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FIL217 / FIL317- *Wittgenstein
studies*

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Summary from last time + outlook

- 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?
 - Focus on language internal (systems of) rules; cf. chess game
- Where do rules get their justification from?
 - Primacy of actual practices
- Which are key ingredients of practice?
 - Humans with their acting and behaving
- Where is language in all this?
 - Acquired through introduction to and participation in practices, and thus embedded in human acting and behaving
- Where are logic and mathematics in all this?
 - [Guess the answer]
- Where is the mental in all this?
 - [Good question]

(cont.)

- So, no world outside of human practice and language?
 - [Wait a second, some realism is still at its place 😊]
- Is human practice something that can be captured and described once for all?
 - Acknowledgment of open-endedness, unpredictability and great variety of human practices
- Thus, no way we could do some systematic philosophy? No conceptual „hinges“?
 - Language game
 - Family resemblance
 - Form of life
 - Most general facts of nature
- What does all this mean for (meta-)philosophy?
 - Attention to everyday language and practices
 - Übersichtliche Darstellung
 - Many methods and means
 - Is there an internal relation between the PI's (criss-cross) form and the PI's philosophy (i.e. the subject of PI's philosophy)?

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

TLP (you fill inn this column ☺)	PI
	Persons, humans (PI §1)
	Body language (PI §1)
	Behaviour, but also acting (PI §1)
	Examples (PI §§ 1, 133, 206)
	Real, everyday language and life (PI §§1, 108, 156, 241)
	Criss-cross (PI preface, §68)
	Many kinds of sentences (PI §23)
	Life, biology (PI §§19, 23, 142, 441, 472; PI II xii / §365f)
	Development, change, variation (synchrone and diachrone) (PI §§ 11, 12, 14, 18, 23)
	Many problems (PI §133)
	Many methods (PI §133)
	Vagueness and open-endedness (PI §§ 18, 66f, 71, 133)
	Use (PI §§ 1, 43, 432)

Where we go from here:

The transition from TLP to PI and the PI's overall approach.

- Week 40-AP: From the *Tractatus* to the *Philosophical Investigations*
- Week 42-AP: Language games, forms of life, family resemblance, „übersichtliche Darstellung“ ...

(Application to) some specific topics.

- Week 43-KC: Rule-following; Mathematics
- Week 44-KC: Inner and Outer; The private language argument
- Week 45-KC: Wittgenstein and the Social Sciences
 - Test paper!

Language games

How did you learn to speak?

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 §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".

What was Augustine's mistake?

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.

Some four mistakes

1. [§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;
2. [§1] and of the remaining kinds of word as something that will take care of itself.
3. [§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. ... [§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."... [§4] Augustine's conception of language is like such an over-simple conception of the script.
4. [§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".

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

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)

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.

Language games

- 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.

We can also think of the whole process of using words in (2) as one of those [1] **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.**

And [2] **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.

I shall also call [3] **the whole, consisting of language and the actions** into which it is woven, the "language-game".

Language games

- 1) 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]
- 2) Fictive, constructed linguistic "games" of a simple/primitive character; *objects of comparison* [§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*.)

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.**

Ts-213: handeln

- Ts-213,15r[3]: Wenn “einen Satz verstehen” heißt, in gewissem Sinn | bestimmter Weise nach ihm **handeln**, dann kann das Verstehen nicht die logische Bedingung dafür sein, daß wir nach ihm **handeln**.
 - Wittgenstein *uses* the word “handeln” (acting).
 - Does to understand a sentence amount to a way of *acting* (rather than *behaving*)?
- Ts-213,65r[2]: (Vergleiche damit ein Spiel, das nie gespielt wurde, eine Regel, nach der nie **gehandelt** wurde.)
 - Rule-following is in the realm of acting. We *act* rather than *behave* according to a rule.

Pl: 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 common ways of *acting* / of carrying out an action / of pursuing an action?

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

Forms 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?

Family
resemblance

How would you explain what
a game is?

PI §66

66. Consider for example the proceedings that we call "games". I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all?—Don't say: "There *must* be something common, or they would not be called 'games'"—but *look and see whether there is anything common to all.*—For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don't think, but look!—Look for example at board-games, with their multifarious relationships. Now pass to card-games; here you find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out, and others appear. When we pass next to ball-games, much that is common is retained, but much is lost.—Are they all 'amusing'? Compare chess with noughts and crosses. Or is there always winning and losing, or competition between players? Think of patience. In ball games there is winning and losing; but when a child throws his ball at the wall and catches it again, this feature has disappeared. Look at the parts played by skill and luck; and at the difference between skill in chess and skill in tennis. Think now of games like ring-a-ring-a-roses; here is the element of amusement, but how many other characteristic features have disappeared! And we can go through the many, many other groups of games in the same way; can see how similarities crop up and disappear.

And the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail.

Family resemblance: PI §67

- **67. I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than "family resemblances";** for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc. etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way.—**And I shall say: 'games' form a family.**

And for instance the kinds of number form a family in the same way. Why do we call something a "number"? Well, perhaps because it has a—direct—relationship with several things that have hitherto been called number; and this can be said to give it an indirect relationship to other things we call the same name. And we extend our concept of number as in spinning a thread we twist fibre on fibre. And the strength of the thread does not reside in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibres.

Cf. Frege: PI §71

71. One might say that the concept 'game' is a concept with blurred edges.—"But is a blurred concept a concept at all?"—Is an indistinct photograph a picture of a person at all? Is it even always an advantage to replace an indistinct picture by a sharp one? Isn't the indistinct one often exactly what we need?

Frege compares a concept to an area [Bezirk] and says that an area [Bezirk] with vague boundaries cannot be called an area at all. This presumably means that we cannot do anything with it.—But is it senseless to say: "Stand roughly there"? Suppose that I were standing with someone in a city square and said that. As I say it I do not draw any kind of boundary, but perhaps point with my hand—as if I were indicating a particular *spot*. And this is just how one might explain to someone what a game is. One gives examples and intends them to be taken in a particular way.—I do not, however, mean by this that he is supposed to see in those examples that common thing which I—for some reason—was unable to express; but that he is now to *employ* those examples in a particular way. Here giving examples is not an *indirect* means of explaining—in default of a better. For any general definition can be misunderstood too. The point is that *this* is how we play the game. (I mean the language-game with the word "game".)

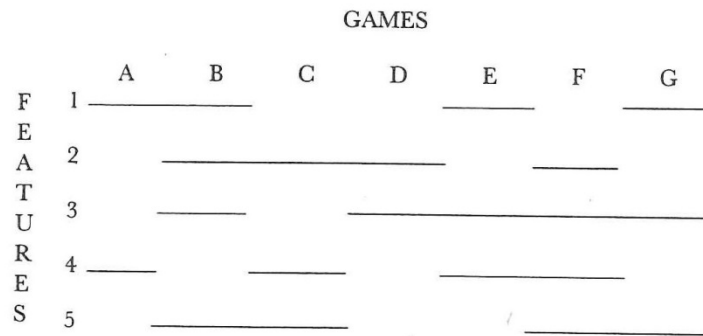
Most of our concepts do not have sharp borders, nor do they have an "essence"

- Instances of a concept do not need to have a single defining feature in common in order to be instances of that concept. (PI §§66-67)
 - There is not *one* thing which the instances of the concept 'game' (Bridge, Ludo, Tennis ...) need to have in common in order to be games.
 - There is not one thing which the members of a family need to have in common in order to be members of that family.
- A concept does not need to have sharp borders in order to function well. (PI §71)

From Glock 1996, p. 121

FAMILY RESEMBLANCE

'look and see' whether all games have something in common, we notice that they are united not by a single common defining feature, but by a complex network of overlapping and criss-crossing similarities, just as the different members of a family resemble each other in different respects (build, features, colour of eyes, etc.). What holds the concept together and gives it its unity is not a 'single thread' running through all cases, but, as it were, an overlapping of different fibres, as in a rope (BB 87; PG 75). This can be illustrated as follows:



Wittgenstein does not maintain that games have nothing in common – he refers to them as 'procedures', and it is manifest that they are all activities. But this falls short of a definition, since there are many activities which are not games. The claim is that there is no set of conditions which all and only

Family resemblance vs. Definition

- The notion of family resemblance proves useful when studying a wide range of expressions: "game", "number", "understanding", "language", "proposition", "art", ...
- Definition by giving sufficient and necessary conditions ("Homo est animal rationale") or putting up a disjunction ("A game is either ... or ... or ...") for the use of a word is often not possible, and where possible, not always helpful.
- However, nothing in Wittgenstein's remarks about family resemblance amounts to the view, that definitions would *never* be required or in place.

It can be difficult to define the meaning of words ...

156. This will become clearer if we interpolate the consideration of another word, namely "**reading**". First I need to remark that I am not counting the understanding of what is read as part of 'reading' for purposes of this investigation: reading is here the activity of rendering out loud what is written or printed; and also of writing from dictation, writing out something printed, playing from a score, and so on.

The use of this word in the ordinary circumstances of our life is of course extremely familiar to us. **But the part the word plays in our life, and therewith the language-game in which we employ it, would be difficult to describe even in rough outline. ...**

... but definitions are often possible
and also useful

- 132: ... Such a reform for particular practical purposes, an improvement in our terminology designed to prevent misunderstandings in practice, is perfectly possible. But these are not the cases we have to do with. The confusions which occupy us arise when language is like an engine idling, not when it is doing work.

NB!

- Nothing in Wittgenstein's remarks about family resemblance amounts to the view, that the instances falling under family resemblance concepts would not have one thing in common – just that this one thing is not a defining feature! Cf. all human family members are humans; all games are activities (PI §66: "proceedings" ☺); etc.

Issues

- Family resemblance: something on the level of things, words or concepts?
 - Cf. games (PI §66): Consider for example the proceedings that we call "games". I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all?
- Family resemblance within one single concept (example "understanding") or rather different concepts, polysemy (example "bank")?

Übersichtliche Darstellung

Cf. Family resemblance

- 66. ... Look for example at board-games, with their multifarious relationships. Now pass to card-games; here you find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out, and others appear. When we pass next to ball-games, much that is common is retained, but much is lost.—Are they all 'amusing'? Compare chess with noughts and crosses. Or is there always winning and losing, or competition between players? Think of patience. In ball games there is winning and losing; but when a child throws his ball at the wall and catches it again, this feature has disappeared. Look at the parts played by skill and luck; and at the difference between skill in chess and skill in tennis. Think now of games like ring-a-ring-a-roses; here is the element of amusement, but how many other characteristic features have disappeared! And we can go through the many, many other groups of games in the same way; can see how similarities crop up and disappear.

And the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail.

- NB: The criss-cross form of the PI is a form of family resemblance?

«Game»

- G_1 -a- G_2 -b- G_3 -a- G_4 -c- G_5 -c- G_6 -a- G_7 -b- G_8 -a- G_9 ...
- Concepts: (open-ended) networks of connections
- How are these networks composed? Which are the connections between the nodes? Which are the nodes?
- «Übersichtliche Darstellung» helps find the mediating links / intermediate cases and connecting similarities between the nodes

PI §122

122. A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not *command a clear view* of the use of our words.— Our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity. A perspicuous representation produces just that understanding which consists in 'seeing connexions'. Hence the importance of finding and inventing *intermediate cases*.

The concept of a perspicuous representation is of fundamental significance for us. It earmarks the form of account we give, the way we look at things. (Is this a 'Weltanschauung'?)

«Übersicht» and «übersichtliche Darstellung»

5. Wenn man das Beispiel im §1 betrachtet, so ahnt man vielleicht, inwiefern der allgemeine Begriff der Bedeutung der Worte das Funktionieren der Sprache mit einem Dunst umgibt, der **das klare Sehen** unmöglich macht. - Es zerstreut den Nebel, wenn wir die Erscheinungen der Sprache an primitiven Arten ihrer Verwendung studieren, in denen man den Zweck und das Funktionieren der Wörter **klar übersehen** kann.

Solche primitive Formen der Sprache verwendet das Kind, wenn es sprechen lernt. Das Lehren der Sprache ist hier kein Erklären, sondern ein Abrichten.

92. Dies drückt sich aus in der Frage nach dem *Wesen* der Sprache, des Satzes, des Denkens. - Denn wenn wir auch in unsern Untersuchungen das Wesen der Sprache - ihre Funktion, ihren Bau - zu verstehen trachten, so ist es doch nicht *das*, was diese Frage im Auge hat. Denn sie sieht in dem Wesen nicht etwas, was schon offen zutage liegt und **was durch Ordnen *übersichtlich* wird**. Sondern etwas, was *unter* der Oberfläche liegt. Etwas, was im Innern liegt, was wir sehen, wenn wir die Sache durchschauen, und was eine Analyse hervorgraben soll....

125. Es ist nicht Sache der Philosophie, den Widerspruch durch eine mathematische, logisch-mathematische, Entdeckung zu lösen. Sondern den Zustand der Mathematik, der uns beunruhigt, den Zustand vor der Lösung des Widerspruchs, übersehbar zu machen. (Und damit geht man nicht etwa einer Schwierigkeit aus dem Wege.)

Die fundamentale Tatsache ist hier: daß wir Regeln, eine Technik, für ein Spiel festlegen, und daß es dann, wenn wir den Regeln folgen, nicht so geht, wie wir angenommen hatten. Daß wir uns also gleichsam in unsern eigenen Regeln verfangen.

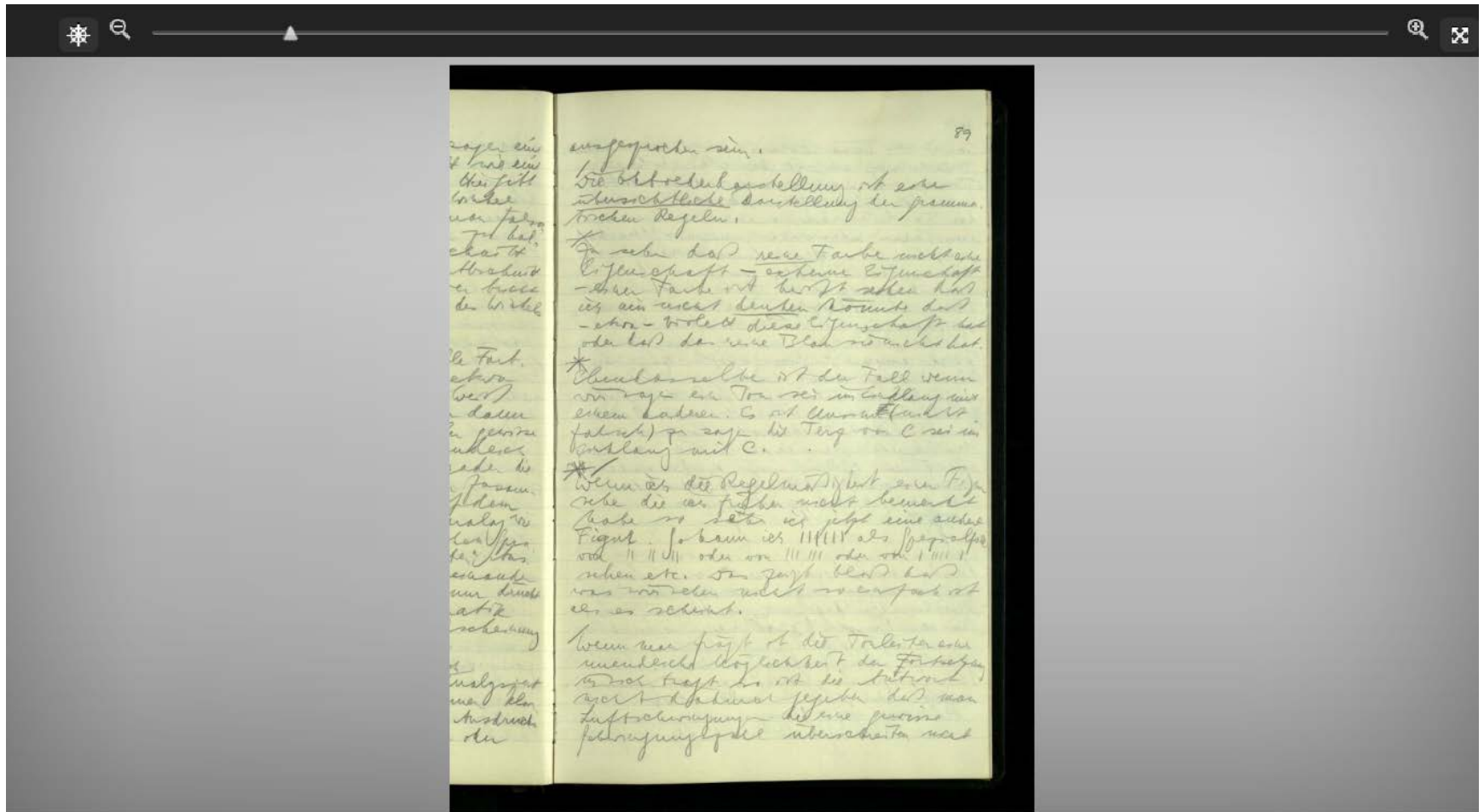
Dieses Verfangen in unsern Regeln ist, was wir verstehen, d.h. übersehen wollen. ...

132. **Wir wollen in unserm Wissen vom Gebrauch der Sprache eine Ordnung herstellen: eine Ordnung zu einem bestimmten Zweck; eine von vielen möglichen Ordnungen; nicht *die* Ordnung. Wir werden zu diesem Zweck immer wieder Unterscheidungen *hervorheben*, die unsre gewöhnlichen Sprachformen leicht übersehen lassen.** Dadurch kann es den Anschein gewinnen, als sähen wir es als unsre Aufgabe an, die Sprache zu reformieren.

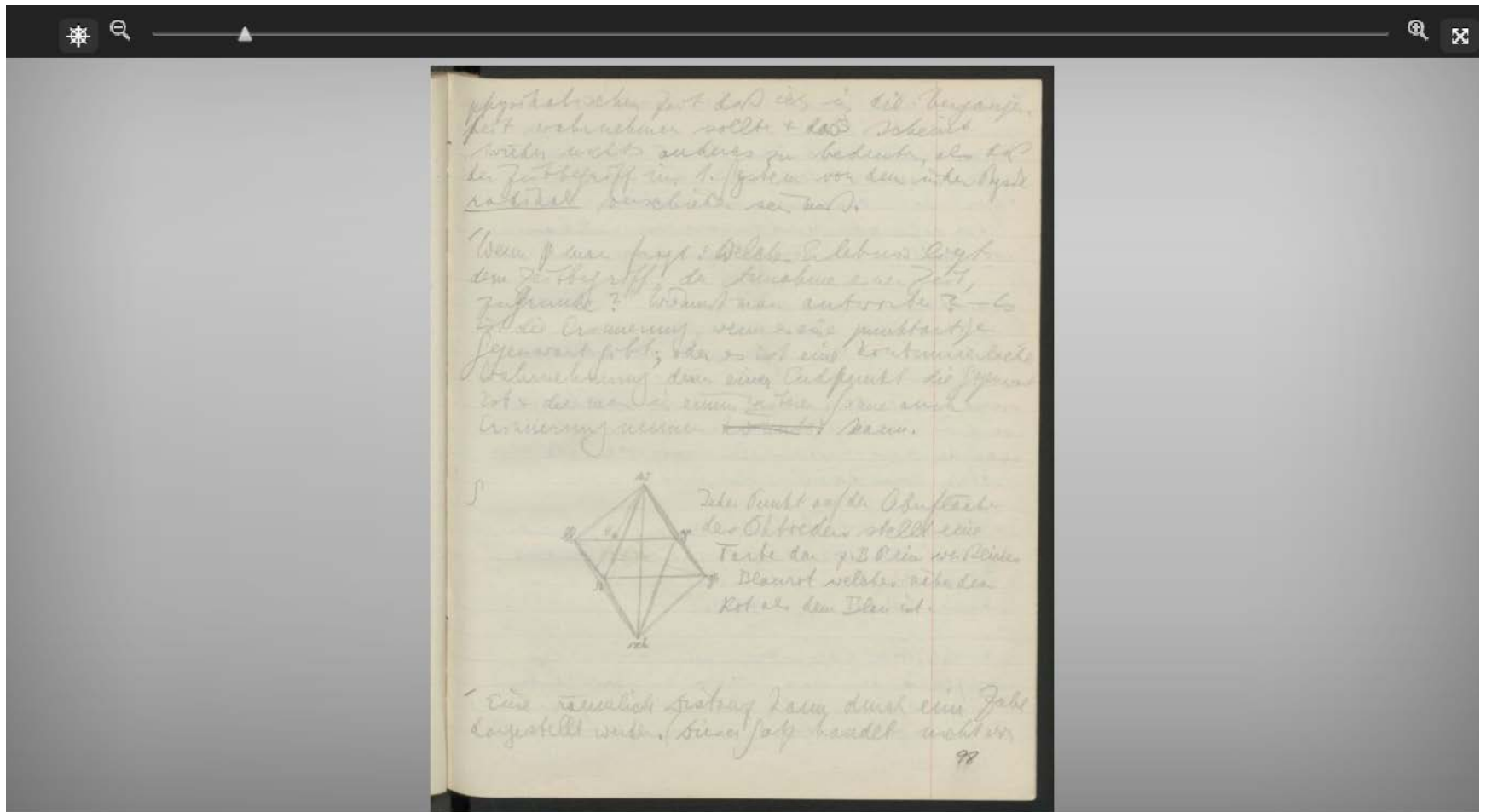
422. Woran glaube ich, wenn ich an eine Seele im Menschen glaube? Woran glaube ich, wenn ich glaube, diese Substanz enthalte zwei Ringe von Kohlenstoffatomen? In beiden Fällen ist ein Bild im Vordergrund, der Sinn aber weit im Hintergrund; d.h., **die Anwendung des Bildes nicht leicht zu übersehen.**

First uses of the expression

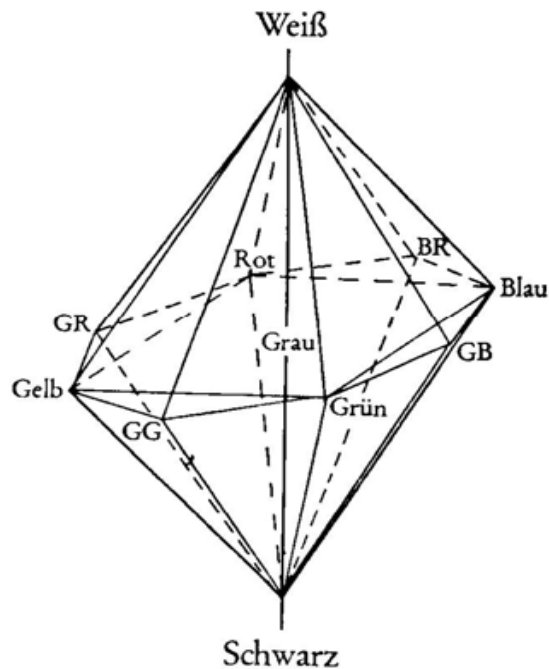
Ms-108,89 (1930): Discussing the colour-octahedron



The colour-octahedron in Ms-105,98 (1929)



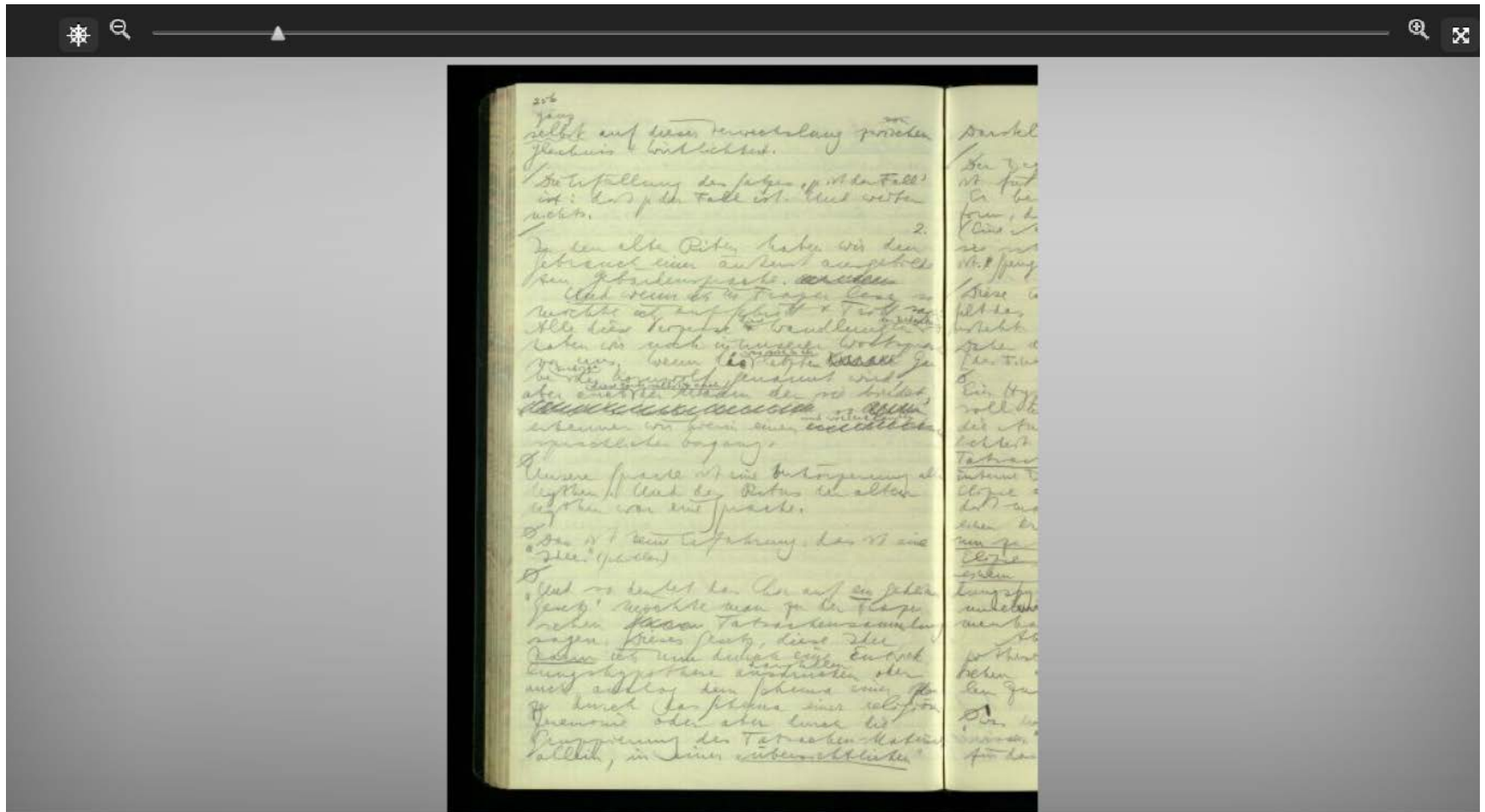
Colour-octahedron



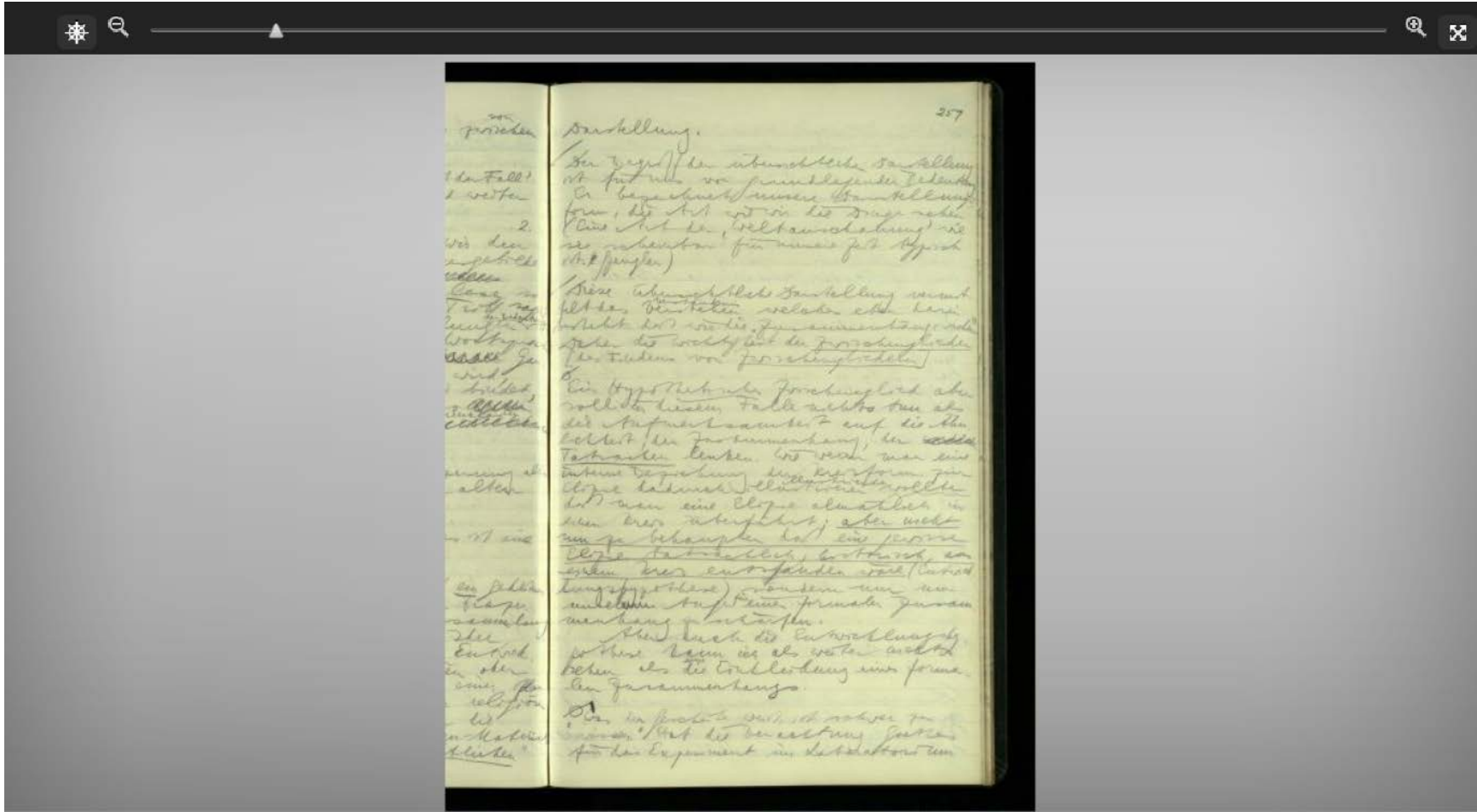
Colour-octahedron from
Philosophische Bemerkungen §221;
cf. Ms-105,90; Ms-105,98, Ms-108,89.

«Damit ist das Farbenoktaeder von einem Teil der phänomenologischen Notation zu der übersichtlichen Darstellung eines Teils der Grammatik unserer Alltagssprache geworden.»
(Sarah Szeltner Uffelmann: *Vom System zum Gebrauch*, Bergen 2016, p. 99f)

Ms-110,256f (1931): Discussing Frazer discussing rituals



(cont.)



J. Frazer

- Rather than explaining and describing the rituals of other cultures with our own culture as golden standard, arrange these rituals' facts in a "übersichtliche Darstellung". This will help us understand them.
- Cf. PI motto: **Überhaupt hat der Fortschritt das an sich, dass er viel größer ausschaut als er wirklich ist.**
- Cf. 1930 preface drafts:
... Our civilization is characterized by the word progress. ... And even **clarity** is only a means to this end & not an end in itself.
For me on the contrary **clarity, transparency**, is an end in itself
... So I am aiming at something different than are the scientists & my thoughts move differently than do theirs.

The Goethe connection

- Goethe's "morphologisches Ableiten", showing (for plant life) the connections between the archetypal form and all the variations: "Dieses Ableiten, so wollen wir vorwegnehmend andeuten, ist weder ein deduktives noch ein induktives Verfahren, sondern ein schrittweises Übergehen von einem Element zum anderen in einer konstruierten oder durch Ordnen hergestellten Reihe von Phänomenen. (...) Auf diese Weise gelangen wir dahin, im Blumenblatt z.B. sowohl die ausgebildete Pflanze wie auch das Staubwerkzeug zu erkennen, doch diese Möglichkeit beruht nicht nur auf bloßer unmittelbarer Sinneserfahrung plus Einbildungskraft; sie setzt voraus, dass die Erfahrungen in der richtigen *Ordnung* gemacht werden, dass sie *übersichtlich* und der Reihe nach dargestellt werden, so dass die Gestalten gleichsam auseinander hervorgehen und durch die Leistung der Einbildungskraft in eine zusammenhängende Kette und damit letztlich in *ein* Bild projiziert werden können. (Schulte 1990: p.15,23)
- Cf. *Brown Book's* logical-linear series of language games!

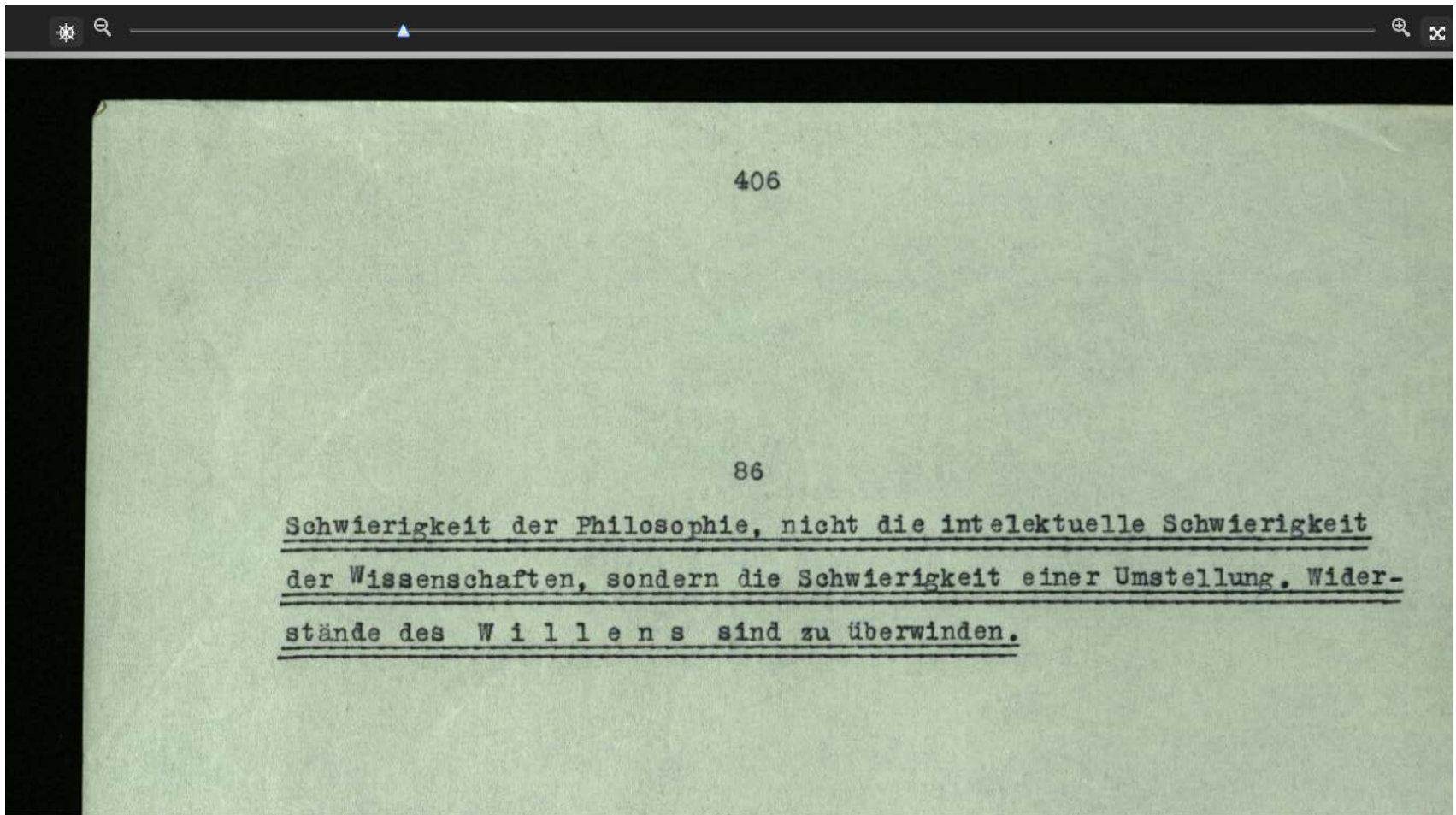
Issues

- Übersichtliche Darstellung of *what?* Of:
 - facts in the world (cf. anthropological context of Frazer discussions)
 - facts in our perception of the world (cf. colour octahedron)
 - facts in language, of our grammar (cf. colour octahedron)
 - surface and depth-grammar
 - facts about language (cf. *Tractatus*' picture theory)
 - our knowledge of language (PI §132)
 - how language variation can be linearly derived from one first „archetypal“ language game (cf. *Brown Book* method)
 - the situation in which the philosophical problem arises
 - Relations between our concepts; causes and reasons for our philosophical problems, be they intellectual, emotional, social, cultural ... (cf. Gordon Baker's interpretation)
- Übersichtliche Darstellung with *which means?* In *word* language or also other means of representation? (cf. colour octahedron)

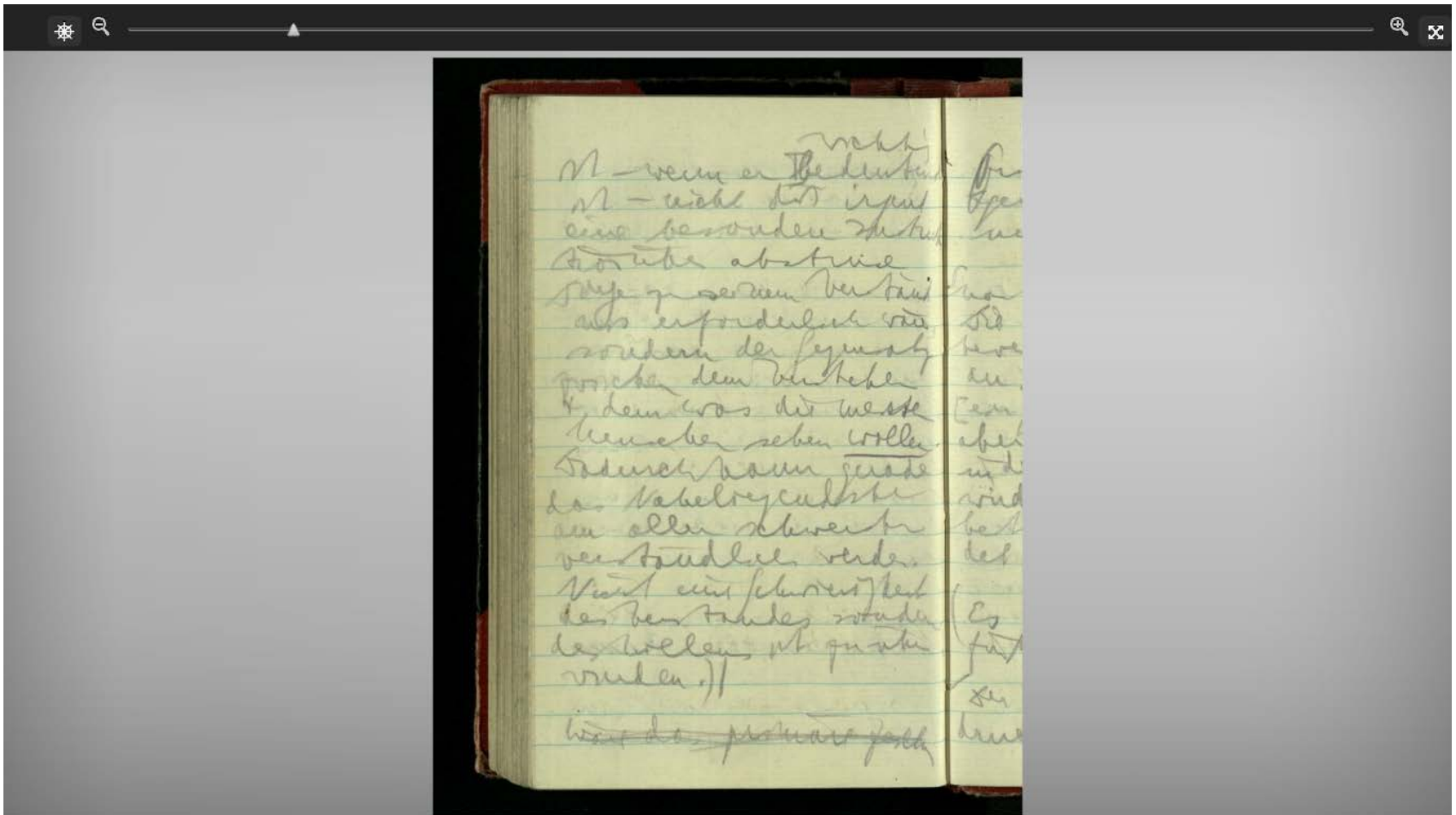
(cont.)

- "übersichtliche Darstellung" is definitely a family resemblance, if not a polysemic concept
 - Perspicuous presentation of our colour system / perception; olympic, bird's eye view of the rules of grammar; tool providing mediating links, and thus helping to see similarities, differences, and connections; ...
- A good translation, please?
 - Perspicuous representation, perspicuous presentation, clear view, overview, surview, survey, surveyability, synopsis ...
- Is übersichtliche Darstellung sufficient for dissolving philosophical problems? Is it necessary?
 - Depends on what is meant by it. But cf. PI §133 - Many methods are needed: aspect change, change of the will, übersichtliche Darstellung, argument, ...
 - Also see the „difficulty of the will“.

http://wittgensteinsource.org/BFE/Ts-213,406r_f



http://wittgensteinsource.org/BFE/Ms-153a,155v_f



Sachlichkeit

- Das, was den Gegenstand schwer verständlich macht ist — wenn er bedeutend | wichtig ist — nicht daß irgend eine besondere Instruktion über abstruse Dinge zu seinem Verständnis erforderlich wäre, sondern **der Gegensatz zwischen dem Verstehen & dem was die meisten Menschen sehen wollen**. Dadurch kann gerade das Naheliegendste am aller schwersten verständlich werden. Nicht eine Schwierigkeit des Verstandes sondern des Willens ist zu überwinden. (http://wab.uib.no/cost-a32/Ms-153a_norm.html)
- The philosopher («die meisten Menschen»!) needs an education in character and virtues. A change in the *person* is asked for rather than in the intellect only.
- Which are the virtues that the philosopher needs to develop in order to achieve *Sachlichkeit*?

Some conclusions

- 1) The PI's critique of Augustine's account of (learning) language is as much - if not even more - a critique of the Tractatus' philosophy of language.
- 2) The PI uses Augustine positively for introducing the idea and method of language games.
- 3) The notions of *Language game*, *Form of life* and *Family resemblance* are methodological devices which shall help us deal with philosophical problems. *Language game* and *Form of life* draw our attention to inherent practice aspects of language and cognition; *Family resemblance* is the PI's alternative to the Tractatus and traditional philosophy's requirements for "determinacy of sense" and definitions. The idea and method of *Übersichtliche Darstellung* is intended as an alternative to deductive and scientific ways of doing philosophy.
- 4) NB: "Language game" is not a univocal term, not even in the PI; neither is "form of life". "übersichtliche Darstellung" may have only one meaning in the PI, but is used with a range of different meanings in other places of Wittgenstein's writings.

(cont.)

5) While *Language game*, *Form of life*, *Family resemblance* and *Übersichtliche Darstellung* seem in the PI first introduced as methodological devices, they do also express some substantial views about language and reality:

- Language is embedded in human action and forms of living.
- Language contains subsystems, language games. These subsystems have however open borders and are connected with each other by family resemblances; moreover, they are in continuous development.
- Language comprises small play-like linguistic activities, language games, which are used in language learning.
- “Form of life” denotes the actual biological, anthropological, cultural, social and historical groundings of our language and practices.
- Family resemblance characterizes mind- and language-independent entities as much as our concepts.
- *Übersichtliche Darstellung* is intended as a method which lets us look through to the «things themselves» and to achieve *Sachlichkeit*: seeing things as they *are* rather than as we expect / want them to be as biased by our philosophical biases and aspirations.