few. This would be a conservative change, one which blocks certain unacknowledged consequences but leaves untouched all but a very few of the judgements in fact made with the old rule. Changes of this premeditated type do occur but even when they do not it is enough that they can. If the moral consequences of conventional rules are adopted and acted upon this is only because they are tolerated, not because they derive an overriding normative weight from their deliberative source. Real commitment requires more than toleration however.

Conventional rules are too flimsy to support a serious moral practice I think. It does not follow that if there is a problem for a conventionalist ethics that there is a problem for non-moral philosophy: that which determines the seriousness of a procedure of ethical deliberation is the moral weight of the results of that

deliberation. All the same, possibilities similar to those which reveal the problems of conventionalist ethics might detract from a serious interest in the results of conventionalist philosophy. We can consider three characteristics of this philosophy.

First, the rules from which we derive philosophical conclusions could have been different. Concepts have changed and will continue to change, so those claims to which we are logically committed by our rules will change. No doubt, for example, the notion of the distinctness and identities of people has changed--the conclusions which previous philosophers could have drawn about people would then be different from those we can reach. And there is no question of our correct consequences being any more true than their correct consequences. This is not to say that all the philosophically interesting concepts have changed. Strawson, for example, defends his conventionalist inquiry into the consequences of certain concepts associated with that of experience by suggesting that it involves notions which have remained constant across time.² The weaker point, that these notions could have changed and can change, is still unsettling to the spirit of scientific philosophy I think. In particular, if one allowed that they could be changed the project is seen in a different light. It is not hard to imagine what a point of changing some rules could be: one might try to alter the concept of experience so as to avoid the consequence that a particular treatment of certain organisms was immoral; one might seek to change the concept of a cause to exclude certain actors from moral culpability ... and so on. Whatever the reason, all rules can in principle be deliberately changed.

² Individuals, p.10

This first complaint is by itself disturbing for but not destructive of a serious interest in conventionalist philosophical discovery I think. A second and more serious complaint is that conservative change in the rules is possible. To see the importance of this, we can imagine one objecting to the attack on the worth of conventionalist philosophy in this way: to be sure, there is nothing in the world anchoring our rules, determining that certain are correct and others incorrect; all the same, it does not follow that there are no reasons why we have the rules we do. Certain activities of importance to us are best served by taking certain regularities and not others as central; in this sense some of our rules have a justification--they are practical necessities, we might say. Out of this practical commitment to the rules grows a real commitment to the consequences of the rules.

But even if this account of the justification of our rules were correct it would be no more supportive of conventionalist philosophy than the prospect of phenomenological disruption gave credence to a conventionalist ethics. The reply again is the same--there can be a conservative change in the rules, one which preserves as correct all the judgements made up until now, but which alters what new consequences can be drawn. Whatever practical justification the rules can receive will not be able to extend over these as yet unrevealed consequences. The empirical explanation (and so justification) for why we adopt a rule must be functional: we have these rules because there was a time at which it was true that if we were to have the rules life would become easier than if we were not to have them. This form of explanation requires that it was realised that these advantages would accrue from adopting these rules. This realisation

leads us to adopt the rules. Rules however are differentiated by their consequences (for rules are internally related to their consequences), and at any one time the acknowledged consequences are all there is on which to base a selection of rules. So in inquiring whether one rule is more advantageous than another, one must be asking whether the consequences of the rule which are so far revealed make one rule practically superior to the other. The unrevealed consequences of a rule do not enter into the factors upon which a choice of rules could be based; hence a choice--however empirically felicitous--could not have been made in virtue of these further, philosophical consequences. But to admit this is also to admit that whatever justification these rules gain from their empirical superiority does not extend as far as their consequences. Hence a conservative change--one which changes the philosophical consequences but not the judgements made up to this point--would not be disruptive of any practical arrangements.

Conservative change is disturbing because it demonstrates that there is no intimate connection between what we in fact believe to be true of the world and what we are committed to be believing is true of the world by the further exploration of the consequences of our rules. We can continue with our non-philosophical beliefs whilst the as yet undiscovered philosophical conclusions available to us have changed. Whatever commitment we have to a certain view of the world cannot translate into a real commitment to philosophical consequences because the same view of the world is compatible with different rules and so with different philosophical conclusions. Whatever commitment there is to philosophical consequences must arise from a commitment to the rules which allow this view of the world. But these rules are

too contingently ours to allow a commitment: the rules are forced upon us, and we are caught up in the changes they undergo. To suggest that because we have these rules we should give some allegiance to their philosophical consequences would be like claiming that because one is born naked one should not wear clothes. No commitment to conventional philosophical conclusions can be rested upon whatever practical benefits are bestowed by our naturally-received rules.

Third, it is revealing to ask what is the proper response of the conventionalist philosopher when confronted with a contradiction within his rules. Say that he realises that the sorites paradox arises--he can prove that a single grain of sand is a heap of sand. How should he respond? The answer is that he is not called upon to do anything. He could of course suggest changes in the rules governing the use of 'heap' so as to prevent the paradox; but it would be absurd to suggest that people should in fact adopt these. In the first place, given that the conventionalist admits that the paradox can show nothing about the ill-suitedness of our rules to track how the world in fact is, there is no scientific imperative to change the rules. In the second place, given that the paradox holds out no practical problem there is no practical imperative to change the rules. If non-philosophers were to stumble across the paradox they would be unimpressed by it--it would appear to be a curiosity, and would not convince them that a single grain of sand should be called a heap--so there is no real need to pass around warnings, to alert people that here is a problem to be avoided. And only those philosophers with a false belief in the status of logic would be impressed by the paradox; but their problem is to be addressed by convincing them of the truth of conventionalism, not by discussing

paradoxes. So there is no one for whom the paradox is a practical problem. Hence there is no good reason to change the rules: the rational response of the conventionalist philosopher is to let things be.

This suggests that the conventionalist has no real commitment to paradoxes which emerge from his rules--they are not problems he should be impressed by, not problems for him. Knowing their status--that they could be avoided if they caused practical problems--he should ignore them. But if it would be unreasonable for the conventionalist to be impressed by the discovery of a contradiction, there is no reason for him to be impressed by the discovery of non-contradictory conclusions--if one is not disturbed by the former one should not celebrate the latter. To do so would be like the one who, when losing at a game, refuses to be dismayed, saying 'It's only a game', but on winning is overjoyed, demanding congratulations for his significant achievement. The conclusion is that the proper attitude towards the consequences of one's rules should be that of disinterested toleration, not real commitment.

Conventionalist philosophy emerges from these complaints somewhat like this. Imagine there being two radio stations in the same country; to broadcast their programmes so that all ordinary radios in the country can tune in, the radio signals must be transmitted with such strength that by means of especially powerful equipment one can pick up the signals far beyond the country's border. At a certain distance beyond the border, in certain atmospheric conditions, the signals have a tendency to merge, so that a receiver gets a garbled mix of both programmes being transmitted. On occasions, the mixture comes out as well-formed English sentences, asserting empirically

unverifiable sentences which, if true, would be interesting. We can imagine people searching for such interferences, believing that these sentences state truths about the world.

Just as the signals overreach the border, so, we are allowing, the logical mechanism determines the use of a term beyond the boundaries of the everyday uses of language. It would be idiotic to believe that just because the sentences heard on special radios arise out of other true sentences that these are also true; but there is no more reason to think that the interconnections of rules result in claims to which we have a real commitment. The interference of the radio signals is a curious phenomenon perhaps, and so too is the possibility of deriving new sentences from rules. But the proper attitude is not a serious interest in or allegiance to the resulting statements. Rather we should see the logical mechanism running on beyond our real need for it, producing results in which we should have little interest. We could avoid these results (we could change the radio frequencies so as to prevent the interference), but, realising their true nature, there is no need. We tolerate these consequences, and realising this, we should ignore them.

5.4 Violating the Rules of Grammar

We can recall the three claims about philosophy attributed to Wittgenstein in 5.1. These were:

- (1) philosophy can make no discoveries about what can or must be the case;
- (2) all philosophical utterances break rules of grammar, so are senseless;
- (3) all violations of the rules of grammar can be revealed by employing the descriptive method.

The concern in this section is with the status of (2), which we can name the violation thesis. If this thesis is not true, the scope of the descriptive mentioned in (3) will be reduced; it will not aspire to demonstrate the ill-foundedness of every philosophical utterance for at least some utterances will not be grammatically flawed. This need not effect the worth of the descriptive method in detecting what grammatical error there is however. Of course, even if the violation thesis were true it would not be obvious that (3) must be true: it does not clearly follow from the fact that all philosophical utterances break grammatical rules that there is some constructive procedure for revealing the violations. But perhaps (3) does not claim that much. Quite how the modality of the claim should be taken will also be left to the next section.

The central concern in this section is with the relation between thesis (1) and the violation thesis. The truth of (1) has been argued for in 5.2 above; it follows directly from the refutation of the idea of the logical mechanism.³ Now, if the violation thesis were true, (1) would follow from it. The violation thesis then entails the negative doctrines on philosophy. But if the violation thesis were true but did not also follow from (1), the situation would be curious--we should have two independent arguments for the negative doctrines on philosophy. This situation would not be impossible of course, only surprising; the prospect of the doctrines on philosophy being overdetermined should incline us to suspect that thesis (1) is the source of the violation thesis.

I can see no other, independent, route to the violation thesis. If that thesis is intended as no more than an empirical

³ In what follows the argument in 5.3 plays no part.

generalisation born of the piecemeal investigations into grammar Wittgenstein undertakes, it would I think be too weak to warrant much attention. For sure Wittgenstein has made apparent very many grammatical flaws that philosophers are inclined to overlook in pursuing their studies, but, one would object, his inquiries have touched on only a very few of the issues discussed by philosophers. An induction on the basis of this sample would be uninteresting. This objection can perhaps be resisted: one might claim that whilst Wittgenstein did not address many philosophical issues (at least in a sustained way), those issues he did address were crucial to many other areas of philosophy. This is not implausible I think--when one surrenders a picture theory of intentionality, for example, many other philosophical problems take on a quite different hue. But it would be hard to make this defense decisive. The exploration of the prospects of the inductive argument for the violation thesis should wait upon a demonstration that there is no 'top-down' argument to be had.

Before we look to see if there is a route from (1) to the violation thesis we should make sure that Wittgenstein is in fact committed to that thesis. In particular, it needs to be shown that Wittgenstein holds to thesis (2) above rather than the claim that just some philosophical utterances break rules of grammar, so are senseless. Let us distinguish this as the weak violation thesis. Such a weak thesis need not be very interesting for it could just be saying no more than we should readily assent to--some philosophical utterances make grammatical (that is, conceptual) errors. To take Wittgenstein to be committed to only the weak thesis would then be to take the concerns of the new philosophy as only a proper subset of

the concerns of the old philosophy: the task now would be to detect those errors there are in the old philosophical utterances, but there is no way to demonstrate that all those old utterances are in error. If this were right, the new philosophy could be embraced by the old, the latter taking whatever method of manifesting grammatical errors is on offer to tidy up his own inquiries. (Of course, this is to ignore the further sanction of thesis (1)--there is nothing worthwhile the unreformed philosopher could be doing even if he is not making those errors. The claim is just that for all that the weak violation thesis says, Wittgenstein's new philosophy is limited in ambition.)

That the strong violation thesis is not what he is wanting is suggested by occasional comments Wittgenstein makes. So at BT p.430 he claims that when we ask if a philosophical use of a word respects the rules of grammar, "In most cases we will find that this is not the case and that the word is used in violation of its ordinary grammar" (emphasis added).⁴ And an argument can be constructed for attributing the weak thesis by attending to comments such as the following: "A philosophical problem has the form: 'I don't know my way about'" (PI §123); "The philosopher aspires to find that releasing word. The word, that is, that finally allows us to get hold of what, ineffably, has strained our consciousness up to then" (BT p.409); "The philosophical problem is the consciousness of the disorder in our concepts" (BT p.421). The implication these comments share is that a philosophical problem is one which has a phenomenological reflection: only those things which induce a mental

⁴ But see the 1930-32 Lectures, p.4: "When a philosophical proposition is elucidated, some confusion of expression is always exposed".

state of confusion can be such problems.⁵ Hence when one is not confused, believing that such-and-such a theory speaks to an (erstwhile) problem of philosophy, that theory is not of interest to the new philosopher. The scientific philosopher is not always confused, if that is understood to be a phenomenological state distinct from having unjustified beliefs, and if the ambition of philosophy is only to remove confusion, philosophy has nothing to say to much that the scientific philosopher holds true. Again, the negative doctrines on philosophy demonstrate that his philosophically-justified beliefs are scientifically worthless, but for all that the suggested practice of revealing error can demonstrate, much unreformed activity is left unaddressed.

It is I think very hard to point to passages which conclusively demonstrate that these claims taken to indicate the weak thesis are intended to be read as only part of the wider story--that whereas phenomenological confusion can be traced to violations of grammar, all philosophical utterances, even those not associated with such confusions, can be found to violate grammar. So when, for example Wittgenstein says that "Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language" (PI §109), meaning that we fail to see the grammar of our language, it could be just the weak thesis he has in mind. If the new philosophy is exhausted by the activity of revealing grammatical errors (as one holding to the weak thesis will say) there is no commitment here to all the utterances of the unreformed philosopher arising out of bewitchments. Again, at BT p.422 Wittgenstein writes: "Lichtenberg:

⁵ "A philosophical trouble is an obsession ..." (1930-1932 Lectures, pp.98-99).

'The whole of our philosophy is a rectification of our use of language, hence, the rectification of a philosophy, namely the most general one'" (emphasis added). Wittgenstein does not go on to qualify or challenge the thesis attributed to Lichtenberg, and it is plausible to take the rectification in question to be a rectification of grammar. But this does not force the strong thesis upon us. And although the unreformed philosopher is to "bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use", Wittgenstein says at PI §116, there is no explicit indication that the metaphysical uses of words in question are not limited to those which arise from the philosopher's confused state of mind.

How then is the exegetical choice between the strong and the weak theses to be made? One route is this: if it can be shown that the strong thesis follows from thesis (1), the rejection of discovery by philosophy, there will be a good reason for attributing it to Wittgenstein, discounting any indications to the contrary as aberrant. If, on the other hand, the strong thesis does not follow from (1), and no other argument for it can be found, we would be justified in attributing only the weak thesis to Wittgenstein, taking the scope of the descriptive method to be correspondingly limited.

It can be shown I think that the strong violation thesis does follow from thesis (1), the denial of discovery. However it is not possible to derive from (1) a version of the strong thesis which will make an interesting version of thesis (3) at all plausible. As it turns out, the scope of (3) will be only that allowed it if the weak thesis were true; although all the utterances of the scientific philosopher will be violations of grammar, the way this is true ensures that there is no reason to think that all of these can be

detected, even in principle. (It does not follow from the fact that the scope of (3) is narrow, so uninteresting, that Wittgenstein's descriptivism is uninteresting in method.)

Philosophical inquiry can make no discoveries about what can or must be the case because there are no facts to discover about what can or must be the case. Even when there is a practice of inference and logical inquiry--a normative practice with terms such as 'entails', 'follows from', 'is a logical consequence of'--to acknowledge the lack of objective logical correlates makes it irrational to treat the activities of scientific philosophy with the respect demanded. If valid argument is in fact only persuasion, not the tracking of objective logical connections, one aware that this is what argument amounts to cannot rationally employ argument as a source of justified belief. However, this claim is independent of the thesis that the products of philosophical activity violate rules of grammar. For all that thesis (1) says it could be that no philosophical utterances break the rules of grammar. The complaint that (1) makes is that even if all the rules are respected there is no reason to wait upon the deliverances of philosophy.

The strong violation thesis depends on a distinction which thesis (1) need not bother to attend to then. One might say that whereas the denial of discovery makes a claim about the external standing of a practice, the violation thesis depends on a distinction found only within a practice. The two complaints are independent therefore.

There is a reply to this argument I think. This however concedes that the strong violation thesis has to be amended, and this amendment prevents it from sustaining a wide understanding of (3). The reply reduces the gap between the denial of discovery and the

violation thesis by allowing the latter to forget talk of rules of grammar being violated. Strictly speaking, the reply concedes, there is no such thing; the real point is not that philosophical utterances break rules of grammar, but that there is no sense in which they heed pre-established rules. Giving up the logical mechanism is giving up the idea that philosophical utterances can follow from anything, not because they violate rules but because there is no such state of affairs as that in which one thing follows logically from another. The inferences philosophers make are not bad inferences--their problem is only that they are not really inferences at all. And there is no sense in which the terms used in philosophical utterances fail to pay heed to the rules for the correct use of the terms, for there is no such thing as heeding such rules. So what the violation thesis should be saying (this reply would have it) is just this: no philosophical utterances can respect rules of grammar.

This version of the violation thesis can be thought of as that which results when one steps outside the shelter of the practice. Within the practice there seem to be rules of grammar, so violations of the rules. But stepping out from behind this ideological veil one sees the objective correlate of the claim that rules are broken, and this is just a negative point--there is neither violation nor respect for rules. Philosophical utterances are not justified: that is their real failing.

The price that this way of bridging the gap between thesis (1) and the (amended version of the) strong violation thesis must pay is readily apparent. It is not a particular property of the sayings of philosophers that they do not take on sense because of some link with previous non-philosophical utterances--that there is no reservoir

from which both are watered. No utterances, of whatever subject matter, are granted or denied sense because of what has gone before. There is no sense-giving nexus--every utterance is sui generis, born naked into the world, awaiting the gift of content in which to clothe itself. Each and every utterance is "not the end of [a] language-game; it is the beginning" (PI §290). Once uttered it is there as the focus of normative reactions--'That's senseless' (an instinctive noise), 'That's to use that word with the same meaning as in that previous utterance' (another instinctive noise), 'Now you're repeating yourself' (yet another). All relations of meaning are ideological; none are anchored in practice-independent states of affairs,

If the violation thesis is taken to reflect the denial of logical facts, there is no reason whatsoever to think that the individual utterances of philosophers can be revealed to have this practice-dependent status. The only sense in which all philosophical utterances have been found to be flawed is just that sense in which all uses of the word 'elephant' are flawed. No utterance of mine, 'That's an elephant', really heeds or breaks a rule for the use of 'elephant', just as no claim I make, 'Understanding is really ...', heeds or breaks a rule for the use of 'understand'. But it is an impossible task to make this point about the use of 'elephant' apparent by asking one to reflect on the uses of the term. What sort of error could be manifested in this way? I might be brought to believe that my present use is different from former uses--that large-eared elephant-like animals are not to be called 'elephants' for example. But reminding me how the term is used cannot lead me to the conclusion that I am going on neither similarly nor differently

from these other uses. There is no such thing as coming to see the world free from relations of similarity and difference. But if there is no reason to expect the sui generis nature of my present utterance of 'elephant' to be revealed by the sort of piecemeal, descriptivist inquiry thesis (3) is promising, there is no reason to expect that the like nature of philosophical utterances can be revealed by this means. But, to repeat, the only 'error' we have found in philosophical utterances is that 'error' we have found with 'elephant', and if the error with the latter cannot be revealed by the descriptive method, there is no reason to expect the parallel errors in philosophical utterances to be manifested using the same method. So if the method is to work on philosophical utterances it must detect features other than the one on which the truth of the amended strong violation thesis depends. Hence the strong violation thesis cannot grant a wide scope--all the utterances of philosophy--to thesis (3).

What conclusion should we draw from this attempt to find some fit between theses (1), (2), and an interesting version of (3)? We might say that we have to live with the fact that (3) has only a limited scope, dealing only with some utterances of unreformed philosophy, those that violate grammatical rules. On the other hand one might hold that this misrepresents Wittgenstein's intention, claiming that (3) must have a wide scope and so his real argument for an unamended form of the strong violation thesis must have been overlooked. Neither of these responses is easy to live with I think. Both admit that the basis of the descriptive method is a distinction which the amended strong violation thesis fails to capture--that between heeding and violating rules. And both take it that seeking out

violations is a respectable ambition for a philosophical inquiry. But this is no longer obviously true. If one grants that all rule followings and violations are ideological constructs, not grounded in objective logical facts, all claims that a rule has been violated are true only within a practice. But this is to say that there is no such thing as objective error for descriptive philosophy to reveal. All that the unreformed philosopher can really do is persuade his scientific counterpart that he has misused terms. Like the theses of the scientific philosopher, his claims cannot rise above persuasion: there is no right or wrong to which they pay heed. This insight was held (in 5.2) to be enough to render scientific philosophy worthless. There is no reason to withhold this assessment from the products of Wittgenstein's reformed philosophy.

Did Wittgenstein acknowledge that the results of the descriptive method must have just this status? He writes thus at BT p.410:

One of the most important tasks is to express all the false trains of thought in such a characteristic way that the reader says, 'Yes, that's precisely how I meant it'. To copy the physiognomy of every error.
 Indeed, we can only convict someone else of a mistake if he acknowledges that this is really the expression of his feeling. // If he really recognises this expression as the correct expression of his feeling. //
 That is to say, only if he recognises it as such, is it the correct expression. (Psychoanalysis)

This passage can be read to be expressing a denial of the objectivity of grammatical error: only when one is persuaded that one has made an error has one in fact made an error. The reference to psychoanalysis is important one might think. Wittgenstein held that the problems detected by psychoanalysis were not real problems--Freud, he held, invented mythological mental processes, then persuaded people to confess to disturbances in their functioning:

if you are led by psychoanalysis to say that really you thought so and so, or that really your motive was so and so, this is not a matter of discovery but of persuasion. (LC p.27)

Is Wittgenstein then admitting in the quotation from the Big Typescript above that his new method "is not a matter of discovery but of persuasion"? It would be foolhardy to be confident of this. The quotation can be taken to be offering not a criterion for the claim that an error has been made but a criterion for the felicity of a statement or expression of the error made. And the parenthetical reference to psychoanalysis might invoke not the thesis quoted from his Lectures and Conversations but the doctrine, held by psychoanalysts themselves, that a patient can be cured only when he acknowledges the source of his illness.⁶

There is nothing to suggest that Wittgenstein believes that the project of revealing grammatical errors is in fact just an activity of persuasion. The most natural reading of virtually all his comments on the descriptive task of philosophy is that there are objective errors waiting to be revealed--violations of rules of grammar existing independently of the reformed philosopher's inquiry. (It is possible of course that in claiming that error is objective Wittgenstein is holding no more than that speakers have objective dispositions to be persuaded that an utterance violates a rule of grammar, so allowing that something is a grammatical error if people would say that it is. But there would then be little reason to say that all philosophical utterances violate rules of grammar; this

⁶ Kenny discusses a further aspect of the analogy with psychoanalysis--the idea of repressed problems--in 'Wittgenstein on the Nature of Philosophy', pp.3-4.

strong thesis will depend on an induction from manifested dispositions to unmanifested dispositions, but this would be too weak to be persuasive.) The right conclusion here is just that there is no good reason to believe that there is the sort of objective error which Wittgenstein's descriptivism depends upon.

5.5 Describing Rules of Grammar

The rules of grammar determine the limits of sense. Philosophical utterances violate these rules, stepping beyond the bounds of sense. The proper response to philosophical utterances is to bring the philosopher to see the rules of grammar he is violating; once grammar is perspicuous it will become apparent to all when violations of the rules have occurred. All that remains to philosophy is this critical pursuit, and in making grammar clear, "Philosophy really is 'purely descriptive'" (BB p.18). The aim is a description of the "actual use of language" (PI §124), the tabulation of the rules of grammar (W p.184), or the "quiet weighing of linguistic facts" (Z §447, BT p.431). The task now is to recollect: "We remember that we have really used words in this way" (BT p.425). The misleading pictures found in language (PI §115), and our false grammatical attitudes (PG p.85) are confronted and embarrassed by the fruits of these inquiries: by erecting a wall where language stops anyway (BT p.425), the philosopher will be dissuaded from crossing over the bounds of sense.

This story differs from that told by contemporary scientific philosophy in both its purpose and its method. The purpose of the inquiry is purely negative: "To philosophise is: to reject wrong arguments", Wittgenstein says at BT p.409. This constraint on the use

to which the method on offer can be put is determined by the arguments against discovery by logical inquiry discussed above. The interest in this section is in the methodological correlates of the negative doctrines on philosophy. The descriptive method Wittgenstein outlines differs in approach from contemporary philosophy in three main aspects, one might suppose.

First, and obviously, the reformed philosopher aims only to describe how we speak about phenomena, not to "penetrate" phenomena (PI §90), intending to explain, theorise, or argue. The philosopher engages in the "descriptive science of speaking", focussing on "sentences from the natural history of mankind" (BT p.408). In explaining the grammar of our language the philosopher is in a position similar to that of an anthropologist investigating the games played by savages, seeking to tabulate the rules of the games (BT p.426). Whereas the anthropologist uses the empirical techniques of field research, the philosopher can remain in his armchair. This is not now because philosophy is an exercise of pure reason, but because in his armchair he has access to his data through memory. The task now is to "look and see" how words are used; don't think about how they should be used, but look to their actual use (PI §66). The ambition is to see connections (PI §122), to gain a perspicuous view of grammar, to make philosophical errors transparent, dissolving problems as sugar gets dissolved in water (BT p.421).

A second aspect of the new method of inquiry is that the statements of philosophy will be neither controversial nor difficult to understand. The truth or falsity of the claims made by the descriptive philosopher will be readily apparent; nothing that he describes will be so hidden that one can doubt whether the

description is correct (PI §§126, 128). Philosophy comes back down to earth--indeed, the claims made by the descriptivist will amount to not much more than platitudes:

What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use.

(The man who said it was impossible to step into the same river twice said something wrong: one can step into the same river twice.)

The solution to all philosophical problems looks this way. If they are correct our answers must be down to earth and ordinary. But it is necessary to look at them in the right spirit. Then this won't matter. (BT p.412)⁷

The difficulties of philosophy are no longer difficulties in understanding, but, Wittgenstein holds, difficulties of sentiment (BT p.406). We have to strive not to be tempted towards philosophical explanations and theorising by the analogies and pictures (the "mythologies") found in our language. Even though one acknowledges that to succumb would be to misuse language, the "discrepancy between the understanding ... and what most people want to see" provides a constant lure towards error.

The third novel aspect one might find in the descriptive method is the suggestion that the method amounts to an effective procedure for revealing the errors of philosophy. The problems of philosophy can be solved completely (BT p.421, PI §133) because philosophy allows the possibility of "calm progress" (BT p.431):

Once a perfectly clear formulation--ultimate clarity--has been reached, there can be no second thoughts or reluctance any more, for these always arise from the feeling that something has now been asserted, and I do not yet know whether I should admit it or not. If however, you make the

⁷ "He also said that he was not trying to teach us any new facts; that he would only tell us 'trivial things'--'things which we all knew already'...", (Moore, 'Wittgenstein's Lectures in 1930-33', Philosophical Papers p.323).

grammar clear to yourself, if you proceed by very short steps in such a way that every single step becomes perfectly obvious and natural, no dispute whatsoever can arise. (W p.183)

If philosophical inquiry is a matter of assessing the truth or falsity of certain claims about the world, room for error is always available. If one argument fails to justify a thesis others can perhaps be found that will; and few arguments are patently correct, immune from the possibility of being overturned on further reflection. But descriptive philosophy intends to reveal the grammatical ill-foundedness of philosophical utterances, not their truth values ("philosophical analysis does not give us any new facts"⁸), and here, Wittgenstein holds, if one investigates in a "completely calm manner", taking one step after another "in a methodical way" (BT p.432), one can confidently expect to arrive at the resolution of all philosophical problems. This method is the discovery which "gives philosophy peace" (PI §133). Without an effective procedure for addressing philosophical problems, the method of inquiry itself will be called into question--is this the right approach to adopt? is there perhaps some better?⁹ The descriptive approach wears its success on its sleeve, thus proclaiming its own worth--its "obvious and natural" resolution of philosophical problems demonstrates that it is the correct method.

These three aspects of the descriptive method hold out the promise of a new type of philosophy. This method has now truly made

⁸ 1930-1932 Lectures, p.35.

⁹ So, in Britain in Wittgenstein's lifetime, the mainline of philosophical activity shifted tracks from Hegelian dialectic, to Russellian analysis, to verificationism, to the study of ordinary language. These represent different ways of addressing the same philosophical problems, so different theses in response to these problems.

philosophy into a science, one might say. Rather than floundering about beyond the bounds of sense, the scientific spirit in philosophy can respectably lay claim to an empirical method which if applied in an orderly and systematic way will guarantee correct results.¹⁰

But this promise cannot be kept. The purpose of philosophy has changed--there is no room for the discovery of new truths by logical inquiry--but the advertisement of a method characterised by the three virtues just noted, is misleading. On closer study of the sort of inquiry Wittgenstein is recommending it is apparent that the method of investigation is not descriptive, it is not free from the controversies and difficulties of the discipline that it aspires to replace, and there is no hope of an effective procedure by means of which to identify violations of grammatical rules. The argument for this attitude towards the descriptive method (as I shall continue to call it) starts by inquiring into quite what it is that the philosopher is meant to describe. Clarifying this matter will reveal the error in the claim that inquiry constrained by the negative doctrines on philosophy is purely descriptive. Once this error is seen, there is no temptation to suggest that the descriptive method has the virtues of being free from controversy or being an effective procedure.

The descriptive method calls on the philosopher to describe the "actual use of language". We can distinguish two categories of description: direct and indirect description. The former I define to include only those descriptions which can be correctly given on the

¹⁰ "The nimbus of philosophy has been lost. For now we have a method of doing philosophy, and can speak of skilful philosophers. Compare the difference between alchemy and chemistry: chemistry has a method and we can speak of skilful chemists", (1930-1932 Lectures, p.21).

basis of the evidences of one's sense or the deliverances of one's memory of what one has perceived. The members of the latter category require some additional means to be made correctly. A description of the tree outside my window, or yesterday's weather in Oxford, can be direct descriptions; whereas a description of the level of radioactivity at this spot would require the use of something like a Geiger counter.¹¹ The descriptivism at hand must be indirect, I will argue; this indicates that the empirical attractions seemingly attaching to the method are overstated (at least). To see that descriptivism must rely upon indirect descriptions we can consider what Wittgenstein means by the "actual use of language", that being what we are called upon to describe.

Two notions of actual use can be distinguished. Think of a statement of the actual use of a typewriter. On the one hand this could be a list of when the typewriter has been used, and what it had done on those occasions. This will be a list of dated, historical occasions of use. Entries such as: Tuesday--typed the following letter ... to my bank manager, might occur on the list. On the other hand, the actual use of the typewriter could mean the potential uses to which the machine could be put. I have never written the following words ... to my M.P., but I could do so on this machine. Clearly, the list of potential uses is always going to be longer than that of historical uses.

A parallel distinction can be made for the notion of the actual use of language. In the first place a list can be made of all the

¹¹ I am not suggesting that this distinction corresponds to different senses of the term 'description'; rather, it is of use in sorting out what it could be to call Wittgenstein's proposed method a descriptive method.

utterances made and the occasions of their making. In the second place, a description of the actual use could be an account of what could be said in the language. The words, "The red cat sitting on the yellow tortoise is called 'Hugh'", will occur in the second category but not, I suspect, in the first.¹²

It might appear that the notion of the actual use of language Wittgenstein has in mind is that of dated, historical utterances. Only thus (we might suppose) can we make good sense of the claim that the philosopher must recollect how words have been used. But this invocation of the memory of historical uses is not to be taken too seriously I think. Other passages, although invoking memory, are less historical in tone: so, for example, we are to remind ourselves of the "kind of statement that we make about phenomena" (PI §90), not the actual statements that we have made. The right way to understand the notion of the actual use is made fully clear at BT p.425:

What is the nature of our investigation? Do I investigate the probability or actuality of the cases I adduce as examples? No, I only adduce what is possible, thus giving grammatical examples.

The proper concern is not with what has been said, nor with what is likely to be said. Instead the aim is to reveal what it is possible to say with sense. This is the notion of actual use as potential use.

Whereas one can give a direct description of the historical actual use of language, one can give only an indirect description of the potential actual use of language. The evidence of the senses and deliverances of memory cannot settle the issue of whether the sentence about Hugh the cat is part of the latter use. (One will

¹² The distinction can be made for token or type utterances-in-circumstances. For the present purpose which is chosen is of no relevance.

think this is wrong if one has not taken Wittgenstein's lessons about the nature of understanding. So one might say that one can remember what the various terms in the expression mean, and these memories will suffice for the judgement that the new sentence is sensible. But knowledge of meaning, and so memories of meanings, lack this determinacy. Competence in language is not explained by a grasp of semantic rules--grasp of semantic rules is better seen to be constituted by competence.) We should see the description, "the sentence 'p' is sensible (grammatically well-formed)", as parallel to the description of the radiation level. In that case one used an instrument, and the description was read off from the instrument. In the case of language, the instrument is just a competent speaker of the language. The description of the grammatical rule: one cannot say 'I know I'm in pain', is arrived at by asking a competent speaker (oneself perhaps): can one sensibly say 'I know I'm in pain'? The response is the 'reading' of the instrument. The reading itself is not a description--that is the essential point. Like the bleeps of the Geiger counter it is a natural reaction; only an indirect description can be given of the state of affairs which prompts this reaction (the sensibleness of the utterance in question).

One can characterise this process of coming to a decision about the sense or lack of it of an expression as 'prompt-and-confess' (if one takes care to note that the confession is not an avowal of determinate secrets but more like an 'expression' as that term is used by Wittgenstein).¹³ To characterise the method of revealing grammatical lessons as 'descriptive' is not felicitous. To advertise something as a descriptive method suggests that one can arrive at the

¹³ This description of the method was anticipated in 2.3 above.

facts sought by describing them. This points to the availability of direct descriptions. But one arrives at the facts of grammaticality by prompt and confession, not description. This indicates that the use of the term 'descriptive method'--not Wittgenstein's expression perhaps, but his sentiments--is misleading, promising more than it can deliver.

The complaint goes deeper than how the new method is to advertise itself. One might grant that talk of a descriptive method is misleading but still point out that to acknowledge the confessional component is to recognise a striking difference between what is here recommended and what is currently pursued. But this would be wrong. To explore these matters further we need to look more closely at the prompts and the confessions needed.

Some uses of the prompt-and-confess approach are straightforward. Ask yourself, can one sensibly say, 'I believe I'm in pain', 'It is red and green all over', 'He understood for two minutes'? The prompts can be more complicated of course, asking whether in certain specified circumstances a term is correctly used. So one might give the prompt: if one seems to follow a rule, but it is impossible for you to discover the rule, can you sensibly say 'He follows the rule'? Again: if one acts in every way as one who understands the word 'multiply' can it be sensible to say of him 'He doesn't understand the word "multiply"'? These latter prompts might well be prefaced with the injunction--'imagine this situation ...'--followed by the request, 'What would you say ...?'

Two things are striking about these more complex, circumstantial prompts. First, they are often used by Wittgenstein not because the situation in the prompt is one of interest in itself, but because the

situation bears some relation to a case of philosophical interest. So, for example, the question of whether the secret line-drawer in PI §237 is following a rule is of interest only because his situation is relevantly similar to that of a private linguist. So too the story of the builders (BB p.77f; PI §8f): we have no interest in their activities in themselves, but our responses to their predicament are held to bear upon an issue of philosophical importance. The point of looking to these indirect prompts, as one might call them, is that it "disperses the fog" which hides our grammar from clear view (PI §5); these simple ("primitive") language games¹⁴ or "intermediate cases" (PI §122) are invented to facilitate the clear view for which the philosopher strives.

The second thing which is striking about the use of circumstantial prompts is that they appear to be just those instruments of inquiry which we should ordinarily call 'thought experiments'. In particular, Wittgenstein's intermediate cases, we should say, are what these scientific philosophers strive for to 'prompt intuitions', as it is often said.¹⁵ In both cases a situation

¹⁴ The (seeming-)definition of a language game at Blue Book p.17 makes it that language games are necessarily simple--they are "ways of using signs simpler than those in which we use the signs of our highly complicated everyday language". In the Investigations not all language games are simple. There (and in the Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics) our actual activities in their full complexity constitute language games (see PI §§7, 23 in particular).

¹⁵ See PR p.52: "What Mach calls a thought experiment is of course not an experiment at all. At bottom it is a grammatical innovation". But see also PG p.109: "[T]here is no such thing as a 'thought experiment'". His point is that a train of thought--a calculation for example--is not related to the conclusion in the same way that an experiment (in physics perhaps) is related to the conclusion drawn from it. The process of calculation, unlike the experiment, does not give evidence for its conclusion; rather, the conclusion is a criterion for the calculation having been performed. The lesson is that there are no thought experiments if that is taken to depend on things, thoughts, which can be used as evidence. The

is described and a confession asked for. Would one say that a clone constructed by teletransportation is the same person as the one used as the blueprint? Would one say that the Twin-Earthians have the same beliefs as Earthlings? Would one say that a drawing intended to be of Smith which could not be used to identify Smith is not a picture of Smith? Of course, as ordinarily employed, prompts such as these serve, it is hoped, to discover the structure of the concepts employed, these construed as the source and explanation of the confessions made. So teletransportation thought experiments are a means to delimit the scope of the notion of personal identity, to arrive at a conclusion of the form: X is the same person as Y iff ... This ambition is based on a mistaken philosophy of mind and an associated mistaken conception of the purpose of philosophy. If these mistakes are revealed one will not put the method to the use it now receives at the hands of the scientific philosopher, but it does not follow from this restriction of its scope and significance that the nature of the method--the technique of prompt-and-confess--is different.

If it is right to see the method Wittgenstein champions as the same as that of thought experiments, it is clear how the second and third supposed advantages of the new method of descriptions are illusory. If "intermediate cases" are needed at all, as Wittgenstein of course admits they are, the new method will take on the controversy and difficulty characteristic of unreformed philosophy. The point is that the prompts used in a thought experiment may fail to be crucial. The purpose of the prompts is to reveal the

parallel between the prompt-and-confess approach and thought experiments made in the text is in point of method alone, not in assumptions about what the method in fact reveals.

grammatical error in a certain philosophical utterance, so it has to be that a prompt is such that the response it invites settles the issue at stake. Here is a simple example. Say one were using a teletransportation thought experiment to cast doubt on the claim that physical identity is a necessary condition for personal identity. So the situation is described thus: a person X is used as a blueprint for teletransportation to Mars. Would we say that Y, the clone constructed from the specifications of X's make-up beamed to Mars, is the same person as X? Let us say that the unanimous response is affirmative. Then, the conclusion is, the physical criterion is wrong for there is no preservation of physical identity--Y is not made up from the same matter as X because X still continues on Earth. But two points are apparent. First, only if the physical criterion for identity of persons were understood as 'made of the numerically identical physical stuff' would this response show that the criterion was wrong. On any notion of qualitative physical identity the thought experiment is not crucial--it is inadequate to demonstrate that the criterion is wrong. This point could be overlooked however, and all might agree that the experiment demonstrates the inadequacy of any physical criterion. This is not to say that the confessions were wrong--that, we can agree, is not possible--but to say that the significance of the confessions is misinterpreted in this case.

Of course, this error too can perhaps be revealed by a thought experiment. But the point is that the need to design thought experiments introduces the possibility of error into descriptive philosophy, so difficulty and room for controversy. Crucial thought experiments are hard to find in very many cases, and their significance can often be disputed. This is apparent from their use

in unreformed philosophy, and of course from their use by Wittgenstein (think of the debate about the precise significance of the builders' language game). For this reason it is wishful thinking to suppose that the prompt-and-confess method should inaugurate an effective procedure for solving philosophical problems. The only thing about the descriptive method which is "obvious and natural" is the confession; the significance of this depends on the design of the prompt, and that requires a skill not conducive to any step-by-step procedure.

The second point to stress is that the skill in designing crucial thought experiments is just a skill in constructing good arguments. So, if the thought experiment were intended to be a crucial test for a numerical physical identity criterion, one can imagine the designer thinking thus: if in this situation--teletransportation of X's specifications but not the material from which X is made--one would say that personal identity is preserved, then we can conclude that the preservation of numerical physical identity is not a necessary condition for personal identity. The same format is seen in other cases. So one designing a Twin Earth thought experiment might reason thus: if in this situation--Twin Earthians with the same recognitional capacities as us, but related to XYZ as we are to H₂O--one were to say that the Twin Earthians believe that the oceans are made of XYZ, then their belief content is not determined by recognitional capacity. These hypotheticals are arguments which must be valid if the experiment is to be crucial. So skill in designing thought experiments is just that skill prized by unreformed philosophy--argumentative ability. There is no reason to expect that these arguments will be any less difficult and any less controversial

than the arguments of unreformed philosophy.

CHAPTER 6: ACQUIESCENCE

6.1 Foundations

The question that we have not yet addressed squarely is this: how well does the argument of 5.2 fit with the negative doctrines on philosophy that Wittgenstein announces? In speaking to this question we will come to see the arguments of the last chapter in a somewhat different light. According to the negative doctrines, there can be no revision to the "actual use" of language, nor foundations for this use (PI §124); there is to be no explanation or deduction--nothing is hidden (PI §126); and there are no theses not uncontroversially true (PI §128). At first sight these claims seem to fit securely with the denial of discovery in philosophy. That denial amounts to the rejection of truths about how words should be used not apparent in the grammar of a language: so it cannot be that philosophical inquiry could discover that we are wrong to employ words in such-and-such a way, hence that we should revise what we do. To rule out the possibility of revision is to deny that our language use has hidden foundations, a set of rules underlying those we in fact acknowledge which have to be made clear. There are no unrevealed sources of our correct use of language which explain what we should say on any occasion; in particular, there are no rules for the use of terms establishing inferential relations which are as yet undiscovered. There are no norms except those acknowledged in grammar, and grammar does not stand in need of difficult thought to be revealed: our motto should be "don't think, but look!" (PI §66)--"all is open to view" (PI §126).

The present concern is with Wittgenstein's claim that philosophy

cannot uncover foundations for the use of language. We can distinguish between normative and non-normative foundations for the use of language: whereas the former give a means for assessing whether people have gone wrong in their utterances, not making sense or the sense they thought they were making, the latter specify in what the use of language really consists but do not offer a criterion for correct or incorrect use. In denying that philosophy can provide a foundation for language use Wittgenstein is denying normative foundationalism. On the other hand, in holding to the practice theory he appears to be championing a non-normative foundationalism: logical phenomena are constituted by and within a nexus of natural reactions with signs. What this suggests is that Wittgenstein's rejection of discovery by philosophy has only a restricted scope. Not all philosophical inquiry is worthless, but, rather, a philosophical inquiry into the foundations of language such as Wittgenstein pursues can show that certain traditional philosophical controversies are empty. Rather than conclude that there are no philosophical discoveries to be made, the warranted result is that once key philosophical insights (the indeterminacy thesis in particular) are achieved it will become clear that there is far less scope for philosophical inquiry than is commonly thought. When Wittgenstein says that there are no explanations, deductions, or interesting theses in philosophy he is--according to this suggestion--to be taken to be announcing a philosophical insight: once the foundations of language use are seen correctly one will know not to await further explanations, deductions, or insights from philosophy.

There is an obvious objection to this restricted reading of the denial of foundations. If the negative doctrines on philosophy do not

apply to the argument by means of which these theses are deduced, what status has that argument? An account is now needed for how in this particular case one can justifiably proclaim that a logical inquiry--the argument from the indeterminacy thesis to the negative doctrines on philosophy--has revealed the previously-hidden truth of its conclusions. The restricted reading of the doctrines demands a two-level account of logic then, but of course it is completely unclear what room there is for this distinction of levels; no privileged realm has been found wherein a logical mechanism conjoining conclusions and premises can operate. The restricted reading can only lead back to obscurity.

So must we adopt an unrestricted reading, applying the negative doctrines to the argument by which they were deduced? This supposition appears no less problematic. The doctrines deny that there can be discovery in philosophy, so it would follow that the doctrines themselves cannot be discoveries. There is then no reason to be impressed by these negative claims: if they are unrestrictedly true it follows that we have no good reason to believe that they are true. There can be no argumentative justification of a belief in the unrestricted claims.

We have therefore a straightforward dilemma: if the restricted reading is correct there must be some room for a logical mechanism to operate; if the unrestricted reading is correct the argument for the negative doctrines negates itself. This dilemma is just the predicament the Tractatus faced of course. If the statement of the picture theory has sense, this is so not in virtue of its respect for the picture theory; hence the picture theory is not the full story of how sense is possible. On the other hand if the picture theory is to

apply even to the statement of the picture theory, that statement is senseless, hence gives no good reason for thinking that the picture theory--with its consequent rejection of philosophical statements--is true. The Tractatus reply, in effect, tries to go between the horns of the dilemma. The sentences which state the picture theory have sense only if they picture their content, so because they cannot picture they have no sense. On the other hand, the statements are not completely without sense; one who reads the statements is led to the truth of the picture theory, so these statements have at least some ersatz content, not assured by picturing, but left otherwise mysterious.

The later Wittgenstein intended an unrestricted reading of the negative doctrines. This seems clear from the occasions in which he comments on the status of his utterances. At PI §121, for example, in denying that there is a second-order philosophy he is denying that there is a standpoint from which the doctrines on philosophy are true but which itself is not encompassed by those doctrines. What is said applies to the saying of it. How then can an unrestricted reading escape the second horn of the dilemma? In this section I will consider two suggestions. These adopt a similar approach: they indicate ways in which the considerations adduced so far for the rejection of discovery in philosophical inquiry can be reasons for believing that there can be no discovery, whilst making no claim that this conclusion is itself a philosophical discovery. These suggestions meet with objections; in the next section I will inquire if these objections are well-founded.

It will be helpful to state the second horn of the dilemma in a clearer form. If we take P to be the set of (true) premises for the

conclusion that there can be no discoveries in philosophy, we have first the claim:

(A) if P then there can be no philosophical discoveries.

If the scope of the consequent is unrestricted, it follows from P that (A) is not a philosophical discovery, because

(B) if there can be no philosophical discoveries then (A) is not a philosophical discovery.

And from (B) we can deduce

(C) P is no reason for believing that there are no philosophical discoveries.

So there is no justification for the belief that there are no philosophical discoveries.¹

The first response to this argument to be considered here holds that (B) is true--the scope of the consequent of (A) is indeed unrestricted--but holds that the argument in (A) is properly taken as a reductio ad absurdum of a belief in scientific philosophy. The right way to understand (A) is then taken to be this: assuming that there is such a thing as discovery in philosophy, here is a philosophical argument for the conclusion that there is no room for philosophical discovery; so on the assumption that there can be philosophical discovery it has been shown that there can be no such thing; hence the conclusion can be detached from the assumption--

¹ This argument is an ancient one. So Sextus Empiricus attributes the following reasoning to the "Dogmatists": "If proof exists, proof exists; if proof exists not, proof exists; but proof either exists or exists not; therefore proof exists" (Outlines of Pyrrhonism II.186). (Burnyeat explores the use of arguments by self-refutation (peritrope) in 'Protagoras and Self-Refutation in Later Greek Philosophy'.)

there can indeed be no such thing as discovery in philosophy. The argument is directed ad hominem to the one who holds to the worth of logical inquiry; once the conclusion is drawn, the assumption motivating the conclusion is shed, and (A) is discarded along with it. The scientific philosopher is committed to (A), but his critic is not--this is the key insight on offer.

In what sense is the one who believes that there are philosophical discoveries committed to (A)? This one might disclaim such a commitment, complaining: how can I be committed to (A) given that it is self-refuting? How can a commitment to philosophical discovery introduce a commitment to something which is patently not a discovery? The reply might come: you are committed to a method of inquiry, so to the results of that method, of which (A) is one; if it turns out that the results are self-refuting, that demonstrates that the method is inadequate to ensure the correctness of its results; hence there is no justification for the belief that discoveries are being made using this method. The method in question is just that of logical inquiry, and the reply proposes an argument from error in effect: the scientific philosopher holds that (A) is not a discovery; but unless the philosopher can point to an error in the reasoning which leads to (A), this philosopher must admit that he has no justification for believing the results of any argument just because he cannot detect an error in the reasoning.²

But this reply will not do. First, because it turns out that a belief is in error it does not follow that the method which led to it

² Fogelin seems to have in mind an argument like this. Scientific philosophers "can take no comfort from [the self-refutation argument], since the burden now falls upon them to find something wrong with a pattern of reasoning embodying principles that they themselves accept" (Wittgenstein 2nd. ed. p.228).

cannot in general justify beliefs to which it gives rise. Second, the method in question can be taken not to consist in just deriving a conclusion from premisses believed true, but, rather, to consist in deriving a conclusion from premisses believed true such that the conclusion does not deny the worth of the procedure. The introduction of such self-refutation is a ground for a distinction between the method of justification employed in this case and that used in others. Third, if the argument in (A) were to be defended in this way, any other argument leading to a paradox could have been used to the same end. It is not necessary that (A) introduce a problem with philosophical inquiry; the challenge to the scientific philosopher is just: if you say that there is here an unidentified error is your method not now useless? Any unidentified error would serve here.

The philosopher who believes in the power of discovery can reasonably deny a commitment to (A). All the same, the strategy of showing that the scientific philosopher is, somehow, really committed to the conclusion that there is no discovery is surely the one to be followed up here. Without such a commitment a problem of incommensurability will arise. Something is needed which will impress the philosopher, but not suffer the rebuff (A) receives. The reductio argument is too easily brushed aside--it does not force itself on the philosopher despite its seeming-correctness. But as long as the connection between P and the conclusion that there is no philosophical discovery is taken to be one of entailment, the philosopher can reject the conclusion, holding that the argument shows itself to be inadequate so does not support its conclusion. There is however another way in which the conclusion of (A) might force itself on the philosopher. We can consider this sequence of

claims, paralleling (A)-(C):

(A*) if P then it appears that there can be no philosophical discoveries;

(B*) if it appears that there can be no philosophical discoveries then it appears that (A*) is not a philosophical discovery;

(C*) so P is no reason for believing that there are no philosophical discoveries.

The consequent of (A*) can be taken to be unrestricted: it appears that there can be no discoveries at all in philosophy. But this does not refute (A*) as (A) was self-refuting, for (B*) does not support a conclusion (C*) which will contradict (A*). The point is of course that (A*) does not pretend to be a philosophical discovery. What it says might be put thus: if P is true it is (it so happens) very hard to see how there can be philosophical discoveries.³ This does not assert any inferential link between P and the denial of discovery (hence there is no formal reductio on offer), but, rather, it says that when one thinks about the situation P, one experiences a sort of intellectual bewilderment. This is not a philosophical bewilderment--one is not confronted by an argument for the falsity of a thesis one formerly believed to be correct. Instead it is the sort of confusion which might arise from a puzzle of some sort--a situation in a game of scrabble perhaps, when one cannot see how one can make a word with the letters available. There is no question now of a proof that no word can be made, but (one will say) one cannot see what words can be made. One's bewilderment does not depend on an intellectual assessment of the state of play, but is better seen as directly

³ It is "not a dogmatic assumption, that is to say assent to something non-evident, but an expression indicative of our own mental condition" (Sextus Empiricus, Outlines of Pyrrhonism I.197).

caused by that state. In the same way, (A*) is suggesting that contemplation of the truth of P causes one to believe that there can be no discovery in philosophy. So if (C*) means more by 'reason' than 'cause', it is irrelevant to (A*).

This second suggestion points to a way in which the belief that there is no discovery can impress a scientific philosopher but be immune from his retort to any attempt to prove that there is no discovery. But this suggestion is open to objection. The philosopher might well allow that (A*) is right--that contemplation of P often leads to the belief that there is no philosophical discovery. But although the philosopher admits that he might be causally impressed, he will raise the question of why this should be thought to address the philosophical problems at stake. One might form the belief that there is no discovery in many circumstances--putting drugs in the water supply might be a very efficient way of inducing just this belief. But the scientific philosopher will think it inappropriate to address his worries by drinking the water--it will lead only to a neglect of the problems, not a solution nor even a proper dissolution--and he will respond likewise to the offer of persuasion held out by (A*). Unless he was previously convinced of the impossibility of discovery he would believe that undergoing the causal treatment for his problems is no better than turning his back on the problems.

Anything less than a logical connection between P and the belief that there is no discovery will be too weak to impress the philosopher. But as much as a logical connection will be too strong, the conclusion undercutting the argument which gives it life. One armed with the arguments of the last chapter, tries to impress the

scientific philosopher, but is rebuffed whatever concessions he is prepared to make. This is frustrating of course; the critic of scientific philosophy believes he has arguments which, if only the philosopher would hear, he would be persuaded by. But the philosopher is deaf to the critic's pleadings, insisting that there can be no proof that philosophy cannot make discoveries, and that anything weaker than proof is too weak.

6.2 The Right Attitude

There is I think something deeply unsatisfying with the replies put into the mouth of the scientific philosopher. It is not that they are logically flawed in any way so much as that they are in the wrong spirit--too lacking in sympathy, or even honesty. In so rejecting the fumbling efforts of the sceptic about philosophical discovery to state his case, the scientific philosopher would be making a moral mistake; the question of the proper response to the argument against scientific philosophy becomes a question of scientific ethics (so I will argue). Once the right answer is seen it becomes apparent that the objections to the sceptic reviewed in the last section have little force.

The philosopher rejects the challenge offered by the sceptic, insisting that it is ill-formed, and in taking this attitude he is, in a sense, within his rights. If scientific philosophy is possible it should hold firm to principles of assessment such as those invoked to rule out the sceptic's challenge. All the same, when the challenge is seen in its wider context, this attitude appears less warranted. The context I have in mind can be put thus: it is at least possible that philosophical inquiry of the sort championed by the scientific

philosopher is worthless in the way the sceptic suggests--there might be no logical mechanism, and there might be only an ideology of objective discovery.⁴ But a belief in this possibility cannot possibly be justified when measured by the standards of scientific philosophy--this is the upshot of the last section. This situation should however be seen as a problem by a scientific philosopher, for if scientific philosophy were not possible (as the sceptic claims it is not) this failing could never be seriously countenanced by one employing the techniques of logical inquiry. And one who is aware that the philosopher can, in all logical consistency, turn a deaf ear to the sceptic's complaints should, for that very reason, come to believe that this attitude is too facile. The thought which should impress the philosopher is just this: if, as is possible, scientific philosophy cannot make objective discoveries, this insight would be difficult to state convincingly--the discussion of the previous section demonstrates this much; however this shows not that scientific philosophy must then be worthwhile, but that the objections put to the sceptic in the previous section are too quick.

This sympathetic attitude is the one warranted here I think: it is that attitude which one imbued with the scientific spirit should adopt.⁵ Just as a physicist, say, who discounts objections to his

⁴ This is the weakest claim which will suffice for the present argument. A stronger claim is however true I think: that it is at least as likely (prior to considering any argument for the worthlessness of scientific philosophy) that scientific inquiry is worthless as that it is not. But to defend this claim would take more space than is available here.

⁵ A striking example of the unsympathetic attitude (directed at a different complaint) is to be found in this extraordinary passage from Putnam: "Philosophers are beginning to talk about the great issues again, and to feel that something can be said about them, even if there are no grand or ultimate solutions. There is an excitement in the air. And if I react to Professor Rorty's book [Philosophy and

favourite theory just because the data on which the objections depend cannot be accommodated by that theory would not be being scientific, so the philosopher who refuses to consider the sceptic's complaints because the sceptic's conclusions cannot be happily stated is not being scientific. Indeed, both would be dishonest, refusing to admit that there is a real challenge here. To say that the scientific philosopher should make himself more open to the sceptic's complaints (not yet to admit their correctness, but to take them as real complaints) is just to say that the honest philosopher will show more sympathy.

What is this sympathetic attitude? The additional element is just the awareness that the sceptic's challenge might not really be expressible, something which can be put in the form of a conclusion logically derived from premises and stated without contradiction. If the sceptic is right, philosophical theses are indeed worthless, and the sympathetic attitude is based on awareness of just this fact. Any conclusions then that the sceptic appears to draw can serve only polemical purposes; they present a challenge to the scientific philosopher to demonstrate where the sceptic's argument has gone wrong. At the end of the day the sceptic is not proposing a thesis ('Scientific philosophy is worthless'), but a way of life--not doing scientific philosophy. Indeed, even this is to say too much; the sceptic should better be seen as simply putting the facts before us and inviting us to choose. This is all the sceptic can consistently be doing. The honest and sympathetic philosopher will be aware that this

the Mirror of Nature] with a certain sharpness, it is because one more 'deflationary' book, one more book telling us that the deep questions aren't deep and the whole enterprise was a mistake, is just what we don't need right now" ('Why Reason Can't be Naturalized', p.236).

is what the sceptic's challenge must consist in. Hence he will realise that the earlier responses to the sceptic's arguments are too quick--the complaint is about the way the sceptic is forced to state his challenge, not about the challenge itself.

If this line of thought is correct, the right attitude of the scientific philosopher is to take the sceptic's challenge philosophically--to explore the worth of the arguments rather than to dismiss them as of necessity wrong. In this way there can be a genuinely philosophical inquiry into the worth of scientific philosophy. Of course, to the extent that this reveals that such philosophy is unable to make objective discoveries, to that extent there should be less motivation to proclaim the failing of philosophy. The sympathetic philosopher will realise this and will not hold his enforced silence against the sceptic.

Wittgenstein wrote in 1930:

It is all one to me whether or not the typical western scientist understands or appreciates my work, since he will not in any case understand the spirit in which I write. Our civilization is characterised by the word 'progress'... Typically it constructs. It is occupied with building an ever more complicated structure. And even clarity is sought only as a means to this end, not as an end in itself. For me on the contrary, clarity, perspicuity are valuable in themselves. (CV p.7)

This spirit (in its negative part at least) is that which the sceptic is trying to express. Wittgenstein here appears to admit that there is no way of overcoming the gulf between the outlook of the scientist (and he would include the scientific philosopher here) and the spirit of the sceptic. The former will be unable to understand the latter. Although there is a "great temptation to try to make the spirit explicit" (CV p.8), this cannot be done. No book can make it explicit

for "the spirit of a book must be evident in the book itself and cannot be described" (CV p.7). Wittgenstein puts the predicament thus (at CV p.8):

When you bump up against the limits of your own honesty it is as though your thoughts get into a whirlpool, an infinite regress: You can say what you like, it takes you no further.

The spirit cannot be made explicit because, say what you will, the question arises, how then can that be correct? If one has not grasped the spirit before one encounters attempts to state it, one will not understand these statements--they will appear to be self-refuting and so worthless. There is no point in trying to express the spirit, and, one might conclude, there is no challenge the sceptic can in fact make--there is nothing he can do to help another (however sympathetic) towards the correct view of philosophy. The spirit is inexpressible, and the sceptic's phrases empty.

By the Investigations however Wittgenstein had decided otherwise. Here the doctrines on philosophy which encompass this spirit are stated confidently. There is of course no attempt to make the supporting arguments explicit--instead the worth of the doctrines is left for the reader to ponder ("I should not like my writings to spare other people the trouble of thinking", PI p.x). Once the grounds for the doctrines are seen, the inadequacy of these statements of the doctrines is also seen; these statements are just gestures at the quietude which is the response to the failings of scientific philosophy (and its worthlessness) which the sceptic invites.⁶ Now the sceptic can make use of the sympathetic reception

⁶ One might even call these statements ladders by which to attain that position. This would make clear the contrast with the 1930 writings (in Culture and Value); then Wittgenstein wrote: "I

he is given, if not to insist that the philosopher abandon his pursuits, at least to reveal his arguments, and so to attempt to lure the philosopher from the supposedly-secure path of a science.

This line of thought is motivated by the need to allow the reach of the negative doctrines to be unrestricted--to embrace even the case made for those doctrines. If this way of looking at the source and status of the doctrines is correct, a further problem remains. The suggestion has been that the argument for the negative doctrines is at best heuristic; if it succeeds in persuading the scientific philosopher it reveals itself as only a polemical device. But what now of the doctrines attributed to Wittgenstein that play no part in the passage from the failure of intellectualism to the surrender of scientific philosophy? It has been argued that Wittgenstein holds to an account of intentional states and the world which can be called non-realistic--what can be in the mind and the world is constituted within a practice, itself founded on instinctive noises and gestures. This looks very much like a substantial theory, one which explains the foundations of intentionality and does not just describe how we use intentional terms. This non-realist theory does not contribute to the negative doctrines--the denial of intellectualism alone suffices to establish these. Hence the tension between the theory and the those doctrines cannot be resolved in the way just suggested, by taking the tension to be a necessary but passing stage on the road to the surrender of scientific philosophy.

How then is the tension to be resolved? I have no clear answer to

might say: if the place I want to get to could only be reached by way of a ladder, I would give up trying to get there. For the place I really have to get to is a place I must already be at now" (CV p.7).

offer, but I will briefly note two suggestions. One suggestion which does not help is that Wittgenstein does not in fact offer a theory--hence not a non-realistic theory--of intentionality; that, rather, all that is on offer are grammatical reflections. The mistake in interpreting these to offer non-realist explanations is exactly parallel to that made by the realist, the one whose mistakes Wittgenstein is most concerned to confront.

But this suggestion will not work (the objections to the descriptivist project in 5.5 above to one side). We do, for example, believe there to be objective logical and mathematical theses awaiting discovery, and we do believe that psychological states can explain behaviour. These beliefs are not philosophical in any sense, but are reflected in what people say and do in their everyday lives. To suggest that these beliefs can be seen to be in error simply by reflecting on how we use language is, I think, patently false. Any reflection on the use of language can only reveal these very commitments to objective discoveries and psychological explanations. This is not to say that these beliefs are true of course, only that Wittgenstein's claim that they are false must rest on something more substantial than grammar.

A second suggestion to remove the tension is this: the non-realism too has a heuristic role. On this account, Wittgenstein intends such theses as that the mathematician is an inventor not a discover, that psychological states are not causal, that language is an elaboration of instinctive noises and gestures ... as deliberate exaggerations, claims made to stir one out of a dogmatic realism, but not intended to provoke assent to non-realist theories of the same phenomena. The dialectical movement is rather this: one is invited to

conclude that if one has to choose between theories, the non-realist's is no less plausible than the realist's; but then one sees that if a non-realist theory is right there is no room for philosophical discovery; so the pendulum comes to rest at a point between the two explanations. The resting point is the surrender of philosophical inquiry: one sees the emptiness of all philosophical explanations. What does one do instead? One acquiesces in one's practice, taking the grammar at its face value, remaining unimpressed by the philosopher's questions.

Is this second suggestion true to Wittgenstein's intentions? I can point to no passages which indicate that it is. But I can see no other plausible way of reconciling his non-realism with the negative doctrines on philosophy.

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