

A. Pichler & S. Säätelä
Wittgenstein studies
FIL 217/317

22.10.2018

- TLP and the PI (once more)
- The notion of «grammar»
- Rules and rule-following

1

PI and the TLP

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.**

For since beginning to occupy myself with philosophy again, sixteen years ago, I have been forced to recognize **grave mistakes in what I wrote in that first book.**

2

Tractatus on philosophical problems

The book deals with the problems of philosophy and shows, as I believe, that **the method of formulating these problems rests on the misunderstanding of the logic of our language**. [I am] of the opinion that the problems have in essentials been finally solved. And if I am not mistaken in this, then the value of this work secondly consists in the fact that it shows how little has been done when these problems have been solved.

3

Compare with PI § 109

[...] we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. All *explanation* must disappear, and description alone must take its place. And this description gets its light, that is to say its purpose, from **the philosophical problems**. These are, of course, not empirical problems; they **are solved, rather, by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: despite an urge to misunderstand them**. The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by assembling what we have long been familiar with. Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our understanding by the resources of our language.

4

Also compare

PI II, p. 224 (PPF § 335): We remain unconscious of the prodigious diversity of all the everyday language-games because the clothing of our language makes everything alike.

TLP #4.002: Language disguises the thought; so that from the external form of the clothes one cannot infer the form of thought they clothe [...]

TLP #4.0031: All philosophy is "Critique of language" [...]. Russell's merit is to have shown that the apparent logical form of the proposition need not be its real form.

5

TLP on language

4. The thought is the significant proposition.

4.001 The totality of propositions is the language.

4.002 Man possesses the capacity of constructing languages, in which every sense can be expressed, without having an idea how and what each word means—just as one speaks without knowing how the single sounds are produced.

6

4.002 continues...

Colloquial language is a part of the human organism and is not less complicated than it. From it it is humanly impossible to gather immediately the logic of language.

...

The silent adjustments to understand colloquial language are enormously complicated.

7

Contrast with PU § 65

65. [...] someone might object against me: "You take the easy way out! You talk about all sorts of language-games, but have nowhere said what is essential to a language-game, and so to language: what is common to all these activities, and what makes them into language or parts of language. **So you let yourself off the very part of the investigation that once gave you the most headache, the part about the *general form of the proposition* and of language."**

PU § 65 continues...

And this is true.—Instead of pointing out something common to all that we call language, I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common in virtue of which we use the same word for all,—but there are many different kinds of *affinity* between them. And it is on account of this affinity, or these affinities, we call them all "languages". I will try to explain this.

Also contrast with W's description of his aims in PI:

PU § 132. We want to establish an order in our knowledge of the use of language: an order with a particular end in view; **one out of many possible orders; not *the* order**. For this purpose we shall again and again *emphasize* distinctions which our ordinary forms of language easily make us overlook. This may make it look as if we saw it as our task to reform language.

Such a reform for particular practical purposes, an improvement in our terminology designed to prevent misunderstandings in practice, may well be possible. But these are not the cases we have to do with. The confusions which occupy us arise when language is, as it were, idling, not when it is doing work.

Summing up: both in TLP and PI

Wittgenstein thought that philosophy is a kind of "critique of language"

Philosophical problems arise from our (mis)use of language

Wittgenstein emphasizes how little has been done when these problems are (dis)solved

Philosophy is an activity, not a body of theories or theses

Philosophy's aim is clarification, not theory construction

11

Points of disagreement / different emphasis between PI and TLP

PI puts emphasis on "grammar" instead of logical syntax, and on description of everyday language instead of logic

Clarification in PI means clarification of our uses of language instead of the "logical clarification of thought"

PI emphasizes the multifarious uses of language instead on "the general form of the proposition" and "*the* language"

PI rejects the truth-conditional account of meaning and instead emphasizes that "meaning is use" ¹²

PI § 109

It was correct that our considerations must **not be scientific ones**.[...] **we may not advance any kind of theory**. There **must not be anything hypothetical** in our considerations. **All explanation must disappear, and description alone must take its place**. And this description gets its light, that is to say its purpose, from **the philosophical problems**. These are, of course, **not empirical problems**; they are solved, rather, by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: *despite* an urge to misunderstand them. The **problems are solved, not by giving new information**, but by assembling what we have long been familiar with.

How to understand philosophical questions – as problems or puzzles?

	problems	puzzles
Paradigm	Problems in empirical science	"Problems of life"/aesthetic puzzles
Origin	Conjecture/observation	Misunderstandings of the logic of our language
Aim of activity	Solution by means of new theoretical or empirical knowledge	Dissolution or elimination of problem
Result of solution	Growth of knowledge, progress	Change of attitude/way of seeing, thinking/way of living
Basis for solution	New facts/information through observations, experiments	Rearranging/reminding us about what we have always known
Nature of investigation	experimental/theoretical	Analytic/grammatical/Therapeutic/aesthetic

	problems	puzzles
Nature of solution	Formulation of theories/Subsumption under more general theories	Clarity about our use of language/ <i>Übersicht</i> of particular region of language/ "synopsis of trivialities"
Criterion of success	Correctness	Agreement
Scope	General	Local/case by case
Method of investigation	Hypothetico-deductive	non-hypothetical/ descriptive/elucidatory
Approach	Reductive (finding causes)	Non-reductive (describing reasons)
Knowledge interest	Explanation/prediction/control	Understanding/ emancipation
Attitude	Disinterested, impersonal	Engaged, personal
Nature of difficulty	Intellectual	Volitional

The notion of "grammar"

In the PI a philosophical investigation is described as a "grammatical" investigation

E.g. PI § 90:

Our investigation is [...] a grammatical one. Such an investigation sheds light on our problem by clearing misunderstandings away. Misunderstandings concerning the use of words, caused, among other things, by certain analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of language.—Some of them can be removed by substituting one form of expression for another; this may be called an "analysis" of our forms of expression, for the process is sometimes like one of taking a thing apart.

An example (PI § 35Z):

Can I say "bububu" and mean "If it doesn't rain, I shall go for a walk"?—It is only in a language that I can mean something by something. This shows clearly that the grammar of "to mean" is not like that of the expression "to imagine" and the like.

17

665. Imagine someone pointing to his cheek with an expression of pain and saying "abracadabra!"—We ask "What do you mean?" And he answers "I meant toothache".—You at once think to yourself: How can one 'mean toothache' by that word? Or what did it *mean* to *mean* pain by that word? [...]

But—can't I say "By 'abracadabra' I mean toothache"? Of course I can; but this is a definition; not a description of what goes on in me when I utter the word.

18

Depth grammar vs. surface grammar

PI § 664. In the use of words one might distinguish 'surface grammar' from 'depth grammar'. What immediately impresses itself upon us about the use of a word is the way it is used in the construction of the sentence, the part of its use—one might say—that can be taken in by the ear.—And now compare the depth grammar, say of the word "to mean", with what its surface grammar would lead us to suspect. No wonder we find it difficult to know our way about.

→cf. TLP on "logical grammar" that is hidden in "the language of everyday life" 3.323-3.325!

19

Grammar instead of ontology?

PI § 371: *Essence* is expressed in grammar.

PI § 373: Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar.)

PI § 383: We do not analyse a phenomenon (for example, thinking) but a concept (for example, that of thinking), and hence the application of a word.

Grammar instead of ontology?

90. We feel as if we had to *see right into* phenomena: our investigation, however, is directed not towards *phenomena*, but, as one might say, towards the '*possibilities*' of phenomena. What that means is that we call to mind the *kinds of statement* that we make about phenomena. [...] Our inquiry is therefore a grammatical one.

21

92. This [the idea of a «final analysis»] finds expression in questions as to the essence of language, of propositions, of thought.—For if we too in these investigations are trying to understand the essence of language—its function, its structure,—yet *this* is not what those questions have in view. For they see in the essence, not something that already lies open to view and that **becomes surveyable by a rearrangement**, but something that lies *beneath* the surface. Something that lies within, which we see when we look *into* the thing, and which an analysis digs out.

22

The aim of philosophy?

PI § 116. When philosophers use a word—
"knowledge", "being", "object", "I", "proposition",
"name"—and try to grasp the *essence* of the
thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word
ever actually used in this way in the language in
which it is at home?—

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

23

When we do philosophy, we are like savages,
primitive people, who hear the way in which
civilized people talk, put a false interpretation on
it, and then draw the oddest conclusions from it.

(PU § 194)

24

The aim is dissolution of problems, clarity (cf TLP)

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

25

§ 133 continues...

...we now demonstrate a method, by examples; and the series of examples can be broken off.— Problems are solved (difficulties eliminated), not a *single* problem.

There is not a philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies [gleichsam verschiedene Therapien].

26

The methods of philosophy

From *the* method (TLP 6.53) to methods (PI § 133)?

Philosophy is 'purely descriptive' and does not advance any theories or explanations (PI § § 122-126)

Eine übersichtliche Darstellung as a methodological marker (PI § 122)

27

Language becomes misleading or begins to "idle", when it is put into philosophical (metaphysical) (mis)use

The problem with this kind of use it is that it

- Understands grammatical issues as ontological
- Confuses empirical problems and conceptual problems
- Does not respect the ordinary use of words (their "grammar") but still wants to use them

28

Issues of reception

Should we care about Wittgenstein's own view of philosophy and its proper *Darstellungsform*?

If not, what is worth while in the PI?

- Unsystematic remarks that can be developed into theories?
- Interesting problem formulations?

29

If yes, is he successful in realizing this view?

- PI is clearly a work of philosophical (self) criticism, but....
- Is the PI really philosophy with only "trivial" theses?
- Are problems or puzzles only dissolved, or does Wittgenstein present alternative views to those criticized?
- Is the peculiar form of the PI internal to its message or does it have other explanations?

If we think the PI succeeds:

- Can Wittgenstein's methods be emulated?
 - How substantial is his notion of "grammar"?
- What is left of philosophy?
 - Does philosophy become a kind of therapy?

30

The rule-following problematic PI §§ 138-242

What are rules?

- Rules are standards of correctness (normative, i.e. prescriptive, not descriptive of behaviour)
- There is a difference between a rule and its expression (a rule is not tied to a particular formulation)
- Rules are general, often governing an unlimited multiplicity of occasion (cf. orders or commands)
- There is a difference between following a rule and believing one is following a rule
- There is a difference in following a rule and merely acting in accordance with a rule (a rule is not a cause, but a reason for acting – intentionality is involved)
- "Rule" is a family-resemblance concept?

See Glock's Wittgenstein Dictionary

What is problematic about rules?

- What kind of entity are they? (ontological question)
- How do we grasp them? (epistemological question)
- How can they guide action? (normative question)

Why are rules important for Wittgenstein?

TLP: logical syntax as system of rules for
meaningful combination of signs

Middle period: language as a calculus

PI:

- Language is compared to games (involves following rules)
- Meaning as use (use has to be in some way regular)
- Conception of a philosophical investigation as a grammatical investigation (grammar is about rules of use)

TLP: the possibility of picturing requires that there are rules of projection/translation that can be made explicit (but in our everyday language they function implicitly)
see eg. 4.0141

In the fact that there is a **general rule** by which the musician is able to read the symphony out of the score, and that there is **a rule** by which one could reconstruct the symphony from the line on a gramophone record and from this again—by means of the first **rule**—construct the score, herein lies the internal similarity between these things which at first sight seem to be entirely different. And **the rule is the law of projection** which projects the symphony into the language of the musical score. It is **the rule of translation** of this language into the language of the gramophone record.

PI § § 81-85 discusses "language as calculus" vs. "language as game"

A calculus has fixed, definite rules. The temptation is to think that the calculus describes not a notation but an ideal language that our languages can only approximate, "as if it took a logician to show people at last what a proper sentence looks like" (PI § 81).

Why do we have this temptation?

PI § 82: All this [...] can appear in the right light only when one has attained greater clarity about the concepts of understanding, meaning something, and thinking. For it will then also become clear what misled us (and did mislead me) into thinking that if anyone utters a sentence and *means or understands* it, he is thereby operating a calculus according to definite rules.

PI § § 81-85 discusses "language as calculus" vs. "language as game"

How are rules at work in ordinary use of language? Here, the analogy between language and games can throw light: games are not everywhere bounded by rules, there is, for example, no rule for how high one may throw the ball in tennis "yet tennis is a game for all that, and has rules too" (PI § 68).

Similarly, an application of a word is not everywhere bounded by rules (cf. "the disappearing chair" in PI § 80).

The interlocutor's worry: does this not make meaning indeterminate?

This worry seems to get even more fuel from the kind of paradox Wittgenstein introduces in PI § 82-84 and develops in § 185:

The formulation of a rule always seems to leave room for doubt about whether a person actually follows it (rules always have loop-holes).

The parable of the "aberrant child"

PI § 185:

[A]t the order "+ 1" [the pupil] writes down the series of natural numbers.—Let us suppose we have done exercises and given him tests up to 1000.

Now we get the pupil to continue a series (say + 2) beyond 1000—and he writes 1000, 1004, 1008, 1012.

We say to him: "Look what you've done!"—He doesn't understand. We say: "You were meant to add two: look how you began the series!"—He answers: "Yes, isn't it right? I thought that was how I was meant to do it."—Or suppose he pointed to the series and said: "But I went on in the same way."—It would now be no use to say: "But can't you see....?"—and repeat the old examples and explanations.—In such a case we might say, perhaps: It comes natural to this person to understand our order with our explanations as we should understand the order: "Add 2 up to 1000, 4 up to 2000, 6 up to 3000 and so on."

PI § 186:

How is it decided what is the right step to take at any particular stage?—"The right step is the one that accords with the order—as it was *meant*."—So when you gave the order +2 you meant that he was to write 1002 after 1000—and did you also mean that he should write 1868 after 1866, and 100036 after 100034, and so on—an infinite number of such propositions?—"No: what I meant was, that he should write the next but one number after every number that he wrote; and from this all those propositions follow in turn."

§ 186 continues...

—But that is just what is in question: what, at any stage, does follow from that proposition. Or, again, what, at any stage we are to call "being in accordance" with it (and with how you then *meant* it—whatever your meaning it might have consisted in). It would almost be more correct to say, not that an intuition was needed at every stage, but that a new decision was needed at every stage.

This seems to lead to a skeptical paradox:

This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. (PI § 201)

Formal logic and mathematics are paradigms of rule-following activity, indeed they seem to be constituted by rules. They are often also given as examples of human practices where our knowledge can be certain (“The hardness of the logical must.” PI § 437). But how can we be sure that we follow a rule correctly? If the sceptic's worry gets a foothold here, then general scepticism seems to follow: how can we ever know that we apply a sign in the correct way?

A rule stands there like a sign-post. —Does the sign-post leave no doubt about the way I have to go? [W]here does it say which way I am to follow it? PU § 85



Wittgenstein considers (and rejects) different answers to the rule-skeptic

- Mentalism (psychologism)
- Mechanism (dispositionalism)
- Interpretationalism
- Platonism

Mentalism

Claim: the understanding or grasping of a rule is (essentially) a mental state or process (see e.g. PI § § 139, 146, 152-154, 205, 210)

See Child pp. 107-111 on "imagism"

Why are we tempted by mentalism?

§ 143: Let us now examine the following kind of language-game: when A gives an order B has to write down series of signs according to a certain formation rule.

§ 145 :...let us suppose that after some efforts on the teacher's part he continues the series correctly, that is, as we do it. So now we can say he has mastered the system.—But how far need he continue the series for us to have the right to say that? Clearly you cannot state a limit here.

§ 146: Suppose I now ask: "Has he understood the system when he continues the series to the hundredth place?" Or—if I should not speak of 'understanding' in connection with our primitive language-game: Has he got the system, if he continues the series correctly up to *this* point?—Perhaps you will say here: to have got the system (or, again, to understand it) can't consist in continuing the series up to *this* or *that* number: *that* is only applying one's understanding. The understanding itself is a state which is the *source* of the correct use.

The temptation is to say that understanding does not consist in the *application* of, say, a formula, but is actually a mental state or process "behind" the rule-following behaviour.

However,

If there has to be anything 'behind the utterance of the formula' it is *particular circumstances*, which justify me in saying I can go on—when the formula occurs to me. (PI § 154)

PI § 154 continues...

Just for once, don't think of understanding as a 'mental process' at all!—For *that* is the expression which confuses you. Instead, ask yourself: in what sort of case, in what kind of circumstances, do we say, "Now I know how to go on"? I mean, if the formula has occurred to me?—

In the sense in which there are processes (including mental processes) which are characteristic of understanding, understanding is not a mental process.

(A pain's increasing or decreasing, listening to a tune or a sentence — mental processes.)

How does a grammatical investigation clear away misunderstandings in this «region of language»?

Two examples from the discussion of «reading» (§ § 156-183):

§ 161:

Try this experiment: say the numbers from 1 to 12. Now look at the dial of your watch and *read* them.

– What was it you called "reading" in the latter case? That is, what did you do, to make it into *reading*?

§ 175

Make some arbitrary doodle on a bit of paper.— And now make a copy next to it, let yourself be guided by it. [...]

But now notice this: *while* I let myself be guided, everything is quite simple, I notice nothing *special*; but afterwards, when I ask myself what happened, it seems to me to have been something indescribable. It's as if I couldn't believe I merely looked, and made such and such a face, and drew a line. ... yet I feel as if there **must have been something else**; in particular when I say "*guidance*" , "*influence*", and other such words to myself.

Morale of the grammatical investigation of "understanding" in § § 143-184

- understanding is neither a mental state, nor a process, but rather an ability
 - the utterance "Now I know how to go on!" is not a report on the occurrence of a mental process (or on the obtaining of a mental state) of understanding
 - it is instead akin to a signal of understanding (a manifestation, *Äusserung*) indicating the dawning of an ability
 - NOTHING **has to** "go on in the mind" for someone to be justified in uttering this sentence - the criterion is that he can actually go on (PI § 150, § § 179f.).

However, central questions remain:

- how does a rule determine what does (and what does not) accord with it?
- how am I able to obey a rule that covers an indefinite amount of cases?

148. But what does this knowledge [of the rule of a series] consist in? Let me ask: *When* do you know that application? Always? day and night? or only when you are actually thinking of the rule? do you know it, that is, in the same way as you know the alphabet and the multiplication table? Or is what you call "knowledge" a state of consciousness or a process—say a thought of something, or the like?

Mechanism/dispositionalism

- Claim: rule-following means that a rule is encoded in the neural system, and manifested as a disposition to act in a certain way:

149. If one says that knowing the ABC is a state of the mind, one is thinking of a state of an apparatus of the mind (perhaps a state of the brain) by means of which we explain the *manifestations* of that knowledge. Such a state is called a disposition.

This would mean that rule-following functions in a machine-like manner:

If we know the machine, everything else—that is the movements it makes—seem to be already completely determined. (PI § 193)

- However, this merely means that we use the *picture* of a machine as a *symbol* of a particular mode of operation, i.e, think of an “ideally rigid machine” the movements of which are not merely *empirically* determined but in some mysterious sense *already present*. But this way of thinking means we are mixing up the possibility of movement with reality (see PI § § 193-194), because we are being misled by language:

When does one have the thought that a machine already contains its possible movements in some mysterious way?— Well, when one is doing philosophy. And what lures us into thinking that? The kind of way in which we talk about the machine. (PI § 194)

Mechanism/dispositionalism

However, the mechanistic view turns reasons into causes, understands the relation between a rule and the action it guides as external. (cf. Child on causal theories of intentionality, p. 111-114)

- The interlocutor’s objection (PI § 195):

“But I don’t mean that what I do now (in grasping a sense) determines the future use *causally* and as a matter of experience, but that in a *strange way*, the use itself is in some sense present.”

Mechanism

Wittgenstein's answer:

—But of course it is, 'in *some* sense'! Really the only thing wrong with what you say is the expression "in an odd way". The rest is all right; and the sentence only seems odd when one imagines a different language-game for it from the one in which we actually use it. ...

196. In our failure to understand the use of a word we take it as the expression of an odd *process*. (As we think of time as a strange medium, of the mind as an odd kind of being.)

Problem of dispositionalism

- if dispositions are brain states, i.e., causal dispositions, they cannot account for normative, intentional action
- if they are described in intentional terms, then the recourse to dispositions does not explain anything (it says: I am (or my brain is) disposed to go on in this way rather than that, *because* I follow the rule!)

A rule stands there like a sign-post. —Does the sign-post leave no doubt about the way I have to go? ...Where does it say which way I am to follow it? PU § 85



Interpretationalism

Claim: A rule in itself is nothing but sounds or ink-marks or bodily movements. So every action according to a rule must be an interpretation, and this settles the right or wrong way of acting.

- An interpretation is supposed to provide the missing content of the rule, but this leads to a regress: every interpretation can be further interpreted; e.g. every beginning of a series is viable to a reinterpretation.

“But how can a rule teach me what I have to do at this point? After all, whatever I do can, on some interpretation [Deutung], be made compatible with the rule.”—No, that’s not what one should say. Rather, this: every interpretation hangs in the air together with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support. Interpretations by themselves do not determine meaning. (PI § 198)

Interpretationalism

One can exhibit understanding of a rule in two different ways:

1. *explaining* what the rule is (giving an interpretation; cf. PI § 201)
2. *acting* in accord with the rule

To say that every *act* in accord with a rule is an *interpretation* blurs this distinction, and amounts to trying to explain rule-following by invoking rules how to apply rules

Instead,

there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation*, but which, from case to case of application, is exhibited in what we call "following the rule" and "going against it".

(PI § 201)

Platonism

- A picture that naturally gives itself when we reflect upon the nature of (especially mathematical) rules: the rule is some kind of abstract entity that *already contains* all the possible applications or steps that can be taken
- "Rules as rails": not a causal, but *logical* necessity
- Problem: How are we to grasp the infinite?

218. Whence the idea that the beginning of a series is a visible section of rails invisibly laid to infinity? Well, we might imagine rails instead of a rule. And infinitely long rails correspond to the unlimited application of a rule.

219. "All steps are really already taken" means I no longer have any choice. The rule, once stamped with a particular meaning, traces the lines along which it is to be followed through the whole of space.

Incoherence of the Platonist view

- Even if rules had some kind of "Platonic" existence, this would not guard us from error in applying them (PI § 213-214)
 - Because this application is dependent on some kind of intuition or decision which is in itself in principle uncertain
- Platonism is only a "mythological description", a picture that can give no further content to the idea of logical compulsion (PI § § 220, 221)

Platonism is, at bottom, a kind of "super-interpretationalism" that tries to block the regress of interpretations by applying to the actual "meaning" of the rule.

What one wishes to say is 'Every sign is capable of interpretation; but the meaning mustn't be capable of interpretation. It is the last interpretation.' (BB, 34)

A skeptical solution?

- Saul Kripke: *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (1982)
- The rule following paradox in PI is "the most radical and original sceptical problem that philosophy has seen to date" (p. 60)
- Wittgenstein presents "a sceptical solution to a sceptical problem"

Kripke's thought experiment

There is "no fact of the matter" that can determine whether I follow a rule or not (ontological challenge). This is shown by the following:

- Suppose that you have never added numbers greater than 50 before.
- Further, suppose that you are asked to perform the computation '68 + 57'.
- Our natural inclination is that you will apply the addition function as you have before, and calculate that the correct answer is '125'

- But what is it about my past usage that determines 125 as the correct answer?

The skeptical problem:

- (i) There is *no fact* about your past usage of the addition function that determines '125' as the right answer, so
- (ii) *Nothing* justifies you in giving this answer rather than another.

Why?

- By hypothesis you have never added numbers greater than 50 before.
- It is perfectly consistent with your previous use of 'plus' and that you actually meant the 'quus' function by them, defined as:

$$x \oplus y = x + y, \text{ if } x, y < 57.$$

= 5 otherwise.

The paradox leads to a general meaning-skepticism, because the application of every word is susceptible to a similar treatment.

According to Kripke, there are two ways to answer such a skeptical challenge (Hume's answers):

1. Reject the premises
2. Accept the paradox, but show that it does not undermine our ordinary beliefs and ways of acting (Hume's solution to skepticism regarding causation)

The skeptical solution:

- Normativity emerges if we consider the individual in relation to a larger community of language-users.
 - The background of agreement in a community is the criterion by which we judge if someone has followed a rule or not.
- Truth-conditions are replaced by *assertability conditions* (i.e. the meaning of a sentence is given by the conditions under which it can be asserted).

The solution is skeptical since it is the contingent fact of widespread agreement that decides whether something is to be accepted as following a rule or not following a rule.

Cf. PI § 202 :

it's not possible to follow a rule 'privately'

"Kripkenstein"

Is this a viable interpretation of what Wittgenstein says?

Kripke himself says this is not an exposition of Wittgenstein's argument, but of «Wittgenstein's argument, as it struck Kripke, as it presented a problem for him» (p. 5)

Problems with Kripke's interpretation

It diverges from the text:

Kripke quotes section § 201 as follows: "this was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule."

§ 201 continues

"The answer was: if everything could 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."

Which (together with the examples in § 200) seems to support Kripke's view, but

But PI does not seem to accept that there is a problem

§ 201 continues further:

It can be seen that there is a misunderstanding here from the mere fact that in the course of our argument we give one interpretation after another; as if each one contented us at least for a moment, until we thought of yet another one standing behind it. What this shows is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation*, but which is exhibited in what we call "obeying the rule" and "going against it" in actual cases.

It also diverges from the spirit of Wittgenstein's philosophy in general and the PI's in particular

Most commentators agree that the PI does not endorse skepticism, nor attempts to solve skeptical paradoxes, but rather attempts to dissolve them. Doubt is always possible, but it makes sense only in very special circumstances (cf. PI § 84)

It can be argued that Kripke's reconstruction does not respect Wittgenstein's methods, nor his idea of a "grammatical investigation" of particular cases.

“Our paradox” in PI § 201 can be understood as the *interlocutor's* paradox, which is based on a misunderstanding that the “voice of correctness” wants to correct.

But what about the answer given to the paradox in PI § 202?

And hence also 'obeying a rule' is a practice. And to think one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately': otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it.

Does this not place the normativity of rules in a community of rule-followers (language users) in a similar way as Kripkenstein?

Communitarianism/constructivism

- Rules are constituted by what a community of rule-followers actually does: normativity is *constructed* from something non-normative
 - cf PI § 206-207
- Rules are *grounded* in a communal/social practice (institution, etc.)
 - cf PI § 197-199
- Meaning and rules are *essentially* social: we cannot make sense of private rule-following
 - Cf PI § 202

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".

It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which someone obeyed a rule. It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which a report was made, an order given or understood; and so on.—To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are customs (uses, institutions).

To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master of a technique.

206. Following a rule is analogous to obeying an order. We are trained to do so; we react to an order in a particular way. But what if one person reacts in one way and another in another to the order and the training? Which one is right?

Suppose you came as an explorer into an unknown country with a language quite strange to you. In what circumstances would you say that the people there gave orders, understood them, obeyed them, rebelled against them, and so on?

The common behaviour of mankind is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language.

Problems with communitarianism

How do we determine what a community actually accepts as correct?

In what sense does this agreement *explain* rule-following behaviour and the notion of a rule?

Can the community's practices be identified *independently* of a reference to the actual following of specific rules? (i.e., reference to communal practices does not seem to identify anything *distinct* from rule-following behaviour)

Conclusions

There is a temptation to construe Wittgenstein's remarks as a theory of rule-following or as an analysis of the concept of a rule.

However, we could, as Wittgenstein himself, characterize these remarks about rules as notes "on the grammar of the expression 'to follow a rule'" (§ 199).

The investigation is purely descriptive, and the aim is to dispel misunderstandings that are deeply rooted in our ways of speaking about human beings and actions.

Morale

We should resist the temptation to presuppose that rules and rule following *must* be analyzable in terms of something more basic (a mental process, logical compulsion, community agreement...)

What "makes it true" that I am following one rule instead of another is simply that I am following the rule ("deflationism", cf. Child ch. 5)

We do not get (or need) an account of normativity, but a reminder of where to look for it.

Once you have described the procedure of this teaching and learning, you have said everything there can be said about acting according to a rule.

(RFM VII § 26)

W's final answer?

PI § 217:

"How am I able to obey a rule?"—If this is not a question about causes, then it is about the justification for my acting in *this* way in complying with the rule.

Once I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: "This is simply what I do."

(Remember that we sometimes demand definitions for the sake not of their content, but of their form. Our requirement is an architectural one; the definition a kind of ornamental coping that supports nothing.)

238. The rule can only seem to me to produce all its consequences in advance if I draw them as *a matter of course*. As much as it is a matter of course for me to call this colour "blue". (Criteria for 'its being a matter of course' for me.)

...

240. Disputes do not break out (among mathematicians, say) over the question whether a rule has been obeyed or not. People don't come to blows over it, for example. This belongs to the scaffolding from which our language operates (for example, yields descriptions).

241. "So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?"—What is true and false is what human beings *say*; and it is in their *language* that human beings agree. That is agreement not in opinions, but rather in form of life.

Results

- Dissolution of ontological quandary: what we call a rule is connected to regularity in actions. It can have many different roles in our language-games (cf. PI § 54, 82-83)
- Dissolution of epistemic quandary: what makes it true that I am following rule A instead of rule B is simply my following rule A.
- Dissolution of the normative quandary: what makes rule A into a norm for my conduct is simply that I follow the rule A, "as a matter of course", and can use it as a justification for my going on in a particular way

Cf. PI § 197

[Is it] that all the rules [of chess] are contained in my act of intending [to play chess]? [...] And if that is nonsense – what kind of super-rigid connection obtains between the act of intending and the thing intended?—Where is the connection effected between the sense of the words "Let's play a game of chess" and all the rules of the game?—Well, in the list of rules of the game, in the teaching of it, in the day-to-day practice of playing.

Emphasis is on our *lives* with rules

In fact, of course, we are not just trained to go “446, 448, 450”, etc. and other similar things; we are brought into a life in which we rest on, depend on, people's following rules of many sorts, and in which people depend on us: rules, and agreement in following them, and reliance on agreement in following them, and criticizing or rounding on people who do not do it right – all this is woven into the texture of life; and it is in the context of its having a place in such a form of human life that a “mistake” is recognizably that. (Diamond 1989, 27–8)

W's account is

- anti-reductionist (does not attempt to explain rule-following in terms of something else)
- anti-systematic (it is not a general account or systematic theory about rule-following)
- contextual (what a rule is and how it functions is determined by the context, the complex surroundings, in which it occurs)
- "deflationist"?
 - Cf. Child, ch. 5

What does this grammatical investigation achieve?

McGinn: "The philosophical significance of Wittgenstein's remarks does not lie in these 'conclusions' [like "meaning is use", "speaking a language is a practice", etc.], which are on their own thin and obscure, and which are clearly not intended to serve as the basis for the construction of a more elaborate theoretical machinery. The real purpose of the journey that has been made lies, on the one hand, in the overcoming of certain deep-seated philosophical myths and inclinations, and on the other, in the reorientation of our style of thought towards what lies open to view in our practice of using language."

Baker:

"Wittgenstein thought that all of [his] observations are uncontroversial descriptions of familiar aspects of our practice of explaining and using the expressions 'a rule' and 'to follow a rule'. Together they were meant to give an *Übersicht* (overview) of what it is to follow a rule. To the extent that this attempt succeeds, it is an achievement as positive as the construction of any theory of rule following. By eliminating the illusion that anything stands in need of theoretical explanation, it pre-empts the place occupied by any possible theory of rule-following."

(Baker 1981, 57-58)