

Subject Against Procedure: the Argument of Following a Rule in the Second Wittgenstein

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ABSTRACT

This paper attends to treat the question about the “following a rule” in the philosophy of the second Wittgenstein and to connect it with the relation between pragmatics and semantic. In the philosophical Investigations this argument (§§ 185-142) represents the culmination of the attempt to elucidate the concepts of use, meaning and understanding, which are introduced in the previous paragraphs. I mean to show that the rule, designed like a sign which indicates how take an action, is an inscrutable fact if we don't insert it in a precise context of human practices and behaviour. This inscrutability of the rule and of the sign raises an apparent contradiction: the rules make possible our lived but they have not sense if considered alone. Such dependence of the rules on the practices is mutual because it's impossible thinking a practice without a rule. The connection rule-practice, that is treated similarly as the relation meaning-use, permit us to introduce the follow arguments my paper will consider: holism of the rule and of the meanings, the question about the understanding and the recognizing of rules and meanings, finally the question about the agreement in the actions.

1. *Following a rule: methodological premise*

The question concerning following a rule as it is introduced in the *Philosophical Investigations* (PI, §§185-242)¹ can be considered the lintel that joins together and sustains both the previous argumentations about the linguistic games and also the subsequent ones, which introduce the concept of agreement and the critique of the private language. This problem is also debated in the *Remarks*

¹ Ludwig, Wittgenstein (1953) *Philosophical Investigations* [*Philosophische Untersuchungen*], edited by G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford.

on the foundations of Mathematics (RFM)² and in *The Brown and Blue Books* (BB).³ To understand well the second phase of Wittgenstein's thought, it is opportune and methodologically correct to remember that it derives from his critique of his previous philosophy, which considered language as a calculus. His earlier theory of language implies that there cannot be an arbitrary use of signs and such use cannot be considered to conform to a rule. In the second phase of his thought, in contrast, he assumes that rules cannot determine the application and procedures, deducing that the calculus theory is absurd because the uses and the behaviours are arbitrary. This implied a new approach to mathematics, which is recognized as an institution that is ontologically grounded on self-referential concepts.

In the *Philosophical Investigations* the question concerning following a rule is introduced as the problem of understanding signs and the symbolic world in which we live (PI, §§130-185). He thus shows the internal relation between the subject and the verbal, graphical and non graphical signs, in order to make clear what happens in the mind as we see a symbol or as we think about a rule.

For Wittgenstein the man is a symbolic being because he has a preferential relation with signs; I define this relation preferential because each of us, in regard to the symbolic world, takes up the active role of learning, elaborating and possibly modifying. Symbols and rules are treated by the individual as something inherited, which Wittgenstein often treats as a Grammar, sometimes as a Mythology of the use (PI, § 221)⁴, other times as an agreement in the forms of life (PI, § 241)⁵, but never as the agreement in thoughts and opinions.

In fact, he avoids separating the rules from their application because he does not want to treat them as a Platonic Universe that can legitimate experience (*Erlebnis*) and actions. They are not even the result of a discursive relation between individuals as Scorekeepings and committive practices in general, through which an agreement about opinions and behaviours is produced.

² Ludwig, Wittgenstein (1956) *Remarks on the foundations of Mathematics* [*Bemerkungen über die Grundlagen der Mathematik*], edited by G. H. von Wright, R. Rhees and G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford.

³ Ludwig, Wittgenstein (1958) *The Blue and Brown Books*, edited by R. Rhees, Oxford.

⁴ PI, § 221: "My symbolical expression was really a mythological description of the use of a rule".

⁵ PI, § 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 their use. that is not agreement in opinions but in form of life".

In order to emphasize the importance of the experience, Wittgenstein does not distinguish the symbol from its author and from its interpreters, and he does not separate the rules from the practice. Therefore the rule is not separable from the act of following it because the act of following it is not different from the process of understanding.

Let us consider PI, § 185: a pupil must carry out a numerical succession by adding 2 to the preceding number; from 1000 he begins to add 4, because he believes that every time he reaches 1000 he must add an additional 2. So the succession becomes the following: up to 1000 add +2, from 1000-2000 add +2+2, from 2000-3000 add +2+2+2, and so on endlessly. The pupil produces a new rule that differs from the rule given by the master. How can he do it? Why did he follow one rule up to 1000 and afterwards follow a new rule? It could be as I, driving my car, decide to stop at red lights while in Milan, at yellow lights while in Florence and at green lights while in Rome. The solution for this paradox is that the rule is not the anticipation of future events because we should not conceive it as a metaphysical fact or a demon, which can lead and advise my actions. Wittgenstein intends to demythicize the concept of rule in order to focus on the forms of life and on the internal relation each of us has with rules and with language in general. This shows that the rule is deeply rooted in the experience and also in the misunderstandings and the interpretations; the concept of a rule indicates a regularity in the acting but never an anticipation of the act.

This ideal of regularity does not determine the experience (*Erlebnis*) or the choices because the rule can be contradicted by a new or an unusual behaviour. But one has not to see this anomaly as a behaviour without rules, for each action has a rule and a rule cannot be performed only once by only one individual (PI, § 199).⁶ Moreover, no course of action can be determined by a single rule, since every action has a precise rule (PI, § 201).⁷ There is no action without regularity, but at the same time an action can break a norm. Beginning

⁶ PI, § 199: “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).”

⁷ PI, § 201: “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. The answer was: if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here”.

from these remarks we are led to admit that there is not a direct relation between an action and the rule comparable to the relation between an effect and the cause. For this reason Wittgenstein's conception of following a rule is compared to Hume's scepticism about the concept of cause. One is not master of this relation, which remains however fundamental to understanding mental processes, intentionality and practices in general.

Therefore the individual has a preferential relation with the rule and with the symbolic world in general, for he is a symbolic being that can modify the rules without thinking that the rules are the ground of the behaviour (§ 211).⁸ Wittgenstein offers a good example in his analysis of the pieces of chess: each piece would be a simple piece of wood without the rules, which determine the use; the rules give a special value to each piece and they define their use. But what are the rules without the chess game?

Another good suggestion is offered in PI, § 212 and all the passages in which Wittgenstein introduces the connection between rule and order. This connection permits us to understand the conditioning exerted by the rules on us, who, following an order-rule, cannot be diverted by the problem about the legitimacy of that order-rule.

We can observe the rules only in relation to the whole of the linguistic games, the other rules and the practice in general. This inscrutability of the rules, which form the range of our experience, our intentions and our actions, bring us to an apparent contradiction: they make possible our experience but they make no sense when considered alone. They give meaning to that without which they could not exist.

This inscrutability is the result of a precise strategy of Wittgenstein: he does not intend to consider the rules that justify the action but instead to reduce them to a whole of codes, which represent an endless regularity. Like the rules of a numerical succession, they indicate an endless possibility of reply, but at the same time they are a mere representation of what can happen in the practices and they can be contested and renewed, similar to the case of the pupil who after 1000 begins to add +4 and not +2. The rules should represent a whole of paradigms, which serve to show a regularity of a form of life or of behaviour, but they cannot determine it. They have the nominal function of de-

⁸ PI, § 211: "How can he know how he is to continue a pattern by himself – whatever instruction you give him? – Well, how do I know? — If that means "have I reasons?" the answer is: my reason will soon give out. And then I shall act, without reason".

scribing the practices stated and transmitted by a specific tradition: the tradition of playing chess, the history of mathematics, in other words, a mythological description of the use (PI, § 221).

But we must also consider that every person has a specific relationship with the rules and with the symbolic universe; they become familiar, similar to the countenances of our memory that we conserve because they are part of our cultural and historical property.

This apparent contradiction led some authors to interpret Wittgenstein as a relativist or even a sceptic, who showed simply the possibility to found the acting only on the institutions, on the uses and on the customs. Probably these authors did not consider the strange and ambiguous connection between rule and practice that Wittgenstein wants to describe in these passages. They are persuaded that Wittgenstein intends to solve the problem concerning our relation with institutions simply through the elaboration of the concept of agreement in the forms of life (PI, § 241).

In contrast to this reading, I believe that Wittgenstein wants to treat rules like a mere description of a practice we can abandon or change in each moment; he understands that men do not learn through the rules but through the relation with other individuals and with the language, which define the way we get to know the world around us. Recent research in evolutionary anthropology gives support to this reading (Tommasello, 1999).⁹ According to Tommasello, children learn symbols, words and behaviours in a pragmatic context through their relation with adults, who already have familiarity with practices and life.

Therefore, I find that Wittgenstein, in these famous passages of the *Investigations*, does not aim merely to show that the only anchorage for rules is the agreement, for otherwise following a rule would be a source of paradoxes and ambiguity. Instead, the agreement of the forms of life depends on the marginal character of the rules to act or play in a linguistic context. They are the ideal portrayal of the endless repetitiveness of an act one can make in another way.

Let us now consider our symbolic universe and picture ourselves lost in an unknown forest. After roving a long time we see an indicator that points in a precise direction. What have we to do? Should we follow the indicator? Should

⁹ Michael, Tommasello (1999) *The Cultural Origins of the Human Cognition*, Harvard University Press.

we ignore it? Should we go in the opposite direction? Should we sit down and wait to see who placed the signal?

Consider a second example. We see a picture that, when turned horizontally, represents the head of a duck and, when turned vertically, represents the head of a hare. And so we ask: “what does the author of this picture want to represent?”

Are these cases proof of an irreducible relativism of signs and norms?

I do not believe it is. In fact, in the first case one cannot reconstruct the value of the signal, for one does not know who placed it and what he wanted to indicate; in the second case we have an ambiguity of the portrayal, which results in an alteration in the interpretation, but not a form of relativism in the perception.

Both examples permit us to observe a situation in which the rule is unclear because the context itself is unclear, which prevents us from putting together again the structure in which that symbol has been situated. Here Wittgenstein propose to look behind every rule and behind our symbolic world in order firstly to see there the forms of life and to overcome the anxiety caused by the relation the subject-procedure or single act-general act, which is a source of ambiguity. For these reasons I suggest that Wittgenstein treats the rule as an inscrutable fact, because it is hardly visible by our actions. It hides in the shadow, attempting to fix the action through a rule and permitting me to do it endlessly again.

Two things emerge from this methodological premise: 1) the rule is the ideal portrayal of what can be replicated endlessly, 2) we can overcome the anxiety of the relation between subject and procedure by admitting that the rule is an inscrutable fact that underlies the interpersonal context of the forms of life. Now I intend to clarify why the rule is an inscrutable fact.

2. The rule as the natural trend to create a tradition

Wittgenstein writes in PI, § 154: “But wait – if ‘Now I understand the principle’ does not mean the same as ‘The formula ... occurs to me’ (or ‘I say the formula’, ‘I write down’, etc.) – does it follow from this that I employ the sentence ‘Now I understand ...’ or ‘Now I can go on’ as a description of a process occurring behind or side by side with that of saying the formula? If there has to be anything ‘behind the utterance of the formula’ it is particular circum-

stances, which justify me in saying I can go on – when the formula occurs to me. Try not to think of understanding as a ‘mental process’ at all. – For *that* is the expression which confuses you. But ask yourself: in what sort of case, in what kind of circumstances, do we say, ‘Now I can know how to go on’ ... understanding is not a mental process.”

Why does Wittgenstein in this and other passages raise the question about how one can go on alone without the aid of someone? This happens when the pupil takes possession of the practice and can really go on alone, without the advice of the teacher. But this does not mean that it happened as internal processes (in the German version: *seelischer Vorgang*). More simply, the pupil is now master of a particular technique in doing something. Here the rule that the teacher used to clarify how to do the task is replaced by the pupil in a mastery of technique. The rule is again inscrutable. It is the representation of what I have to do, but as soon as I can do what the rule expresses, I do not need it.

The idea of a rule and the question of following a rule arises when we distinguish the subject from the procedure, or – to use a word typical in contemporary pragmatism – the subject from the performance. Our thought can recognize the regularity in the linguistic games and describe formally this regularity with what we call a rule. Wittgenstein criticizes this splitting-phenomena – which arises in separating the uses from the rules – and in the passages PI, §§ 241-242, which are the last ones about this theme, he applies the concept of agreement (in German *Übereinstimmung*) to hook again the rules to the practices.

But this does not indicate an absolute dislike for the division of the rule from the act; the rule hook-up itself becomes like a shadow that watches over the operation of the subject, for it is natural for the individual to find an ideal form for a successful action.

I give an example: Robinson Crusoe is wrecked on a desert island and finds a good method for bringing drinkable water from a river to his shack on the seashore. It is a system of bamboo cane pipes that work very well, on condition that he checks regularly the efficiency and changes the ruined pipes with new and well-carved pieces. He must remember the rules, which permit him to install and to overhaul his little and rudimentary aqueduct as soon as it is necessary. R. Crusoe cannot share these rules with anyone except himself, as long as he remains on his desert island.

Like each of us, he could separate the rule from the procedure in order to better remember it¹⁰ and eventually teach someone and to hand it on to future inhabitants of that island. But as he constructed the aqueduct, he remembered the rule only for himself, for he could not forecast that Friday had to arrive and that he had to come back to his country.

Through this example it is clear that the concept of agreement, which is introduced at the end of the reasoning about following a rule, is inadequate for understanding how one follows a rule. I think the concept of agreement is introduced in the *Philosophical Investigations* by virtue of their flowing style. However, this is ultimately inappropriate for understanding the ambiguity, which is connected to the problem of following a rule.

I think it is more reasonable to consider that the rule is useless while I am acting, because while I am acting I am not following a rule but instead adapting myself to a form of life I can potentially share with an infinite number of subjects, including myself in the past or in the future. The rule is a sign, a scheme that remains after I perform something. But for whom does it remain? It remains for my successor, for my follower and for all who intend to share in the future that form of life. For this reason I believe that the rule is the natural tendency of the individual to create a tradition and a culture that are to be conserved, spread and handed on.

In RFM, VP3 Wittgenstein writes that the rule “stands as it were alone in its glory; although what gives it importance is the facts of daily experience. What I have to do is as it were to describe the office of a king;P in doing which I must never fall into the error of explaining the kingly dignity by the king’s usefulness, but I must leave neither his usefulness nor in his dignity out of account. I am guided in practical work by the result of transforming an expression. But in that case how can I still say that it means the same thing whether I say “here are 625 nuts”, or “here are 25×25 nuts”? If you verify the proposition “here are 625 ...” then in doing that you are also verifying “here are 25×25 ...”; etc. But the one form is closer to one kind of verification, the other closer to another”.¹¹

¹⁰ That’s what Wittgenstein says in PI, § 199 when he writes: “It is no 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).”

¹¹ L, Wittgenstein (1956).

With this metaphor we touch on many important aspects of the idea of a rule that Wittgenstein treats in his writings. The rule, when considered alone, is the monument of its self-glory, but only carrying it out in practice can give it importance. The rule is the monument of the use that is the affirmation of its dignity and majesty, but like all monuments it can become obsolete and forgotten.

We can gain insight into the relation between rule and use by comparing it with the relation between tradition and innovation. In a known aphorism, Wittgenstein compared the language to an ancient city with old portions and modern portions, that is, to something that can conciliate old and new (PI, § 18). Through the rule a practice can be handed down, but through a practice a rule can be brought into question, improved and also neglected. The cohabitation between practice and rule is never peaceful because the individual has an active and dialectic relationship with the rules. They receive sense and value by the use and not vice versa, and such a legitimating makes them deeply rooted in our customs, our culture and our tradition, giving them the character of inscrutability.

This inscrutable and intransitive nature of rules is twofold: from one side their rigidity gives continuity and coherence to a specific behaviour, from the other side this inscrutability makes them partially foreign to the experience. Each of us, by acting and following a rule, remains in the perspective of the uses and the customs in which that rule is rooted. In other words, the individual relates himself to a practice that is based on an interpersonal relation and on a historical stratification of behaviours and principles.

These behaviours are grounded in a tradition and the form of this tradition is the rule, which, as a solitary and vacuous monument of a practice, presides over its self-continuity and length.

3. The arbitrary nature of the rule

Wittgenstein writes in PI, § 219: “All the 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. – But if something of this sort really were the case, how would it help? No; my description only made sense if it was to be understood symbolically. –

I should have said: This is how it strikes me. When I obey a rule, I do not choose. I obey the rule blindly.”

This passage may be understood in light of the question about the intransitive character that signs and rules assume. But, as we have already indicated, we cannot treat rules as a railway track because I can break them and this implies that I am following a second rule. This ambivalence of the rule – that it can be at the same time rigorous and questionable – depends on the fact that the rule is an integral part of the action and can be definite like an “actor’s category”.¹² In other words, we cannot compare the rule to the description of behaviour of a spectator or to the result of a theory, which has a preferential point of view in comparison with social behaviours. Wittgenstein rejected the possibility of making the philosophy of language out of language itself by setting up a super- language with superconcepts (PI, § 97).¹³ This leads him to formulate the idea of family likeness (PI, § 108), which permits him to deprive logic of the task of unifying and disciplining the linguistic phenomena.

This assigns behaviours an arbitrary character and following a rule a performative one, in which rule and action stick together, setting up a form of immanence between rule and performance, depriving the author of a critical perspective of both what he is doing (PI, § 219)¹⁴ and what others are doing (PI, §§ 185-188).

The only way to understand the impossibility of giving a description to the process of following a rule is to accept the arbitrary character and self-refering nature of practices, which have like reference only the interpersonal context in which they are developed.

¹² Bloor, D. (1997) *Wittgenstein. Rules and Institutions*, Routledge, London and New York.

¹³ PI, § 97: “We are under the illusion that what is peculiar, profound, essential, in our investigation, resides in its trying to grasp the incomparable essence of language. That is, the order existing between the concepts of proposition, word, proof, truth, experience, and so on. This is order is a super-order between - so to speak - super-concepts. Whereas, of course, if the

words “language”, “experience”, “world”, have a use, it must be as humble a one as that of the words “table”, “lamp”, “door”“.

¹⁴ PI, § 219: “ “All the 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. — But if something of this sort really were the case, how would it help? No; my description only made sense if it was to be understood symbolically. — I should have said: This is how it strikes me. When I obey a rule, I do not choose. I obey the rule blindly.

To better explain this point we can resort to a simple example: Dr. Jones is the owner of a home with a view over the sea, a garage and a garden with a barbecue. The furnishings are not particularly sumptuous but they are practical and comfortable.

I could continue to describe at length the home of Dr. Jones, illustrating without difficulty all the things present in that home. But what should I answer if someone would ask me: “Could you give me a better sense of the expression “to be an owner”?”.

The concept of property belongs to a specific use, which in theory cannot be adopted by other societies different from the society of Dr. Jones. To introduce my interlocutor to the concept of private property, I must clarify for him the sense of property so that he may be familiar with the use of this concept typical in our societies. He would then be educated in a social practice, which for Wittgenstein means to know a rule (PI, § 150),¹⁵ or to know how to go on alone (PI, §§ 151-152).¹⁶

The agreement about the rules is a conventional fact and as we speak about Dr. Jones as an owner of a home, we are not talking about a physical object. Rather, we refer to a convention. At the same time, our agreement about the rules assumes an intransitive character, similar to the way we talk about an object, of which we can have empirical experience. The regularity expressed by the rules is the result of the fact that we relate ourselves to rules in the same way we relate ourselves to a self-referential and self-founded system. The reasons for this are that they are the product of society, which is an interpersonal structure that plays a key role in the constitution of our semantic and behavioural world, which tends to be transmitted and to become stratified. The rigidity of the facts is mediated by a holistic and interpersonal structure of behaviour, rules and values, which are the Grammar of our experience and which are mediated by the language.

This Grammar is the necessary cultural ground from which our behaviour develops itself; the inexorability (*die Unerbittlichkeit*) of the mathematics is an example. At the same time, the theorists that see in the Wittgensteinian con-

¹⁵ PI, § 150: “The grammar of the world “knows” is evidently closely related to that of “can”, “is able to”. But also closely related to that of “understand”. (‘Mastery’ of a technique)”.

¹⁶ Particularly G. Baker e P. Hacker and their volume *Grammar and Necessity* (1985), Blackwell, Oxford.

ception of grammar a necessary structure of transmission of truth and objectivity¹⁶ clash with the fact that grammar does not produce only arithmetical rules that have an objective nature, but also conventions like the concept of property or of rights, which have no counterpart in the natural world.

The whole of the behaviours and of the culture is formed by the model of the physical world and behaves like a second nature that influences us and characterizes us. In RFM, VP29 we read: “What sort of proposition is: “The class of lions is not a lion, but the class of the classes is a class”? How is it verified? How could be it used? ... To draw someone’s attention to the fact that the word “lion” is used in a fundamentally different way from the name of a lion; whereas the class word “class” is used like the designation of one of the classes, say the class of lions.

One can say that the word “class” is used reflexively, even if for instance one accepts Russell’s theory of types”.¹⁷

Such a difference between the use of the word “lion” and the use of the word “class” arises because physical objects have a reference in the world while conventional objects are the way they are in virtue of a practical and social behaviour. Thus the use of these words is self-referring and can be verified only by recognizing their conventional and not empirical character.

4. *Conclusions*

In the second phase of his thought Wittgenstein abandoned the conception of language as a calculus and adopted instead a conception of language as behaviour. In doing so he had to address the fact that natural languages are more complex than formal language.

Moreover, in this phase, the language appeared to him as something articulated and difficult to analyze. Consider this passage, PI § 203: “Language is a labyrinth of paths. You approach from one side and know your way about; you approach the same place from another side and no longer know your way about.”

This passage indicates that for the second Wittgenstein it was impossible to bring back language under a general rule, under which it would be possible to derive all utterances. On the contrary, he adopted an analysis of the uses that

¹⁷ L., Wittgenstein (1956).

reveals the pragmatic component in the meaning. This also occurs when we analyze the question about following a rule; it is possible to learn a rule in a pragmatic and interpersonal context and breaking it is a pragmatic and interpersonal fact.

The fact that behind every action lies a rule should not lead us to assume erroneously that to break a rule requires a rule. The rule, as we argued, is what remains of a practice; it is the sign behind which there is the experience (*Erlebnis*) of its author or the experience that a linguistic community decided to adopt as a form of life. In these passages of the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein suggests that we have not to separate the sign and the rule from the interpersonal context in which it is adopted.

This is the reason I picked the word “inscrutability”; in fact, the rule is barely visible behind the behaviours. The real protagonists of the *Investigations* are experience (*Erlebnis*), intersubjectivity and forms of life, and not the sign that is deprived of its formal character, which cannot be identified with the action. But I do not use inscrutable only in the sense of invisible, but also to indicate the intransitive and implicit character of the rule. The rule, as a portrayal of a behaviour, is also the tool to transmit the forms of life and the whole of the rules is the inheritance and the cultural influence that is our identity. Such influence is the sense of belonging to a group, of sharing the forms of life and it is also the possibility of learning a language. For this Wittgenstein tends to see in the rule an intransitive fact and to deny that its interpretation could determine the meaning. In fact, we read in PI, § 198: ““But how can a rule show me what I have to do at this point? Whatever I do is, on some interpretation, in accord with a rule”. – That is not what we ought to say, but rather: any interpretation still hangs in the air along with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support. Interpretations by themselves do not determine meaning.”

There is an ambiguity in the question of following a rule: one can break it but only by following a second rule, but if one follows the first rule, one can not also interpret it; instead one must follow it as one is trained (*abgerichtet*). Such ambiguity is solved if we consider the fact that rules must be connected to the practices and to the forms of life, which stay in an interpersonal context.

If I break a rule, I am acting, but since the word rule is related to the word agreement through the concept of use (PI, § 224)¹⁸ and since the use of the concept of rule is based on the concept of same (PI, § 225)¹⁹ and the concepts of regularity and repetition, it is clear that in breaking a rule I also adopt a rule, for every action has an interpersonal aspect that emerges through the rules. Breaking a rule becomes clear to our selves and to others if it is described with a rule that permits me, as we have seen, to fix a behaviour. From this point we can derive the interpersonal and self-referring character of actions, thoughts and forms of life.

Nonetheless, Wittgenstein does not want to give space to the interpretations of the rules, for following a rule does not mean interpreting it. Even here the interpersonal character of the rule comes into play; in fact, if I say “I’m following a rule”, the rule is not subject to my personal and private interpretations since it was transmitted to me in an interpersonal and linguistic way.

To conclude, breaking a rule is inscrutable because it is foreign to my experience (*Erlebnis*), to my personality and to the reasons that moved me to break it. It shows all its vacuity in comparison to the experience and to the ability I have to renew and to remove the old paradigms. But in following the rule, the rule is still inscrutable, for my action is not determined by my personality, but by the personality of that shared form of life I am assuming and personifying. My choices are always orientated to the forms of life and to the agreement; in fact, in following the rule I also have to respect the sense of that form of life, of which the rule is the expression. In breaking the rule I must always keep in mind the experience and the dimension of the agreement, then I will describe my breaking through a rule and I could hand it by making a new rule.

¹⁸ PI, § 224: “The word “agreement” and the word “rule” are related to one another, they are cousins. If I teach anyone the use of the one word, he learns the use of the other with it.”

¹⁹ PI, § 225: “The use of the word ‘rule’ and the use of the word ‘same’ are interwoven. (As are the use of ‘proposition’ and the use of ‘true’.)”

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