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FIL217 / FIL317- *Wittgenstein studies*

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Philosophical Investigations:  
Key concepts and  
approaches

- Summary from last time
- PI in contrast to Tractatus
- Augustine's mistake(s)
- The importance of acting; form of life; language game
- There is no philosophical language game («einfach», «Bedeutung», «Satz» ...)
- The idea of family resemblance
- The role of Übersichtliche Darstellung
- PI frontmatter

# Short summary from last time

- Is "This is red" an elementary proposition?
  - Abandonment of *Tractatus* philosophy of language and dismantling of "logical syntax alone" approach
- If not through reference to simple objects in the world, how are meaning and sense established?
  - Middle Wittgenstein: Focus on language internal (systems of) rules; cf. chess game
- Where do rules get their justification from?
  - Primacy of actual practices
- What about the ideal of exactness?
  - *Tractatus*: Exactness is required at the center / bottom of our thought and language (and inherent in both thought and language).
  - *Philosophical Investigations*: We don't need the requirement of exactness for our thought and language to work as they actually *do* work (and neither do we need this requirement for our thought and language as we think they *should* work).

# Exactness a continuous issue?

Understanding, as it is usually conceived, is a vague process – we are only interested in what is exact. But not because we are only interested in the “ideal” of a language which reality only approximates, but because we only in this way can capture what is expressed in every language.

But what am I saying when I say “that only what is exact interests me”? What is the inexact? What is the vague that I exclude?

Isn't it that I have to exclude what I don't know in precise enough terms? I.e. don't I want to say that — — —.

Why do I say: feelings, moods etc. that accompany, follow, or precede a sentence don't interest me? Because it is only the symbolic structure that interests me.

Doesn't the vague consist in the fact that it does not belong to the symbol, that it can be one way or the other, even when the symbol remains the same?

No, there is still something else: that, in a sense, it is my only task to say something clearly and not to allude to anything.

It is almost as though I wanted to say I'm weaving a tapestry & therefore I cannot have any unclear colour transitions. But in reality this is not a good simile.

Shall I say that exactness consists in the fact that what is dubious does not concern us?

What does our exactness consist in?

Frege about psychological logic. His comments are all concerned with the inexactness of a psychological study in contrast to a logical one.

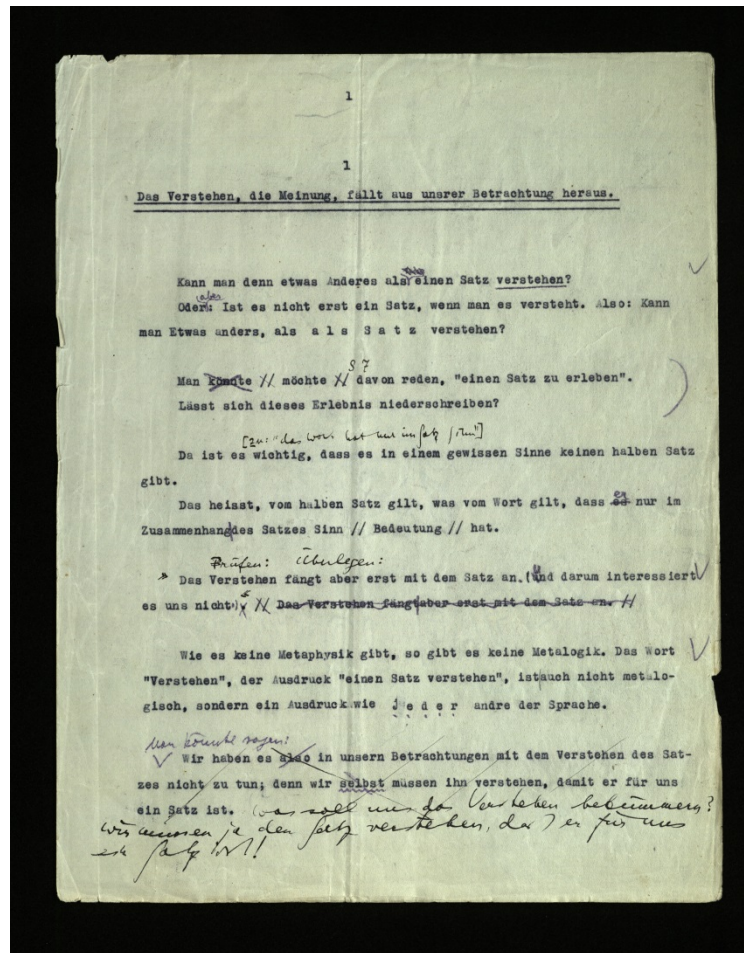
Can I say that I am only interested in the *content* of the sentence? And the content of the sentence lies in it.

The sentence has its content as a component of the calculus.

Is thus, “understanding a sentence” of the same kind as “mastering a calculus”? Thus, as knowing how to multiply? I think so.

[http://www.wittgensteinsource.org/BFE/Ms-153a.102r ff.](http://www.wittgensteinsource.org/BFE/Ms-153a.102r_ff) (1931)

# The issue of exactness: Is understanding calculus or human practice driven?



# PI §81

(...) All this, however, can only appear in the right light when one has attained greater clarity about the concepts of understanding, meaning, and thinking. For it will then also become clear what can lead us (and did lead me) to think that if anyone utters a sentence and *means* or *understands* it he is operating a calculus according to definite rules.

# PI: Practice comes first

- Meaning and authority are established by our practices (linguistic and other)
  - Focus on practice
    - Focus on the *use* of words
- Language is
  - an activity
  - a social activity
  - an activity which is embedded in human practices and nature
  - «Language games»: Exemplifications of language as embedded in actions, activities, practices and forms of life.
  - "Forms of life": Stresses that there are also non-linguistic and non-action related factors that are relevant for understanding our linguistic existence (and thus also relevant for philosophy of language).

# PI: "Meaning is use"

- If meaning is tied to use, then one method for dealing with philosophical problems arising from questions of meaning could be to pay attention to actual linguistic usage.
- Studies of how words actually are used can become key to the method of philosophy!
  - A range of relevant contexts: linguistic, extra-linguistic, social, cultural, historical ... **ordinary language**
    - Frege's context principle!
  - Variety and multiplicity: Not *one* "general form of proposition"; not *one* meaning of "simple" ...
    - "Family resemblance"
- Focus on examples of use.
- Focus on examples as constitutive parts of learning language and communication - see PI §208.



# PI vs. Tractatus

# PI preface

Four years ago I had occasion to re-read my first book (the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*) and to explain its ideas to someone. It suddenly seemed to me that I should publish those old thoughts and the new ones together: that the latter could be seen in the right light only by contrast with and against the background of my old way of thinking.

## ... against the background of my old way of thinking

TLP	PI
?	Persons, humans (PI §1)
?	Body language (PI §1)
?	Behaviour, but also acting (PI §1)
?	Examples (PI §1)
?	Real, everyday language and life (PI §§1, 108, 156, 241)
?	Criss-cross form and method (PI preface, §68)
?	1-word sentences (PI §19)
?	Many kinds of sentences (PI §23)
?	Life, biology (PI §§19, 23, 142, 441, 472; PI II xii / §365f)
?	Language in development, change, variation (synchronic and diachronic) (PI §§ 11, 12, 14, 18, 23)
?	Many problems (PI §133)
?	Many methods (PI §133)
?	Use (PI §§ 1, 43, 432)
?	Vagueness and open-endedness of meaning (PI §§ 18, 66f, 71, 133)

# «Augustine's» mistakes

# «Augustine's» mistake(s)

1. "Cum ipsi (majores homines) appellabant rem aliquam, et cum secundum eam vocem corpus ad aliquid movebant, videbam, et tenebam hoc ab eis vocari rem illam, quod sonabant, cum eam vellent ostendere. Hoc autem eos velle ex motu corporis aperiebatur: tamquam verbis naturalibus omnium gentium, quae fiunt vultu et nutu oculorum, ceterorumque membrorum actu, et sonitu vocis indicante affectionem animi in petendis, habendis, rejiciendis, fugiendisve rebus. Ita verba in variis sentiis locis suis posita, et crebro audita, quarum rerum signa essent, paulatim colligebam, measque jam voluntates, edomito in eis signis ore, per haec enuntiabam." (Augustine, *Confessions*, I. 8.)

These words, it seems to me, give us a particular picture of the essence of human language. It is this: the individual words in language name objects—sentences are combinations of such names.—In this picture of language we find the roots of the following idea: Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands.

**Augustine does not speak of there being any difference between kinds of word.** [Intellectual mistake: «There is only one type of words»] If you describe the learning of language in this way you are, I believe, thinking primarily of nouns like "table", "chair", "bread", and of people's names, and only secondarily of the names of certain actions and properties; and **of the remaining kinds of word as something that will take care of itself.** [Ethical mistake: «Let's deal with this later (if we want to deal with it at all)»]

Now think of the following use of language: I send someone shopping. ...

2. That philosophical concept of meaning has its place in a primitive idea of the way language functions. But one can also say that it is the idea of a language more primitive than ours.

Let us imagine a language for which the description given by Augustine is right. ... The language is meant to serve for communication between a builder A and an assistant B. A is building with building-stones: there are blocks, pillars, slabs and beams. B has to pass the stones, and that in the order in which A needs them. For this purpose they use a language consisting of the words "block", "pillar", "slab", "beam". A calls them out;—B brings the stone which he has learnt to bring at such-and-such a call.—Conceive this as a complete primitive language.

# «Augustine's» mistake(s)

3. **Augustine, we might say, does describe a system of communication; only not everything that we call language is this system.** And one has to say this in many cases where the question arises "Is this an appropriate description or not?" The answer is: "Yes, it is appropriate, but only for this narrowly circumscribed region, not for the whole of what you were claiming to describe."

It is as if someone were to say: "A game consists in moving objects about on a surface according to certain rules..."—and we replied: You seem to be thinking of board games, but there are others. You can make your definition correct by expressly restricting it to those games.

4. Imagine a script in which the letters were used to stand for sounds, and also as signs of emphasis and punctuation. (A script can be conceived as a language for describing sound-patterns.) Now imagine someone interpreting that script as if there were simply a correspondence of letters to sounds and as if the letters had not also completely different functions. **Augustine's conception of language is like such an over-simple conception of the script.**

5. ... If we look at the example in §1, we may perhaps get an inkling how much this general notion of the meaning of a word surrounds the working of language with a haze ...

6. ... But if the ostensive teaching has this effect,—am I to say that it effects an understanding of the word? Don't you understand the call "Slab!" if you act upon it in such-and-such a way?—Doubtless the ostensive teaching helped to bring this about; but only together with a particular training. With different training the same ostensive teaching of these words would have effected a quite different understanding. ... [Intellectual mistake: «Ostensive definition works like Augustine describes»]

32. ... Augustine describes the learning of human language as if the child came into a strange country and did not understand the language of the country; that is, as if it already had a language, only not this one. Or again: as if the child could already *think*, only not yet speak. And "think" would here mean something like "talk to itself". [Intellectual mistake: «Learning to speak is similar to learning a second language»]

# Augustine revisited: PI §32

32. Someone coming into a strange country will sometimes learn the language of the inhabitants from ostensive definitions that they give him; and he will often have to *guess* the meaning of these definitions; and will guess sometimes right, sometimes wrong.

And now, I think, we can say: Augustine describes the learning of human language as if the child came into a strange country and did not understand the language of the country; that is, as if it already had a language, only not this one. Or again: as if the child could already *think*, only not yet speak. And "think" would here mean something like "talk to itself".

# Augustine revisited: PI §32

- Augustine\* describes the acquisition of first language
  - as though the language learning infant could already think, only not speak
  - as though the language learning infant could already understand actions and act himself, only not speak
  - as though the language learning infant could already participate in the “gemeinsame menschliche Handlungsweise”, only not speak
  - in short: as though thinking and understanding could develop in the infant without any participation in language games (in all the senses of “language game”) and forms of life
- Or, alternatively: Augustine’s description already presupposes that the child masters language games – and thus his description fits how we learn a foreign, second language.
- Language, thought and action acquisition work hand in hand with each other
  - Nothing innate?
  - The status of the mental / inner ...

\* NB: As translated, paraphrased and described by Wittgenstein



➤ These mistakes can all be regarded mistakes of the *Tractatus*!

# Fifth mistake!

The «Augustinian picture of language» forgets about human *action!*

# A certain picture of the human language (as it also characterized the *Tractatus*)

PI §1: (...) the individual words in language name objects—sentences are combinations of such names. (...) Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands.

- No human agents needed? Cf. PI §1: Now think of the following use of language: I send someone shopping. ...

# Acting

PI §1:

Now think of the following use of language: I **send** someone shopping. I **give** him a slip marked "five red apples". He **takes** the slip to the shopkeeper, who **opens** the drawer marked "apples"; then he **looks up** the word "red" in a table and **finds** a colour sample opposite it; then he **says** the series of cardinal numbers—I **assume** that he knows them by heart—up to the word "five" and for each number he **takes** an apple of the same colour as the sample out of the drawer.—**It is in this and similar ways that one operates with words.**—"But how does he know where and how he is to look up the word 'red' and what he is to do with the word 'five'?"—Well, I **assume** that he **acts** as I have described. Explanations come to an end somewhere.—But what is the meaning of the word "five"?—No such thing was in question here, only how the word "five" is used.

Wittgenstein's philosophical development  
according to Johannessen 1988:  
«Logic ... language ... **practice**»

«Practice»? → Acting!

# Acting

OC §204:

Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end;—but the end is not certain propositions' striking us immediately as true, i.e. it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; **it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game.**

Ms-175,4v f:

Die Begründung aber, die Rechtfertigung der Evidenz kommt zu einem Ende; – das Ende aber ist nicht daß uns gewisse Sätze unmittelbar als wahr einleuchten, also eine Art Sehen unsrerseits, sondern **unser Handeln, welches am Grunde des Sprachspiels liegt.**

# PI: handeln

- 1 Denke nun an diese Verwendung der Sprache: Ich schicke jemand einkaufen. Ich gebe ihm einen Zettel, auf diesem stehen die Zeichen: "fünf rote Äpfel". Er trägt den Zettel zum Kaufmann; der öffnet die Lade, auf welcher das Zeichen "Äpfel" steht; dann sucht er in einer Tabelle das Wort "rot" auf und findet ihm gegenüber ein Farbmuster; nun sagt er die Reihe der Grundzahlwörter - ich nehme an, er weiß sie auswendig - bis zum Worte "fünf" und bei jedem Zahlwort nimmt er einen Apfel aus der Lade, der die Farbe des Musters hat. - So, und ähnlich, operiert man mit Worten. - "Wie weiß er aber, wo und wie er das Wort 'rot' nachschlagen soll und was er mit dem Wort 'fünf' anzufangen hat?" - Nun, ich nehme an, er **handelt**, wie ich es beschrieben habe. Die Erklärungen haben irgendwo ein Ende. - Was ist aber die Bedeutung des Wortes "fünf"? - Von einer solchen war hier garnicht die Rede; nur davon, wie das Wort "fünf" gebraucht wird.

# PI: handeln

- 6 Wenn aber das das hinweisende Lehren bewirkt, - soll ich sagen, es bewirkt das Verstehen des Worts? Versteht nicht der den Ruf "Platte!", der so und so nach ihm **handelt**? - Aber dies half wohl das hinweisende Lehren herbeiführen; aber doch nur zusammen mit einem bestimmten Unterricht. Mit einem anderen Unterricht hätte dasselbe hinweisende Lehren dieser Wörter ein ganz anderes Verständnis bewirkt.
  
- 7 In der **Praxis** des Gebrauchs der Sprache (2) ruft der eine Teil Wörter, der andere **handelt** nach ihnen; im Unterricht der Sprache aber wird sich dieser Vorgang finden: Der Lernende benennt die Gegenstände. D.h. er spricht das Wort, wenn der Lehrer auf den Stein zeigt. - Ja, es wird sich hier die noch einfachere Übung finden: der Schüler spricht die Worte nach, die der Lehrer ihm vorsagt - beides sprachähnliche Vorgänge.



# PI: handeln

23 Führe dir die Mannigfaltigkeit der Sprachspiele an diesen Beispielen, und andern, vor Augen: Befehlen, und nach Befehlen **handeln** - Beschreiben eines Gegenstands nach dem Ansehen, oder nach Messungen - Herstellen eines Gegenstands nach einer Beschreibung (Zeichnung) - Berichten eines Hergangs - Über den Hergang Vermutungen anstellen - Eine Hypothese aufstellen und prüfen - Darstellen der Ergebnisse eines Experiments durch Tabellen und Diagramme - Eine Geschichte erfinden; und lesen - Theater spielen - Reigen singen - Rätsel raten - Einen Witz machen; erzählen - Ein angewandtes Rechenexempel lösen - Aus einer Sprache in die andere übersetzen - Bitten, Danken, Fluchen, Grüßen, Beten.

- NB: The examples given in PI §23 are all examples of *acting*.

# PI: sich benehmen, sich verhalten

193"Die Maschine scheint ihre Wirkungsweise schon in sich zu haben" heißt: wir sind geneigt, die künftigen Bewegungen der Maschine in ihrer Bestimmtheit mit Gegenständen zu vergleichen, die schon in einer Lade liegen und nun von uns herausgeholt werden. - So aber reden wir nicht, wenn es sich darum handelt, das wirkliche **Verhalten** einer Maschine vorauszusagen. Da vergessen wir, im allgemeinen, nicht die Möglichkeit der Deformation der Teile, etc. - Wohl aber, wenn wir uns darüber wundern, wie wir denn die Maschine als Symbol einer Bewegungsweise verwenden können, - da sie sich doch auch ganz anders bewegen kann.

244Wie beziehen sich Wörter auf Empfindungen? - Darin scheint kein Problem zu liegen; denn reden wir nicht täglich von Empfindungen, und benennen sie? Aber wie wird die Verbindung des Namens mit dem Benannten hergestellt? Die Frage ist die gleiche, wie die: wie lernt ein Mensch die Bedeutung der Namen von Empfindungen? Z.B. des Wortes "Schmerz". Dies ist eine Möglichkeit: Es werden Worte mit dem ursprünglichen, natürlichen, Ausdruck der Empfindung verbunden und an dessen Stelle gesetzt. Ein Kind hat sich verletzt, es schreit; und nun sprechen ihm die Erwachsenen zu und bringen ihm Ausrufe und später Sätze bei. Sie lehren das Kind ein neues **Schmerzbenehmen**.

# PI: sich benehmen, sich verhalten

246 Man kann nicht sagen, die Andern lernen meine Empfindung nur durch mein **Benehmen**, - denn von mir kann man nicht sagen, ich lernte sie. Ich habe sie.

250 Warum kann ein Hund nicht Schmerzen heucheln? Ist er zu ehrlich? Könnte man einen Hund Schmerzen heucheln lehren? Man kann ihm vielleicht beibringen, bei bestimmten Gelegenheiten wie im Schmerz aufzuheulen, ohne daß er Schmerzen hat. Aber zum eigentlichen Heucheln fehlte diesem **Benehmen** noch immer die richtige Umgebung.

# Translations: The Brown Book complex

*Ts-310,1[2]et2[1]*

- In the actual use of this language, one man calls out the words as orders, the other **acts** according to them.

Ms-115,118[5]et119[1]et119[2] | EPB p. 117

- Im praktischen Gebrauch dieser Sprache ruft der Eine die Wörter als Befehle, der Andre **handelt** nach ihnen.

# Translations: The Brown Book complex

Ts-310,14[2]et15[1]et16[1]

- Now it is queer that on closely looking at cases of comparing, it is very easy to see a great number of **activities** and states of mind, all more or less characteristic of the **act** of comparing.

Ms-115,133[2] | EPB p. 126

- Wenn wir nun irgendwelche Vorgänge des Vergleichens genau ins Auge fassen, so sehen wir leicht eine Anzahl von **Handlungen**, Gedanken, Empfindungen, die alle für das Vergleichen mehr oder weniger charakteristisch sind.

# Translations: The Brown Book complex

*Ts-310,70[2]*

- The change which took place was one which we might call a change in the general **behaviour** of the pupil, ...

Ms-115,198[3]et199[1] | EPB p. 174

- Die Veränderung, als der Schüler zu lesen anfang, war eine Veränderung seines **Verhaltens**, ...

# Translations: The Brown Book complex

## Ts-310,64[2]

- ... we are strongly inclined to use the metaphor of something being in a peculiar state for saying that something can **behave** in a particular way.

Ms-115,192[2] | EPB p. 170

- ... Wir neigen dazu, im **Verhalten** von etwas die Folge seines Zustands zu sehen.

# Translations: The Brown Book complex

Ts-310,24[3]et25[1]et26[1]et27[1]

- In fact we could easily imagine the numeral 159 to be used on such occasions, in connection with such gestures and forms of **behaviour** as would make us say that this numeral plays the role of an unsurmountable ...

Ms-115,147[2]et148[1] | EPB p. 137

- Wir können uns leicht das Zahlzeichen '159' bei solchen Anlässen, in Verbindung mit solchen Gesten und Formen des **Benehmens** gebraucht denken, daß wir sagen müßten, dieses Zeichen spielt bei ihnen die Rolle einer unübersteigbaren oberen Grenze.



# PI §206

- ... Die *gemeinsame menschliche Handlungsweise* [my italics] ist das Bezugssystem, mittels welches wir uns eine fremde Sprache deuten.
  - the common *behaviour* of mankind?
  - mankind's shared ways of *acting* / shared ways of carrying out an action / shared ways of pursuing an action?

# PI: handeln

- Also see PI § § 21, 36, 51, 54, 168, 197, 198, 200, 201, 202, 206, 207, 211, 212, 232, 243, 330, 420, 460, 486, 487, 489, 490, 505, 519, 534, 556, 613-616, 627-629, 631, 632, 638, 642, 653

# Introduction to the PI (§§1-88) under four headings\*

- Form of life
- Language games
- Family resemblance
- There is no philosophical language game («einfach», «Bedeutung», «Satz»)

\* Simo will do the rest 😊 .

Form of life

# PI §19 dt.-engl.

19. Man kann sich leicht eine Sprache vorstellen, die nur aus Befehlen und Meldungen in der Schlacht besteht. - Oder eine Sprache, die nur aus Fragen besteht und einem Ausdruck der Bejahung und der Verneinung. Und unzähliges Andere. - Und eine Sprache vorstellen heißt, sich eine **Lebensform** vorstellen. ...

19. It is easy to imagine a language consisting only of orders and reports in battle.—Or a language consisting only of questions and expressions for answering yes and no. And innumerable others.—And to imagine a language means to imagine a **form of life**. ...

➤ To imagine language use not only involves imagining the actions with which it is intertwined, but to imagine also the life, **biology**, facts of nature, behaviour and social and cultural factors etc. which it is embedded in.

# PI §§ 23-24 dt.

23. Wieviele Arten der Sätze gibt es aber? Etwa Behauptung, Frage und Befehl? - Es gibt unzählige solcher Arten: *unzählige* verschiedene Arten der Verwendung alles dessen, was wir "Zeichen", "Worte", "Sätze", nennen. Und diese Mannigfaltigkeit ist nichts Festes, ein für allemal Gegebenes; sondern neue Typen der Sprache, neue Sprachspiele, wie wir sagen können, entstehen und andre veralten und werden vergessen. (Ein *ungefähres* Bild davon können uns die Wandlungen der Mathematik geben.)

Das Wort "Sprachspiel" soll hier hervorheben, daß das *Sprechen* der Sprache ein Teil ist einer Tätigkeit, oder einer **Lebensform**.

Führe dir die Mannigfaltigkeit der Sprachspiele an diesen Beispielen, und andern, vor Augen: ...

24. Wem die Mannigfaltigkeit der Sprachspiele nicht vor Augen ist, der wird etwa zu Fragen geneigt sein, wie dieser: "Was ist eine Frage?" ...

# PI §§ 23-24 engl.

23. But how many kinds of sentence are there? Say assertion, question, and command?—There are *countless* kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call "symbols", "words", "sentences". And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten. (We can get a *rough picture* of this from the changes in mathematics.)

Here the term "language-*game*" is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a **form of life**.

Review the multiplicity of language-games in the following examples, and in others:

...

24. If you do not keep the multiplicity of language-games in view you will perhaps be inclined to ask questions like: "What is a question?" ...

# PI §241 dt.

241. "So sagst du also, daß die Übereinstimmung der Menschen entscheide, was richtig und was falsch ist?" - Richtig und falsch ist, was Menschen sagen; und **in der Sprache stimmen die Menschen überein. Dies ist keine Übereinstimmung der Meinungen, sondern der Lebensform.**



# PI §241 engl.

241. "So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?"—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.**

# Issues

- One or many human forms of life?
  - A universal human form of life? Common human nature? (cf. PI §§ 25, 415)
- Biological or anthropological / social / cultural?
  - Or both? (cf. PI §§ 25, 415)
- Specific or general?
  - Specific forms of greeting, saying Goodbye, ... as "forms of life" (see Majetschak 2010: "Forms and Patterns of Life: A Reassessment of a So-Called Basic Concept in the Late Philosophy of Wittgenstein")
  - See <http://www.nordicwittgensteinreview.com/issue/view/NWR%20Special%20Issue%202015>

→ Many autonomous and separated language games and forms of life?

# Language games

How did you learn to speak?

# Ms-110,89f

Drury sagte mir heute, er habe überlegt, daß man sich nicht des Zustandes erinnern könne wo man noch nicht sprechen konnte || es unmöglich sei sich des Zustands zu erinnern vor der Erlernung der Sprache. – Man könnte natürlich Erinnerungsbilder aus jener Zeit besitzen, aber man kann sich nicht an ein Fühlen des Mangels der Sprache erinnern, da man keinen Begriff der Sprache haben kann, ehe man spricht & freilich auch nachher nicht, weil es einen solchen Begriff nicht gibt. Auch kann man sich nicht an das Bedürfnis nach dem sprachlichen Ausdruck erinnern, denn wo das vorhanden ist, gibt es schon eine Sprache in der man denkt.

# PI §1

1. ... \* "When they (my elders) named some object, and accordingly moved towards something, I saw this and I grasped that the thing was called by the sound they uttered when they meant to point it out. Their intention was shewn by their bodily movements, as it were the natural language of all peoples: the expression of the face, the play of the eyes, the movement of other parts of the body, and the tone of voice which expresses our state of mind in seeking, having, rejecting, or avoiding something. Thus, as I heard words repeatedly used in their proper places in various sentences, I gradually learnt to understand what objects they signified; and after I had trained my mouth to form these signs, I used them to express my own desires."

**These words, it seems to me, give us a particular picture of the essence of human language. It is this: the individual words in language name objects—sentences are combinations of such names.—In this picture of language we find the roots of the following idea: Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands. ...**

# PI §1

... Augustine does not speak of there being any difference between kinds of word. If you describe the learning of language in this way you are, I believe, thinking primarily of nouns like "table", "chair", "bread", and of people's names, and only secondarily of the names of certain actions and properties; and of the remaining kinds of word as something that will take care of itself.

Now think of the following use of language: I send someone shopping. I give him a slip marked "five red apples". He takes the slip to the shopkeeper, who opens the drawer marked "apples"; then he looks up the word "red" in a table and finds a colour sample opposite it; then he says the series of cardinal numbers—I assume that he knows them by heart—up to the word "five" and for each number he takes an apple of the same colour as the sample out of the drawer.—It is in this and similar ways that one operates with words.—"But how does he know where and how he is to look up the word 'red' and what he is to do with the word 'five'?"—Well, I assume that he *acts* as I have described. Explanations come to an end somewhere.—But what is the meaning of the word "five"?—No such thing was in question here, only how the word "five" is used.



# PI §2

**2. That philosophical concept of meaning has its place in a primitive idea of the way language functions. But one can also say that it is the idea of a language more primitive than ours.**

Let us imagine a language for which the description given by Augustine is right. The language is meant to serve for communication between a builder A and an assistant B. A is building with building-stones: there are blocks, pillars, slabs and beams. B has to pass the stones, and that in the order in which A needs them. For this purpose they use a language consisting of the words "block", "pillar", "slab", "beam". A calls them out;—B brings the stone which he has learnt to bring at such-and-such a call.—Conceive this as a complete primitive language.

# PI §3

3. Augustine, we might say, does describe a system of communication; only not everything that we call language is this system. And one has to say this in many cases where the question arises "Is this an appropriate description or not?" The answer is: "Yes, it is appropriate, but only for this narrowly circumscribed region, not for the whole of what you were claiming to describe."

It is as if someone were to say: "A game consists in moving objects about on a surface according to certain rules..."—and we replied: You seem to be thinking of board games, but there are others. You can make your definition correct by expressly restricting it to those games.

# §4

4. Imagine a script in which the letters were used to stand for sounds, and also as signs of emphasis and punctuation. (A script can be conceived as a language for describing sound-patterns.) Now imagine someone interpreting that script as if there were simply a correspondence of letters to sounds and as if the letters had not also completely different functions. Augustine's conception of language is like such an over-simple conception of the script.

# PI §5

5. If we look at the example in §1, we may perhaps get an inkling how much this general notion of the meaning of a word surrounds the working of language with a haze which makes clear vision impossible. It disperses the fog to study the phenomena of language in primitive kinds of application in which one can command a clear view of the aim and functioning of the words.

A child uses such primitive forms of language when it learns to talk. Here the teaching of language is not explanation, but training.

# PI §2ff: Positive use of Augustine's account → **Language games**

2. ... Let us imagine a language for which the description given by Augustine is right. ...

- PI §§ 2, 6, 7, 8, ... 23 ...
- Cf. Brown Book (1934-55)

# What is a "language game"? At least 4 meanings

- PI §7:

7. In the practice of the use of **language (2)** one party calls out the words, the other acts on them. In instruction in the language the following process will occur: the learner *names* the objects; that is, he utters the word when the teacher points to the stone.—And there will be this still simpler exercise: the pupil repeats the words after the teacher—both of these being processes resembling language. [1]

We can also think of the whole process of using words in (2) as one of those **games by means of which children learn their native language. I will call these games "language-games" and will sometimes speak of a primitive language as a language-game.** [2]

And **the processes of naming the stones and of repeating words after someone** might also be called language-games. Think of much of the use of words in games like ring-a-ring-a-roses. [3]

I shall also call **the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the "language-game".** [4]

# Language games

- 1) Fictive, constructed linguistic "games" of a simple/primitive character; *objects of comparison* [§7]
- 2) Actually existing linguistic "games" of a simple/primitive character: Wir können uns auch denken, daß der ganze Vorgang des Gebrauchs der Worte in (2) eines jener Spiele ist, mittels welcher Kinder ihre Muttersprache erlernen. [§7]
- 3) Parts of linguistic practices: Und man könnte die Vorgänge des Benennens der Steine und des Nachsprechens des vorgesagten Wortes auch Sprachspiele nennen. [§7]
- 4) The whole of / the unity of language and action: Ich werde auch das Ganze: der Sprache und der Tätigkeiten, mit denen sie verwoben ist, "das Sprachspiel" nennen. [§7]
- 5) **Kinds of linguistic practices: Review the multiplicity of language-games in the following examples, and in others: ... [§23]**

# PI §23

23. But how many kinds of sentence are there? Say assertion, question, and command?—There are *countless* kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call "symbols", "words", "sentences". And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten. (We can get a *rough picture* of this from the changes in mathematics.)

Here the term "language-*game*" is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life.

Review the multiplicity of language-games in the following examples, and in others:

Giving orders, and obeying them—

Describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements—

Constructing an object from a description (a drawing)—

Reporting an event—

Speculating about an event—

Forming and testing a hypothesis—

Presenting the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams—

Making up a story; and reading it—

Play-acting—

Singing catches—

Guessing riddles—

Making a joke; telling it—

Solving a problem in practical arithmetic—

Translating from one language into another—

Asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying.

—It is interesting to compare the multiplicity of the tools in language and of the ways they are used, the multiplicity of kinds of word and sentence, with what logicians have said about the structure of language. (Including the author of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.)



The PI's description / diagnosis  
of the Tractatus' reasoning  
behind "simple names- /  
simple objects-philosophy":  
Philosophy does not have its  
own language game (§97)

No philosophically separated  
/ separable meaning of  
«einfach»

# PI §39

- 39. But why does it occur to one to want to make precisely this word into a name, when it evidently is *not* a name?—That is just the reason. For one is tempted to make an objection against what is ordinarily called a name. It can be put like this: *a name ought really to signify a simple*. And for this one might perhaps give the following reasons: The word "Excalibur", say, is a proper name in the ordinary sense. The sword Excalibur consists of parts combined in a particular way. If they are combined differently Excalibur does not exist. But it is clear that the sentence "Excalibur has a sharp blade" makes *sense* whether Excalibur is still whole or is broken up. But if **"Excalibur" is the name of an object**, this object no longer exists when Excalibur is broken in pieces; and as no object would then correspond to the name it would have no meaning. But then the sentence "Excalibur has a sharp blade" would contain a word that had no meaning, and hence the sentence would be nonsense. **But it does make sense**; so there must always be something corresponding to the words of which it consists. **So the word "Excalibur" must disappear** when the sense is analysed and its place be taken by words which name simples. It will be reasonable to call these words the real names.

# The reasoning behind

- A sentence built with "Excalibur" has sense even if the object to which "Excalibur" refers no longer exists.
- For a sentence to make sense it is a precondition that it contains elements which refer to objects.
- Therefore, the object of reference cannot be Excalibur, and the expressions which refer to objects cannot be words like "Excalibur".
- Therefore, there must be simple names which refer ("bedeuten"), and simple objects as their objects of reference («Bedeutungen»):
  - So the word "Excalibur" must disappear when the sense is analysed and its place be taken by words which name simples. (PI §39)

# PI §59

- 59. "A *name* signifies only what is an *element* of reality. What cannot be destroyed; what remains the same in all changes." ...We see *component parts* of something composite (of a chair, for instance). We say that the back is part of the chair, but is in turn itself composed of several bits of wood; while a leg is a simple component part. We also see a whole which changes (is destroyed) while its component parts remain unchanged. These are the materials from which we construct that picture of reality.

# PI §60

- 60. When I say: "My broom is in the corner",—is this really a statement about the broomstick and the brush? Well, it could at any rate be replaced by a statement giving the position of the stick and the position of the brush. And this statement is surely a further analysed form of the first one.—But why do I call it "further analysed"?—Well, if the broom is there, that surely means that the stick and brush must be there, and in a particular relation to one another; and this was as it were hidden in the sense of the first sentence, and is *expressed* in the analysed sentence. ...

# TLP used the word «einfach» wrongly: PI §47

... We use the word "composite" (and therefore the word "simple") in an enormous number of different and differently related ways. (Is the colour of a square on a chessboard simple, or does it consist of pure white and pure yellow? And is white simple, or does it consist of the colours of the rainbow?—Is this length of 2 cm. simple, or does it consist of two parts, each 1 cm. long? But why not of one bit 3 cm. long, and one bit 1 cm. long measured in the opposite direction?)

No philosophically separated  
/ separable meaning of  
«Bedeutung»



## TLP used the word "Bedeutung" wrongly: PI §40

- 40. Let us first discuss *this* point of the argument: that a word has no meaning if nothing corresponds to it.—It is important to **note that the word "meaning" ["Bedeutung"] is being used illicitly** if it is used to signify the thing that 'corresponds' to the word. That is to confound the meaning of a name with the *bearer* of the name. When Mr. N. N. dies **one says** that the bearer of the name dies, not that the meaning dies. And it would be nonsensical to say that, for if the name ceased to have meaning it would make no sense to say "Mr. N. N. is dead." [cf. Frege's use of the word "Bedeutung"]

No philosophically separated  
/ separable meaning of  
«Satz»

# TLP used the word «Satz» wrongly: PI §23 (cf. TLP #4.5, #6)

23. Wieviele Arten der Sätze gibt es aber? Etwa Behauptung, Frage und Befehl? – Es gibt *unzählige* solcher Arten: unzählige verschiedene Arten der Verwendung alles dessen, was wir "Zeichen", "Worte", "Sätze", nennen. Und diese Mannigfaltigkeit ist nichts Festes, ein für allemal Gegebenes; sondern neue Typen der Sprache, neue Sprachspiele, wie wir sagen können, entstehen und andre veralten und werden vergessen. (Ein *ungefähres Bild* davon können uns die Wandlungen der Mathematik geben.)

Das Wort "Sprachspiel" soll hier hervorheben, daß das *Sprechen* der Sprache ein Teil ist einer Tätigkeit, oder einer Lebensform.

Führe dir die Mannigfaltigkeit der Sprachspiele an diesen Beispielen, und andern, vor Augen: (...)

- Es ist interessant, die Mannigfaltigkeit der Werkzeuge der Sprache und ihrer Verwendungsweisen, die Mannigfaltigkeit der Wort- und Satzarten, mit dem zu vergleichen, was Logiker über den Bau der Sprache gesagt haben. (Und auch der Verfasser der Logisch-Philosophischen Abhandlung.)

# PI §124

- 124. Die Philosophie darf den tatsächlichen Gebrauch der Sprache in keiner Weise antasten, sie kann ihn am Ende also nur beschreiben.

# "Meaning is use": PI §43

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

And the *meaning* of a name is sometimes explained by pointing to its *bearer*.