

Grammar, Method, Meaning, and Use

Workshop on Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy

—Abstracts—

“If only we avoid misunderstandings in any particular case!”

– Wittgenstein: Philosophy as an Activity

Sebastian Greve (Birkbeck College, University of London)

How are we to understand Wittgenstein's intention not to put forward any theses in philosophy?— After all, to some this might seem to involve a paradox. For, what can he mean by saying this if this utterance is not a thesis itself? Or, in order to escape the paradox, is it perhaps a *meta*-philosophical thesis rather than a thesis within philosophy? But what is *meta*-philosophy if not *philosophy*? I do not know the answer to any of these questions. However, I know how not even to let myself be troubled by such questions. This, I think, is what Wittgenstein tried to teach us in the form of his later method. In my paper, I present what I take to be a central, though often neglected, characteristic of this method, which, roughly, consists in: taking the philosophically troubled person seriously.

“Meaning is Use” and Wittgenstein's Method

Stefan Giesewetter (Universität Potsdam)

In *Investigations* §43, Wittgenstein famously wrote: “The meaning of a word is its use in the language”. In that work, Wittgenstein also declared: “What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use”. The question is: What is the relation between Wittgenstein's method of dissolving philosophical problems by reminding us of the actual *use* of words, and “meaning is *use*”? “Therapeutic” readings of Later Wittgenstein have insisted that “meaning is use” should not be taken as a *substantial account* of how linguistic meaning comes about, but rather as a mere *grammatical remark* on how we use the word “meaning”. In my talk, I will deal with an assumption which can be found in many therapeutic readings: that although “meaning is use” is a mere fact of grammar, it still stands in some sort of special connection to the method of asking for the actual *use* of words. What I wish to show is that taking seriously the *grammatical* status of “meaning is use” should ultimately lead us to question this seemingly straightforward assumption.

What is Grammar?

Sarah Anna Szeltner (Universität Kassel / UiB)

The question what Wittgenstein means when he speaks about grammar seems to be of crucial importance for understanding his philosophical approach. Wittgenstein himself calls his investigation a grammatical one and uses the term “grammar” and its derivatives abundantly throughout the whole *Nachlass*. Moreover, the notion of grammar is pivotal when we turn to the question about the relation between language and the world in his later writings. In my talk I will address the question what grammar is, not by offering a concluding answer, but by pointing to further questions and problems that arise when trying to find an answer.

