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The Continuity of Wittgenstein's Critical Meta-Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the continuity of Wittgenstein's approach to, and conception of, philosophy. Part One examines the rule-following passages of the *Philosophical Investigations*. I argue that Wittgenstein's remarks can only be read as interesting and coherent if we see him, as urged by prominent commentators, resisting the possibility of a certain 'sideways-on' perspective. There is real difficulty, however, in ascertaining what the resulting Wittgensteinian position is: whether it is position structurally analogous with Kant's distinction between empirical realism and transcendental idealism, or whether philosophical 'therapy' is meant to dissolve any drive towards such idealism. I argue that both of these readings of Wittgenstein are found in the work of McDowell. Part Two argues that related issues arise in respect to the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and the question of realism. In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein rejects the possibility of a certain 'sideways-on' perspective. Again, I argue, it is unclear whether Wittgenstein embraces a form of transcendental idealism or, on the contrary, ultimately reveals the idealist position to be empty. Part Three connects 'sideways-on' glances with the threat of idealism by introducing a philosophical 'measure'. I argue that the measure is a useful tool in assessment of the *Tractatus*, and shows that Wittgenstein was no idealist, but is less useful as an assessment of the *Investigations*. It yields the result that Wittgenstein succumbed to idealism, but in doing so may overlook the 'therapeutic' nature of Wittgenstein's later philosophy.

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Introduction

This thesis is an investigation into the continuity of the philosophical approach adopted by the early and later Wittgenstein. I will focus on the two masterpieces of Wittgenstein's work. The 'early' Wittgenstein will, for the most part, be the author of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. The 'later' Wittgenstein will, for the most part, be the author of the *Philosophical Investigations*. My interest is not primarily the views espoused in these great texts but, rather, the underlying conception of philosophy and the philosophical method that informs them. Wittgenstein undoubtedly altered, criticised and rejected views in his later work that he himself once held. The question is whether such criticisms reflected a deep change in Wittgenstein's philosophical approach or, on the contrary, that such an approach remained significantly unaltered.

This introduction has two tasks. One: explain the motivation for investigating this topic. Two: set out the structure of the thesis by providing signposts as to the direction the discussion will take. I will address these in turn.

The first motivation is the current state of Wittgenstein studies. As I see it, one crude view of the relationship between the early and later periods is under attack from another, equally crude, view. Crary, in introducing the papers that form *The New Wittgenstein*, tells us that:

> It would not be wrong to say that what is most striking about the papers in this volume has to do with their suggestion of significant *continuity* in Wittgenstein's thought. These papers criticize more

> standard interpretations of his work in so far as such interpretations furnish a narrative about the development of his thought, which, while it leaves room for important similarities between the views he holds at different times, accents the idea of a *decisive break* in his mode of philosophizing between the *Tractatus* and his later writings.[1]

A number of commentators have argued for a 'decisive break' in Wittgenstein's thought, although the contrast has been developed in different ways. Dummett [2] has claimed that the early Wittgenstein was a 'realist' and the later Wittgenstein an 'anti-realist'. Hacker has maintained that the contrast is best seen not as a replacement of one philosophical position with another, but rather as a deep-rooted change of approach to philosophical questions. For the early Wittgenstein, Hacker maintains:

> Philosophy is an activity of logical clarification. […] It will consist of producing clear presentations of empirical propositions by analysing them into their constituents, ultimately, if need be, into atomic propositions, and presenting this analysis in a perspicuous notation.[3]

Hacker reads the later Wittgenstein, in contrast, as offering a 'therapeutic' approach to philosophy. Such an approach is totally at odds with the one adopted in his younger life.

> It destroys those houses of cards, which always seem interesting, great, and important in philosophy, namely putative insights into the real, the metaphysical, structure of the universe, the essence of the world. The importance of philosophizing in the new way lies in disillusionment, in curing philosophical thought of the madness which besets it.[4]

[1] Crary (2000), p.1-2.
[2] Dummett (1991b)
[3] Hacker (1972), p.26.
[4] Hacker (1972), p.116.

The kind of view that finds voice in *The New Wittgenstein* complains that, contrary to standard readings (however they may be developed), there is a substantial and deep continuity in Wittgenstein's thought.

> These papers have in common an understanding of Wittgenstein as aspiring, not to advance metaphysical theories, but rather to help us work ourselves out of confusions we become entangled in when philosophizing. More specifically, they agree in representing him as tracing the sources of our philosophical confusions to our tendency, in the midst of philosophizing, to think that we need to survey language from an external point of view.[5]

Thus, the 'new' interpretation regards Wittgenstein's philosophy as 'therapeutic' throughout: that grasping the essence of language, of thought, or seeing our relationship to reality, will not be achieved by searching for an external standpoint. We need to recognise and accept the perspectival elements of our investigations. This 'new' understanding of Wittgenstein has grown in popularity in recent years.

What we have in the literature, then, is a sharp contrast. One school of thought holds that there was a radical shift in Wittgenstein's philosophical approach between the early and later periods. The second school of thought holds that, in contrast, there is a deep 'therapeutic' strand running throughout Wittgenstein's work. It is likely, given the nature and breath of Wittgenstein's philosophy, that neither of these crude interpretations is satisfactory. More plausible is the view that Wittgenstein altered certain aspects of his approach whilst others remained constant. In other words: the truth lies somewhere

[5] Crary (2000), p.1.

between the two options presented here. In a Wittgensteinian spirit, I propose we look and see how matters lie rather than just think how they must be.

The second motivation for addressing this topic is the nature of the philosophical issues this investigation requires. The general question which interested Wittgenstein throughout his work (and has concerned all the great philosophers) is how language and thought stand in relation to reality. Is objective representation possible? Can we accept and respect certain perspectival and relativistic pressures without abandoning the familiar notions of truth and objectivity? I think the real value in Wittgenstein's work is to be found in his attempt to get beyond the false choice between 'realism' and 'anti-realism' that dominates philosophy. (This will be a recurring theme of the thesis.) Understanding quite what Wittgenstein's position is, whether it is satisfactory, and whether it remained constant throughout, should offer some guidance in framing our answers to the difficult questions about the relationship between ourselves and reality.

I turn now to signposts. The thesis has three parts. Part One is an examination of the philosophical approach adopted in the *Philosophical Investigations*. I tackle the later Wittgenstein first because the kinds of issues that are relevant to our discussion are more prevalent in the surrounding secondary literature, and there is a greater history of entrenched interpretative disputes. I take a specific and central topic of the book: the so-called 'rule-following problematic'. I argue, and demonstrate through reference to influential interpretations, that there is difficulty in having

Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following appear both interesting and coherent. I search for satisfactory interpretations of Wittgenstein's remarks, concluding that McDowell is the closest to achieving this. McDowell reads in Wittgenstein, as others have, a rejection of the possibility of a certain 'sideways-on' perspective. Others find little value in the resulting Wittgensteinian position. McDowell, in contrast, clearly finds something right about the rejection of such a perspective. Unfortunately, however, McDowell's remarks suggest two quite different interpretations. I sketch these alternatives, one has Wittgenstein embracing a kind of transcendental idealism; the other has Wittgenstein as revealing such idealism to be the right answer to a question which must itself be rejected through a process of therapy.

Part Two is an examination of the philosophical approach adopted in the *Tractatus*. The task, framed by Part One, is to see whether analogous interpretative concerns appear in relation to the early Wittgenstein. Again, I investigate a specific and central topic: the saying / showing distinction. I argue, after a false start, that similar issues arise when one raises the question of realism and the *Tractatus*. I argue (inspired by a remark by McDowell) for a 'middle-way' interpretation which cuts between realist and idealist readings of the book. The *Tractatus* is shown to also rule out a certain 'sideways-on' perspective. I argue that an analogous problem arises to that encountered in Part One: it is not clear whether Wittgenstein embraces a kind of transcendental idealism, or ultimately reveals such a position to be empty.

Part Three connects the previous discussions together and addresses the question of continuity. I outline a philosophical 'measure', proposed in recent literature, which seeks to connect together the possibility of 'sideways-on' glances with the doctrine of transcendental idealism. Through the help of secondary literature I apply the measure to both the *Investigations* and the *Tractatus*. The result is that the early Wittgenstein was no idealist, whereas the later Wittgenstein did indeed succumb to idealism. I end by questioning the viability of the proposed measure in application to the *Investigations*. The overall conclusion will show that there is significant continuity in the kinds of questions that motivated Wittgenstein throughout his work, but that his approach to answering those questions differed markedly.

I conclude this introduction with a warning to the reader. There will be no major change in our understanding of Wittgenstein proposed at the end of this thesis. There is no, as it were, 'bombshell' in the last chapter. I aim to offer a clear setting out of the shape of the debate, the positions one make take and then raise questions and suggest possible directions for future research. If this thesis achieves even these modest aims I will be delighted.

Part One:

The *Philosophical Investigations*

Chapter One

The Primary Text: *Investigations* §§185-242

[1.1] Introduction

This chapter will set out the four central themes of Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following as they appear in §§185-242 of his *Philosophical Investigations*. Wittgenstein's remarks frustratingly fall short of detailed accounts of what following a rule consists in or what correctly following a rule amounts to. It is left to the reader to connect the pieces together. This has given rise to, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, a plethora of differing interpretations as to what Wittgenstein was up to in these sections. The local aim of this chapter is to get the four themes in play and assess how far Wittgenstein presents the relationship between them. The strategic aim of this chapter is to provide markers by which interpretations of Wittgenstein can be assessed. I will argue that there is a pressing concern for would-be interpreters: on the face of it the four themes do not seem able to sit together in a way that has Wittgenstein saying something both interesting and coherent.

The structure of the chapter is as follows: [1.2] is a brief background of the issue of rule-following. [1.3] examines, and attempts to make sense of, the crucial passages of the *Investigations*. [1.4] offers an initial reading on how these themes fit together and outlines frustration with Wittgenstein's apparent failure to explain how *he* intends them to cohere. It appears that the four themes, if they are to be taken seriously, are incompatible with one

another. I leave it for Chapter Two to demonstrate that this concern is even more pressing when one considers the relevant classic secondary literature.

[1.2] Why Rule-Following?

That is: why *this* issue over and above any of the other issues Wittgenstein discusses in the latter period? I think these passages are certainly interesting and elusive. What justifies their inclusion, however, is the centrality of these sections to the *Investigations* and Wittgenstein's later work in general. The undermining of a kind of Platonism which, as we shall see, is at least part of Wittgenstein's intention in these passages intersects philosophy of language, philosophy of mind as well as the foundations of mathematics. That is to say: *any* fully comprehensive understanding of Wittgenstein's later philosophy would involve assessment of and reflection on the 'rule-following problematic'. It is no wonder, then, that these passages are so hotly disputed by rival schools of interpretation.

We normally think of rules in the context of games or sports. Chess, for example, is a game played according to rules. The rule for castling, say, stipulates what has to be case for a player to castle – neither the king and the rook have been moved, there are no pieces occupying the squares between them, the king is not in check, and so on. The 'offside rule' in association football is another good example. But rules are an essential part of everyday life, not just when we are playing certain games. In mathematics, for example, notions like addition and subtraction are governed by rules. There are

stipulations of what is permissible and impermissible practice, what actions are in accord with the rules and what are not. Meaning is another example. Grasping the meaning of an expression or word involves recognising when it is legitimate to use that expression or word. To remain faithful to the meaning of the terms involved we must obey the rules of use. Grammar tells us what structures and combinations are legitimate in our language, what is acceptable and what is not. So rules are central to our everyday lives.

The so-called 'rule-following problematic' has at its core issues of constitution and epistemology. What the rule requires must in some sense be *settled*; we also must *know* what the rule requires. In meeting the first constraint we feel it necessary to conceive the nature of a rule as completely independent of our thoughts and practices. The danger being that in doing so it can seem mysterious or magical how we can ever have knowledge of what the rule requires. But if we bring knowledge of the requirements within reach it can seem to threaten the objectivity of rules; whether we can make the distinction between seeming to follow a rule and actually following it.

[1.3] The Text

As indicated in the Introduction [1.1], this engagement with the primary text is aimed at setting markers by which to judge the various interpretations of Wittgenstein's remarks in the remainder of Part One. This section is not aimed at giving a fully-fledged interpretation of Wittgenstein's position. As we shall see, Wittgenstein's remarks do not lend themselves to such clear and

straightforward exegesis. The four themes are as follows. One: the relationship between a rule and actions in accordance with it is an internal or grammatical one. Two: the rejection of a kind of scepticism about rules. Three: the simplicity and straightforwardness of rule-following in our everyday lives. Four: the appeal to notions of community, convention and practice in coming to terms with what correctly following a rule demands. I will take these in turn.

[1.3.1] The Internal Relationship Between a Rule and Its Requirements

The first theme is so obvious and straight-forward it might appear that it does not require stating because no-one would seriously want to deny it. A rule and actions that are in accordance with that rule (or, as we might put it, a rule and the requirements of that rule) are internally related. The rule is the rule it is because going a certain way meets its requirements and other ways fail to meet those requirements. The rule for castling in chess, for example, would not be the rule it is if castling were permitted when pieces occupy spaces between the rook and the king. If that *were* allowed the rule would be a different rule. Nothing in what Wittgenstein says in the rule-following passages is meant to undermine these truisms. It is settled by the rule itself what actions accord and what discord with it. This is the internal (or grammatical) relationship between a rule and its requirements.

The early sections of the rule-following passages are to be seen as reactions to those truisms. The general drift of the interlocutor's remarks is

this: 'Surely there must be more to it that *that*?' That is: 'granted that there is an internal relation between a rule and its requirements, there must be something more to following a rule, something which one has to grasp in following the rule correctly.' Wittgenstein's aim, in the passages leading up to §197, is to show that nothing does fill that role and this is because there is no space to fill.

Near the beginning of the *Blue Book* Wittgenstein asks us to imagine explaining the meaning of a word by means of ostensive definition. We might, to use Wittgenstein's example, explain the meaning of the word 'tove' by pointing to a pencil and saying 'this is tove.' This attempted definition admits of a variety of possible interpretations – 'this is a pencil', 'this is round', 'this is wood', and so on. One might object that a variety of interpretations is only available to an individual who already grasps a language. "And this objection is significant if by 'interpretation' we only mean translation into a word-language"[6] We could give an English speaker a definition by pointing to an object and saying: 'this is what Germans call 'Buch'.' The English speaker will most likely associate this with his word 'book'. In such a case he has interpreted 'Buch' to mean 'book'.

There are other cases, however, where the subject may not have encountered the thing in question, and so has no word for the kind of thing it is. Wittgenstein's example is a subject who has never come into contact with a banjo. Perhaps the ostensive definition 'this is a banjo' prompts him to associate it with the word 'guitar', perhaps no word comes to him at all. The

[6] BB, p.2.

subject is given the order to pick out the banjo in a group of objects. If he picks out the banjo we are inclined to say he has given the word 'banjo' the correct interpretation – 'he has interpreted me correctly'. If he picks out some other object we are inclined to say he has misinterpreted. The point is that even though the subject has no other language to interpret 'banjo' into, we still say that he has given the word this or that interpretation.

Part of Wittgenstein's aim in the rule-following passages is to challenge the need for an 'interpretation' in this sense. He aims to show that there is no need for an intermediary phase between a rule and actions in accordance with it. We are tempted to think that something other than the rule itself stipulates correct or incorrect practice. For example, again from the *Blue Book*, imagine the order 'fetch me a red flower from the meadow'. How is a person to know what sort of flower to bring to comply with this order? I have only given him the word 'red' to work with. Perhaps we say: the person must bring a red image 'to mind', and then go into the meadow to compare the sample colour with the colour of the flowers. But now consider the order 'imagine a red patch.' We are not inclined to think that in order to obey this order the person must first bring a red image 'to mind' to serve as a sample for the red patch he is instructed to imagine. There is simply no work for the sample to do in this case; so why think that in other, more standard, cases it is doing any work? Wittgenstein's point is that, in fact, the role of the sample is completely empty: "any interpretation still hangs in the air with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support. Interpretations by themselves do not determine

meaning."[7] The idea that an 'interpretation' or some intermediary phase between a rule and action is required appears in different ways in the rule-following passages of the *Investigations*. It is replaced by the realisation that the relationship between a rule and actions in accordance with it is an internal or grammatical one.

What is it to *correctly* follow a rule? "To carry it out correctly! How is it decided what is the right step to take at any particular stage?"[8] Wittgenstein and his interlocutor proceed to discuss answers one might give to such a 'correctness question'. The first specific suggestion is a natural one: the correct answer is the one that accords with the order; accords with what the person giving the order *meant*. So, for example, when a teacher gives a particular order to a student, say carry on adding two to this series, correctly following her order will amount to keeping faith with what she meant in giving the order. Wittgenstein is unimpressed:

> 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?[9]

Whilst some might be happy to say 'yes' to Wittgenstein's question (that is just what giving the order '+2' amounts to they might say), the interlocutor concedes defeat; telling Wittgenstein this is not what was meant in giving the order. The teacher did not mean that the student should write 100036 after

[7] *PI* I §198.
[8] *PI* I §186.
[9] *PI* I §186.

100034 when she gave the order. Rather, she meant that one should add two after this number and that number, and so on. Wittgenstein's real point, it seems, is that not every step of the series 'came into the mind' of the teacher when she gave the order. As if every possible step in the series came before her minds eye.

> "But I already knew, at the time when I gave the order, that he ought to write 1002 after 1000." – Certainly; and you can also say you *meant* it then; only you should not let yourself be mislead by the grammar of the words "know" and "mean". For you don't want to say that you thought of the step from 1000 to 1002 at that time – and even if you did think of this step, still you did not think of other ones. When you said "I already knew at the time ….." that meant something like: "If I had then been asked what number should be written after 1000, I should have replied '1002'." And that I don't doubt. This assumption is rather of the same kind as: "If he had fallen into the water then, I should have jumped in after him".[10]

Of course, if we had been asked what number the student should write after 1000 we would reply '1002'. But do not be misled, Wittgenstein is telling us, into thinking that each stage came into your mind when giving the order. It is wrong to think that in giving the order one's mind 'flies ahead' and takes all the steps before we arrive at this or that particular step. It is as if the steps themselves are already taken in the act of meaning - as if meaning can anticipate reality. Wittgenstein's target here is the idea that how the rule is meant or how the rule is conceived 'in mind' explains the relationship between the rule and actions in accordance with it. It looks as though something is needed to sit between, mediate between, a rule and correct

[10] *PI* I §187.

action. As we saw, this falls under the heading of 'interpretation' for Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein's point is that the mental could not be a satisfactory intermediary.

We find it natural to think that the steps of a series are determined; that it is already settled which actions will be correct, which incorrect. We say things like: 'The steps are determined by the formula $y = x^2$'. Whatever number we substitute for x it has already in some sense been settled what the corresponding value of y will be. Even if a number yet to be encountered by the human mind is substituted for x we still think the formula completely settles the value of y – what the correct answer is. In mathematical cases everything is settled by the formula. We are merely passive observers in the process. But we ought to be careful over what we mean by 'determined'. This example concerns mathematical determination.

There is also causal determination. So, for people trained in a particular way to respond to '+2' then perhaps the order completely causally determines every step from one number to the next. But other people, who have been trained in a different way, or indeed not trained at all, might well act in a whole host of different ways. Wittgenstein's point, at §189, appears to be that it cannot be the formula *itself* which settles correct and incorrect action for the formula is open to different interpretations and readings depending on the training the individual has received. So, for example, if we took 'x!2' to mean x^2 we would get one answer, if we took it to mean $2x$ we would get another.

But being mathematically determined or being causally determined was not the issue. We were interested in determination by *meaning*. We thought that something about the meaning of the order '+2' determined what counts as correct or incorrect practice. As the interlocutor responds: 'The way the formula is meant determines which steps are to be taken.' But this runs into analogous problems as before. How can the act of meaning settle the correct and incorrect steps in advance? How could, say, my meaning addition by 'plus' determine the way I go on?

Wittgenstein's point is to again undermine the idea that something needs explaining about the relationship between a rule and actions in accordance with the rule. We are tempted to think that something about the very nature of the rule, the kind of rule it is, projects onto practice; settles what is correct or incorrect practice. In a sense Wittgenstein is happy with this but warns against a certain kind of distortion. In that, we think that formulising the rule provides us with a link between the rule and correct practice – as if writing the rule down or speaking it out loud did the mediating job.

But this natural way of thinking about rules (that all the steps are already settled simply by laying down the rule) remains persuasive. All we can do, we imagine, is watch as impartial observers as the rule leads us this way and that. This, I take it, is a Platonist conception of rules: the claim that rules are independent of us and our practices. It does indeed seem puzzling how stipulating a rule can achieve this. Moreover, how could we ever grasp

such a thing? "Can't the use – in a certain sense – be grasped in a flash?"[11] Wittgenstein's answer appears to be 'in a sense of course, yes. But in the sense in which you mean it, no.' To illustrate this supposed confusion, Wittgenstein describes the movement of a machine. The actions of a machine seem to be already there from the start, from when it was constructed – its movement appears to be completely determined. We talk as though the parts of the machine can only move in *this* way. In so doing, we overlook the possibility of parts bending, breaking, melting, and so on. We imagine that we could give someone the design and drawings of a machine and that he could derive all the movements of its parts from it.

> "The machine's action seems to be in it from the start" means: we are inclined to compare the future movements of the machine in their definiteness to objects which are already lying in a drawer and which we then take out.[12]

But, continues Wittgenstein, when we talk about the behaviour of an *actual* machine in *actual* circumstances we normally do not overlook the possibility of distortion or the breaking of parts. When we reflect that the machine might have moved differently, we may suppose that the way a 'machine-as-symbol' moves is far more determined than an actual machine. Crucially: we may think that it is not enough for the movement to be empirically determined but that such movement is already *present* in the machine.

When do we, then, have the thought that the possible movements of a machine are already present in it? "Well, when one is doing philosophy."[13]

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[11] *PI* I §191.
[12] *PI* I §193.
[13] *PI* I §194.

Wittgenstein argues that the way we talk about machines is apt to mislead us here. We say that a machine *possesses* such-and-such possibilities of movement. We speak of ideally rigid machinery which can only move in *this* or *that* way. Wittgenstein argues that we fail to grasp what the possibility of movement actually is. It is not the movement itself, nor the physical conditions for moving. The possibility of movement is rather a kind of 'shadow' of the movement itself.

> But do you know of such a shadow? And by a shadow I do not mean some picture of the movement – for such a picture would not have to be a picture of just *this* movement. But the possibility of this movement must be the possibility of just this movement. (See how high the seas of language run here!)[14]

How actually do we use the phrase 'possibility of movement' in regard to an actual machine? The answer comes[15]: I show you the possibility of movement by a picture of the movement. We say: 'It isn't moving yet, but it already has the possibility of moving' – so possibility is something very near reality. We never discuss whether *this* is the possibility of this or of that movement. So the possibility of movement is in a close relation to the movement itself. We do not say: 'experience will show whether this is the possibility of this movement'. So: it is not an empirical fact that this possibility is the possibility of precisely this movement.

What can be made of this (quite obscure) discussion about the machine? The point Wittgenstein is making, I conjecture, is that we need to be much clearer about what we mean by 'possibility'. He is obviously drawing a

[14] *PI* I §194.
[15] *PI* I §194.

distinction between what is actually possible and what is possible for the machine as symbol – what is in theory possible. An actual machine can move this way or that; a machine as symbol has built in possibilities of movement. But what is crucial here, I think, is the notion of an internal possibility. Such a possibility is one without which a thing cannot be; it is inconceivable that *this* object does not have *this* possibility of movement.

The reference to 'shadows' is then a reference to the kind of mediating entity I have argued Wittgenstein is so keen to expose as empty. Just as we think that there must be something sitting between a machine and its movements – a possibility – we think that there must be something sitting between a rule and actions in accordance with it. Wittgenstein's answer is that we ought to recognise the internal relationship in play in both cases. It simply would not be this machine without these possibilities of movement; it simply would not be the rule it is without these actions being in accordance with it.

What, then, are we to say about 'grasping in a flash'? Perhaps, argues the interlocutor, grasping the rule does not determine what will count as correct or incorrect practice. Rather, "in a *queer* way, the use itself is in some sense present"[16].

> But of course it is, 'in *some* sense'! Really the only thing wrong with what you say is the expression "in a queer way". The rest is all right; and the sentence only seems queer when one imagines a different language-game for it from the one in which we actually use it.[17]

[16] *PI* I §195.
[17] *PI* I §195.

Wittgenstein's point is that we ought not to feel anything strange or queer about this process of grasping a rule or grasping the whole use of a word in a flash. It only becomes strange if we think the future development of a series, or the use of a word, are there as it were 'in the grasping'.

The important marker for future discussion is Wittgenstein's recognition that a rule and its requirements are internally related.

[1.3.2] The Rejection of Rule Scepticism

The recognition of the internal or grammatical relationship is reinforced by the second of the four central themes: the rejection of a kind of scepticism about rules and following a rule. A number of candidates for the 'shadowy intermediary' have been canvassed and rejected in turn. Wittgenstein's answer is that the belief that there needs to be such an intermediary is at fault. The interlocutor struggles to see the point Wittgenstein is making. He expresses his frustration with the direction of the discussion: "But how can a rule shew me what I have to do at *this* point? Whatever I do, is, on some interpretation, in accord with the rule."[18] If the order is '+2' then going '998, 1000, 1004' instead of going '998, 1000, 1002' could be seen as acting in accordance with the rule. Perhaps such an individual has interpreted the order '+2' as: 'add two up to a 1000, add four beyond 1000'. Wittgenstein agrees, as we might suspect, that appealing to an 'interpretation' here is of no

[18] *PI* I §198.

use: an interpretation still 'hangs' along with what it interprets. Then, asks the interlocutor, "can whatever I do be brought into accord with the rule?"[19]

The worry being expressed straight-forwardly leads to a kind of scepticism about rules. If, on some way of looking at it, any course of action can be seen to be in accord with a rule the very notion of correct or incorrect practice comes under threat. There is no longer any room, as we think there must be, between seeming to follow a rule correctly and actually following a rule correctly. If we were to cast this in terms of meaning: there would be nothing that would count as incorrect use of a word for there is nothing that would count as correct use of that word. We could not maintain that anyone means something determinate by the words they use. This worry is repeated at the start of §201:

> This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because any course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if *any* action 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.[20]

So, if *any* action can be seen, by interpretation, to be a 'correct' manner of following the rule, then the whole notion of 'correctness' appears to have been lost.

It is clear that Wittgenstein wants to reject this kind of scepticism. As he goes on immediately to say:

> 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

[19] *PI* I §198.
[20] *PI* I §201.

> another; as if each one contented us for at least a moment, until we thought of yet another standing behind it.[21]

So far from embracing the scepticism about rules, Wittgenstein claims that it is based on a misunderstanding. The misunderstanding is the idea that an 'interpretation' (something providing mediation between a rule and actions in accordance with it) is the only possible answer to the correctness question. *If* we are tempted to think that it is the only answer then the sceptical worries may indeed bother us. But it is only by making the mistake Wittgenstein precisely warns against that scepticism enters the picture.

[1.3.3] Rule-Following 'Without Reasons'

We like to think that our practices are grounded in deep and secure foundations. That when, say, I answer '1002, 1004…' I can explain to the teacher why I am going this way rather than that, that I can justify my answers to her. Equally, when I use terms to communicate I think that, if pressed, I could give reasons or justify my use of those terms. It is comforting to think of a justificatory structure underpinning our practices. Wittgenstein seeks to undermine this idea: for him, there is no deep routed justification to be found when it comes to following rules.

> 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 reasons will soon give out. And then I shall act, without reasons.[22]

[21] *PI* I §201.
[22] *PI* I §211.

> If 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."[23]
>
> When I obey a rule, I do not choose. I obey the rule *blindly*.[24]

These comments could seem to point towards the kind of scepticism discussed in [1.3.2]. If we are following a rule blindly, what sense is there to *following* a rule here at all? If nothing is, as it were, 'in mind' when we follow rules how can we get any traction on the notion of correctly following a rule at all?

Wittgenstein's aim, however, is not to say that rule-following is irrational, or that we are unjustified in going this way rather than that. Rather; he wants to undermine a certain conception of that view, a conception that there must be ever deeper and more complicated explanations. Instead, according to Wittgenstein, we should recognise how basic, how straight-forward, and how unreflective it is for us to follow certain rules or obey certain orders. "When someone whom I am afraid of orders me to continue the series, I act quickly, with perfect certainty, and the lack of reasons does not trouble me."[25] We feel the temptation for complex definitions or explanations, but really they serve no purpose: "Our requirement is an architectural one; the definition a kind of ornamental coping that supports nothing."[26]

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[23] *PI* I §217.
[24] *PI* I §219.
[25] *PI* I §211.
[26] *PI* I §217.

> Isn't there a deeper explanation; or mustn't at least the *understanding* of the explanation be deeper? – Well, have I myself a deeper understanding? Have I *got* more than I give in the explanation? – But then, whence the feeling that I have got more?[27]

The idea that we ought to 'dissolve' or 'diagnose' the philosopher's desire for ever deeper and more satisfying (at least thought to be more satisfying) answers – is central not only to Wittgenstein's comments on rule-following but to the wider project of the *Investigations*. The job of philosophy, Wittgenstein tells us, is merely to draw attention to what is already known, assemble reminders for a particular purpose, rather than advance ever more complicated doctrines. This is often referred to as Wittgenstein's 'Quietism'.

> Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. – Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain. For what is hidden, for example, is of no interest to us.[28]

In our specific case: Instead of constructing ever more elaborate structures and theories concerning rules, just look at how basic and simply rule-following is. We do not need the complex justificatory structure we imagined we did.

[1.3.4] 'Shared Agreement in Judgement' and Convention

The fourth and final theme is, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, the most difficult to understand and place in Wittgenstein's thought. He develops the idea that there needs to be shared human agreement in judgements for rule-

[27] *PI* I §209.
[28] *PI* I §126..

following to take place. Wittgenstein offers the example that human beings share a natural reaction to pointing: looking at the direction of the line from the wrist to the finger-tip rather than from the finger-tip to the wrist.[29] Crucial is the idea that not only *are* such shared judgements, but that there *need to be* for us to communicate with one another:

> If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgements.[30]

And, again, from earlier in the section: "The common behaviour of mankind is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language."[31] If we observe some unknown tribe, who appear to have intelligible behaviour, but cannot learn their language as it does not contain enough regularity between the sounds they make and their behaviour we will, according to Wittgenstein, say that there is nothing of sufficient regularity to call a 'language'. The kind of agreement crucial to Wittgenstein here is not of opinions or definitions – it is not the kind of agreement one reaches at a committee or through some other kind of discussion. It is meant to be a much more basic kind of agreement than that. The term usually used for this basic set of shared characteristics is 'form of life':

> "So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?" – It is what human beings *say* that is true or false; and

[29] *PI* I §185.
[30] *PI* I §242.
[31] *PI* I §207.

> they agree in the *language* they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life.[32]

This is linked to Wittgenstein's rather curious appeal to custom and convention:

> I have further indicated that a person goes by a sign-post only in so far as there exists a regular use of sign-posts, a custom.
>
> To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are *customs* (uses, institutions).[33]
>
> And hence also 'obeying a rule' is a practice.[34]
>
> This merely shews what goes to make up what we call "obeying a rule" in everyday life.[35]

As with the last section, part of Wittgenstein's thought here is to recognise how following a rule is a very ordinary part of our everyday lives. Wittgenstein seems to think that an answer to the correctness question needs to recognise that rules and rule-following only make sense within the custom or practice of people following rules, obeying orders, meaning things by the words they use and so on. So we need to recognise that the rules we follow are dependant (in some way or another) on custom and convention.

It is not immediately obvious what the relationship is between 'shared agreement in judgement' and the appeal to convention. A natural thought, I take it, would be that the shared agreement in judgement provides the backdrop or framework for there being any conventions at all. This allows us

[32] *PI* I §241.
[33] *PI* I §199.
[34] *PI* I §202.
[35] *PI* I §235.

to see the two aspects of this fourth theme as distinct: What conventions or customs we adopt is built upon the shared agreement, but a wide variety of options remain open as to what those conventions are. Wittgenstein's thought, I take it, is that there is a much closer relationship between the two aspects, such that they are not distinct from one another at all. The idea must be that the shared agreements in judgements impinge on or colour what conventions there are. So, what we find natural infiltrates the kind of conventions we adopt in a much more direct way than simply providing the backdrop.

[1.4] A Coherent Account?

I have, somewhat artificially, split Wittgenstein's discussion in these passages into four themes. What can we say about the relationship between them? The first part of Wittgenstein's discussion seems negative. The interlocutor attempts to provide an account of the relationship between a rule and actions in accordance with it – how the order is meant, a Platonic conception of rules reaching out like rails to infinity etc. – and each is rejected. It is then very tempting, if one agrees with Wittgenstein's arguments, to accept that the sceptical thought – there just is no difference between seeming to correctly follow a rule and actually correctly following a rule – must have something going for it. But far from embracing the reasoning that leads to the paradox Wittgenstein goes on to say that it is based on a 'misunderstanding'. It is clear, then, that he intends the criticism of the mediating entity *not* to push us into

the sceptical paradox. The question then is: how can we accept the argument without falling into the trap? The misunderstanding arises from the thought that we must interpret or infer what is meant by a rule at each stage. Wittgenstein's conjecture is that the supposed paradox shows, rather, that "there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation*"[36]. For Wittgenstein, once we free ourselves of the assumption that following a rule will always involve interpretation, will always involve something other than the rule itself, the apparent choice between the mediating entity and the sceptical paradox does not even get a chance to be considered.

The other two themes developed above in [1.3.3] and [1.3.4] are as close as we get to a 'positive' answer to some of these puzzles. We ought to remember, Wittgenstein tells us, how basic and straight-forward rule-following is in our everyday lives, how rule-following only takes place within the practice of following rules. And these thoughts, it seems, are meant to remove any frustration we have in not being able to find a complicated answer to the correctness question. Moreover, the appeal to convention is, somehow, meant to satisfy that question.

But frustration remains. In particular, it is as yet unclear precisely *how* Wittgenstein's appeal to custom, practice or convention is meant to figure in his thinking; at what level such an appeal is to be made. There is a genuine concern for interpreters of Wittgenstein to make this as precise as one would like. On the one hand, Wittgenstein's remarks can appear to admit of a banal reading which has Wittgenstein arguing for things that, whilst true, are

[36] *PI* I §201.

hardly insightful. This would have Wittgenstein saying things like: 'there would no such thing as following a rule save for shared human agreement in judgement'. We would not be able to communicate with one another; there would be no such thing as meaning if it where not for some conventions. But that, we might reasonably say, is obvious. Of course the meaning of a word depends *to some extent* on community or convention. And what conventions there are depends on the kind of creatures we are, what things seem natural to us, what limitations we have. If that was Wittgenstein's message in the rule-following passages then he is telling us very little indeed.

On the other hand, Wittgenstein's remarks can be read as fantastical; by giving full weight to the appeal of 'convention'. This would have Wittgenstein arguing that at every stage of following a rule, or using a word, a decision is required as to the way to proceed. Moreover, the 'correct' way of proceeding is established only by our explicitly treating it as the correct way to proceed. Convention, community or agreement functions as the link between a rule and what counts as accord with it. That would be a radical thesis if it were actually Wittgenstein's view. But if it were Wittgenstein would have to be read as offering an inconsistent picture, for 'convention' is now appearing in the place where a mediating entity would sit. As we saw in [1.3.1] this is precisely what Wittgenstein was arguing against: nothing can fulfil the role of the mediating entity or 'interpretation' because there is no requirement for that role whatsoever. So, it seems, pushing the appeal to

'convention' to a point where it becomes interesting and controversial is pushing it to a point that contradicts Wittgenstein avowed views.

This is of course just a sketch of a problem. The next chapter will show that this problem appears when one examines the classic literature on the rule-following 'problematic'. The remaining chapters of Part One will examine whether a satisfying middle ground reading of Wittgenstein is possible. One, that is, that has Wittgenstein saying something both non-banal and coherent.

[1.5] Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the four central themes of Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following. These are: [1] The internal relationship between a rule and its requirements; [2] The rejection of rule scepticism; [3] The recognition that, in a certain sense, we follow rules 'without reasons' and; [4] The appeal to shared agreement in judgements and social conventions. I have briefly raised a concern that these themes do not appear to fit together in a way that has Wittgenstein arguing for a position both non-banal and coherent. The aim of Chapter Two is to develop this general concern into a substantial problem.

Chapter Two

First Attempts to Unify the Four Themes

[2.1] Introduction

Chapter One identified four themes in Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following. These were: [1] The internal relationship between a rule and its requirements; [2] The rejection of rule scepticism; [3] The recognition that, in a certain sense, we follow rules 'without reasons' and; [4] The appeal to shared agreement in judgements and social conventions. I argued that, on a first reading at least, making these four themes cohere in an interesting way is going to be at best difficult.

This chapter aims at demonstrating just how difficult the task is through examination of some of the most prominent and influential secondary literature on the subject. I will argue that these leading interpretations of Wittgenstein fall into two camps. On the one side there are those who read Wittgenstein as offering a radical and challenging account of what it is to follow a rule. This will be labelled the 'Fantastical Wing'. [2.2] will use Dummett's claim that Wittgenstein was a 'full-blooded conventionalist' about logical necessity as an example of a 'Fantastical' interpretation. Dummett's Wittgenstein offers a radical thesis which gives real content to the appeal to shared biological ancestry and social environment. The problem with it, insofar as it represents Wittgenstein, is that it contravenes the other themes identified in Wittgenstein's discussion; most notably the internal relation between a rule and its requirements. On the other side of the interpretative divide are those who read Wittgenstein as offering a

true but utterly uninteresting account. Such readings dilute Wittgenstein's appeal to convention and position it in such a way that nobody could seriously deny what was being presented as the Wittgensteinian thought. This will be labelled the 'Banal Wing'. [2.3] will use part of Baker and Hacker's analytical commentary on the *Investigations* as an example of a 'Banal' interpretation. What remains appears to be a no-win situation: either Wittgenstein is offering an account of no interest or, if we build real content into the appeal to convention, he is offering an interesting but incoherent position. Subsequent chapters will examine if it is possible to read Wittgenstein as adopting a position on the knife edge: both interesting and coherent. The role of [2.4] is to set out a kind of philosophical 'roadblock': one that must be avoided by any such position. Nagel's comments on realism are used to question the very possibility of the position at once both interesting and coherent. This will serve to highlight just how difficult the task for the remainder of Part One will be.

[2.2] The Fantastical Wing: Dummett

I want to use Dummett's classic paper "Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mathematics" as an example of a 'Fantastical' interpretation of Wittgenstein. Platonism in the philosophy of mathematics holds that mathematical objects exist and stand in certain relations independently of us. The job of the mathematician is to discover these objects and the relationships between them. For the Platonist the meaning of mathematical statements is to be

explained in terms of the truth-conditions of those statements. For each statement something in reality settles whether it is true or whether it is false. Constructivism, by contrast, holds that we make or construct the entities of mathematics 'as we go along'. For the constructivist, the meaning of mathematical statements is to be explained in terms of justified assertion. The crucial part of Dummett's paper for our discussion is the interpretation of Wittgenstein on offer. Dummett's paper proceeds by taking a specific issue: logical necessity.

Logical necessity throws up familiar problems of constitution and epistemology to those encountered with rule-following in Chapter One. First, what is the source of the necessity? In what way is it settled that something holds not just in this world, but across all possible worlds? Second, how do we know that something is necessary? We can discover whether something is true. But how are we to discover that it *must* be true? Dummett argues that Wittgenstein is a 'conventionalist' about logical necessity. Such a view provides the following answer: 'Necessity is imposed by us on language. A statement is necessary by virtue of our having chosen not to count anything as falsifying it.'

Dummett claims that a weak conventionalist account of logical necessity is widespread. "On this view, although all necessity derives from linguistic conventions that we have adopted, the derivation is not always direct."[37] Some necessary statements are straight-forwardly set down; others are merely consequences of conventions. Dummett's example is colour.

[37] Dummett (1959), p.328.

'Nothing can at the same time be green and blue all over' is a direct register of convention. This is because there is no training in the use of colour words that demonstrates that we should not call something on the borderline between green and blue 'both green and blue'. On the other hand, 'Nothing can at the same time be green and red all over' is a consequence of convention – a consequence of the meaning we assign to the colour words involved. There is no need to train someone to recognise that we should not call something 'both green and red', for it is implicit in understanding the meaning of 'green' and 'red'. When applied to mathematics, this conventionalist thought runs as follows: the axioms of mathematics are necessary because they are direct registers of conventions. The job of the mathematician, then, is to discover the various consequences of our having adopted such-and-such conventions.

Dummett thinks that this 'standard' conventionalism will simply not do: "This account is entirely superficial and throws away all the advantages of conventionalism".[38] The objection is that 'standard' conventionalism leaves an unexplained and embedded necessity at work, so cannot itself be an account of logical necessity. We are told that that some things are logically necessary because they are consequences of certain conventions. But given the conventions, there must be an explanation of why certain consequences must follow, why the consequences are necessary. 'Standard' conventionalism cannot provide us with an answer to this question as it "leaves no room for

[38] Dummett (1959), p.328.

any further such convention"[39] which would account for this embedded necessity.

Dummett understands Wittgenstein as avoiding this objection by adopting what is called 'full-blooded' conventionalism. For him, logical necessity is always a direct expression of a linguistic convention:

> That a given statement is necessary consists always in our having expressly decided to treat that very statement as unassailable; it cannot rest on our having adopted certain other conventions which are found to involve our treating it so.[40]

The example Dummett offers is that of counting. The first criterion we would adopt for saying there are a certain number of children in a room is the process of counting. If, however, we found out that there are five boys and seven girls in the room we would then say there are twelve children in total, without bothering to count them all. This second way is a new criterion for saying there are twelve children from simply counting them all. Dummett claims that because we have what appear to be genuinely distinct criteria for the statement 'there are *n* children in the room' we thereby appear to be accepting the possibility of a clash. A clash, that is, of the results when the distinct criteria are applied. But, the conventionalist will respond, "the necessity of '5 + 7 = 12' consists just in this, that we do not count anything as a clash"[41].

Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following are taken to support such an interpretation. A mathematical proof proceeds according to certain rules of

[39] Dummett (1959), p.329.
[40] Dummett (1959), p.329.
[41] Dummett (1959), p.329.

inference. It is natural, as expressed in [1.3.1], to think that once the 'wheels are in motion', once the proof starts, we are passive spectators of the process. For Dummett, Wittgenstein holds that it is up to us to decide, at any given stage of the process, whether we will accept or reject the proof: we have a decision to make at each stage.

> 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.[42]

On this understanding, for Wittgenstein there is nothing which *forces* us to go this way or that, there is no super-rigid machinery or rules as rails to which we attach our minds and hold on. Wittgenstein, in Dummett's eyes, is saying that if we accept the proof we thereby confer necessity on the theorem proved. "In doing this we are making a new decision, and not merely making explicit a decision we had already made implicitly."[43]

By way of example Dummett asks us to imagine a statement of some mathematical theory. The Platonist will hold that there exists either a proof or a disproof of that statement. If the statement is true the fact that it is true consists in an independently existing proof – even though we are yet to discover such a proof. Suppose that there is, somewhere, an actual piece of paper (unseen by man) on which is written something that claims to be a proof of the statement. Dummett reads Wittgenstein as maintaining, against the Platonist, that there still does not exist a proof – for when we discover the

[42] *PI* I §186.
[43] Dummett (1959), p.330.

document "it is still up to us to decide whether or not we wish to count it as a proof."[44]

Dummett claims that, for Wittgenstein, it is up to us to decide whether or not to regard a statement as holding necessarily: in laying down that something holds necessarily we can in some way determine the sense of the words used; and we can attach whatever sense we wish to the words we employ. "Against this one would like to say that the senses of the words in the statement may have already been fully determined"[45]. Dummett's concern is that the sense of a particular word may already have been settled such that no further determination is possible. This concern will be shared by almost all in this discussion. The realist will explain the sense of a statement by appealing to the truth-conditions of that statement. He might say, for example, that "it is by reference to the truth-tables that one justifies taking certain forms as logically true."[46] The 'intuitionist' replaces the notions of truth and falsity with the idea that what explains the sense of a statement is the criteria for justified assertion of that statement. For example, specifying the sense of 'or' comes to saying: we are justified in asserting 'P or Q' only when we are justified in asserting P or justified in asserting Q. "A logical law holds in virtue of these explanations; by reference to them we see that we shall *always* be justified in asserting a statement of this form."[47] Wittgenstein, according to Dummett, is unimpressed. Wittgenstein thinks that we need have no regard for the previous employment of the words contained in a

[44] Dummett (1959), p.332.
[45] Dummett (1959), p.336.
[46] Dummett (1959), p.337.
[47] Dummett (1959), p.337.

statement, that we need not abide by any senses attached previously to those words: for, in fact, there is nothing to be abided by at all.

"If Wittgenstein were right, it appears to me that communication would be in constant danger of simply breaking down."[48] If we decide to regard a statement as holding necessarily we not only affect the senses of the terms used in that statement. Other related statements will be, to use Dummett's term, 'infected' by our decision. Thus, in order to account for the senses of other statements we would need to refer to our taking the original statement as holding necessarily.

> Thus it will become impossible to give an account of the sense of any statement without giving an account of the sense of every statement, and since it is of the essence of language that we understand *new* statements, this means that it will be impossible to give an account of the use of our language at all.[49]

We might well think that language and our ability to communicate with one another are fragile things, in danger of breaking down at any moment. Dummett's point is that they cannot be *this* fragile though.

> Against [Wittgenstein] I wish […] to set the conventional view that in deciding to regard a form of words as necessary, or to count such-and-such as a criterion for making a statement of a certain kind, we have a responsibility to the sense we have already given to the words of which the statement is composed.[50]

[48] Dummett (1959), p.337.
[49] Dummett (1959), p.337.
[50] Dummett (1959), p.340.

Here Dummett is endorsing the natural view that when we count an expression as being necessary we must remain faithful to the meaning the terms of the expression already have.

It is easy to sympathise with Dummett's worries about the view he finds in Wittgenstein. The idea that at each stage of a mathematical proof, at each step of acting on the instruction of a rule, indeed *whenever* we use a word or expression to communicate, it is somehow a matter of decision to go this way rather than that strikes one as at best odd. If it were the case why would we bother adopting certain rules? What, we might say, would the 'ceremonies' of attaching names to things be for? There would be no point in teaching the child what 'addition' meant if we were free at any point to decide it means something in no way related to its previous meaning. The important question for us, of course, is whether Dummett's interpretation represents what Wittgenstein actually thought. I think it clearly does not.

I argued in [1.3.1] that one of the central claims of the rule-following passages is that there is an internal relationship between a rule and its requirements. The rule is the rule it is because certain ways of proceeding are in accordance with it, others not. It is tempting to assume that there must be something more to it than that. Wittgenstein, as we saw, is at pains to point out that nothing does occupy the space of mediation between a rule and its requirements because there is no such space to occupy. Wittgenstein, as Dummett understands him, conflicts with this thought. There is something that provides a link between a rule and its requirements: convention. It is our

deciding (as opposed to the rule itself settling matters) that such-and-such a way of proceeding is in accordance with the rule that settles that it is in fact the correct way of proceeding. 'Convention' is, for Dummett's reading of Wittgenstein, what glues together a rule and its requirements. It is for this reason that Dummett's interpretation appears so unsatisfactory: it so blatantly contradicts one of Wittgenstein's central claims about rules.

It is worth pointing out the positives of Dummett's interpretation. Dummett engages with and gives a central role to Wittgenstein's appeal to custom and convention. Any satisfactory interpretation of the rule-following passages must do this. In doing so, Dummett ascribes to Wittgenstein a challenging and novel thesis; albeit one that would strike many as simply wrong. The problem, as was suspected in [1.4], is that in making the appeal to convention central it is hard to see how the other themes, in particular the internal relationship between a rule and its requirements, is to be respected. Unless we are willing to read Wittgenstein as succumbing to an obvious contradiction, Dummett's interpretation is to be resisted.

It is also worthwhile to point out that Dummett is being used as a figurehead for a family of interpretations which stand on the 'Fantastical' side of the divide I am attempting to draw. There are others who fall into this camp (although I will not have space to discuss them here). Kripke[51], for example, reads in Wittgenstein an extreme form of scepticism like that briefly discussed and rejected in [1.3.2]. Wright[52] develops a strikingly similar

[51] Kripke (1981)
[52] Wright (2001)

interpretation. Both authors share, just as Dummett, the fault of latching onto a part of Wittgenstein's discussion and developing it in such a way that it conflicts with other aspects of Wittgenstein's thought. Both authors are heavily influenced by Dummett, in particular the 'anti-realist' conception of the later Wittgenstein's thought.

[2.3] The Banal Wing: Baker and Hacker

Baker and Hacker argue against Dummett's attribution of conventionalism to Wittgenstein:

> If 'moderate conventionalism' and 'full-blooded conventionalism' exhaust the possible forms of conventionalism, then there can be no doubt that Wittgenstein's explanations of the character of necessary propositions should *not* be pigeon-holed as 'conventionalism'.[53]

Backer and Hacker claim that, in *some* sense, there is justice in calling Wittgenstein a conventionalist. But it turns out to be neither 'full-blooded' nor 'moderate' so conceived. For Baker and Hacker, to think that Wittgenstein advances conventionalism in either of its established forms displays a serious misunderstanding of Wittgenstein's remarks on following a rule. The task for this section is to discover in *what* sense Baker and Hacker read Wittgenstein as a 'conventionalist' and question whether, as they put it, the view they develop "avoids the anxiety that something deep has been trivialized."[54] I will argue that there is such an anxiety and it is not avoided.

[53] Baker and Hacker (1985), p.345.
[54] Baker and Hacker (1985) p.92.

Our question has been this: What is Wittgenstein *doing* in the remarks on following a rule? Baker and Hacker accept that it is tempting to interpret Wittgenstein as advocating a kind of scepticism about rules. We have seen why there is temptation towards a kind of scepticism in Wittgenstein's remarks in [1.3.2]. Baker and Hacker think, rightly, that interpreting Wittgenstein as embracing such scepticism is wrong:

> Wittgenstein did not urge us to abandon the convictions that we *know* what acts accord with a rule and that a formula (expression of rule) does *determine* what steps are to be taken.[55]

This, Baker and Hacker tell us, cannot be intelligibly disputed. These theses are simply part of the grammar of the concepts rule and following a rule. Wittgenstein thought it wrong to suggest that what determines whether an act accords with a rule is something other than the rule itself. The drive towards scepticism is resisted by an understanding of the internal relationship between a rule and its requirements: only if one thinks that there must be a mediating entity does one start down the path to scepticism. So, contrary to Dummett, the rule does indeed determine what acting in accordance with the rule will amount to. It is not 'up for grabs' at each stage of the process. To understand Wittgenstein's actual intentions, Baker and Hacker suggest we need to trace the development of his thought on the question of what is called the "harmony between language and reality."[56] The relationship between a rule and acts in accord with it is but one example of

[55] Baker and Hacker (1985), p.82.
[56] Baker and Hacker (1985), p.85.

the relationship between language and reality – others include fulfilment of an expectation, satisfaction of a desire and so on. In each of these cases there seems to be a correspondence between something in language and something in the world.

Baker and Hacker argue that the representational theory of meaning developed in the *Tractatus* was designed to answer the question of the relationship between language and reality. The theory – at least according to Baker and Hacker – held that an elementary proposition is a model of reality; a logical picture of a state of affairs which would make the proposition true if the states of affairs were actualised. The proposition determines reality except for a 'Yes' or a 'No'. The relation between a true proposition and the fact that verifies it is *internal*. A relation is internal if it is unthinkable "that *these* two objects should not stand in *this* relation."[57] So, it is inconceivable that the state of affairs pictured in the proposition be actualised and the proposition not be true. This turns out (for Baker and Hacker) to be a version of the correspondence theory of truth.

Setting aside whether this is a plausible interpretation of the *Tractatus*, how exactly would this view resolve the relationship between language and reality? Baker and Hacker's answer is this: "The possibility of propositions depends on their being essentially connected with situations because they are composed of signs which represent objects."[58] Whilst not actually functioning as an intermediary between the two, Baker and Hacker have the early

[57] Baker and Hacker (1985), p.86, footnote.
[58] Baker and Hacker (1985), p.86.

Wittgenstein holding that possible situations are, as it were, "shadows that mediate between propositions and facts."[59]

When Wittgenstein returned to these matters in the 1930's, Baker and Hacker continue, he initially extended the scope of apparent harmony between and language and reality to include examples such as the relationship between an expectation and its fulfilment. For example, my expectation that a gun will go off seems to anticipate its fulfilment. The expectation cannot *contain* the event of the gun going off because it has not happened yet, and may never happen. The expectation nonetheless pictures a possibility (the gun going off) realisation of which is the fulfilment of the expectation. Here Wittgenstein was deploying a shadowy intermediary – a possibility – to link language and reality. This reference to shadowy possibilities should remind us of §§193-4 which were examined (and puzzled over) in [1.3.1]. Those remarks make more sense when viewed as an attack on Wittgenstein's own earlier position, for it might there have seemed strange that anyone would posit possibilities as an answer to the 'correctness question'.

Baker and Hacker argue that the discussion of rule-following in the *Investigations* is designed to shatter these "logico-metaphysical illusions"[60]. The apparent harmony between language and reality is actually, they say, 'an echo of grammar'; what appears to be a metaphysical correspondence is really a grammatical articulation. For example, 'the expectation that *p*' $=_{\text{df.}}$ 'the

[59] Baker and Hacker (1985), p.86.
[60] Baker and Hacker (1985), p.88.

expectation that is fulfilled by the event *p*'. Instead of something 'shadowy' or 'hidden' the harmony between language and reality is completely transparent in grammar. An expectation and its fulfilment are connected in language. The same strategy is applied to the relationship between a proposition and a fact. "Facts and true propositions are connected in various ways by familiar rules of grammar."[61] For example, 'it is a fact that *p*' is interchangeable with 'it is true that *p*' or 'the proposition that *p* is true'. Wittgenstein's point, argue Baker and Hacker, is that there is no fitting of entities from different metaphysical realms – language and reality; rather true propositions and facts belong to each other: they make contact *in* language.

> It is in *language* that a rule and the act in accord with it (or a rule and its 'extension') make contact. This point […] is fundamental to understanding the discussion of following rules in the *Investigations*.[62]

Baker and Hacker quite nicely clarify the claim that a rule and what accords with it are grammatically (or internally) related. Nothing mediates between a rule and what accords with, they argue, precisely because no third thing is needed to cement an internal relation. To say that A and B are internally related is to say that it is inconceivable that they should not be related so. It is "of the *essence* of A and B to be thus related."[63] An internal relation between two objects is different in kind to an external relation. One ought not to think that there are relations between A and B and we need to investigate which are

[61] Baker and Hacker (1985), p.89.
[62] Baker and Hacker (1985), p.91.
[63] Baker and Hacker (1985), p.104.

internal and which are not. This would be absurd because we could not grasp what A and B were without grasping that they are internally related.

Baker and Hacker caution against interpreting Wittgenstein as offering a "deeply distasteful form of irrationalism."[64] It may initially look otherwise:

> 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 reasons will soon give out. And then I shall act, without reasons.
>
> If 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."[65]

What Wittgenstein says is that one's reasons will soon give out, not that I have no reasons. For Baker and Hacker, I can give my reasons for acting in a certain way when presented with an instruction, but I do not need to provide reasons for my reasons. If pressed I will quite quickly reach what Wittgenstein describes as 'bedrock' – a place where justification gives out and all I am left with is saying 'this is what I do' or 'this is what is called doing thus-and-so.' This does not entail that I lack justification for my way of proceeding. On the contrary, argue Baker and Hacker, I can cite the rule I am following as ample justification. No further justification could possibly be required "for it makes no sense to *justify* a grammatical nexus."[66] Equally, to say that in basic cases rule-following is a blind practice is not to compare it to someone stumbling along the hillside with no idea in which direction to turn. It is meant rather to highlight the straightforward and unreflective aspects of

[64] Baker and Hacker (1985), p.105.
[65] *PI* I §211, §217.
[66] Baker and Hacker (1985), p.105.

following certain rules – I know exactly which way to go, the rule always tells me the same thing[67], and so on.

> These remarks do not signify yawning chasms or irrationality beneath our rule-governed activities. On the contrary, they point towards the firm grounds of grammar and of our practices of using language. To be sure, these have no support, but they no more need support than the globe itself.[68]

So far, so good. Baker and Hacker have accounted for, and given justice to, the first three themes spelt out in [1.3]. First, they have shown that the relationship between a rule and its requirements is internal [1.3.1]. Second, they have shown that Wittgenstein thinks there is such a thing as correctly following a rule; scepticism is rejected [1.3.2]. Third, they have accounted for anti-theoretical strand in Wittgenstein's thinking [1.3.3]. But this discussion has not yet got us closer to the sense in which Baker and Hacker think Wittgenstein *can* legitimately be called a 'conventionalist': how to incorporate the fourth theme [1.3.4].

> Of course Wittgenstein stressed the importance of regularity and agreement for the application of the concept of following a rule. […] The issue is not whether it is important, but what its importance is. To interpret his observations as parts of a proposal to *define* 'accord with a rule' in terms of agreement is unsupported by sound textual evidence and it conflicts with his *Grundgedanke*, that accord is an internal relation of an act to a rule.[69]

[67] *PI* I §223.
[68] Baker and Hacker (1985), p.106.
[69] Baker and Hacker (1985), p.179.

Baker and Hacker do not wish to deny the importance of agreement and consensus in Wittgenstein's discussion. They merely seek to assign it the proper role within Wittgenstein's view. Baker and Hacker see it as being part of the *framework* within which the language-game is played.

> But this must be understood to refer to the *framework* within which the concept of following a rule has intelligible employment, not to the explanation of what 'following a rule' means.[70]

If it were not for normal or natural reactions to various gestures, to reading charts, and so on the practice of communicating with one another would fall apart. But Baker and Hacker want to distinguish the framing possibilities of our language-games from the rules and logical laws of those particular games we play. Or, in their words:

> The grammatical relations that constitute logic are constructed within the framework of common agreement, but that consensus in action is *not* the cement that binds together those grammatical relations.[71]

The general direction of this interpretation must be correct. Wittgenstein did not take the appeal to convention to mediate between, or cement together, a rule and its requirements. But given the importance Wittgenstein places on the notions of agreement, custom and practice, Baker and Hacker are committed to saying that, in *some* sense, Wittgenstein was a conventionalist. But once we start to put some pressure on what, exactly, one might mean by a

[70] Baker and Hacker (1985) p.248.
[71] Baker and Hacker (1985), p.249.

'framework' or in *what* sense meaning rests on convention, matters seem less clear.

The claim that meaning rests on convention, that there would be no such thing as meaning without shared human agreement in judgement, is liable to strike one as trivial. It is this triviality that Baker and Hacker wanted to avoid. Of course it is a matter of convention to do with shared biological ancestry and social environment that certain noises or marks on a page mean certain things. If human beings lacked the ability to see or hear the world around them their systems of communication would be different from the way they actually are. Signposts, to repeat Wittgenstein's example, play on the shared human reaction of reacting to the arrow in a certain way. It is matter of shared agreement that we apply certain labels to certain concepts. So, for example, it is a matter of convention that '+' means addition. We might easily have adopted a different symbol to attach to the concept *addition*. These are trivialities that nobody, including the Platonist, would seek to deny. Our question is then: how is notion of a 'framework' supposed to be something more than trivial?

We are struggling to see what the appeal to the notion of a 'framework' is doing if it is not simply to remind us of the obvious. A claim beyond the obvious is this: that the meaning of addition *is what it is* depends on shared agreement. That there is that concept *at all* depends on such agreement. There would not be the concept of addition save for shared human agreement in judgement: the concept comes into being by virtue of the shared biological

and social agreements. This is offers the hope of something more than mere banalities. It holds out the possibility of an opposition to a realist conception of reality; that, as it were, there are concepts 'out there' and it is our job to discover or reach out to them.

We need to be careful, however, as to what this non-banal claim actually means. One line leads to standard conventionalism: that certain conventions are laid down by our shared agreement in judgements and that our task is to map out the consequences of those conventions. This would run into the problem discussed above, namely: we would need to explain why certain consequences followed and not others. There would be an embedded feature at work that the conventionalist could not explain.

Anything more that standard conventionalism (and its problems) will end up looking very like Dummett's interpretation of Wittgenstein. In building real content into Wittgenstein's appeal to the shared biological and social agreements we create serious interpretative difficulties. 'Agreement' has been pushed to the point where it is no longer banal – no longer a claim that everyone would accept – but actually fantastical. The rules are brought into being and sustained by us and our practices. What the rule requires is settled not by the inherent nature of the rule itself but by us. That places us in opposition to the internal relationship between a rule and its requirements. This puts would-be interpreters of Wittgenstein in a difficult position: It seems that either Wittgenstein is offering an account of no interest or, if we build real content into the appeal to shared agreement, he is offering an

interesting but incoherent position. It would be nice if we could avoid this supposed choice.

[2.4] A Roadblock: Nagel

Subsequent chapters will assess recent attempts to find a middle ground between 'Fantastical' and 'Banal' interpretations. In this section I want to set up the worry that we will not find any middle ground as there simply is no conceptual space for such a position to occupy.

Nagel seeks to defend a certain form of realism: the world is independent of, and extends beyond the reach of, our minds.

> there may be aspects of reality beyond [our] reach because they are altogether beyond our capacity to form conceptions of the world. What there is and what we, in virtue of our nature, can think about are different things, and the latter may be smaller than the former.[72]

Nagel takes idealism to be the view that what there is is what we can think about or conceive of. The idea of something that we could not think about or conceive of makes no sense whatsoever for the idealist. Put like that, idealism seems to require an inflated sense of self-importance. We are such small and contingent parts of the universe – why should we think that the world is our world? Indeed, argues Nagel, idealism is so odd no one would hold it unless they had good reason to deny what he calls the 'natural picture'.

The 'natural picture' is this: human beings have gradually developed the capacities to think about, to know about, more and more aspects of reality.

[72] Nagel (1986), p.91.

In the course of such development there will have been things of which we could not conceive of which we can conceive of today. It is natural to assume, then, that there are things which we cannot currently conceive of yet might one day come to grasp.

> and there are probably still others that we lack the capacity to conceive not merely because we are at too early a stage of historical development, but because of the kind of beings we are.[73]

That is, there are some things or aspects of reality of which we can never have a conception.

Nagel claims the idealist argument against the natural picture is this: If we try to make sense of the idea that there are things we cannot and could never conceive of, we must deploy notions like: something existing, something being the case, and so on. The idealist will argue that these basic ideas cannot go beyond specific ideas of certain things existing, certain things being the case.

> We do not, in other words, possess a completely general concept of reality that reaches beyond any possible filling in of its content that we could in principle understand.[74]

Nagel cites Davidson[75] as an example of someone who holds this kind of idealism. Davidson argues that we do not possess a general concept of truth that goes beyond the truth of all possible sentences in any language that we could understand, or that could be translated into a language that we could

[73] Nagel (1986), p.92.
[74] Nagel (1986), p.94.
[75] Davidson (2001)

understand. He rejects the idea of a conceptual scheme that genuinely applies to the world but is so removed from our own: if we try to get some grip on something we could never conceive we find that we have to deploy ideas which imply that we could (at least in principle) think about it after all. Realists are deluded, then, in thinking we have a stable idea of reality above and beyond the reach of human thought. Either our ideas about the inconceivable will turn out to be empty, not genuine ideas at all, or will simply display that what was supposed to be beyond us was, after all, within our grasp all along.

Nagel thinks that the idealist is wrong. His strategy is to provide an analogy that undermines the idealist thought. We think that there are plenty of human beings who simply lack the capacity to think about (know, conceive) things which other members of the species can. For example, those who have a permanent mental age of nine cannot come to understand various complex mathematical theorems. It is natural to imagine that there are beings that are related to us as we are to the nine year olds. Such beings would be capable of understanding aspects of the world that our beyond our comprehension. Whether these beings exist is irrelevant, what matters is that if such creatures exist what they say about reality is true.

Nagel expands the analogy by asking us to imagine a realist and a Davidson emerging in the community of nine years olds. Realist junior wonders whether there are things about the world that he and others like him are incapable of *ever* finding out about or understanding. Would we really

want to deny the nine year old realist has a genuine belief? If he did think that there are things about the world beyond his ken, the junior realist would not only be having a significant belief, his belief would also be true: that there are concepts usable by other types of minds, which apply to the world and can be used to formulate truths about it. "Wouldn't a nine-year-old Davidson who rose among them be wrong?"[76] If we conclude that Nagel is right, then it is supposed to follow that our Davidson is wrong too.

It is not the aim of this section to resolve the dispute between Nagel and Davidson. It might be questioned, for example, to what extent (if any) it is right to call Davidson an idealist. Our task, however, is to see what this has to do with Wittgenstein and the desire, expressed at the end of the last section, that we find a middle way between 'Fantastical' and 'Banal' interpretations of the rule-following passages.

Nagel thinks that the *Investigations* provides contemporary idealism with much of its popularity. He explicitly draws our attention to the rule-following passages:

> it is only within a community of actual or possible users of the language that there can exist that possibility of agreement in its application which is a condition of the existence of rules, and of the distinction between getting it right and getting it wrong.[77]

[76] Nagel (1986), p.97.
[77] Nagel (1986), p.105.

This remark suggests that Nagel is on the side of the 'Fantastical' interpretations. Indeed, he explicitly allies himself to readings of Wittgenstein offered by Dummett and Kripke. Wittgenstein's view, Nagel tells us,

> clearly implies that any thoughts we can have of a mind-independent reality must remain within the boundaries set by our human form of life, and that we can't appeal to a completely general idea of what there is to defend the existence of kinds of facts which are in principle beyond the possibility of human confirmation or agreement.[78]

Nagel takes this to stand in direct opposition to his realist account. We could not hold, Wittgenstein is being understood as saying, thoughts entirely divorced from human minds and practices.

But in what sense do we have a 'roadblock'? The thought being presented is that a rejection of the kind of realism under discussion entails idealism. So, the thought runs, either Wittgenstein is appealing to shared biological and social judgements in an interesting and developed way or not. If he is, he must be an idealist. There is no space for a position that makes a genuine appeal to shared judgements and also retains a realist perspective. But commitment to the internal relationship between a rule and its requirements is a commitment to a form of realism. In short, there is no space for a 'middle-ground'.

[2.5] Conclusion

[78] Nagel (1986), p.106/7

I have argued that the secondary literature on Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following demonstrates just how difficult it is to make the four central themes cohere in an interesting and plausible way. [2.2] used Dummett's attribution of 'full-blooded conventionalism' to Wittgenstein as an example of a 'Fantastical' reading. If it were a true interpretation it would mean Wittgenstein was arguing for a blatantly incoherent position. [2.3] used Baker and Hacker's view as an example of a 'Banal' reading. It gave no real content to Wittgenstein's appeal to convention. The problem is that in giving real content to that appeal we 'topple over' into something 'fantastical'. What we want is a view that balances on the knife-edge: is at once both more than banal yet coherent. [2.4] offered a 'roadblock' to this desire. Nagel holds a certain kind of realism. Rejecting that realism immediately commits one, in Nagel's eyes, to a kind of idealism. There is no middle ground. In the terms of Wittgenstein's discussion this comes out as: either Wittgenstein appeals to shared biological and social agreement is some way settling the requirements of a rule or he does not. If he does he is committed to idealism: there is no 'wiggle room'.

The remaining two chapters of Part One will assess interpretations of Wittgenstein on whether or not they offer a position both interesting and coherent. Chapter Three will examine two attempts from 'Fantastical' interpreters – one by Dummett, another by Wright – to modify their readings of Wittgenstein. I will argue that both of these attempts fail to offer a satisfactory middle way. Chapter Four will examine McDowell's attempt to

move from a 'Banal' reading towards the centre ground. I will argue that this is more promising; although there is great difficulty in working out precisely what McDowell is saying.

Chapter Three

Modifying the Fantastical: Dummett and Wright

[3.1] Introduction

Chapter Two argued that initial and influential interpretations of Wittgenstein's comments on rules fall into one of two camps: the 'Fantastical' or the 'Banal'. Philosophers in the latter camp do not, I argued, recognise Wittgenstein's appeal to shared biological ancestry and social background beyond mere trivial reminders that nobody could sensibly dispute. They do not do so because it seems they cannot do so; on pain of reading Wittgenstein as offering an incoherent account. Philosophers in the first camp attribute to Wittgenstein radical and challenging theses (Dummett's 'full-blooded conventionalism' was our example) but in doing so they run headlong into such incoherence. The question for the remaining chapters of Part One, framed by Nagel's challenging contention that there is no conceptual space for such a view, is whether Wittgenstein actually held a view both coherent and non-trivial.

Chapter's Three and Four are designed to work together at answering this question. Chapter Four will start from the 'Banal', with Baker and Hacker's claim that the appeal to shared agreement functions as recognising the 'framework' within which the practice of rule-following proceeds, and see if something more substantial can be offered without slipping into incoherence. This will involve an assessment of McDowell's perplexing interpretation of Wittgenstein. Here, in Chapter Three, the aim is to examine a move in the opposite direction: starting from the 'Fantastical' and attempting

to modify (or, we might say, soften) the reading to the point where all four themes indemnified in [1.3] can be held consistently. Both Dummett and Wright have, in recent years, attempted such moves.

I will argue that there is symmetry between Dummett and Wright's modified interpretations. Both seek to reconcile the fantastical aspects of Wittgenstein's remarks with the trivialities and both fail in this attempt. Dummett characterises Wittgenstein as accommodating the truism that a rule and its requirements are internally related with the appeal to shared agreement in judgement in a way that allows us to keep the words but loses the whole content of, the whole point of, the internal relation. Wright characterises Wittgenstein as accommodating the rejection of rule-scepticism with the appeal to the ungroundedness of rules in a way that points to scepticism rather than resists it. Neither of these attempts can hide their 'Fantastical' roots and both collapse back into that camp. The conclusion will not, however, be entirely negative. Both Dummett and Wright highlight notions which will require more investigation: the notion of a view from 'sideways-on', and a kind of Quietism. Chapter Four, by way of McDowell, will carry out that investigation.

[3.2] Dummett

I protested against Dummett's initial interpretation of Wittgenstein [2.2] not only that the view on offer was implausible but that it could not possibly have been Wittgenstein's. Dummett's reading did account for Wittgenstein's

appeal to shared agreement in judgement [1.3.4], and it did so in a way that made Wittgenstein's view challenging and interesting. But this came at the price of incoherence. Dummett's initial interpretation holds that convention or custom holds a rule and its requirements together; it is only by our expressly deciding that a rule has such and such requirements that it actually has those requirements. The actual Wittgenstein held that the rule and its requirements are internally related [1.3.1]: nothing functions, because nothing could possibly be required to function, as an intermediary between a rule and its requirements.

Dummett's initial interpretation has been criticised by various commentators. The best way to introduce the new, refined, interpretation is to examine some of this criticism and what might be said on Dummett's behalf. One of the most influential commentators has been Stroud.

[3.2.1] Stroud's Objection

> Despite suggestions of […] "standard conventionalism" in Wittgenstein, I agree with Dummett that he does not hold such a view, although it is not always easy to see how what he says differs from it.[79]

Stroud's aim is to show that Wittgenstein was neither a standard conventionalist nor, as it will turn out, a full-blooded conventionalist. Stroud asks us to consider Wittgenstein's examples of peculiar groups or individuals, such as the pupil who when ordered to continue the series +2 beyond 1000 answers: '1004, 1008, 1012 …'. Wittgenstein describes the pupil as finding it

[79] Stroud (1965) p.505.

natural to go that way, natural to think that this is the same as going '996, 998, 1000 …'. Giving the pupil the same old training is pointless. It would be just like trying to teach someone to 'go in that direction' by pointing where that person naturally looks at the direction from the fingertip to the wrist rather than wrist to fingertip. Or, to use another of Wittgenstein's examples, a tribe who find it natural to sell wood on the basis of the area covered by a pile of wood, ignoring the height of the pile.

> How could I shew them that – as I should say – you don't really buy more wood if you buy a pile covering a bigger area? – I should, for instance, take a pile which was small by their ideas and, by laying the logs around, change it into a 'big' one. This *might* convince them – but perhaps they would say: "Yes, now it's a *lot* of wood and costs more" – and that would be the end of the matter. – We should presumably say in this case: they simply do not mean the same by "a lot of wood" and "a little wood" as we do[.][80]

The natural response to such examples is that these people simply mean different things to us by expressions such as 'a lot of wood'. The strange wood-sellers could not remain faithful to meaning of such expressions we have and deploy them in the way they do.

Dummett's initial interpretation of Wittgenstein, Stroud argues, would have it that such strange people differ from us in that they have simply decided to adopt different ways of proceeding from us. Stroud is unimpressed: "Can the people in Wittgenstein's examples properly be said to differ from us only in having adopted different conventions? I think the answer is "No"."[81] It is, Stroud continues, implied by saying that our current

[80] RFM I 150.
[81] Stroud (1965), p.509.

ways of proceeding are based on biological and social contingencies that there are alternative ways that could be put in their place: it could so easily be otherwise. But in the simple mathematical case this looks very odd indeed: There is no alternative to writing '1002, 1004, 1006 …' if we are to keep faith with the instruction +2.

The point of these strange examples, Stroud claims, is to make plausible the idea that there are ways of counting, inferring and so on which are different from ours, but maintain that this does not show that the way we actually carry on in our practices is a result of our deciding to adopt particular ways of proceeding to which we had genuine alternatives. Such examples do not demonstrate that at each step we are free to accept or reject a way of continuing a series, or that the necessary truth of a statement resides in our deciding to treat that statement as unassailable.

When we reflect more on the examples of the strange people Wittgenstein introduces us to – wood sellers, our pupil, reverse pointers – we think that we can understand them, come to know what such people would be like. If such examples represent clear alternatives, then it seems our inferring, calculating etc. in the way we do is simply a matter of choice. But, argues Stroud, such examples are not as intelligible as we first suspected. Their initial intelligibility derives from their being isolated and restricted. We suppose that we can conceive of these alternatives as genuine only because, Stroud thinks, the wider-reaching consequences of counting, calculating etc. in such ways are not fully developed. "When we try to trace out the

implications of behaving like that consistently and quite generally, our understanding of the alleged possibilities diminishes.[82]"

Consider again the tribe who sell wood by the area covered by the pile of wood. They would, it seems, believe that an ordinary plank of wood increased in value from lying on its side to lying flat on the ground. There would be an odd conception of quantity for such people. Someone could find that, in dropping some wood he was carrying, the amount of wood had increased from when he picked the pile up. These people might regard themselves as shrinking when they stand on one foot as opposed to two. And so on. The point is that we really do not grasp what it would be like to sell wood (and be justified in doing so) in the way Wittgenstein describes. Stroud claims that in order to move towards understanding such people and their practices we must necessarily move away from our own:

> to live in their world inevitably leads us to abandon more and more of our own familiar world and the ways of thinking about it upon which our understanding rests.[83]

In successfully projecting ourselves into such a world, the fewer of the resources of our way of thinking can be deployed to understand it. This is not to say that such examples are logically impossible or contain some contradiction. The examples, for Stroud, are designed to oppose Platonism, by highlighting that counting, inferring, calculating etc. might have been done differently. It is contingent that such processes are carried out in the way they

[82] Stroud (1965), p.512.
[83] Stroud (1965), p.513.

currently are, just as it is contingent that there are any such practices at all. But we can acknowledge this, continues Stroud, without understanding what those different ways might have been. If so, then there is no genuine set of alternatives that we might choose. Therefore, Stroud continues, Wittgenstein is not a full-blooded conventionalist. For:

> This does not imply that we are free to put whatever we like after "1000" when given the instructions "Add 2," or that our deciding to put "1002" is what makes that the correct step.[84]

Stroud is clearly attempting to perform a very delicate balancing act. As indicated at the start of this section Stroud explicitly agrees with Dummett that Wittgenstein was not a standard conventionalist. We have now seen why Stroud thinks that Dummett is wrong to claim that Wittgenstein is a full-blooded conventionalist. So what position does Stroud see Wittgenstein as adopting?

> What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of man: not curiosities however, but rather observations on facts which no-one has doubted, and which have only gone unremarked because they are always before our eyes.[85]

Stroud highlights the 'facts of our natural history' and that Wittgenstein takes them to be contingent and constitutive of mankind. Such facts obtaining are responsible for human nature being the way it is. It is a contingent fact that we take '1002, 1004 …' as going the same way as '998, 1000 …', it could have been otherwise. Since such people might naturally have followed the rule in a

[84] Stroud (1965), p.513.
[85] RFM, I §142.

different way, the rule itself does not make the strange ways of following it impossible, since, for Stroud, a rule is not something which stands apart from our understanding of it, and which contains within it all the future applications. Rather:

> How we naturally understand and follow the rule determines which applications of it are correct, and the way a rule is followed will depend in part on what we take to be "going on in the same … The use of the word 'rule and the use of the word 'same' are interwoven"[86]

Stroud's key contention appears to be this: that we take the step we do after '1000' is a contingent fact, but not one the result of decision. It is not a course of action to which there are alternatives amongst which we could choose.

There is a possible concern for the reader that Stroud is keen to resolve: that there is really no difference between Dummett's initial reading of Wittgenstein and his own. Somebody might think that our sharing certain judgements is to be read as saying that we all agree that certain propositions are true. Both views point to our all agreeing that certain propositions are true or unassailable. Stroud's answer is that this 'agreement' is not unanimous acceptance. Presumably, he means here that we all have not all explicitly decided that certain things are true or unassailable. The agreement, Stroud says, resides in human practices – practices the engaging in which makes a creature human.

One of the questions that motivates Dummett's more recent paper is whether there actually is a substantive disagreement between Stroud's

[86] Stroud (1965), p.514.

interpretation and his own. Putnam, in a long passage quoted by Dummett, attempts to dissolve away any conflict between Stroud and Dummett. Putnam points out that Stroud's contention that Wittgenstein was not a full-blooded conventionalist, because he did not maintain that we legislate or explicitly decide to accept proofs, is accepted by the majority of Wittgenstein scholars. But, continues Putnam, Dummett's central contention about Wittgenstein still stands.

> It appears to me that Stroud's reply, while correct as a response to Dummett's interpretation, does not speak to the real philosophical point Dummett was making. The real point is that if *either* Dummett *or* Stroud is right, then Wittgenstein is claiming that mathematical truth and necessity *arise in us*, that it is human nature and forms of life that *explain* mathematical truth and necessity. If this is right, then it is the greatest philosophical discovery of all time. Even if it is wrong, it is an astounding philosophical claim. If Stroud does not dispute that Wittgenstein advanced this claim – and he does not seem to dispute it – then *his* interpretation of Wittgenstein is a revision of Dummett's rather than a total rejection of it.[87]

To push this idea a bit further it is worth considering what Dummett actually takes this 'decision' of radical conventionalism to be. Stroud, as we have seen, complains at the notion of our going around and all agreeing to adopt such and such rules. Dummett is well aware that mathematicians, in general, do not engage in legislative discussions as to whether *this* follows or *that* doesn't follow. Equally, we do not normally legislate over whether a certain way of using a word keeps faith with that words meaning. In the Preface to *The Seas*

[87] Putnam (1983), p.117.

of Language, Dummett characterises the Wittgensteinian position in the following way:

> Every new application of the word, even to something resembling in every way things to which he has applied it before [will] demand a decision, in a logical, though doubtless not in a phenomenological, sense. That is to say, there is nothing in whatever constituted his attaching a certain meaning to the word that logically entails that, if he fails to apply it to some one or another object, he will be attaching a different meaning to it.[88]

What is striking here is an attempted distinction between a 'logical decision' and a 'phenomenological decision'. If this distinction can be drawn we might indeed be able to regard the apparent difference between Stroud's interpretation and Dummett's initial interpretation as one that dissolves away on reflection. Stroud can be seen as calling attention to the fact that, psychologically, it is not normally a matter of our having decided, say, to regard a proof as unassailable that makes it unassailable. We are, rather, moved to accept the proof as such because of a combination of biological and social contingencies. Nothing Dummett's interpretation of Wittgenstein maintains challenges this. But from a logical perspective Wittgenstein, in Dummett's eyes, is maintaining that there is a decision to be made at each stage. There remains space to decide different courses of action and nothing settles the right or the wrong way but the decision being made. Roughly: Stroud is drawing attention to the psychological conditions and Dummett is drawing attention to the logical conditions. The conflict vanishes.

[88] Dummett (1993), p.xv.

[3.2.2] The Modified View

Dummett thinks that there *is* a genuine disagreement between his initial interpretation of Wittgenstein and that of Stroud. Stroud's interpretation of Wittgenstein, Dummett tells us, acknowledges something (namely: human nature or 'form of life') that *determines* the consequences of the basic necessary truths, or of the conventions that directly confer necessity upon them. Granted, the determining is within us, not external. But given basic necessary truths it is determined what we shall take as their consequences, we cannot but draw the consequences we in fact draw. Dummett accepts that we do, by and large, agree on what the consequences are. This is a fact about our form of life and without it mathematics could not exist. But for Dummett's Wittgenstein this is a *brute* fact, nothing explains it.

> Wittgenstein himself thought that *nothing* determines it in advance: only when we have accepted the proof and put the theorem in the archives does it *become* a consequence of the initial conventions.[89]

What of the distinction between a logical decision and a phenomenological decision? Dummett is unhappy to accept Putnam's move at reconciliation. I think this is because Dummett sees Stroud as someone unwilling to accept the neat division offered between logical and phenomenological decisions. Or, in other words: when Stroud draws our attention to Wittgenstein's appeal to our shared agreements in judgement he is not making just a psychological point.

[89] Dummett (1993c), p.449.

Our shared 'form of life' actually shapes the logical space, shapes what options are open to us from a logical perspective. This, I take Dummett to think, pushes one back into a kind of standard conventionalism.

Dummett's new paper (like the old) maintains that, for Wittgenstein, a statement being necessarily true consists in it being treated as necessarily true: being unassailable, or providing a standard for other truths to be judged. Mathematical proof, on this account, is a procedure that induces us to treat the theorem as unassailable – 'to put it in the archives'. In doing so, we adopt a new criterion for the application of some mathematical concept.

> For instance, when we first encounter the proof that a cylinder intersects a plane in an ellipse, we acquire, provided that we accept the proof, a new criterion for the application of the term "ellipse"; we might for example, appeal to the theorem in a particular case to establish that a certain figure, which, perhaps, did not look quite like an ellipse, *must be* one.[90]

The core of Wittgenstein's arguments, Dummett continues, is the observation that the mathematical proof provides us with a new criterion for how to proceed. The worry Dummett raises is that this is susceptible of being totally banal: When we know the theorem, our accepting *this* is a cylinder, *that* a plane gives a reason for saying the figure determined by their intersection is an ellipse. This is a reason we did not have before.

> If this is all that is meant by saying that we have a new criterion, it is indisputable; but it tells us nothing about what a mathematical proof is, or about the status of the theorem that it proves.[91]

[90] Dummett (1993c), p.446.
[91] Dummett (1993c), p.450.

Wittgenstein's official description of his philosophical method is that it consists in assembling truths that no one could dispute. But, argues Dummett, the observation would tell us 'precisely nothing': "[I]f, so understood, it is an example of Wittgenstein's philosophy, then that philosophy is incapable of throwing any light on anything."[92] It seems, therefore, that the official description of Wittgenstein's philosophical method cannot be the true one and, continues Dummett, that the observation about new criteria is not meant to be understood as a mere platitude.

It is a platitude if we assume that whenever we apply the new criterion correctly, we should have been justified by the original criteria in making the assertion that we do, even if we had failed to notice that fact.

> For instance, whenever we rightly judge, by the old criteria, that this is a cylinder and that a plane, and, applying the new criterion, judge their intersection to be an ellipse, we should have been justified by the old criteria in declaring it to be an ellipse, even though, had we not known the theorem, we might not have noticed that it was or even, as the result of some mistake, have judged it not to be one.[93]

But this obvious, banal, realisation is not something we could coherently oppose. As Dummett puts it: these remarks are "precisely what we take the force of the proof to be."[94] We take a proof to show that whatever is judged by the new criterion to be an ellipse must be an ellipse by the means of the old criterion too. Denying this would mean saying that the new criterion alters or adjusts what an ellipse actually is. And that is plainly wrong. Any attempt,

[92] Dummett (1993c), p.450.
[93] Dummett (1993c), p.450.
[94] Dummett (1993c), p.450.

then, to go beyond the banal interpretation of the observation about new criteria appears a hopeless task. In other words, the observation is banal or so revisionary it cannot be accepted. We are left with no space to move. As Dummett puts it: "[I]t is not merely a delicate matter to state the Wittgensteinian alternative, but an impossibility."[95]

Dummett suggests that one might try to avoid the dilemma by saying that it must be possible for there to be an apparent counter-example to the theorem whose description as being a counter-example involves no specifiable mistake in the application of the original criteria for applying the terms (e.g. 'ellipse' , 'cylinder' and 'plane'). The new criterion would then allow us to see the apparent counter-example as merely that – an apparent one – by showing a specifiable mistake in its description. But, responds Dummett, we are saying that there isn't a counter-example, and hence any description of something as one must involve a mistake. This is an expression of our acceptance of the theorem, "and, since we do accept it, we do say that, and there is no questioning our correctness in saying it."[96] Obviously there may be mistakes that we cannot specify, but, for Dummett, every mistake must be intrinsically capable of being specified. We might try saying that that we are not warranted in claiming that, in arriving at a judgement in conflict with the theorem, any particular mistake comes to light. This, Dummett says, is again banal. What is needed, rather, is that there need be no particular mistake that comes to light. But this is incoherent – there cannot be a mistake

[95] Dummett (1993c), p.450.
[96] Dummett (1993c), p.451.

that is not a particular mistake just as there cannot be a donkey that is not a particular donkey.

This dilemma is not something new. It is, in fact, Dummett's way of characterising the problem of finding an alternative to the 'Fantastical' and 'Banal' readings of the rule-following passages that has driven Part One. It is worthwhile making the connection explicit. Dummett claims that the recognition about a new criterion can appear banal. The first two themes identified in Wittgenstein's discussion of rules were, I argued, banalities. The first [1.3.1] is the internal relationship between a rule and its requirements: the rule is the rule it is because certain actions are in accordance with it and others not. Different requirements equals different rule. The second [1.3.2] is that there is no place for scepticism: the requirements of the rule are determined. Dummett claims that any attempt to move beyond the banal recognition looks doomed to failure. We would have to say that the new criterion for recognising of a shape that it is an ellipse modifies what it is to be an ellipse. This not only looks odd but abandons the banalities that cannot be disputed. The two latter themes identified in Wittgenstein's discussion of rules are exactly parallel. The appeal to shared agreement in judgement [1.3.4], if it is to mean anything interesting, appears to abandon the internal relationship between a rule and its requirements. The recognition of the basic, ungrounded, nature of rules [1.3.3] could appear to threaten the idea that there is a determinate requirement of a rule at all. Our question is whether a satisfying middle position – accommodating both the trivial and controversial

claims Wittgenstein makes – can be found. As Dummett himself points out, this is starting to look not merely delicate but impossible. Up to this point of the more recent paper, then, we can simply see Dummett tracing out in his own way the very problem that has been bothering us.

It is here that Dummett's paper offers a modification of the interpretation of Wittgenstein; a departure from Dummett's previous interpretation. Wittgenstein is to be seen, Dummett now tells us, as rejecting an 'external' or 'superhuman' standpoint. We tried to differentiate the banal interpretations of Wittgenstein from something less trivial by speaking of mistakes we might in fact make, although we do not detect them or possess any reason for thinking they have occurred; "in general, by talking about what would have been *true* even though we had not recognised it as true"[97] But this is doing the very thing Dummett takes Wittgenstein to be attacking: an 'externalist' standpoint. That is: the "attempt to step outside the situation in which we are placed, and thus to pass beyond the limits of language and say what can only be shown."[98] We can only, rather, describe the criteria for the application of our words, and the interaction between them. We want to say: in cases of apparent counter-examples to the theorem, God could see what mistakes we have made in applying our own criteria, even if we cannot. But, argues Dummett, saying this leads to banality. The reaction to this is internalism: to say that, on the contrary, there need not have been any specific mistake for God to notice. This, thinks Dummett, would make us unfaithful to

[97] Dummett (1993c), p.451.
[98] Dummett (1993c), p.451.

our acceptance of the theorem. Because such a position would be self-refuting - to state the general thesis (e.g. internalism or relativism) would run foul of that actual practice it claims to be the source of necessity and truth. As Dummett puts it: "it is an attempt to view our language and our thought from that external vantage-point which it declares to be inaccessible"[99]

The resolution of the difficulty, this interpretation of Wittgenstein goes, is to accept the impossibility of our even talking intelligibly about how things are in themselves independently of what we treat ourselves as having reason to say. If we accept this, then we no longer have two distinct interpretations of the thesis about new criteria to bring into conflict. This is apparently banal, vindicating Wittgenstein's philosophical method. But: it uses the only resources we have, therefore *has* to be the account of mathematical proof and the source of mathematical necessity. "All we can do is to describe our own practices as we can view them through our own eyes."[100] The proof 'induces' us to accept a new criterion as being justified by the criteria we already had.

> That, therefore, is the sole and sufficient account of mathematical proof and the necessity of the mathematical theorems. We are not to ask whether the new criterion is *really* so justified: justification is whatever we *count* as justification.[101]

This, if correct, reads Wittgenstein as offering a full-blown internalism "internalism with a vengeance"[102] – which cannot be labelled 'realism'. Truth, here, becomes equated with being recognised or being treated as true. It

[99] Dummett (1993c), p.452.
[100] Dummett (1993c), p.452.
[101] Dummett (1993c), p.452.
[102] Dummett (1993c), p.452.

stands opposed to externalism – which attempts to say how things are in themselves, independently of how they appear to us.

How are we to understand this in the terms of reference laid out in Chapter One? The principal target of Dummett's remarks should be seen as an attempt to reconcile Wittgenstein's appeal to shared agreement in judgement [1.3.4] with the truism that the relationship between a rule and its requirements is an internal one [1.3.1]. Dummett's earlier interpretation was faulty, I argued, because in appealing to shared agreement it abandoned Wittgenstein's insistence on the internal relationship. Nothing in Dummett's revised view is meant to downplay the depth to which Wittgenstein's appeal to convention runs. So how are the banalities to be faithfully maintained? Dummett's point, I think, is that raising the question 'is there really an internal relationship between a rule and its requirements?' is attempting to adopt the external standpoint Wittgenstein dismisses. We want to know whether really, independently of our taking it to be so, the rule and its requirements are so related. But, Wittgenstein is being represented as saying, this is an attempt to step outside of language as a going concern and represent things how they really are. This is impossible. All we can do, the thought runs, is map the workings of our language from the inside. And from within language it will be obvious that there is an internal relationship between a rule and its requirements. The question whether this keeps faith with our previous understanding of the rule cannot be asked.

Dummett is deeply opposed to the view he finds in Wittgenstein.

> Thus [Wittgenstein's view] can make our linguistic practices the whole source of necessity and of truth only by discrediting those practices, and, indeed, the concepts of necessity and truth themselves: that is *its* incoherence. […] [It] will lead us to dismiss as pointless the practices on which it so heavily insists.[103]

Our learning various linguistic practices has led us to believe that we are talking about how things really are, how the world is actually constituted. We are interested in what constitutes the truth of certain statements: we think this is to do with the way the world is and not with our ways of representing the world. We do not maintain certain practices in their current form "because it is what society expects us to do: we do so because it appears to us to have a rationale, that is, to be a method of ascertaining how things in fact are."[104]

It is natural to sympathise with Dummett. We take our practices to be aimed at and informed by the way, in fact, the world is. This points us in the direction of the fault in Wittgenstein's position, as Dummett represents him, in terms of the themes identified in Chapter One. We have seen a way of reconciling the first of Wittgenstein's themes with the fourth: a way of appealing to shared agreement in judgement that allows us to still say that there is an internal relationship between a rule and its requirements. But it does so simply by relegating the internal relationship into the appeal to convention. We have the right words, but we have missed the very underlying point of the internal relationship: it is meant to say something straightforward and uncontroversial about the way the world is. But if

[103] Dummett (1993c), p.457.
[104] Dummett (1993c), p.457.

Dummett is right about Wittgenstein we have to abandon the natural motivation to talk about how the world, in fact, is altogether. Shared agreement is still in the driving seat. This cannot be a satisfactory position for anyone to adopt.

[3.3] Wright

Dummett argues that Wittgenstein is right to observe that for most of the fundamental rules we follow there is nothing by which we judge something to be a correct application of them. But from this it does not follow that there is no specific thing that would be a correct application. In other words: Wittgenstein is right to highlight the basic, ungrounded, nature of the rules we follow but this does not lead to a kind of scepticism about rules. Themes two [1.3.2] and three [1.3.3.] can be reconciled. Wright's recent return to the issue of rule-following is, in part, an attempt to reach the same conclusion. I will argue that it does not succeed.

Wright's aim is to show that, for Wittgenstein,

> there is no well-conceived issue about the 'constitution' of facts about what rules require, instance by instance, or about what enables us to keep track of such facts. There is no real dilemma between platonist and communitarian views of the matter, and no constructive philosophical work to do by way of attempting to steer between its horns.[105]

Wright argues that Wittgenstein presents to the reader a series of negative results about rules and their requirements. The requirement of a rule is not

[105] Wright (2007), p.489.

constituted by communal agreement, as this would threaten the objectivity of rules, nor is the requirement constituted by the rule itself, as this would threaten our ability to grasp what the rule requires.

> But we have not been told what *does* constitute it; all we have been told is that there would simply be no such requirements were it not for the phenomenon of actual, widespread human agreement in judgement. How can he possibly have thought that this was enough?[106]

Wright goes on to argue this 'Quietism' on Wittgenstein's behalf does rest on some theoretical basis and seeks to demonstrate it. The shape of the suggestion is straightforward. It would be incumbent on Wittgenstein to respond to his rejection of Platonism about rules if Platonism had given a bad answer to an intelligible and pressing question: we would naturally want an answer to that question. But, argues Wright, Wittgenstein regarded the question itself as problematic. The correct course of action is to reject the question to which Platonism was a bad answer.

This suggestion opens up the possibility of a position distinct from both the 'Fantastical' and 'Banal' camps. Against the former the Quietist reading would maintain that Wittgenstein was not advancing some grand thesis such as Dummett's full-blooded conventionalism or Kripke's radical scepticism. Against the latter the claim would be more subtle: Wittgenstein's remarks do indeed look banal and he is to be seen as assembling reminders that no-one could dispute. But there is a real philosophical lesson to be found in why only saying that is enough; working through the basis Wittgenstein

[106] Wright (2007), p.488.

has for not answering the seemingly pressing questions. That is just a general shape of a suggestion. The details of Wright's account are a lot more complicated.

Wright reminds us that the rule-following problematic has at its core issues of constitution and epistemology. What the rule requires must in some sense be *settled*; we also must *know* what the rule requires. It is tempting to assume that there must be a 'focal point' for such issues. That is: that there has to be some *fact* about what the requirement of a rule is before we can sensibly ask what constitutes this fact and how we have knowledge of it. But, argues Wright, in basic cases of rule-following there is no such fact - a fact, that is, that can be extricated from the practice of following rules. The assumption that there must be such a fact, knowledge of which is an essential part of our being guided by the rule, is a mistaken one coming from "an over-rationalisation – an implicit attempt to impose on rule-following everywhere a rational structure which can only engage the non-basic case."[107] What we need to accept, rather, is that "in the basic case we do not really *follow* – are not really guided by – anything."[108]

Central to this thesis is Wright's claim that there is no such thing as 'pure' rule-following. Consider the following structure of judgement:

RULE: If x has moved neither King nor Rook … etc., then x may castle.
PREMISE: I have moved neither King nor Rook … etc.
VERDICT: I may castle.

[107] Wright (2007), p.498.
[108] Wright (2007), p.497.

Wright calls this the *modus ponens* (MP) model of rule-following. It neatly characterises the kind of judgement one might go through when castling in chess. Note that knowledge of the rule is just one element in coming to correctly follow the rule. Indeed, one could correctly understand what the rule requires yet still not reach the correct verdict. Also required is the premise – the relevant features of the circumstances, the particular situation one is in when attempting to follow the rule. And, of course, one could be greatly mistaken about their current situation. Wright claims that this result applies across the board. Even in simple cases, such as the continuation of an arithmetical series, rule-following is essentially impure. In the arithmetical case there might be no perceptual input at all, but the judgement will still depend on one's memory – not losing track of where one is. To say that rule-following is impure, then, is to say that correctly following a rule will always amount to a combination of correct grasp of the rule and correct grasp of the relevant circumstances.

Why does this matter? Wright's claim is that if there is no such thing as pure rule-following we cannot conceive the facts about what rules require as resting on *particular* applications of rules - as they are necessarily imbued with information to which the rule itself is applied. Wright is surely correct in this, for particular instances of rule-following will always be coloured by context, history and so on. The obvious response, however, is that even if all rule-following is essentially impure one can still straight-forwardly separate the rule from the specifics of the individual case. Indeed, it is explicit in the very

structure of the MP model. What belongs to the rule is contained in RULE, what belongs to the situation is contained in PREMISE. The questions which motivated the rule-following problematic – about constitution and epistemology – are clearly concerned with the former. So, the thought would run, we can happily take Wright's claim about the impurity of rules: in order to address the rule-following problematic we should just filter out the specifics of the case.

This brings us to Wright's central claim: in basic cases the MP model 'lapses' and so the neat separation afforded between rule and input in complex cases is lost.

> The clean separation effected by the modus ponens model between what belongs to the rule and what belongs to the situation to which it is applied is possible only in (relatively complex) cases where the conditions which trigger the application of the rule – those described in the antecedent of the relevant conditional – can be recognised and characterised in innocence of a mastery of the rule. That cannot be the situation in general.[109]

In the chess case, one could recognise the conditions in the antecedent of the conditional in ignorance of the rule. That is: one could recognise that neither the King nor one of its Rooks has moved in the game thus far, that the squares between them are unoccupied (and so on), without already grasping the rule for castling. Not only does this not happen in basic case but also "the contribution of grasp of the rule to the responses it informs is *inextricable* from the contribution of one's grasp of the prevailing circumstances."[110] So, if we

[109] Wright (2007), p.494.
[110] Wright (2007), p.494.

attempted to construct a model of basic rule-following akin to the chess case, we wouldn't be able to separate the rule from the inputs of the particular situation. The two would necessarily be bound up together.

This is how we get to Wright's claim that, in basic cases, we follow rules 'without reasons'. It is important to spell out what this claim does and does not amount to. Following a rule 'without reason' is not a matter of immediacy, like a good chess player might make a great move without consciously going over his grounds for making that move. Neither is it Wright's claim that basic rule-following is arational. It is "still to be appraised within the *categories* of rationality – justification and truth."[111]; it still requires intentionality and willingness to accept correction. What following a rule 'without reason' *does* mean, however, is that the MP model will not apply to such a case. And that model is the only possible way one could extricate the fact about what the rule requires from the specific instance of rule-following. That is, the MP model is the only one that would allow us to find the 'focal point' which the constitution and knowledge questions seemed to require. That is why Wright takes Wittgenstein Quietist approach to be justified in this case.

> The problematic invited us to try to construct an account of what, when we follow a particular rule constitutes the facts about the direction in which, step by step, it guides us and how we are able to be responsive to its guidance. But in basic cases the invitation emerges, from the perspective on the matter just adumbrated, as utterly misconceived; for it presupposes a false conception of the sense in which basic rule-following is rational.[112]

[111] Wright (2007), p.492.
[112] Wright (2007 p.497.

Wittgenstein, in Wright's eyes, takes the problematic itself to be based on a mistake: the failure to recognise that in basic cases we are not guided in any such way. All rule-following is, on this picture, rational but that is not to say in basic cases we grasp the requirements of a rule in terms of a series of instructions.

It is puzzling why, exactly, Wright thinks that, for Wittgenstein, the MP must lapse for basic cases and thereby why there is no guide in such cases. Take Wright's own example: where one "stubbornly [tries] to assimilate predications of 'red' to the modus ponens model."[113]

RULE: If …x…, it is correct to predicate 'red' of x
PREMISE: …a…
VERDICT: It is correct to apply 'red' to a.

What would be wrong with this? One suggestion is that there is something wrong with the rule. In order to grasp what the rule demands of us we have to grasp an anterior concept '…x…'. "But now it stares us in the face that this concept can hardly be anything other than: *red*!"[114] To say such and such about x just is to say that it is red. So we already must have the concept *red* in play before we can grasp the rule. But the rule is meant to tell us when it is legitimate to predicate red to a certain object. But this, as yet, wouldn't show why PREMISE and RULE in our judgement are inextricable from one another. It just tells us that something is suspect about the rule for predicating red to

[113] Wright (2007), p.495.
[114] Wright (2007), p.495.

an object. This invites the question: what is supposed to be inextricable from what in the colour case? At first glance, the problem seems to be that PREMISE and VERDICT cannot be separated from one another. 'Such and such about a' is equivalent to saying 'a is red'. So we would have a premise that said 'a is red' and a conclusion that said 'it is correct to apply 'red' to a'. The point about 'no pure rule-following' is that coming to a correct verdict is always a matter of combining the rule and the input of the particular situation. Verdict equals rule plus premise. If the verdict *just is* the input of the particular situation then, perhaps, Wright's thought is the rule cannot *add* anything to the judgement. To all intents and purposes the rule itself is empty. As such, it cannot possibly provide the kind of guide we were looking for – the kind of guide the rule-following problematic demanded.

Wright is clearly correct in saying that there is a difference between how the chess case functions and how the colour case functions. As we have seen, for the relatively complex chess case the rule can inform or rationally underlie our move – in the sense that it can guide us step by step in the moves we make. In the basic case of predications of 'red' this just isn't possible. If that was all 'lapsing' amounted to we could readily accept it. But does that show that, in basic cases, there is no guide, nothing that underlies or guides us in our moves? This must come down to what one takes a genuine 'guide' to be. If one thinks that the only thing that could serve as a guide is a set of instructions to be grasped independently of the concepts the rule governs, then in basic cases there will be no such thing. But if one denies this,

maintains that a set of instructions graspable only by those who understand the concepts the rule governs can indeed be a guide, one can say basic rule-following is guided. The latter thought is more likely to be Wittgenstein's. Let me try and spell this out a bit more.

We are being told that there is a theoretical position for a guide that informs us in following rules. This position is occupied by the rule in relatively complex cases. At the same time, Wright is arguing that in basic cases this position is not occupied. A more a natural reading of Wittgenstein would be to say this conception of the theoretical position is itself at fault. Take, again, Wittgenstein's example (in the *Blue Book*) of the instruction 'Bring me a red flower', discussed in [1.3.1]. Wittgenstein is attacking the idea that to obey that order one must first create an image in mind of a colour sample by reference to which one could go out and select a flower of the right colour. It is tempting to think that something like this must be the case. But now consider the instruction 'Imagine a red patch'. The idea seems to fall apart. Have I now got to create an image of red in my mind to act as a sample to correctly imagine a red patch? Wittgenstein's point is that the role of the sample is empty. That is: it is a mistake to think that there need be a theoretical place as the one the sample was supposed to occupy. Wittgenstein's point is *not* that the place for the sample is fine and that, in the case of 'Imagine a red patch', there just is nothing in that place. But that seems precisely Wright's thought in the rule case. "To express the matter dangerously, we need have nothing 'in mind' when we follow rules"[115] 'In

[115] Wright (2007), p.486.

mind' must mean something like 'in the place the sample was supposed to be'. This, it seems, leaves the theoretical place the imaginary sample was to occupy untouched – saying only that in basic cases there is nothing in that place. To find nothing in the only place a genuine guide could be would certainly amount to applying the rule 'without reason'. But that does not appear to be a Wittgensteinian thought. What does seem right to say is that to obey the order 'Bring me a red flower' I must have in mind – I must know - the colour of the flower I am to bring.

My concern with Wright's interpretation is that, at its core, it demands on Wittgenstein's behalf a kind of reductionism. We have a demand for a particular kind of guide: one in 'splendid isolation' that can serve to inform our applications of rules. Wright clearly thinks that recognising that basic rule-following is blind and ultimately ungrounded need not lead us into scepticism about the nature of rules and their requirements. In short: themes three and two can be reconciled. My worry is that Wright's characterisation does the exact opposite. Wittgenstein warns us that failure to recognise that no mediating entity – no 'interpretation' – is required to sit between a rule and its requirements if we are to avoid scepticism. The paradox of §201 comes about only if we think that there must be a mediating entity. Wright's reductionism is an attempt to find space for an 'interpretation' when there is no space for it. As such it invites scepticism rather than, as Wittgenstein clearly intended, rejecting the line of thought that generates it.

[3.4] Conclusion

The two attempts to modify the 'Fantastical' interpretations into something more palatable considered in this chapter fail. Dummett's interpretation still has Wittgenstein as offering an incoherent account of the relationship between a rule and its requirements. Wright's reading of what it is to follow rules 'without reasons' gets Wittgenstein's intentions wrong. But there are positives to be taken from this chapter. Discussion of Dummett has brought into play the notion of an 'external' or 'sideways-on' perspective and Wittgenstein's apparent hostility to it. This notion will be developed in Chapter Four. Wright claims that Wittgenstein was a Quietist. Whilst I do not agree with the actual way Wright motivates this, the notion that it is the questions themselves that lead to the problems does appear to be a plausible interpretative stance. We will both of these thoughts taken up in Chapter Four in working out the details of McDowell's interpretation.

Chapter Four

Moving Beyond the Banal: McDowell

[4.1] Introduction

Chapter Three examined two attempts to amend 'Fantastical' interpretations of Wittgenstein to a point where the rule-following passages could be seen as offering both a coherent and non-banal account. I argued that both of these attempts failed. This chapter will examine a move in the opposite direction: working out from a 'Banal' reading to a satisfactory middle ground. This move is, as I understand him, attempted by McDowell.

The conclusion of Chapter Three was negative: these interpretations simply will not do as they stand. It would be wrong to think, however, that no progress has been made. Dummett neatly highlighted Wittgenstein's interest in a kind of external standpoint – the view from 'sideways-on' – where one as it were divorces oneself from the domain in question to examine that domain. Dummett claims that it is Wittgenstein's aim to resist the possibility of such a perspective. Wright's suggestion, at a general level, sounds very Wittgensteinian: we should not search Wittgenstein's remarks for a positive answer as to what the correctness conditions for following a rule are. Wittgenstein wants to say, rather, that it is the question itself that is at fault. I expressed concern at the detailed way Wright develops this thought, but the general picture was not rejected. McDowell's interpretation features both a concern with the view from 'sideways-on' and recognition of Wittgenstein's Quietism.

The conclusion of this chapter will be less clear-cut. I will argue that something along the broad lines of McDowell's interpretation of Wittgenstein must be right. He is the closest of any interpreter to identifying in Wittgenstein a coherent and non-banal view. There is great difficulty, however, in working out precisely *what* McDowell is actually claiming. I will attempt to show that McDowell's remarks lend themselves to two quite different interpretations of Wittgenstein. One view attempts to steer a course between the 'Fantastical' and the 'Banal', not by rejecting both, but by accepting both. What keeps the view coherent, this interpretation of Wittgenstein suggests, is recognition of different levels of discourse. This view attributes to the author of the *Investigations* a combination of views that share at least a structural parallel with Kant's combination of empirical realism and transcendental idealism. The second view suggested by McDowell's comments accepts the drive towards idealism, but claims that this is only a stage to be passed through to Wittgenstein's final, settled, position. Roughly, on this account, transcendental idealism would be the right answer if the question made sense, but this question does not make sense, and so idealism is to be rejected. Thus, Wittgenstein is to be read as therapeutically 'dissolving' what philosophical concerns there are with rules and their requirements. This chapter will develop these two interpretations out of McDowell's remarks. I will not reach a settled conclusion on which of these is McDowell's view, or whether either accurately represents Wittgenstein. Part Three will examine the latter question. There will be

enough in play, however, to begin a comparison with Wittgenstein's early work. This will be the focus of Part Two.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. [4.2] provides an initial engagement with McDowell via discussion of the paper "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule". The crucial sections of the paper are deeply puzzling. My engagement with them is therefore to be seen as an opening skirmish; an attempt to raise questions and issues to be addressed in further detail later. [4.3] aims at illumination by examining McDowell's broader philosophical themes, with a view to locating the discussion of rule-following within the broader project. [4.4] questions to what extent, if any, McDowell's interpretation is genuinely a departure from other interpretations. [4.5] sketches the view that the author of the *Investigations* was a transcendental idealist. [4.6] sketches the alternative: Wittgenstein ultimately found a way to reject such idealism.

[4.2] "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule"

I begin with McDowell's "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule". The early sections of this paper cover similar ground to that covered in Chapter One. A brief summary of the relevant parts will still be useful here.

McDowell identifies in Wittgenstein the rejection of the need for a mediating entity to combine a rule and its requirements. As McDowell puts it, Wittgenstein aims to "exorcise the insidious assumption"[116] that there must be an 'interpretation' standing in between – doing, as it were, 'the gluing'. This is

[116] McDowell (1998g), p.239.

the recognition of the first theme outlined in Chapter One [1.3.1], the internal relation between a rule and actions in accordance with it that is emphasised by Baker and Hacker. McDowell is also explicit in pointing out, against Kripke, that Wittgenstein rejects rule scepticism. The paradox of §201 – that no course of action could be determined by a rule because any course of action could be made out to accord with the rule – is introduced by Wittgenstein; but, as Wittgenstein himself says, it is based on a "misunderstanding".

> The right response to the paradox, Wittgenstein in effect tells us, is not to accept it but to correct the misunderstanding on which it depends: that is, to realize "that there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation*."[117]

This coheres with the second theme identified in the rule-following passages in Chapter One [1.3.2]. McDowell also shows sensitivity towards the third theme: the ungrounded basic-ness of following rules [1.3.3]. He points out Wittgenstein's insistence on 'bedrock' – a place where justification gives out and we are simply left saying 'this is what I do'. But, quoting from the *Investigations* itself: "To use an expression without a justification does not mean to use it without right."[118]

In combining these themes, McDowell's interpretation comes out as roughly this: Wittgenstein's aim in the rule-following passages is to steer a middle course between two unpalatable extremes, labelled 'Scylla' and

[117] McDowell (1998g), p.229.
[118] *PI* I §289.

'Charybdis'. Scylla is the insidious assumption that a mediating entity – an interpretation – is required between a rule and actions in accordance with it. If we are drawn to this view then, argues McDowell, we are forced into a dilemma: either we must embrace rule-scepticism and the paradox Wittgenstein highlights or we must accept the Platonist's account of rules. This cannot be acceptable to Wittgenstein, the thought goes, because he precisely *was* rejecting Platonism and he clearly states that rule-scepticism is based on a misunderstanding. In rejecting Scylla we need to explain how genuinely following a rule can be something other than an interpretation. McDowell fears that this risks steering onto Charybdis – an attempt to get below 'bedrock' and hence lose all semblance of normativity and objectivity in meaning. McDowell contends that it is only by rejecting that attempt that we can reach a position which allows for the immediacy and basic-ness of rule-following yet retains the objectivity of rules.

It is at this point that the appeal to shared agreement in judgements, the fourth theme identified in Chapter One [1.3.4], is meant to contribute to the discussion: "the key to finding the indispensable middle course is the idea of a custom or practice."[119] Objectivity is somehow to be retained through the recognition that rule-following is a practice or institution that takes place within a community. To summarise:

[119] McDowell (1998g), p.242.

> What I have claimed might be put like this: Wittgenstein's point is that we have to situate our conception of meaning and understanding within a framework of communal practices.[120]

This talk of a 'framework' should remind us of Baker and Hacker's interpretation. In Chapter Two I argued that the notion is as yet unclear; depending on the role assigned to this framework Wittgenstein's appeal to it either comes out as true but banal or interesting but incompatible with other aspects of Wittgenstein's discussion. An immediate worry one might have is whether McDowell has advanced matters beyond the appeal to framework offered by Baker and Hacker. McDowell accepts that he will need to say more:

> Until more is said about how exactly the appeal to communal practice makes the middle course available, this is only a programme for a solution to Wittgenstein's problem.[121]

McDowell attempts to "discharge the unfinished business"[122] of this interpretation in §§11-12 of "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule", and it is on these puzzling sections of the paper that I most want to focus. Here McDowell aims to define the interpretation he recommends by contrast with the 'anti-realist' views put forward by Dummett and Wright. §10 sees McDowell offer what he calls the 'transcendental argument against anti-realism'. The general thought appears to be this: once we go down the anti-realist route we cannot properly account for the normative character of, and hence the objectivity of,

[120] McDowell (1998g), p.243.
[121] McDowell (1998g), p.242.
[122] McDowell (1998g), p.249.

meaning. As McDowell puts it: "a condition for the possibility of finding real application for the notion of meaning at all is that we reject anti-realism."[123] But this, as yet, does not tell us why anti-realism goes wrong, or what McDowell takes Wittgenstein to be offering in its place. That task is left for the next section. In completing that task McDowell will indeed have discharged the unfinished part of his interpretation.

McDowell begins §11 by accepting the appeal of anti-realism and acknowledging that the motivation behind it is surely correct. In particular, McDowell thinks anti-realists are on the right track in rejecting the idea that meaning is, as it were, 'hidden' or concealed below the surface of a person's linguistic behaviour. That view would amount to saying that the meaning of a word or expression resides in some inner state of the person in question. If this idea were right, the best we could ever achieve would be a hypothesis about another's meaning – 'it *seems* as though he means such and such.' McDowell clearly thinks that this is wrong. But the anti-realist goes wrong, continues McDowell, in the view he develops out of that rejection. The anti-realist thesis, McDowell argues, retains the confused contrast between states of mind hidden behind the visible surface behaviour and the empty conception of that behaviour on which the anti-realist places meaning. McDowell argues that the correct response is to reject this particular notion of visible surface behaviour:

[123] McDowell (1998g), p.249.

> According to this different view, the outward aspect of linguistic behaviour – what a speaker makes available to others – must be characterised in terms of the contents of utterances (the thoughts they express).[124]

What this actually means, what it actually amounts to, is one of the issues I will return to in the next section.

McDowell claims that we are meant to feel some unease in reading Wittgenstein's comments on following a rule. Wittgenstein tells us not to dig below 'bedrock', but at the same time various trends in his discussion tempt us to inquire as to what lies 'down there'. If we did, we would most likely be stuck by the sheer contingency of our ways of carrying on – how they depend on the kind of creatures we are. McDowell draws our attention to the following reading of Wittgenstein:

> We learn and teach words in certain contexts, and then we are expected, and expect others, to be able to project them into further contexts. Nothing insures that this projection will take place (in particular, not the grasping of universals nor the grasping of books of rules), just as nothing insures that we will make, and understand, the same projections. That on the whole we do is a matter of our sharing routes of interest and feeling, senses of humour and of significance and of fulfilment, of what is outrageous, of what is similar to what else, what a rebuke, what forgiveness, of when an utterance is an assertion, when an appeal, when an explanation – all the whirl of organism Wittgenstein calls "forms of life". Human speech and activity, sanity and community, rest upon nothing more, but nothing less, than this. It is a vision as simple as it is difficult, and as difficult as it is (and because it is) terrifying.[125]

[124] McDowell (1998g), p.249.
[125] Cavell (1969), p.52.

This supposed 'terror' which Cavell brings out is, argues McDowell, induced by the suggestion that there is nothing that keeps our practices in line except the reactions and responses we develop in learning them. This generates the feeling that the ground has been removed from beneath our feet. For, the 'forms of life' Cavell highlights are, one might think, insufficient for any conviction that some action really is going the same way with a practice as before.

Both the anti-realist and McDowell's 'non-anti-realist' accept the feeling of terror or vertigo that the quotation from Cavell is meant to engender. McDowell's position (and the position being attributed to Wittgenstein) is that

> When I understand another person, I know the rules he is going by. My right to understand him is precarious, in that nothing but a tissue of contingences stands in my way of losing it. But to envisage its loss is not necessarily to envisage its turning out that I never had the right at all.[126]

I think this has to be the correct thing to say on these matters. The fact that we communicate at all with one another does rest on contingency – on the kinds of beings we are. But those contingencies do not rule out the possibility of genuine and secure communication. I do not think anyone would sensibly want to deny that. Thus far the 'non-anti-realist' position is an appealing one.

What are we to make of Wittgenstein's appeal to shared agreement in judgements? McDowell argues that anti-realist interpretations correctly

[126] McDowell (1998g), p.251/252.

identify that Wittgenstein makes such an appeal but misrepresent it. This, again, is meant to show a contrast between the anti-realist and McDowell's 'non-anti-realist'. The anti-realist, in McDowell's eyes, describes a linguistic community as a collection of individuals that present to one another certain exterior patterns that match, or so far have matched, in observable ways. This, argues McDowell, simply is not enough to account for meaning. For, it degrades into a "mere aggregate of individuals whom we have no convincing reason not to conceive as opaque to one another."[127] There is simply not enough, for McDowell, on the 'surface' on this conception to account for content. If, on the other hand, we follow McDowell's reading we are supposed to recognise the possibility of not just matching in exterior patterns, but of actually making "our minds available to one another"[128].

We have been struggling to accommodate Wittgenstein's appeal to shared agreement in judgement with the thought that a rule and its requirements are internally related. McDowell presents the 'non-anti-realist' interpretation as offering us a way forward. Wittgenstein maintains that understanding what another person means can be something other than an interpretation. McDowell argues that 'non-anti-realism' allows us to make sense of that thought:

> shared command of a language equips us to know one another's meaning without needing to arrive at that knowledge by interpretation, because it equips us to hear someone else's meaning in his words.[129]

[127] McDowell (1998g), p.253.
[128] McDowell (1998g), p.253.
[129] McDowell (1998g), p.253.

The anti-realist cannot have this explanation, at least according to McDowell, because of their 'wooden' conception of what a linguistic community amounts to. Where the anti-realist can aspire at best to a matching of exteriors within a community, the 'non-anti-realist' acknowledges a "capacity for a meeting of minds."[130]

Again, I want to flag up this passage as something that requires further attention as we move on. It is worth noting here, though, a puzzle over how McDowell has characterised the debate. Initially it seemed that the anti-realist interpretation was guilty of slipping into Charybdis – a loss of objectivity. But now it seems the anti-realist cannot avoid Scylla – it fails to account for a way of following a rule that is not an interpretation. Indeed, my complaint with Dummett's initial interpretation [2.2] was precisely that it placed 'convention' as a mediating entity. On the way McDowell has carved things up the anti-realist goes wrong in both ways.

§12 of the paper provides a more general conception of the shape of McDowell's 'non-anti-realist' interpretation. McDowell presents a (supposedly natural) picture of how facts and truths line up. A genuine fact is a matter of how things are in and of themselves, independent of how we perceive those things to be. So, for example, it is either a fact or not that my coffee mug is on the desk, irrespective of what I perceive to be the case. So, the thought runs, a true judgement must (at least potentially) be 'pure', in that if something about the nature of human beings is part and parcel of

[130] McDowell (1998g), p.253.

(inextricably bound-up in) the formation of the judgement it would threaten to undermine the idea that the fact is really a proper fact at all.

One of the reasons such a view might be found attractive lies in the assumption that meanings take care of themselves – we need make no contribution to settling what they require. If we make that assumption

> we can let the judging subject, in our picture of true judgement, shrink to a locus of pure thought, while the fact that judging is a human activity fades into insignificance.[131]

McDowell takes Wittgenstein's comments on following a rule to undermine the idea that meanings take care of themselves. The idea is that our being governed by the constraints rules place on us is not a matter of being forced this way or that by the rigid 'rules as rails', but that we act within a framework of shared agreement. In doing so we must abandon the picture of a genuine truth, in which a 'pure' thought abstracted from anything intrinsically human is possible. Instead we must recognise that judgements are inextricably bound up in the kind of beings that we are. That is to say: Wittgenstein's remarks oppose a certain extreme form of realism, where meaning is taken to be completely independent and autonomous of us. That kind of realism imposes a metaphysically inflated reading on the thesis that the facts are not up to us.

McDowell agrees with the anti-realist that Wittgenstein is rejecting this particular heady realism. But McDowell argues that rejecting such an extreme

[131]McDowell (1998bg, p.254/255.

form of realism need not push us immediately into the anti-realist interpretations offered by the likes of Dummett and Wright. First, in 'recoiling' from the extreme form of realism we have said nothing against the truth-conditional account of meaning, which, I take it, is meant to be a characteristic of 'realism' in contemporary debates. We can accept that the truth-conditions of a statement are given by us. So, using McDowell's example, when we say " 'Diamonds are hard' is true iff diamonds are hard", we can accept that we are involved on the right-hand side. It is not, as it were, that the right-hand side is an unconceptualised fact. Second, crucially, we need not abandon altogether the insight that facts are not up to us. The common sense view that a rule extends in application to new cases independently of our ability to ratify that fact does not force us to accept the Platonist picture of 'rules as rails'.

Take the example of meeting an object for the first time and a community coming to a consensus as to whether or not to call it 'yellow':

> we must say that the community "goes right or wrong" according to whether the object in question is, or is not, *yellow*; and nothing can make its being yellow, or not, dependent on our ratification of the judgement that that is how things are.[132]

This looks like simple common sense. Or, perhaps it would be better to say, it would require a substantial and persuasive argument to make us reject this picture. The target here for McDowell is the idea (in, for example, the earlier work of Wright) that appeal to community will only offer temporary solace,

[132] McDowell (1998g), p.256.

as the community itself fares no better than the individual: the community has no authority *it* must meet. That claim – 'for the community itself there is no authority, so no standard to meet'– is at very best, argues McDowell,

> an attempt to say something that cannot be said but only shown. It may have some merit, conceived in that light; but attributing it to Wittgenstein as a doctrine can only yield distortion.[133]

What is interesting here is the introduction of what seem to be different levels of investigation. On the one hand McDowell wants to say: 'of course, whether something is yellow or not depends on the thing in question, it is not dependent on our ratifying it as such.' At another level, however, McDowell appears to be rejecting the idea that we can, as it were, step outside of our own practice, or that of the community of which we are a member, and assess the relationship between ourselves/community and the world. At that level, McDowell is arguing, the best we could ever hope for is that the limitations of the community reveal themselves in the language we use, for they cannot intelligibly be put into words as we cannot occupy the position that would require. Nonetheless, McDowell appears to be saying, conceived as an attempt to occupy that position Wright's remarks would have "some merit"[134].

To repeat: I do not imagine this summary to capture all that is present in the crucial passages of McDowell's paper. Some headway has been made though. It is clear that McDowell's interpretation fits within the boundaries

[133] McDowell (1998g), p.256.
[134] McDowell (1998g), p.256.

established in Chapter One, and that he seeks to do justice to all four themes there identified. The crucial question for McDowell is the crucial question for us: how is it possible to make the fantastical claims about rules and their requirements cohere with the basic, common sense, banalities? McDowell insists on the internal relationship between a rule and actions in accordance with it whilst also incorporating the appeal to shared agreement in judgement. McDowell has Wittgenstein rejecting a certain extreme form of realism on the one hand, yet rejecting anti-realism on the other. And part of this middle course is a re-conception of what it is to belong to a linguistic community.

I think this shape is admirable and, indeed, the very kind of interpretation we have been looking for. The problem so far is the detail; it is not clear yet *how* all of this is supposed to work.

[4.3] Broader McDowellian Themes

I want to try to fill out these details through examination of McDowell's wider philosophical work. The key passage we will need to work towards is the final section of his "Anti-Realism and the Epistemology of Understanding". But it will take some serious work to get there. Two ideas need to be developed and connected. The first is McDowell's conception of content residing on the surface of linguistic behaviour. This will take us into some of McDowell's epistemological standpoint. The second is the rejection of a view from 'sideways on'. I want to show that McDowell is making the same

move that we saw Dummett make in Chapter Three [3.2], although McDowell, contrary to Dummett, finds something persuasive in the resulting position.

[4.3.1] Content 'on the surface'

In my initial 'skirmish' with McDowell I simply stopped at phrases like 'a meeting of minds' and 'content residing on the surface of linguistic behaviour'. Here I want to see if we can make something of this imagery. In other works McDowell uses the terms 'psychologism' and 'behaviourism' to identify the two extremes between which he wants to offer a middle course. Behaviourism is the view that various types of content – meaning, understanding, intending and so on – consist in publicly observable behaviour. The problem with behaviourism is that it risks leaving out any account of how the mind is involved with, say, meaningful speech. Psychologism is the claim that content resides, as it were, 'below' or 'beneath' the publicly observable phenomena. That is: in some 'inner' or 'private' state. The worry which such a view is that if meaning resides in such an inner state the best we could ever get about another's meaning is a hypothesis about him and what he means, rather than actually direct access to such content. Such hypotheses would not rule out deviant cases, such as Wittgenstein's pupil, where it appears as though my interlocutor and I are 'marching in step' with a particular term, yet it turns out that we are in fact not (he continues 1004, 1008, etc.). Such a worry would therefore undermine my confidence in

communicating with anyone at all. This clearly mirrors McDowell's remarks in "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule". There McDowell was concerned to show that resisting the idea that meaning resides in a hidden state does not commit one to a 'wooden' kind of behaviourism.

But how, exactly, are we supposed to perform the balancing trick?

> Our attention is indeed drawn to the contents of the used sentences, rather than the mere words […]: but not as something "beneath" the words, to which we are to penetrate by stripping off the linguistic clothing; rather, as something present in the words – something capable of being heard or seen in the words by those who understand the language.[135]

The idea, then, in meaning 'being on the surface' is that a speaker really does put their thoughts into the words they use, and others can hear or see those thoughts: come into direct contact with them. What is essential to McDowell's case is a recasting of what linguistic behaviour is. Linguistic practice need not be characterizable from 'outside' of content. Rather, McDowell wants to insist:

> that the outward aspect of linguistic behaviour is essentially content-involving, so that the mind's role in speech is, as it were, on the surface – part of what one presents to others, not something that is at best a hypothesis for them.[136]

Crucial to McDowell's discussion is the notion of a 'perceptual capacity':

[135] McDowell (1998d), p.99.
[136] McDowell (1998d), p.101.

> Command of a language is partly constituted by just such a perceptual capacity; one whose acquisition makes a new range of facts, not hitherto within one's perceptual ken, available to one's awareness.[137]

How are we to understand this notion? There is an innocuous way of understanding the claim that certain capacities allow us to take in facts about the world we would not be able to if we lacked those capacities. So, for example, that I have eyes and the ability to see the world around me makes available a certain range of facts that otherwise would be unavailable. McDowell clearly means something more than such a trivial claim. A further thought would be that the capacities that interest McDowell are not those we have in virtue of mere biological contingencies, but are somehow brought about by something akin to training. So, for example, careful study and work experience in a garden centre might get me to a point where I can discriminate between azaleas and rhododendrons. If I acquire such a discriminating capacity I could see that a certain plant is an azalea. This is something that without the training would have been beyond my perceptual ken. Similarly, if I learned how to read German I would then have an ability to come into contact with the content of sentences written in German. Without an understanding of that language I would not be able to do so.

Again, however, one is likely to think that these claims are uncontroversial. Understanding German or acquiring a discriminating capacity for plants brings things into my perceptual awareness that I did not have before. But how are we to get from that point to McDowell's odd-

[137] McDowell (1998b), p.332.

looking claims that we should conceive of content lying on the surface of linguistic behaviour and that communication involves a genuine meeting of minds? McDowell wants to offer a different conception of perceptual capacities to the two so far considered:

> I mean to be offering a more radical alternative: one that rejects the assumption, common to both horns of the dilemma, that our genuine perceptual intake can be exhaustively described in terms that do not beg the question of the status, as knowledge, of what we ascribe to people when we say they understand utterances.[138]

But what does this amount to? The idea is, it seems, that what we take in (the 'perceptual intake') differs depending on what perceptual capacities we have. We tend to assume that the raw materials of experience are the same irrespective of such capacities. So, for example, that when both I and someone who understands German read a piece of German text we take in the same experiential data. He, as opposed to me, has an ability to work out the content of what is written. McDowell is claiming that this assumption is mistaken: the perceptual intake itself is shaped by what capacities a person has.

Let's take a particular example. Consider again Wittgenstein's ordering a pupil to write down the series '+2'. Given our normal assumptions – the kind of assumptions McDowell thinks leads to a 'wooden' conception of linguistic behaviour – the pupils behaviour, his going '996, 998, 1000', in itself will not be sufficient to regard him as genuinely obeying the order. This is because although his behaviour has conformed to a certain pattern to this

[138] McDowell (1998b), p.332.

point we cannot rule out that his behaviour might diverge from that pattern: he might continue '1104, 1008, 1012…' McDowell's claim is that a genuine perceptual capacity, something which a proper upbringing or inculcation in a way of life brings about, will allow us to simply see that the pupil is obeying the order '+2' as opposed to '+2 up to 1000, +4 thereafter'. What then of the concern that the pupil's behaviour could all of a sudden cease conforming to the pattern we expect? McDowell maintains that

> […] our right to the conviction that it will not happen is anchored upward, so to speak, in our right to take another at face value; it is not something we have independently, on which our right to take one another at face value can be founded.[139]

The specific connection with rules is starting to come into focus. It is this: for McDowell, there can be no description of the requirements of a rule graspable independently of our understanding of what the rule requires. Developing this thought will take us back to 'sideways-on' looks.

[4.3.2] The View From 'Sideways-On'

Dummett's modified interpretation of Wittgenstein was examined in Chapter Three [3.2]. That interpretation presented Wittgenstein as holding both the trivial point that a rule and its requirements are internally related and the interesting appeal to shared agreements in judgement. This was achieved by recognising Wittgenstein's hostility to a kind of external perspective. That is:

[139] McDowell (1998b), p.337.

> To attempt to step outside the situation in which we are placed, and thus to pass beyond the limits of language and say what can only be shown.[140]

Wittgenstein, on Dummett's modified interpretation, relegates recognition of the internal relationship into the appeal to shared judgements by abandoning the idea that we can talk intelligibly about things as they are in themselves. The view that comes out of Dummett's interpretation is to be rejected as hopeless: it saves the internal relationship at the cost of the very point of insisting on it. McDowell reads the same move in Wittgenstein as Dummett, but appears to find a resulting position far more palatable. This section aims at highlighting what is common between Dummett and McDowell, the differences in where one goes from there will emerge in the next section.

McDowell claims that the imagery of the Platonist picture – our somehow attaching mental wheels to rail leading out to infinity – is an example of the faulty desire for an external perspective: the idea that the relationship between our language and the reality it represents can be considered from 'sideways on', from a standpoint independent of human practice. From such a perspective it would be recognisable what the correct move in any given mathematical series is: "[T]hat, say, 1002 really does come after 1000 in the series determined by the instruction "Add 2"".[141] McDowell takes Wittgenstein to be rejecting the intelligibility of such a perspective. We want to deny that what it is for the square of 13 to be 169 is for it to be possible to train people to find such a calculation compelling. "Rather, it is

[140] Dummett (1993c), p.451.
[141] McDowell (1998f), p.208.

because the square of 13 really *is* 169 that we can be brought to find the calculations compelling."[142] McDowell argues that we suppose that when we say 'the square of 13 really is 169' in the context 'It is because […] that we can be brought to find the calculations compelling', we are speaking from a perspective independently graspable from our understanding of such calculations. But, continues McDowell, we cannot occupy such an external position, all we can do is describe matters from within the midst of our own, human, competence, and it is only a mistake to think the position makes sense.

> The fact is that it is only because of our own involvement in our "whirl of organism" that we can understand a form of words as conferring, on the judgement that some move is the correct one at a given point, the special compellingness possessed by the conclusion of a proof.[143]

If we are just normally and simply engaged in our practices we do not feel the need for the 'sideways on' view. We could protect ourselves, continues McDowell, if we stop supposing that the relation to reality of some area of our thought and language needs to be assessed from a standpoint independent of our 'form of life'. He admits this will be incredibly difficult, drawing attention to Wittgenstein's comment:

> The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to. – The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* in question.[144]

[142] McDowell (1998f), p.208.
[143] McDowell (1998f), p.209.
[144] PI I, §133.

McDowell argues that finding a way of stopping the temptation to adopt the 'sideways on' perspective would be the discovery that enables one to stop doing philosophy when one wants to. The quest for the external standpoint is characteristic, continues McDowell, of a kind of philosophical realism. Such realism "chafes at the fallibility and inconclusiveness"[145] of our finding out the ways things really are. It confers a sense on 'But is it *really* so?' in which the question does not call for an extremely careful assessment by our own lights, but from a perspective that transcends our own limitations.

This is the same position Dummett's modified interpretation reached. Both McDowell and Dummett agree that Wittgenstein is resisting the possibility of a view from 'sideways on' and that it is in recognising this that we can see Wittgenstein as offering a coherent account. The question 'is there really an internal relationship between a rule and its requirements?' cannot be asked because it requires the external perspective to even be considered. From within our community it will of course look like the internal relationship holds. It is the desire to ask questions of the form 'but is it *really* that way?' that is to be abandoned as empty. There simply can be no way of characterising the requirements of a rule independent of our understanding of the rule.

It might be worthwhile pausing to reflect on what this standpoint is and why it is thought to be so problematic for Wittgenstein. We might understand the position as suggesting that we can in some way 'detach'

[145] McDowell (1998f), p.212.

ourselves from ourselves. We could submit our own beliefs or attitudes to reflection and criticism from a position independent of those beliefs or attitudes. Such self reflection and criticism seems possible in particular cases. I might have the belief that Tony Blair was an honest and trust-worthy Prime Minister. I can reflect on the status of that belief whilst at the same time withholding judgement about the belief. I can bring evidence to bear on the belief – that he misled parliament regarding the threat posed by Iraq, that he created a financial mess for future generations with Private Finance Initiatives, that he exaggerated the threat of terrorism to push through legislation infringing our civil liberties, and so on – without the belief influencing my critical reflection.

If that is what a view from 'sideways on' amounted to it is hard to see why it might be threatening or undesirable. In the case of Tony Blair it is simply an attempt to be objective as possible on my beliefs about him as a Prime Minister. It is the kind of standpoint we adopt (or at least seek to adopt) all the time. When marking an essay a teacher ought to aim at impartiality: remove whatever opinions she has of the pupil and grade the work on its merits alone. We are 'sideways on' when we seek to learn a second language. We know and understand our native tongue and what we do is map across the foreign terms. It is only by doing this that we work ourselves into an understanding of the foreign language. On the face of it, then, we attempt to adopt 'sideways on' perspectives frequently and should feel no shame in doing so.

So what is the problematic 'sideways on' stance? Nagel claims that any attempt to *completely* adopt a 'sideways on' view – to totally divorce ourselves from ourselves – is doomed to failure. Nagel offers Descartes' attempt to "demolish everything completely and start again right from the foundations"[146] as an example of such a failure.

> The true philosophical point consists not in Descartes' conclusion that he exists […], nor even in the discovery of something absolutely certain. Rather, the point is that Descartes reveals that there are some thoughts which we cannot get *outside* of.[147]

Descartes does not bring everything into doubt in Meditation One, in particular his ability to reason, because he cannot: the whole project would then collapse. Nagel's point is that there are some thoughts we cannot help but have, which are impossible to consider 'from outside', because they are necessarily and directly linked to any process of considering ourselves from the outside. This, for Nagel, highlights why full-blown relativism and related views regarding ethics are incoherent. They purport to tell us how things really are – that ethics is nothing more than, say, sociology and biology – yet deny that we are capable of having thoughts about how things really are.

We have a contrast between harmless, natural, attempts to adopt 'sideways on' perspectives and attempts to adopt a completely external perspective on all our beliefs that is doomed to fail. The thought that has been developed out of McDowell's remarks is this: for Wittgenstein, there can be

[146] Descartes (1996), p.12.
[147] Nagel (1997), p.19.

no description of the requirements of a rule graspable independently of our understanding of what the rule requires. That suggests that the kind of 'sideways on' looks that bothers Wittgenstein (on the current interpretation) falls somewhere in between: it is harmful and yet not an attempt to completely detach ourselves from ourselves. For any given concept, or any given rule, the claim is that we cannot occupy a 'sideways on' perspective on it. What we must recognise is that for any specific concept, our grasp of that concept cannot be described in terms that do not employ our understanding of that concept. Put like that, Wittgenstein's supposed position looks very unappealing. We will return to the issue of 'sideways on' in Part Three

[4.4] Levels of Discourse

We have spent some time trying to understand what McDowell's interpretive position amounts to. Some progress has been made: The imagery of a 'meeting of minds' has been made somewhat clearer and we have investigated the crucial claim that Wittgenstein rejected the possibility of the view from 'sideways on'. McDowell is agreeing with Dummett's interpretation insofar as Wittgenstein is to been seen as reconciling the internal relationship between a rule and its requirements with the appeal to shared agreement in judgement by giving up any attempt to talk about the world as it is in itself. But whereas Dummett found nothing to be said in favour of this position, and that it ought to be abandoned, McDowell thinks that there is a genuinely interesting and persuasive account to be found in

Wittgenstein's remarks. This section aims at establishing how McDowell's interpretation is supposed to differ to that offered by Dummett. It turns on Wittgenstein's engagement with transcendental philosophy. We saw a hint of this in the discussion of 'levels' of discourse in [4.2]. I think this is crucial to understanding quite how McDowell's interpretation is supposed to offer a unique way of reading Wittgenstein.

Perhaps the best way to approach this topic again is in the form of a possible objection to McDowell's account. When introducing McDowell's interpretation I briefly raised concern whether the appeal to the 'framework' of shared agreements would risk leaving McDowell's interpretation falling into the banality I read in some of Baker and Hacker's views. That worry might still be pressing. Indeed, McDowell himself seems to anticipate an objection along these lines:

> Crispin Wright might distinguish my position from the target of anti-realist attacks by saying that the acceptability of my position is a mere reflection of "grammar", in one of Wittgenstein's senses. There is a truth here, but it needs to be handled carefully.[148]

Part of McDowell's defence against such a possible objection is that there is nothing wrong with a conception of the world that reflects grammar. So if we have a conception of the world that maintains that elements of reality are beyond our ability to discover them, if our grammar reveals this then so "much better for the conception."[149] What *is* wrong, for McDowell, is the

[148] McDowell (1998b), p.341.
[149] McDowell (1998b), p.341.

emphasis of the conception being a 'mere' reflection of grammar. That could only be a genuine complaint if a more critical perspective – the view from 'sideways on' – was possible.

But there is another element to McDowell's response. If we are to reject the view from 'sideways on' we are accepting that, in a general way, the relationship between language and the world cannot be thought about except from within language. So an anti-realist will feel the force of the following idea: the relationship between language and the world which realism proposes has to be infected with ('a reflection of') our ways of conceiving that relationship. McDowell's point is that this does point to anti-realism, but only at the *transcendental* level: "if the "reflection" thesis is a truth, then it is a transcendental truth, the sort of thing which shows but cannot be said."[150] The anti-realist interpretation saddles Wittgenstein with empirical idealism. For McDowell, it seems, the right answer is that Wittgenstein, by rejecting the view from 'sideways on', endorsed empirical realism and transcendental idealism.

So we are left saying this: *if* McDowell's interpretation is to fill the gap between banal but true and interesting but false whilst keeping faith with Wittgenstein's remarks, then we need, the claim appears to be, to accept that the author of the *Investigations* was a transcendental idealist. We would then read Wittgenstein as assembling truths that nobody would dispute on the empirical, human, level, but holding that we simply cannot talk about things are they are in themselves on the transcendental level. This, to coin a phrase,

[150] McDowell (1998b), p.342.

is just a 'programme for a solution to Wittgenstein's problem'. But it does offer us a way of reconciling the trivial reminders Wittgenstein makes with the apparently fantastical claims about the depth to which contingency runs. In making the transcendental turn McDowell at least opens the possibility that Wittgenstein's view is not as immediately unpalatable as Dummett's modified interpretation suggested.

[4.5] Wittgenstein and Idealism

The suggestion in play is that if we want to read the later Wittgenstein as offering an interesting and consistent account that does not look immediately unpalatable, then we are going to have to read him as a transcendental idealist. In this section I want to flesh out in greater detail precisely what this suggestion would amount to; what it would mean to say that the later Wittgenstein was a transcendental idealist.

One cannot introduce the notion of transcendental idealism without some discussion of Kant. The empirical / transcendental distinction *is* Kant's distinction. He understood it as describing different standpoints from which one could conduct philosophical investigation. An object could, then, be considered from both the empirical and transcendental standpoint. From the empirical or "human standpoint"[151] one considers objects as they appear to us to be. Empirical realism holds that spatio-temporal objects are real when considered from the human standpoint. Empirical idealism holds that such objects are mental images, hallucinations and the like. From the

[151] Kant (1929), A26/B42.

transcendental standpoint one considers the conditions under which objects are possible for us. That is, one does not consider how objects appear to us through our mode of cognition, but how objects stand in relation to our mode of cognition. Transcendental realism holds that objects have their constitution independently of human sensibility – objects are things in themselves. Transcendental idealism holds that an objects constitution depends on human sensibility – objects are appearances. Kant maintains that, from the transcendental standpoint, we cannot know about things in themselves.

> What objects may be in themselves, and apart from all this receptivity of our sensibility, remains completely unknown to us. We know nothing but our mode of perceiving them – a mode which is peculiar to us […] Even if we could bring our intuition to the highest degree of clearness, we should not thereby come any nearer to the constitution of objects in themselves.[152]

Kant is thus a transcendental idealist. This is meant to go hand in hand with empirical realism. So whilst, for Kant, spatio-temporal objects are not features of the world as it is in itself, such objects are real from the human standpoint. These two ideas are intimately related in Kant's thinking. Why transcendental idealism is correct – because the objects of experience cannot be considered as things in themselves but rather part of the structure of experience – provides the basis for empirical realism because the objects are constituted by the structure of experience. "Transcendental ideality and empirical reality are correlates."[153] As Gardner summarises:

[152] Kant (1929), A42-43/B59-60.
[153] Gardner (1999), p.92.

> transcendental idealism may be defined as the thesis that the objects of our cognition are mere appearances: they are empirically real but transcendentally ideal. To say that they are transcendentally ideal is to say that they do not have in themselves, i.e. independently of our mode of cognition, the constitution which we represent them as having; rather our mode of cognition determines this constitution. Transcendental idealism entails that things cannot be known as they are in themselves.[154]

There is no doubt that Wittgenstein was influenced (at least indirectly) by Kant. Wittgenstein was troubled by questions of the 'how possible' kind. And so, for example:

> The limit of language is shown by its being impossible to describe the fact which corresponds to […] a sentence, without simply repeating the sentence. (This has to do with the Kantian solution of the problem of philosophy.)[155]

But nothing in our discussion has shown Wittgenstein to be interested in the question of how objects are possible for us or, indeed, taking sides over whether the objects of our experience are things in themselves or mere appearances. But then why call the suggested view 'transcendental' or 'idealism' at all? For this I turn first to the paper by Williams "Wittgenstein and Idealism". There Williams comments on the relationship between early and later Wittgenstein:

> [If] the idea that the limits of *my* language mean the limits of *my* world can point to transcendental solipsism, then perhaps there is a form of

[154] Gardner (1999), p.95.
[155] CV, p.10.

> transcendental idealism which is suggested […] by the idea that the limits of *our* language mean the limits of *our* world.[156]

Now in what way is this 'transcendental' and in what way is it a species of 'idealism'? To achieve the former we need show that 'the limits of our language are the limits of our world' is not an empirical claim. It does run the risk of looking banal. It could just mean whatever we understand we understand, whatever we can speak of we can speak of, and so on. Williams warns against reading 'language' narrowly and 'the world' broadly. So a 'language' would be a system of communication, with various different linguistic groups having different 'languages'. The way the world looks to different groups would depend on what their 'languages' were like. On the interpretation being attributed to Wittgenstein this simply will not do. For Williams the idea is not that the 'we' of our language is, as it were, placed in the world and then examined from outside.

> Under the idealist interpretation, it is not a question of our recognising that we are one lot in the world among others, and (in principle at least) coming to understand and explain how *our* language conditions *our* view of the world, while that of others conditions theirs differently.[157]

The idea is rather that what the world is for us reveals itself in the fact that some things make sense and other things do not. Empirical investigation into 'our' view of the world would, on this view, have to be coloured by the very thing we were investigating. It would make no sense to talk of something

[156] Williams (1974), p.82.
[157] Williams (1974), p.84.

beyond the boundary of our language because we could not grasp our non-understanding of it. There are, then, no comprehensible alternatives to 'our language'; the 'we' is not part of the world but rather the framework for conceiving the world. In this way 'our language' admits of no empirical explanation, but reveals itself in our shared interests and activities. Any attempt to actually say that these shared outlooks actually determine what the world is for us will turn out to be false – it is something that can only be shown and not said. Moreover, according to Williams, the fact that things can only be described through the lens of our shared interests and concerns provides the ground for calling "such a view a kind of *idealism*"[158]. The thought is something like: the way we are minded determines the way we see the world, but we cannot make any sense of the idea of being other than minded in the way we are.

I take Moore to be working with a similar conception in his *Points of View*. There he defines idealism as "the view that some aspect of the form of that to which our representations answer depends on some aspect of the representations."[159] Appealing to the 'form' is meant to show that we are not just interested in how that to which our representations answer stands, but interested in the essential features of reality however it may be. What makes idealism transcendental is the rider that the dependence is transcendent.

Moore outlines how such transcendental idealism can be seen as appealing (although he wants to go on and argue that it is, in fact,

[158] Williams (1974), p.85.
[159] Moore (1997), p.116.

incoherent). It appears, for example, to offer reconciliation between arguments for and against the possibility of absolute representations. An absolute representation is a representation from no point of view; from no location whatsoever. Transcendental idealism points to the following: at the immanent level the 'Basic Assumption' holds (and can be justified); at the transcendental level the 'Basic Assumption' is false. (The 'Basic Assumption' is the assumption that representations are representations of 'what is there anyway'.) More generally, transcendental idealism has appeal in meeting a general philosophical problem of attempting to acknowledge an apparent philosophical truth which we seem unable to acknowledge without saying something false. The shape of the response is to argue that there is a genuine philosophical truth, but this is at the transcendental level. Any attempt to express it at the human level will result in falsehood.

Let's take the idea that how things can be truly represented as being is how they really are; the content of a true representation is the fact that things are a certain way. The content of the thought that grass is green and the fact that grass is green are one and the same. "The content of my thought *is* that grass is green. The fact *is* that grass is green."[160] This is an identity, not mere correspondence. It also seems to be a Wittgensteinian thought: "When we say, and *mean*, that such-and-such is the case, we – and our meaning – do not stop anywhere short of the fact; but we mean: *this-is-so*."[161] But what gives us the right to think that reality is made up of the kind of things that we can grasp in

[160] Moore (1997), p.118.
[161] *PI* I §95.

thought? Transcendental idealism offers an answer; by saying that at the transcendental level the form of reality is determined by the form of thought. But any attempt to get beyond mere platitudes at the human level will result in falsehood: "we are liable to produce absurdities about, for example, the mental make-up of physical reality."[162]

This Williams (endorsed by Moore) conception of 'transcendental idealism' chimes with the kind of view I have suggested arises from McDowell's comments on Wittgenstein. As McDowell puts it: "What is at issue here is the status of a position that is analogous to a kind of idealism, but with linguistic practice in place of "ideas"."[163] . There is something right, continues McDowell, about what the anti-realist wants to say but he simply misperceives how it ought to be expressed. The anti-realist interpretation "stands to the misperceived deep doctrine as a shallow empirical idealism would stand to an analogous transcendental idealism."[164] It is, then, not a Kantian form of transcendental idealism but a Wittgensteinian one; worthy of the title nonetheless.

[4.6] Philosophical Therapy

The crucial question is whether McDowell takes this species of transcendental idealism to be the terminus of Wittgenstein's thought or simply a halt along the line. In this section I want to sketch the latter idea: that Wittgenstein ultimately rejects transcendental idealism. (This chapter, as indicated in the

[162] Moore (1997), p.119.
[163] McDowell (1998b), p.342.
[164] McDowell (1998b), p.342/3.

introduction [4.1], aims at merely sketching the alternatives. I will not attempt to settle the matter until Part Three.) This suggestion has Wittgenstein claiming that we need to recognise that the questions to which transcendental idealism would be the correct answer are themselves mistaken. Wittgenstein's point, this train of thought would argue, is a *therapeutic* one. It is, therefore, of the same general motivation as Wright's modified interpretation [3.3].

The authors I have pointing Wittgenstein in the direction of transcendental idealism are, to say the least, cagey in actually attributing the view to him. In two crucial passages McDowell gestures at, but comes conspicuously short of asserting, the view that Wittgenstein was a transcendental idealist.

> In Wittgenstein's eyes, as I read him, Wright's claim that "for the community itself there is no authority, so no standard to meet" can be, at very best, an attempt to say something that cannot be said but only shown. It may have some merit, conceived in that light; but attributing it to Wittgenstein as a doctrine can only yield distortion.[165]

The impression one gets from this remark is that *maybe* what the anti-realist (here figuring as the original position offered by Wright) is saying has some value, *maybe* it is even true. But if it is true it is the kind of thing that would reveal itself in the way we carry on rather than actually being capable of being expressed. In "Anti–Realism and the Epistemology of Understanding" McDowell comes even closer to the transcendental idealist interpretation. There he accepts that the motivation for anti-realism, the kind of thing Wright

[165] McDowell (1998g), p.256.

argues, has something going for it: "There is a truth here, but it needs to be handled carefully."[166] But in the space of a page McDowell seemingly wavers on this. He tells us "if the "reflection" thesis is a truth, then it is a transcendental truth"[167]. But to waver over whether the "reflection" thesis – the thought that the world realism gestures at is, in some sense, a reflection of our way of talking about that world – is true *is* to waver over whether Wittgenstein was an idealist or not. Williams is more forthright in pinning the view on Wittgenstein. But even he qualifies it:

> In fact, I am not going to claim anything as strong as that he held it; it seems to me that both the nature of the view, and the nature of the later Wittgenstein material, make it hard to substantiate any unqualified claim of that kind.[168]

No doubt some of this caginess comes from the complexity of Wittgenstein's remarks and the way different themes are overlapped, run together, re-introduced from different directions and so on. Another concern, perhaps more substantial, is what we are to make of Wittgenstein's avowed anti-theoretical stance. The interpretation we have been considering attributes transcendental idealism to Wittgenstein. But, one might legitimately ask, isn't the very point of the latter Wittgenstein project to reject such 'isms' altogether?

There can be no doubt that there is an anti-theoretical thread in the *Investigations*. We came across it in [1.3.3]. Here are just a couple of examples:

[166] McDowell (1998b), p.341.
[167] McDowell (1998b), p.342.
[168] Williams (1974), p.85.

> Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. – Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain. For what is hidden, for example, is of no interest to us. […] The work of the philosopher consists in assembling reminders for a particular purpose. If one tried to advance *theses* in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree to them.[169]
>
> In philosophy we do not draw conclusions. "But it must be like this!" is not a philosophical proposition. Philosophy only states what everyone admits.[170]

As such, any account of what is going on in the rule-following passages is going to have to been sensitive to this particular theme. The question is not whether Wittgenstein opposed philosophical theory building but how that opposition is at work in the rule-following considerations; not whether the theme is there but what we are to do with it.

In a further paper McDowell argues that the anti-theoretical strand deserves a central place in understanding Wittgenstein's remarks. He warns against the following kind of reading: When Wittgenstein mentions our shared agreement in judgements, this is meant to figure as an answer to genuine, pressing, philosophical questions such as 'How is meaning possible?'

> A response that, according to some readings, Wittgenstein actually gives, and that, according to other readings, he points towards but does not deliver, out of a quietism that must stand exposed as inappropriate by the sheer fact that the questions are supposed to be good ones.[171]

[169] *PI* I §§126-128.
[170] *PI* I §599.
[171] McDowell (1998e), p.275.

The targets here are Kripke's 'sceptical solution' on the one hand, Wright's original complaint that nothing positive can be rescued from Wittgenstein's remarks on the other. Interestingly, McDowell admits (in a footnote) that his discussion in "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule" is too 'hospitable' to the kind of reading offered by Wright. Wright's initial interpretation of Wittgenstein had him unearthing interesting and fundamental questions for philosophers to deal with. But given that these questions are genuine and pressing concerns, Wright continues, it seems unduly defeatist to adopt hostility to 'constructive' philosophy just because the task looks hard. If "Wittgenstein reveals tasks for philosophy, he cannot appeal to what now looks like an adventitiously negative view of philosophy's scope to justify not engaging with those tasks."[172] What is wrong with this, for McDowell, is that it displays awareness of Wittgenstein's resistance to 'constructive' philosophical ambitions, yet takes this resistance as something to be criticised. Wittgenstein's real achievement, on such an interpretation, was uncovering the issues he refuses to address. Wittgenstein's point is rather, according to McDowell, that the mention of 'form of life' is not part of an attempt to construct a philosophical response to supposedly good questions about the possibility of meaning etc., but: "to remind us of something we can take in the proper way only after we are equipped to see that such questions are based on a mistake."[173]

[172] McDowell (1998e), p.277.
[173] McDowell (1998e), p.277.

There is a similar thought in Moore:

> For Wittgenstein philosophy was a kind of therapy. Its purpose was to cure us whenever, through the misuse of our own language, we became troubled by unanswerable pseudo-questions posing as deep problems.[174]

Wittgenstein avoids transcendental idealism, for Moore, not by openly rejecting it, or showing it to be incoherent or false, but rather by denying to questions that would lead one to think that it was a good answer. Wittgenstein does not put another 'ism' in its place but rather treats the illness that made certain pseudo-questions look like pressing concerns.

So we have, then, the shape of an alternative interpretation of Wittgenstein's project: transcendental idealism would be the right answer if the question could intelligibly be asked. But how would this 'therapy' run in a specific case? For this I want to use one of Moore's examples. Say we ask the following: 'what does something's being green consist in?' No doubt there is a good scientific answer to this question. But from a philosophical perspective we are tempted to think that there must be a different, deeper, explanation. So we might try and offer one: 'it consists in the thing embodying the universal 'greenness'.' But that just amounts to saying it is green. What we wanted, or at least thought we wanted, was an explanation of what something's being green consisted in. And here we are at one with Wittgenstein's interlocutor:

[174] Moore (1997), p.126.

> Isn't there a deeper explanation; or mustn't at least the *understanding* of the explanation be deeper? – Well, have I myself a deeper understanding? Have I *got* more than I give in the explanation? – But then, whence the feeling that I have got more?[175]

Wittgenstein's point is that no deeper explanation is possible or, indeed, desirable. If we keep pushing, if we keep trying to 'dig below bedrock' and such for even deeper explanations or justifications we reach the choices that have been figuring in our discussion. We might try and argue that something's being green consists in it reflecting the Platonic object 'greenness'. Wittgenstein's hostility to a certain kind of Platonism has already been discussed. A better answer would be to recognise just how deep contingency runs in our lives. Ultimately there is nothing more to something's being green than we call it such. Something's being green depends on shared agreement in judgement. Of course when I put that claim into words it comes out as a simple falsehood; it is better to think of the claim as expressing (pointing at) a transcendental, rather than empirical, truth. Wittgenstein's remarks show that he thought this was the answer to the question. But the question itself was misguided; there is no deeper explanation here whatsoever. Whether this is a plausible interpretation of Wittgenstein's intentions will be asked in Part Three.

[4.7] Conclusion

This chapter has argued that McDowell's interpretation of Wittgenstein is the most promising we have considered. McDowell neatly identifies in

[175] *PI* I §209.

Wittgenstein's discussion the four themes that were identified in Chapter One. The crucial question for us is also the crucial question for McDowell: how is Wittgenstein's appeal to shared agreement supposed to be understood? McDowell agrees with (the more recent) Dummett insofar as Wittgenstein is to be seen as rejecting the possibility of a certain 'sideways-on' perspective. Whereas Dummett rejects the resulting Wittgensteinian position, McDowell finds something of value in it. McDowell argues that we ought to recognise different levels of discourse and recast what being a member of a linguistic community amounts to. The position we reached was this: that if we are to find anything of value in Wittgenstein's view it seems to commit us to reading Wittgenstein as embracing a linguistic kind of transcendental idealism. There is a serious problem, however, in understanding quite what McDowell is arguing for. I presented two options. First, that McDowell reads Wittgenstein as embracing transcendental idealism. Second, that McDowell sees Wittgenstein as ultimately, through a kind of philosophical therapy, dissolving the appeal of such idealism.

As indicated, I will not seek here to resolve which of these is the official McDowellian view or whether either accurately represents Wittgenstein. Some work towards answering those questions will be carried out in Part Three. We have enough in play to turn to the work of the early Wittgenstein. Crucially, we now have questions to drive that discussion: Does the *Tractatus* point towards either (or indeed both) of the options here presented as interpretations of the later Wittgenstein? Does the showing / saying

distinction of the *Tractatus* provide the resources for the transcendental idealist interpretation? Does the *Tractatus* aim at a kind 'philosophical therapy' like that suggested by the therapeutic interpretation? Part Two aims at answering those questions. Part Three will draw connections and discuss continuity.

Part Two:

The *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

Chapter Five

The Primary Text: The *Tractatus* on Saying and Showing

[5.1] Introduction

The topic for discussion in Part Two, of which this chapter marks the start, is the philosophical outlook of the early Wittgenstein: in particular that offered in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Chapter Four argued that, even though we have not settled the question as to what position Wittgenstein finally adopts, there is enough in play, enough of the shape and content of Wittgenstein's concerns with rules, to begin a comparison with his early work. I concluded that the only way of making Wittgenstein's remarks on rules appear both interesting and coherent is, as urged by both Dummett and McDowell, to see him as resisting the possibility of an external, 'sideways-on', perspective. Dummett argues that the resulting position must be rejected. McDowell, in contrast, clearly thinks there is something right in Wittgenstein's position. The problem was working out precisely *what* McDowell takes that position to be: whether it is a position structurally analogous with Kant's distinction between empirical realism and transcendental idealism or, in contrast, a position where the appeal of such idealism is registered on the way to ultimately rejecting it.

The task for Part Two is to examine whether similar lines of thought present themselves in the *Tractatus*: whether Wittgenstein is there questioning the possibility of an external perspective and whether this is to be linked with a threat of idealism. But how are we to go about that task? In [1.2] I argued

that *an* issue had to be chosen to focus discussion on the later Wittgenstein. Otherwise, the worry was, we might just end up with a broad, impressionistic, sweep of the *Investigations*. Moreover, it had to be a central issue: one that took us to the heart of the philosophical approach of the book. I chose the rule-following considerations but it was open to me to have picked another issue. Matters are somewhat different when it comes to approaching the *Tractatus*. It remains the case that an issue needs to be chosen for discussion and that it should be a central one. But, given the kind of issues raised in Part One, we need to be more careful in picking an issue. What we need is to examine the issue most likely to generate similar interpretive debates. That is, *if* there are similar lines of thought in the *Tractatus* as there are in the *Investigations* on the question of 'sideways-on' looks and idealism then they will be found by considering *this* issue.

I propose that Wittgenstein's distinction between what can be said as opposed to merely shown should be the issue that drives the examination of the *Tractatus*. The saying / showing distinction is crucial to an understanding of the book. But there are two considerations pushing us towards tackling this issue as opposed to any other. First, both Dummett and McDowell introduce Wittgenstein's opposition to a 'sideways-on' perspective in terms of the saying / showing distinction:

> [Our problem comes from adopting] the externalist standpoint that it was the whole point of Wittgenstein's account to repudiate: to attempt

> to step outside of the situation in which we are placed, and thus to pass beyond the limits of language and say what can only be shown.[176]

> But if it is true that we cannot think about the relation between language and reality except from the midst of language as a going concern, then we must insist on this: if the "reflection" thesis is a truth, then it is a transcendental truth, the sort of thing that shows but cannot be said.[177]

Second, the so-called 'new' interpretation of the *Tractatus*, offered most prominently by Diamond and Conant, is developed out of a way of understanding Wittgenstein's distinction between what can be said and what shows itself. Crucially for our purposes, Diamond claims to be offering an interpretation in sympathy with certain McDowellian themes. Wittgenstein, Diamond tells us, is in the business of clearing away metaphysical confusion, revealing to us how we are trapped in certain philosophical misconceptions. Diamond explicitly draws parallels in this regard with McDowell's interpretation of Wittgenstein's later work. Both share the conception, she says, that Wittgenstein is attempting to free us from the illusory comfort of view from 'sideways on'.

> In the *Tractatus*, the idea of the illusory view from sideways on has a very particular form. When we philosophize we try as it were to occupy a position in which we are stationed outside logic, where logic is that through which we say all the things we ordinarily say, all the things that can be said.[178]

These two considerations suggest not only that reflecting on the issue of saying and showing will bring us quickly to questions of 'sideways-on'

[176] Dummett (1993), p.451.
[177] McDowell (1998b), p.342.
[178] Diamond (1991b), p.185.

perspectives, but also that an analogous reading of the *Tractatus* to the one I claimed most persuasive for the *Investigations* will result through examination of the saying / showing distinction and how it informs the so-called 'new' interpretation. It is within this framework that the examination of the *Tractatus* will proceed.

Chapter Five aims at providing exegesis of the primary text: the saying / showing distinction as it appears in Wittgenstein's remarks on the inexpressibility of form. The aim of this, like the initial engagement with the rule-following passages of the *Investigations* in Chapter One, is to provide markers for future discussion. In Chapter One these took the form of four themes in Wittgenstein's discussion that any satisfactory interpretation would have to respect. Chapter Five aims at introducing an issue that will run through the entire discussion of the *Tractatus*: Wittgenstein's context principle. Wittgenstein tells us: "Only the proposition has sense; only in the context of a proposition has a name meaning."[179] I will argue that an understanding of the context principle is crucial in coming to understand different interpretations of the saying / showing distinction. A certain understanding of the context principle will be shown, in Chapter Six, to be informing Diamond's interpretation of Wittgenstein. Chapter Seven will argue that the question of 'realism' and the *Tractatus* turns on how one understands the context principle.

In Part One the engagement with the primary text was immediately followed by the setting out of extremes of the interpretative debate. One wing

[179] TLP 3.3

read Wittgenstein as offering merely banal reminders about rules; the other wing read Wittgenstein as offering an interesting albeit incoherent account. We then searched for a 'middle-way' between those two extremes, concluding, roughly, that something along the lines offered by McDowell must be right. Given the claims of affinity between McDowell's interpretation of the *Investigations* and her interpretation of the *Tractatus*, it makes sense to adopt a shortcut approach and discuss the 'middle-way' in absence of two interpretative extremes. Chapter Six will, therefore, head straight into Diamond's interpretation. I will argue in Chapter Six that, whilst much of what Diamond says is both interesting and persuasive, it does not provide us with a parallel set of issues arising from the *Tractatus* as those from the *Investigations*. Chapter Six is therefore to be seen as something of a disappointment: we were promised parallels between certain interpretations that do not seem to be there. Building out, however, of Diamond's remarks on 'realism' and the *Tractatus*, Chapter Seven investigates a much more promising comparison between early and late Wittgenstein. This will involve actually setting out extremes to which a 'middle-way' will be preferred.

The structure of Chapter Five is as follows. [5.2] sets out the most fundamental distinction between what can be said and what is merely shown in Wittgenstein's remarks: the inexpressibility of form. I show that understanding Wittgenstein's remarks requires a substantial investigation of the metaphysical commitments of the early sections of the book. [5.3] introduces the relevance of Wittgenstein's context principle to understanding

the saying / showing distinction. This principle, as indicated, will provide the common thread for the chapters on the *Tractatus*. [5.4] sketches different approaches to understanding the saying / showing distinction. There will not be enough in these sketches to convince that any one approach is correct. But I will argue that the kind of interpretation offered by Long looks at least promising.

[5.2] The Inexpressibility of Form

The task for this section is to present Wittgenstein's remarks on the inexpressibility of form. Perhaps the easiest and simplest way to introduce matters is through quotation:

> 4.12 Propositions can represent the whole reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it – the logical form.
> To be able to represent the logical form, we should have to be able to put ourselves outside logic, that is outside the world.
> 4.121 Propositions cannot represent the logical form: that mirrors itself in the propositions.
> That which mirrors itself in language, language cannot represent.
> That which expresses *itself* in language, *we* cannot express by language.
> The propositions *show* the logical form of reality.
> They exhibit it.

We need to unpack some of this. For Wittgenstein, propositions can represent or picture reality in its entirety. Propositions cannot, however, picture 'logical form' where this is defined as that which a proposition has in common with what it pictures so as to be a picture of it. In order to picture logical form a

proposition would have to be stationed outside of logic. But that is clearly impossible for Wittgenstein. That is not to say that there is no connection between logical form and propositions. On the contrary; logical form, Wittgenstein tells us, is reflected or mirrored in propositions. Propositions display or show their logical form, even though they cannot express it. So, for example, consider a proposition ascribing a property to an object such as 'Andy is fat'. What shows forth, according to Wittgenstein, is the logical form of this proposition. We would characterise it as: φ (ξ). What we have is a distinction between what can be said or expressed by means of language and what can merely be shown or reflected in language. And: "What *can* be shown *cannot* be said."[180]

Why not? That is: *why* is it impossible for a proposition to say or express its own logical form? What kind of impossibility is this? Answering these questions involves first answering others. What does Wittgenstein mean by 'logical' or 'formal' properties, relations and concepts? What is 'logical form' (that which a proposition must have in common with what it is picturing in order to be a picture of it)? For these answers we must look to discussions featuring earlier in the *Tractatus*: in particular to Wittgenstein's discussion of pictorial form.

Some basics of the picture theory will ease our way:

2.12 The picture is a model of reality.
2.13 To the objects correspond in the picture the elements of the picture.

[180] TLP 4.1212

> 2.131 The elements of the picture stand, in the picture, for the objects.
> 2.14 The picture consists in the fact that its elements are combined with one another in a definite way.

Propositions picture or represent reality. A collision between a car and a pram might be represented by means of a toy pram and a toy car in a courtroom. The toys could then be used to provide a three-dimensional model of the accident. The model could serve to demonstrate the distances involved, the angle of impact, and so on. Propositions, for the *Tractatus*, picture reality in much the same way; they provide a model of reality.

> In the proposition a world is as it were put together experimentally. (As when in the law-court in Paris a motor-car accident is represented by means of dolls, etc)[181]

The objects in reality correspond to the elements of the picture. The natural way to read this would be that the model car corresponds to the actual car, and the model pram corresponds to the actual pram, and so on. We need to be careful, however, when discussing the 'objects' of the *Tractatus*. Here objects are simple – they "form the substance of the world"[182] as opposed being contingent items in the world. Possible worlds are distinguished not by which objects are in them – for the objects are constant across worlds – but by the configuration of those objects. Just what makes the picture the picture it is, is not what elements there are, but how those elements are combined. I will return to the status of objects for the *Tractatus* in Chapter Seven and again in Part Three. Our task here is to establish what this might have to do with *form*.

[181] NB 29.09.14.
[182] TLP 2.021

I should note that there are interpretive issues with the very phrase 'pictorial form' ('*Form der Abbildung*'). Pears and McGuinness use the term, presumably to distinguish it from 'representational form' ('*Form der Darstellung*'). Ogden makes no such distinction – with 'form of representation' standing for both German phrases. Commentators disagree over this. Kenny, for example, distinguishes between the two kinds of form: 'Pictorial form' is what makes A like B, what A has in common with B. 'Representational form' is what makes A unlike B, what makes A merely a picture and not a "reduplicated reality" of B. Although even Kenny 'hedges his bets' somewhat:

> This appears to be what Wittgenstein meant by '*Form der Darstellung*', if he did not mean this expression to be synonymous with '*Form der Abbildung*'.[183]

Sullivan argues for the opposite: that '*Form der Darstellung*' is "merely a stylistic variant"[184] of '*Form der Abbildung*' – citing evidence that Wittgenstein was happy to suppress any distinction when commenting on the first translation into English. Whatever the truth here, I am anxious to avoid getting bogged down. I hope the reader can grant me 'pictorial form' as standing for '*Form der Abbildung*' and that we can suspend judgement on '*Form der Darstellung*'. Nothing, I hope, turns on this.

Even if those messy interpretive concerns can be avoided problems remain. For, as Ramsey[185] pointed out, 'pictorial form' is given, in the space of just under a page of text, what appear to be three different meanings. First:

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[183] Kenny (1973), p.57.
[184] Sullivan (2001), p.107.
[185] Ramsey (1923)

2.15 That the elements of the picture are combined with one another in a definite way, represents that the things are so combined with one another.
This connexion of the elements of the picture is called its structure, and the possibility of this structure is called the pictorial form of the picture.

Pictorial form is the possibility that the elements of the picture are combined so as to be that very picture.

2.151 The pictorial form is the possibility that the things are combined with one another as are the elements of the picture.

Pictorial form here is the possibility that the things or objects in reality are combined with one another in the same way as the elements of the picture are combined.

2.17 What the picture must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it after its manner – rightly or falsely – is its pictorial form.

Finally, pictorial form is that which a picture must have in common with reality to represent it at all. It is indeed far from obvious that these three definitions can be subsumed under one term 'pictorial form'. Sullivan appears to think that they can. We should conceive of a proposition, he argues, as a combination of expressions – a combination of words and/or phrases. These expressions have a certain range of possibilities built into them. That is: ways in which they can fit with other expressions in propositions, and in other propositional contexts. Such possibilities are 'internal' in that they are

essential to that expression being the expression it is. The following discussion of internal properties might be instructive:

> 4.123 A property is internal if it is unthinkable that this object does not possess it.
> (This blue colour and that stand in the internal relation of brighter and darker eo ipso. It is unthinkable that *these* two objects should not stand in this relation.)

So, it is unthinkable that *this* expression does not have *these* possibilities. Or, to use an example considered in Chapter One [1.3.1], a rule and its requirements are internally related: the rule would simply not be the rule it is if it did not have these requirements. Wittgenstein is here calling an expression's potential for combination with other expressions the form. And so, Sullivan concludes:

> [To] talk of the pictorial *form* of a proposition is to draw attention to the fact that any particular propositional structure is an actualization of possibilities of use built into the forms of the constituent expressions.[186]

This does make some sense of 2.15 – in that pictorial form is the very possibility of a proposition's structure. But how are we now to account for the apparent 'jump' between 2.15 and 2.151? A jump that is, from talk of propositions and *their* structure to reality and *its* structure? If our propositions and reality really do line-up perfectly with one another, then 2.151 would seem to make sense. For, the internal possibilities of expressions would correlate with internal possibilities of objects in reality. But why should we think that propositions and reality line-up so neatly?

[186] Sullivan (2001), p.103.

> 2.1511 Thus the picture is linked with reality; it reaches up to it.

One way propositions and reality, names and objects, could be made to line up is by holding that it is the job of language to reflect the way the world is: objects set a standard for our propositions to meet. That kind of idea is at least suggested in certain passages. For example:

> 4.0312 The possibility of propositions is based upon the principle of the representation of objects by signs.

But we should question whether a crude object-name relationship is really the view of the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein holds that a proposition and what it pictures must have something in common: the way the names of the proposition combine so as to make the proposition the one it is must mirror the way the objects might combine in reality. Wittgenstein's thought appears to be that what it is to genuinely be a name is to share the possibilities of combination in propositions as the corresponding object has in states of affairs. It is bound up with being a name that it lines-up with reality in this way; otherwise it would not be a name at all. Wittgenstein is to be seen as saying that there is no issue over how names line up neatly with objects: 'that's just what being a name is'. We will return to these issues in Chapter Seven.

Wittgenstein clearly maintains that the possibilities of combination of names correlate with the possibilities of combination of objects. Otherwise, it just wouldn't be a picture at all:

> 2.16 In order to be a picture a fact must have something in common with what it pictures.
> 2.161 In the picture and the pictured there must be something identical in order that the one can be a picture of the other at all.

This links into 2.17. For, unless there was a correlation between possibilities so described, there couldn't be a picture. Crucially, there would be nothing in common between a picture and what it pictures and therefore no picturing relation. It would be of interest to pursue this point further through discussion of the motivation for thinking that there must be something common between a picture and what it pictures; what generates such motivation. I will touch on this issue again in Part Three. For now we are interested not so much in the why but the what: what is it that is common between a picture and what it pictures on Wittgenstein's view? We are getting closer to answer, but other pieces of the jigsaw are required.

At 2.172 Wittgenstein tells us: "The picture, however, cannot represent its form of representation; it shows forth." The argument for this appears to be given in the following two sections:

> 2.173 The picture represents its object from without (its standpoint is its form of representation), therefore the picture represents its object rightly or falsely.
> 2.174 But the picture cannot place itself outside of its form of representation.

A picture's 'object' is to be understood as a situation in reality. Wittgenstein is assuming that a picture can only be said to represent its object if it can get it right or wrong. 2.173 claims that a picture can only represent its object rightly or wrongly from a position outside of what it represents. 2.174 claims that a picture cannot occupy a position outside of its own form. The conclusion, therefore, is that a picture cannot represent its own form. As Morris puts it:

> The claim of 2.172 is, then, that a picture which represents *that* things are a certain way cannot represent that it's possible for its own elements to be the same way. The reason is, apparently, that a picture cannot 'place itself outside' its own form of representation.[187]

How are we to understand 'outside' in this context? At 2.22 Wittgenstein says: "The picture represents what it represents, independently of its truth or falsehood, through the form of representation." A picture's genuinely representing requires it being independent of whether it represents things rightly or wrongly.

What is the relationship between pictorial form and logical form?

2.18 What every picture, of whatever form, must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it at all – rightly or falsely – is the logical form, that is, the form of reality.
2.181 If the pictorial form is the logical form, then the picture is called a logical picture.
2.182 Every picture is *also* a logical picture. (On the other hand, for example, not every picture is spatial.)
2.19 The logical picture can depict the world.

[187] Morris (forthcoming), p.85.

The idea here appears to be that logical form is simply the broadest or most basic kind of form: what every picture, of every possible form, must have is logical form. Different pictures could have different pictorial forms but must still share logical form – the form of reality. For example: I could describe my new bathroom design to a friend, show her my childlike sketch on paper or show her the 3D computer simulation the people at MFI did for me. These representations have different pictorial form: the second and third are spatial whereas the first is not, the third is coloured whereas the first two are not, and so on. But each of them share logical form.

So what is it, then, that a picture must share with the reality it pictures to be a picture of it? Let us return to the model car and pram in the courtroom. There are, of course, going to be a number of differences between a picture and what it pictures: between the courtroom model of the collision and the actual collision. What we need to do is separate what is essential to the picture being the picture it is from what is inessential; find that which is required for the proxies to be in a relation representing how the actual objects were related. The colour of the pieces used to represent the car and pram is clearly inessential. That the car was red (even if that were essential to the case) could be symbolised in many different ways; painting it red would be the most obvious but one could draw an 'R' on the side of the relevant piece and so on. That the pieces are shaped like a pram and a car is also inessential, it could still be a representation if wooden blocks were used as a replacement for the models. Are the spatial relations between the proxies (wooden blocks,

models, whatever) required? We might initially think so – how else could the proxies be in a relation representing how the actual objects were related? Sullivan argues that this too is inessential: "we can suppose that the spatial order of the vehicles is represented by a temporal order in which their proxies are placed."[188] How might that work? Presumably, that the proxies are placed in a temporal order, at staggered points, representing the relation between the actual objects. But even the physical objects we might use in this temporal story seem inessential. A verbal description of the collision would also serve to represent it.

> All material identity – colour for colour, space for space – having been abstracted away, what remains is identity of form: that the combination exemplified by the proxies in the picture is an exemplification of the combinatory possibilities of the coordinated things. For only in that way can those proxies be indeed proxies for those things.[189]

The notion of replacement is crucial here: all material aspects could be replaced by or assigned to something else. Sullivan's contention is that once we have abstracted away all that is inessential to a picture we end up with that which cannot be abstracted away – identity of form. A picture's ability to picture is no longer a physical consideration, but rather a matter of mere intelligibility. What is essential cannot be replaced.

It is worth noting that an understanding of the context principle is operating in the background of this discussion. A common form is what is required for representation. The final sentence of the passage quoted from

[188] Sullivan (2001), p.109.
[189] Sullivan (2001) p.109.

Sullivan is meant to be an echo of the context principle: Proxies can only be proxies for things insofar as they share a common form. Or, in other words, only in the context provided by the form can a name be a name.

But what, exactly, does that leave us with? We want to represent the car standing in a certain relation to the pram. We have cleared away the inessential elements of the representation. What we have left is simply the logical or formal relation: ζ φ ξ. There are two items standing in a certain relation. And it is *that* that is common, or identical, between the representation of the collision and the actual collision. Wittgenstein's claim, at 4.12, that propositions cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it – the logical form – is therefore to be understood as the claim that, for any given proposition it cannot represent, it cannot say, that it is of a certain logical form.

We have cleared up some confusion to leave ourselves with a question to answer: 'Why is it impossible for a proposition to represent logical form?' That is: why is it impossible for a proposition of the form, for example, ζ φ ξ to say that it is of that form? Unfortunately, Wittgenstein then immediately appears to raise a different question.

> 4.124 The existence of an internal property of a possible state of affairs is not expressed by a proposition, but expresses itself in a proposition which presents that state of affairs, by an internal property of this proposition.
> It would be as senseless to ascribe a formal property to a proposition as to deny it the formal property
> 4.1241 One cannot distinguish forms from one another by saying that one has this property, the other that: for this assumes that there is a sense in asserting either property of either form.

What's going on here? The initial part of 4.124 appears to be repeating issues of inexpressibility. In that an internal property of a situation cannot be expressed by means of a proposition, but reveals itself by means of an internal property of a proposition. Wittgenstein then moves onto to argue that is senseless to assert that a proposition has or lacks a logical property. We cannot say that a proposition is of a certain logical form as opposed to another one. That is: we couldn't say that proposition is of the form ζ φ ξ as opposed to any other form, it has *this* formal property as opposed to *that* one. For that would suppose that it made sense to ascribe either of those properties to either of those forms. This prompts a different question from that discussed above: 'why is it impossible to say of a proposition that it is of a certain logical form?' That is: why is it impossible to say of a proposition of the form, for example, ζ φ ξ, that it is of that form?

> 4.126 That anything falls under a formal concept as an object belonging to it, cannot be expressed by a proposition. But it is shown in the symbol for that object itself. (The name shows that it signifies an object, the numerical sign that it signifies a number, etc.)
> Formal concepts cannot, like proper concepts, be presented by a function.

We now appear to be in some trouble. We started with an initial characterisation of the inexpressibility of form: that it is in some way or another impossible. I argued that we needed to sharpen our understanding of the claim Wittgenstein is making in order to properly form a question to the effect: 'but why?' This led us into close evaluation of the picture theory.

Unfortunately close analysis of the text reveals that Wittgenstein makes at least two claims. The first is that it is impossible for a proposition to represent logical form. The second is that it is impossible to say of a proposition that is of a certain logical form. These look like different claims. So when we ask 'but why?' we appear to be asking different questions.

[5.3] The Context Principle

Wittgenstein's context principle was introduced in [5.1]: "Only the proposition has sense; only in the context of a proposition has a name meaning."[190] Wittgenstein was clearly influenced in this regard by "the great works of Frege"[191]. Frege maintained, in the Introduction to *Grundlagen*, that we are "never to ask for the meaning of a word in isolation, but only in the context of a proposition."[192] Later in the book he asserts: "it is only in the context of a proposition that words have any meaning."[193]

Settling what the context principle means, whether that be for Frege or for Wittgenstein, is no easy matter. Our initial task is to settle the very least any such principle could mean.

> The context principle does not say that a word may have one meaning in one context and a different meaning in another; it says that it may be said to have a meaning at all only as occurring in *some* context. […] it is plain that it is a principle concerning what it is for a word to have meaning, and does not imply that its meaning may legitimately vary from one occurrence to the other.[194]

[190] TLP 3.3
[191] TLP Preface
[192] Frege (1968), p.x.
[193] Frege (1968), §62
[194] Dummett (1981), p.364.

Here Dummett is remarking on what Frege understood by the context principle. Dummett neatly assesses the kind of question to which the context principle is supposed to provide an answer. It is a very general question: 'what is it for a word to have meaning?' The principle maintains that to explain the meaning of a word is to explain the meaning it has in a given proposition. We cannot hope to abstract the word away from the proposition: for the meaning of a word just is the way it contributes to the meaning of the proposition in which it occurs. The context principle is, however, to be seen as compatible with asking particular questions, such as: 'what does this word mean?' The compositionality of language is to be respected: by grasping the meaning of a word we can go on to understand other, novel, sentences in which that word occurs.

We have already seen an understanding of the context principle coming to the surface of our discussion. The first was when we worried about an apparent jump in Wittgenstein's remarks from talk about propositions and their structure to talk of reality and its structure. Wittgenstein seemed to be assuming that propositions and the reality they represent line up neatly. It looked wishful thinking, at best, to maintain that this correlation could be maintained through a crude object-name relationship. Reflecting on the context principle resulted in this thought: that the lining up of propositions and reality, names and objects, has to be the case for there to be something common between a picture and what it pictures. Being a name *just is* having

the combinatory possibilities in propositions that the object it stands for has in states of affairs. If not, it is not a genuine name at all. This replaces a crude 'naming-game' with the recognition that only within a given context does a name stand for an object. The second place the principle emerged was in the process of abstracting away what is inessential to a pictures being the picture it is. The thought there was that what cannot be extracted away is logical form. A proxy is a proxy only insofar as it shares the logical combinatory possibilities of what it stands for. Any attempt to replace this combination with further proxies is hopeless: that something can be a proxy for something else depends on sharing such a combination. Put more simply: only in the context provided by the shared form can a name genuinely be a name.

Reflecting on the results of the two appearances of the context principle in our discussion already prompts us to think that Wittgenstein meant something more by his context principle than our initial description. The initial suggestion was that we could abstract the meaning of a word from the propositions in which it occurs. Wittgenstein's further claim, it seems, is that a word has no meaning outside of its occurrence in a proposition. A name is only a name in a given context.

> 3.328 If a sign is *not necessary* then it is meaningless. That is the meaning of Occam's razor.
> (If everything in the symbolism works as though a sign had meaning, then it has meaning.)

Here Wittgenstein looks to be not only endorsing the claim that attending to the propositional context of use is necessary in coming to understand what a

word means but also that it is sufficient, nothing else is required. If the name functions as if it does stand for an object then it does actually stand for that object. This reading of the principle, as Sullivan points out, directs us towards a kind of 'internalism' about language: "this is the claim that there is no perspective external to language from which we may certify as correct, or reject as misconceived, its ontological commitments."[195] Wittgenstein clearly moves from the initial characterisation of the principle. Quite how far will be a recurring theme in subsequent chapters.

At the end of [5.2] it appeared we had run into a serious problem. Wittgenstein appeared to be offering two distinct claims about the inexpressibility of form. The general drift was towards the claim that it is impossible for a proposition to represent logical form. But another claim seemed to develop, namely: it is impossible to say of a proposition that it is of a certain form. These two questions appear to differ over how to understand the term 'represent'. Does this mean 'name' (stand for), or, in contrast, 'say'? The first claim amounts to saying that, unlike the objects themselves, the way objects are combined cannot be proxied. The second claim amounts to saying that we cannot say of a proposition that is of this or that logical form. [5.4] will show that these are not, for Wittgenstein, separate questions at all. In doing so the importance of the context principle will be further demonstrated.

[5.4] Attempts to Characterise the Saying / Showing Distinction

[195] Sullivan (2001)

I start with answers aimed at the second question: 'why is it impossible to say of a proposition that it is of a certain logical form?' The suggested answer is this: It just doesn't make sense to attempt to express such things in words. A proposition wouldn't be the very proposition it is without having such-and-such formal properties, or falling under a certain logical category. Attempting to assert that a proposition is, for example, a two-placed relation 'opens the door' to the possibility that it might not fall under that logical category, it could have been otherwise. But that is simply inconceivable. Such a possibility would rule out the proposition being the very proposition it is. For example, let's say we attempt to distinguish $\zeta\ \varphi\ \xi$ from $\varphi\ (\xi)$ by saying the former falls under a certain logical category, the latter a distinct logical category. But that just doesn't make any sense. There is no common ground for logical categories, no level at which one may possibly be mistaken for another category. This appears to fit with Wittgenstein's remarks at, in particular, 4.2141. There is no sense in asserting a property of a certain form.

Kenny offers a similar interpretation of the distinction between saying and showing in regard to the 4.12's:

> As a first attempt to explain the distinction, one might say that something can be *said* if it would be possible for a hearer to grasp the content of what was communicated to him without knowing its truth-value; or, to put it another way, it can be said that *p* only if a questioner can formulate a question 'Is it the case that *p*?' without yet knowing the answer to it. For Wittgenstein, something can be *said* only if it could be passed on to somebody as a piece of new information.[196]

[196] Kenny (1973), p.46.

Take the tautology: 'If it is Sunday the shops are shut, and it is Sunday, then the shops are shut.' This shows something about the formal properties of language. Namely: that 'The shops are shut' follows from 'If it is Sunday, the shops are shut' and 'It is Sunday.' But why is it impossible to express of language that it has such and such formal properties? Kenny's answer is this: To understand those propositions one must take them not as meaningless marks but as English expressions. To do this, a person must already grasp English and know rules for the use of English expressions such as 'If it is Sunday the shops are shut'. But, if a person already knows such rules then he is in the position of already knowing that 'The shops are shut' follows from 'If it is Sunday the shops are shut' and 'It is Sunday.' So no information has been conveyed by this attempt to say what really can only be shown. The common thread of my initial attempt and Kenny's could be summarised thus: necessary truths are unsayable.

I want to raise two concerns with such an interpretation that, whilst not devastating, provide motivation for a more a suitable alternative. First, there is a concern that we are using a rather blunt unwieldy instrument to crack what is a very subtle nut: we are using Wittgenstein's notion of bipolarity to explain saying and showing. Bipolarity can be traced back to some of Wittgenstein pre-*Tractatus* remarks:

> To have meaning *means* to be true or false: the being true or false actually constitutes the relation of the proposition to reality, which we mean by saying that it has meaning.[197]

[197] NB, p.113.

So, for Wittgenstein, if a statement really is a genuine expression of thought, really does convey information, then it must have two poles: a truth pole and a false pole. There must be circumstances that make the proposition true along with circumstances that make the proposition false. If this is not the case then the proposition in question lacks sense. The consequence of this is that, for Wittgenstein, tautologies and contradictions lack sense. The concern here is that generating the saying / showing distinction requires that we already have a large chunk of Wittgenstein's theory in play. Or, better; what we want is an account of saying and showing that, whilst compatible with, does not *depend on* bipolarity. The second concern arises out of the first: this interpretation just looks all too easy. Wittgenstein directs a substantial amount of his discussion toward the saying / showing distinction. It seems hard to reconcile that with the apparent ease of setting up the distinction on our current interpretation. 'Tautologies and contradictions cannot be said because they do not convey any information, but rather reveal themselves in language'. Wittgenstein could have expounded *that* view in a couple of paragraphs. We would seem be left with a rather uncomfortable choice. Either Wittgenstein was unable to express his own view in a short, succinct, manner or he was deliberately being obtuse in his exposition. Neither of these options presents Wittgenstein (nor his distinction) in a good light. Such worries are, as I said, flesh wounds at worst. But they do open up a requirement for a more suitable interpretation of what is going on in these puzzling passages on saying and showing.

We have attempted to answer the 'why not?' from one direction. Let us now turn to the other: 'why is it impossible for a proposition to represent logical form?' Long's paper "Formal Relations" is a good, if taxing, place to start. Take the relation of a city to the country of which it is the capital or the relation of a man to a child of whom he is the father. The first relation can be expressed in sentences such as: 'London is the capital of the United Kingdom', 'Paris is the capital of France', 'Berlin is the capital of Germany' and so on. These sentences share the expression 'capital of'. The second relation can be expressed in sentences such as 'Prince Philip is the father of Prince Charles', 'Prince Charles is the father of Prince William' and so on. These sentences share the expression 'father of'. But how are we to express "the relation of an object to a function of which it is the argument?"[198] Long's contention is that we cannot put such a relation into words at all. Echoing 4.121, Long suggests that this relation is not one that can be expressed *by means of* language, but rather expresses itself *in* language.

Frege held that a concept is a particular case of a function. So, the sense in which we speak of the relation between an object and a concept it falls under is the same as the relation between an object and a function of which it is the argument. If we write 'Gold falls under the concept *malleable*' instead of 'Gold is malleable' we are not expressing in words with the longer sentence a relation that is expressed without words in the shorter sentence. It would be like writing 'the value of the function *capital of* for the argument Germany' in place of 'the capital of Germany'.

[198] Long (1982), p.151.

> Suppose someone now thought that the longer designation contained an expression – *viz.*, 'the value of the function ___ for the argument …' – for the relation of an object to a function of which it is the argument. Would this not be manifestly absurd?[199]

Well, would it be manifestly absurd? Doesn't 'the value of the function ___ for the argument …' capture the relation of an object to a function of which it is the argument? We could 'plug in' things to the gaps in the expression, just as we can for the expressions '___ is the father of …' or '___ is the capital of …' For example: 'the value of the function fatness for the argument Andy' or 'the value of the function useless for the argument Steve McClaren'.

Long holds that statements like: 'There is no expression for the relation of one body to another that lies beneath it' are obviously false. This statement expresses a relation in denying any such relation is expressible. Long argues that the same is not happening with statements like: 'There is no expression for the relation of an object to a concept it falls under.' *This* statement is supposedly concerning the grammar of 'relation'. Equally:

> In saying, "The relation of an object to a concept it falls under expresses *itself* in language and is not one that we express by means of language", we have not in the same breath expressed the very relation that we are saying cannot be expressed.[200]

There is a difference in kind then, for Long, between 'lies beneath' and 'falls under'. Whereas the former is a relational expression, the latter is not. Since 'falls under' is not a relational expression that means that phrases of the form

[199] Long (1982), p.152.
[200] Long (1982), p.152.

'the concept *F*' are not singular terms. So whereas 'the city of Stirling' designates a certain city, 'the concept *malleable*' does not designate a certain concept. So 'falls under' and 'the concept *F*', continues Long, are not signs in their own right, they are not expressions *for* anything. But why not think that the relation between gold and *malleable* in the sentence 'Gold falls under the concept *malleable*' is expressed by the 'falls under'? Long's answer appears to be this: The expression 'the concept *malleable*' is not an expression for a concept. Therefore, it cannot stand for the second term of an object's falling under a certain concept. That being the case, 'falls under' cannot *itself* be an expression for that relation. There is a slight puzzle, then, as to which way round the argument is supposed to run. On the one hand we have the suggestion that *because* 'falls under' is not a relational expression phrases like 'the concept *F*' are not singular terms. On the other we have the suggestion that *because*, for example, 'the concept *malleable*' is not an expression for a concept, 'falls under' cannot be the expression of the relation in question. The latter, I think, is Long's view. It would appear to fit with what Frege himself says, for example, about the concept *horse*:

> Quite so; the three words 'the concept "horse" ' do designate an object, but on that very account they do not designate a concept, as I am using the word.[201]

The concept-object relation is expressed, continues Long, in both 'Gold falls under the concept *malleable*' and 'Gold is malleable' because they both complete a sign for an object with a sign for a concept. The first completes 'ξ

[201] Frege (1966).

falls under the concept *malleable*', the second 'ξ is *malleable*'. Crucially for Long, these two amount to the same thing:

> Hence it comes to the same thing whether we say that the relation of an object's falling under a concept is expressed in a sentence or that the sentence satisfies this formal description. In other words, for this relation to be expressed in a sentence is for the form *Fa* to be expressed in it.[202]

So we don't get any closer to, because we are infinitely far away from, the pure expression of the relation. Now, continues Long, given that it is the same thing for the concept-object relation to be expressed in a sentence and for the form *Fa* to be expressed in it, we ought to call such a relation a 'formal relation'. We can represent it as: φ (ξ). Therefore:

> the grammatical statement 'There is no expression for the relation of an object to a concept it falls under' will then give way to the statement 'There is no expression for the relation φ (ξ)', the truth of which is *manifest*.[203]

Sullivan's answer is comparable to Long's. Sullivan argues that it is a straightforward step from the abstraction process (described above) to the inexpressibility of form. The latter, argues Sullivan, is just the impossibility of a stage of abstraction beyond what has been labelled 'the final stage'. To get beyond this final stage would involve representing the logical combination of the elements of reality not with the logical combination of the proxies in the proposition, but rather with proxies for those proxies. But that is simply inconceivable. A proxy can only be such, as we have discovered, in virtue of

[202] Long (1982), p.153.
[203] Long (1982), p.153.

its logical combination. "The elements of a proposition can represent things in the world *only because* their manner of combination represents nothing but itself."[204]

The common ground between Long and Sullivan is the incoherence of another step beyond, as it were, the final step. This kind of answer appears to have more going for it. We have a story that is both compatible with bipolarity without appealing to it, and also is subtle and complicated enough to warrant a sustained exposition of the view. Moreover, it neatly explains the impossibility for Wittgenstein of expressing logical form by means of a proposition. In doing so it brings together what looked like two different questions.

[5.5] Conclusion

At the narrow level of exegesis we have been examining Wittgenstein's motivation for maintaining the inexpressibility of form: quite what the claim amounts to and what considerations Wittgenstein offers in favour of it. Some progress has been made. The kind of answer suggested by both Long and Sullivan seems plausible. The impossibility of expressing logical form is to be seen as the incoherence of another step beyond the final possible step. The abstraction process, as Sullivan puts it, can go no further. A proxy can only be a proxy in virtue of its logical combination. But I do not pretend that this chapter has finally settled the interpretative debate surrounding this issue. There is much more to be said about the saying / showing distinction.

[204] Sullivan (2001) p.110.

At the strategic level (what this chapter contributes to the aim of Part Two) matters are much more satisfactory. [5.1] set out the shape of Part Two. We now have enough in play to work towards an understanding of the 'new' interpretation offered by Diamond. Diamond uses an understanding of Wittgenstein's distinction between saying and showing both as an inspiration and 'stalking horse' for her interpretation. Chapter Six will investigate this reading of the *Tractatus*.

Chapter Six

Diamond: A New Interpretation?

[6.1] Introduction

This chapter will outline and evaluate Cora Diamond's so-called 'new' interpretation of the *Tractatus*. Chapter Five concluded that Wittgenstein's distinction between saying and showing, whilst still undoubtedly puzzling, was clear enough to begin analysis of different interpretative stances. The rationale for assessing the work of Diamond was set out in [5.1]. Our examination of the *Investigations* involved setting out two extremes of interpretation: the task was then to find a satisfactory 'middle-way' between

them. Here it is hoped that we can avoid having to set out extremes. Diamond argues that she is offering an analogous reading of the *Tractatus* to McDowell's reading of the *Investigations*. Part One concluded that McDowell comes the closest to reading Wittgenstein as offering a coherent and interesting position. So let us take a shortcut and start with Diamond.

This chapter will argue that, unfortunately, the proposed shortcut will not get us to a position of genuine comparison between the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations*. I will argue that Diamond grounds her interpretation by picking a fight where no fight is wanted or indeed required. There appears to be no single or simple difference between her interpretation and the so-called 'traditional' readings she sets out to oppose. There are undoubtedly differences of emphasis or focus between Diamond and those she takes as her opponents. But these differences do not bring into play the kind of issues that were raised in Part One. In short, there is no deep-rooted disagreement between 'new' and 'standard' readings of the book to parallel those outlined with regard to the *Investigations*. We will find, however, that Diamond's remarks do point to another question which *will* help our project: to what extent, if any, is the author of the *Tractatus* a realist? That question will be pursued in Chapter Seven.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. [6.2] uses an influential paper by Geach as a way of linking the discussion of Chapter Five with Diamond's so-called 'new' interpretation. [6.3] outlines Diamond's interpretation of Wittgenstein. [6.4] offers an evaluation: I argue that

Diamond's view does not generate the kind of disagreement we hoped for. I contrast Diamond's interpretation with an account that, whilst clearly wrong, *would* genuinely diverge from 'traditional' readings.

[6.2] Geach on Saying and Showing

Geach's paper is a useful way into Diamond's interpretation because it deals with some of the puzzling issues so far discussed, whilst at the same time providing the dual role of inspiration and 'stalking horse' for Diamond's interpretation.

Geach sets up his paper with a concern one might naturally have with Wittgenstein's distinction between saying and showing: should we not think that, if it follows from a certain doctrine that this doctrine cannot be stated, then this simply amounts to a refutation of the doctrine? As Geach puts it, does this not simply amount to a kind of 'self-mate'? Geach's suggestion – a suggestion we have already seen taken up in Long and Sullivan [5.3] – is that to understand how Wittgenstein avoids the pitfall of self-mating we must attend to 'the great works of Frege':

> I shall here argue that some fundamental aspects of the Wittgensteinian saying / showing contrast are already to be discerned in Frege's writings … Wittgenstein extended the doctrine beyond the limits within which Frege employed it[.][205]

According to Geach, Frege held that there are logical category-distinctions, which clearly show themselves in formalised language, but cannot themselves

[205] Geach (1977), p.55.

be asserted in language. The sentences we use to convey such distinctions are logically improper; they cannot be translated into well-formed symbolic notation. Nevertheless, these sentences have a use and we can *test* whether they convey the intended distinctions – whether through them mastery of the formalised language is attainable.

Let us try and tease some of this out. Frege held that there is a fundamental difference between concepts and objects. Let's take an instance of this:

a) There is a difference between what 'Brutus' stands for and what the predicate '___ killed Caesar' stands for.

Geach claims that Frege held the view, and was required to on pain of 'self-mating', that inserting an expression in the blanks of "what '___' stands for" will result in something that stands for what the expression inserted stands for. For example, "that function of 2 which 'the square of' stands for" is just a long-winded way of saying 'the square of 2'. Equally, "what 'the Duke of Wellington' stands for" is simply a long-winded replacement for the Duke's name. If we apply this principle to a) we get:

b) There is a difference between Brutus and killed Caesar.

This is manifestly nonsense. It appears that Frege has 'self-mated'. But Geach thinks Frege has a way out of this bind. The position he would adopt is to assert that the reduction from a) to the manifest nonsense of b) highlights the fact that we cannot actually construct any significant proposition to say what

we wanted to say in a). But why not think that if it follows from the philosophical doctrine that there is a fundamental difference between concepts and objects that that doctrine cannot be credibly stated that this is a good reason to reject the doctrine? Geach's answer is this: sentences like a) may nevertheless be useful – they may lead someone to understand Frege's concept-script. And the test of whether something useful has been conveyed by sentences like a) is that a person masters the use of symbolic language partly in virtue of it. And I think it's this *testability* of things like a) which is crucial for Geach.

I am only touching on issues in what is a very deep and complex paper by Geach. Interestingly, Geach goes on to argue that Wittgenstein simply took over and extended Frege's doctrine, recognising further category-distinctions which Frege had missed. But we have enough already in play for the purposes of our discussion. As Geach himself puts it, with some of the background of the saying / showing distinction in Frege filled in "the doctrine should no longer appear as mystification, even if it remains mysterious."[206] Geach's concern is that, whilst testability makes sense for those cases in Frege, it is difficult to see how in the disciplines Wittgenstein extends the doctrine to (such as ethics or religion) we could *test* that insights have indeed been conveyed.

[6.3] Diamond

[206] Geach (1977), p.68.

I said that Geach's paper is both an inspiration and 'stalking horse' for 'new' interpreters. Here is Diamond:

> Geach is right that we can best understand what the *Tractatus* holds about saying and showing if we go back to Frege and think about what the saying / showing distinction in its origin looks like there.[207]

And later in the same paper Diamond talks of going "further down the road that Geach points out as a road."[208] The overarching aim of Diamond's paper "Throwing Away the Ladder" is, we are told, to pay attention to Wittgenstein's insistence throughout his philosophical work that he is not putting forward philosophical doctrines or theses. It is only a matter of confusion which would lead one to think that one was offering philosophical doctrines or theses in first place at all. The third theme identified in Wittgenstein's discussion of rules in the *Investigations* [1.3.3] touched on this. We ought not look for ever more complex explanations but, rather, stop and look at the actual practice of following rules. This Quietist thought was developed by both Wright [3.3] and, on one way of reading him, McDowell [4.6].

> I think that there is almost nothing in Wittgenstein which is of value and which can be grasped if it is pulled away from that view of philosophy.[209]

Diamond contends that in order to understand this conception of philosophy, and how it permeates Wittgenstein's writings, we must first understand how

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[207] Diamond (1991b). p.179.
[208] Diamond (1991b), p.180.
[209] Diamond (1991b), p.179.

it figures in the *Tractatus*. There, Diamond argues, it is inseparable from the central theme: the distinction between what can be said and what can be shown. And that brings her back to Geach.

I want to take a brief detour before following Diamond down Geach's road. We need a general grounding in Diamond's strategy. In particular, I want to consider Diamond's discussion on the nature of 'nonsense'. What, one might ask, has this got to do with our current concerns over how to interpret the *Tractatus*?

> 6.54 My propositions serve are elucidatory in this way: he who understands me finally recognises them as nonsensical [*unsinnig*], when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them. (He must so to speak throw away the ladder, after he has climbed up on it.)
> He must surmount these propositions; then he sees the world rightly.

One of the many puzzles in reading this puzzling book is how we ought to take Wittgenstein's, on the face of it paradoxical, claim that his own propositions are nonsense. An answer to such a puzzle will depend, of course, on what we take him to mean by 'nonsense'. Diamond introduces us to her discussion of this question with the following examples of nonsense:

1) Caesar is a prime number
2) Scott kept a runcible at Abbotsford

In virtue of what are these sentences nonsense? One, very natural view, runs as follows: 1) is nonsense in virtue of the meaning of the terms involved. 'Caesar', we can assume, is a proper name. That something is a prime number

can only be truly or falsely said of numbers. We cannot say of a person that he is a prime number or not. Therefore, the two 'bits' – the logical parts – of the sentence do not fit together. In short we have some sort of category error. 2), in contrast, is nonsense in virtue of one of the terms involved lacking meaning. 'Runcible' has no meaning in our language.

Diamond offers an alternative to this natural view of nonsense, something she calls the 'Frege-Wittgenstein' view. She begins by reminding us of Frege's three fundamental principles:

> There must be a sharp separation of the psychological from the logical, the subjective from the objective;
> The meaning of a word must be asked for in the context of a proposition, not in isolation;
> The distinction between concept and object must be kept in mind.[210]

Diamond argues that if we wish to focus on the work done by the 'working parts' of a sentence – those parts in virtue of which the sentence means what it does – then to keep faith with Frege a) we must not refer to psychology and b) we must look at the working parts in the context of the whole sentence rather than in isolation. Here, again, we see the context principle playing a crucial role in the discussion.

Let's begin with 1). The word 'Caesar' appears in this sentence. If I say 'Caesar is a prime number', my state of mind may be exactly the same as when I use the word 'Caesar' in saying 'Caesar crossed the Rubicon'. But this state of mind doesn't prove that 'Caesar' as it occurs in 'Caesar is a prime number' has the role it does in 'Caesar crossed the Rubicon'.

[210] Frege (1963), p.x.

> What I am driving at is this: that if we accept Frege's principle of always separating the psychological from the logical, there must at the very least be a question for us whether "Caesar" in "Caesar is a prime number" is working as the proper name of a person[.][211]

And, of course, a similar consideration applies to the last four words of 1). I may intend those words to mean what they do in '17 is a prime number', but by Frege's lights my state of mind cannot settle whether those words do indeed mean the same.

Returning to 2), Diamond asks us what would 'cure' such a sentence of being nonsense? The obvious suggestion is that the sentence would make sense if a meaning were given to the term 'runcible'. Both the natural view and the Frege-Wittgenstein view would accept that. But the Frege-Wittgenstein view, according to Diamond, denies what the natural view accepts: that it would be possible to assign a meaning to 'runcible' that would *clash* with the remainder of the sentence. The idea is that 'Scott kept a ___ at Abbotsford' has a meaning which is constant in both 'Scott kept a cow at Abbotsford' and 'Scott kept a runcible at Abbotsford'. To give a meaning to the latter sentence one must ascribe a meaning to 'runcible' that fits with 'Scott kept a ___ at Abbotsford'. That is: that fits with the meaning the sentence already has. But:

> On the Frege-Wittgenstein view, if a sentence makes no sense, *no* part of it can be said to mean what it does in some other sentence which it does make sense – any more than a word can be said to mean something in isolation.[212]

[211] Diamond (1991c), p.99.
[212] Diamond (1991c), p.100.

Compare with the *Investigations*:

> When a sentence is called senseless it is not as it were its sense that is senseless. But a combination of words is being excluded from the language, withdrawn from circulation.[213]

If, on this view, 'Caesar is a prime number' is nonsense, then 'Caesar' cannot be taken to mean what it does when used in, for example, 'Caesar crossed the Rubicon'. Equally, 'is a prime number' cannot be taken to mean what it does when used in, for example, '17 is a prime number'. The same applies to 2). If 'Scott kept a runcible at Abbotsford' is nonsense, then 'Scott kept a ___ at Abbotsford' cannot be taken to mean what it does in, for example, 'Scott kept a cow at Abbotsford.'

Diamond's point is that, on the Frege-Wittgenstein account of nonsense, the strategy for curing 2) applies equally to curing 1). We could stipulate that the logical element 'runcible' in 'Scott kept a runcible at Abbotsford' stands for a keep-able kind of thing. 2) will then say that Scott kept such a thing at Abbotsford. Then 2) will be working as 'Scott kept a cow at Abbotsford' works – by combination of the logical element 'Scott kept a ___ at Abbotsford' and a logical element standing for a keep-able-kind-of-thing. In the case of 1) we can proceed in two ways. First, we could assign a meaning to 'Caesar' so that it is a number term. 'Caesar is a prime number' would then turn out to be a logical combination of a number term and the predicate 'is a prime number'. Second, we could assign a meaning to 'number' such that it

[213] *PI* I §500

could be attributable to a person, 'minister' for example. 'Caesar is a prime number' would now be read as a combination of a logical element 'Caesar' as it is understood in 'Caesar crossed the Rubicon' and something it makes perfect sense to say of a person – that of being a prime minister. So, on this view, it is precisely because certain determinations of meaning have not been made in 1) that it turns out to be nonsense. 1) has *words* in common with 'Caesar crossed the Rubicon' and '17 is a prime number', but it fails to conform to either pattern because a meaning has not been given to 'Caesar' or a meaning has not been given to 'is a prime number'. On this way of thinking, then, nonsense of type 1) turns out to share a fundamental aspect of nonsense of type 2).

The Frege-Wittgenstein view is to be seen as denying a 'functional' account of nonsense. The natural view holds that whether a sentence makes sense depends on its parts, on their logical category. Nonsense of the type expressed by 1) is dependent on the functionality of the terms involved: whether you get sense or nonsense when you replace the word 'Caesar' in 1) depends on the category of word you put in. Nonsense comes out if you put in terms of certain categories (names, objects), sense comes out if you put in terms of a certain other category (numbers). The Frege-Wittgenstein view, as Diamond presents it, denies this: A word does not have a category which, as it were, it carries around with it, which it brings to whatever context the word is used.

> Sentences are not made up of ingredients, words-assigned-to-certain-categories, but are constructed on patterns, where the category of a word in a sentence depends upon the pattern (or patterns) in accordance with which the whole sentence may be taken to be constructed[.][214]

The idea is that nonsense cannot be 'constructed' by putting words of such-and-such categories together in a sentence so that nonsense results. It would, suggests Diamond, be an example of an 'illogical language'. Here we can see Diamond's reliance on a reading of the context principle. Words only have meaning in the context in which they appear; they do not have a meaning prior to or independently of their occurrence in propositions.

Other than wishing to remain faithful to Frege's fundamental principles we are yet to hear why the Frege-Wittgenstein view is to be preferred, or, indeed, what is mistaken about the natural view. Diamond does highlight an objection for the natural view. The objection *seems* to be that the natural view is guilty of some sort of 'double-think'. In the sentence 'Caesar is a prime number' we have been saying there is no genuine thought, just a string of words imitating an expression of a thought. Only a sentence which did genuinely express the thought that Caesar is a prime number would have the structure we think we can see, we pretend or imagine we can see, in the sentence 'Caesar is a prime number'. That is: only a sentence that did say this individual, Caesar, was a prime number would contain illegitimately combined categories. The idea that the sentence is nonsense because of the categories in it being combined illegitimately implicitly acknowledges the

[214] Diamond (1991c), p.105.

notion of those categories forming a sentence that does say something. But that is impossible; such a thing cannot be sayable, on the natural view, at all.

Diamond frames her discussion by speaking of 'positive' nonsense. She argues that, for Wittgenstein, "there is *no* kind of nonsense which is nonsense on account of what the terms composing it mean – there is as it were no 'positive' nonsense."[215] Any genuine nonsense is nonsense in virtue of a lack of determination of meaning, rather than as a result of determinations of meaning that have been made. Diamond contends that the opposition to 'positive' nonsense – opposition to the view that a sentence is nonsense in virtue of what it would mean given the fixed meanings of the terms it contains – is one Wittgenstein held throughout his writings: right through from the pre-*Tractatus* writings to the *Investigations*.

It is somewhat confusing why such nonsense is worthy of the term 'positive'. Presumably 'yellow orange red' would be a putative example of positive nonsense, in that it could be regarded as nonsense in virtue of determinations of meaning that have been made. The thought must be that cases of positive nonsense would be more philosophically interesting, or of more value than, 'mere' nonsense. But where would that value lie? I think it must be something like this: with some 'positive nonsense sentences' – say 'Caesar is a prime number' – we can, as it were, go along with the 'charade' for a while. We can understand, given the words involved, what the sentence is trying to say, if only it could say it. We can grasp that the sentence is attempting to ascribe something to a person that can only legitimately be

[215] Diamond (1991c), p.107.

ascribed to a number. So something understandable is conveyed even though, strictly speaking, the sentence is nonsense.

It might be worth noting why this debate surrounding nonsense might be thought important, beyond localised quibbling over how to interpret the *Tractatus*. This will help us see the beginnings of a connection with the kind of issues touched on in Part One. The suggestion would be that the debate over nonsense – whether there is such a thing as 'positive' nonsense – cuts right to the heart of an issue for philosophy in general. Namely: the issue of what philosophy should be doing, what the task for philosophy is. If you think there is such a thing as positive nonsense then it looks like you can demarcate between that which makes sense and that which does not. So we can say 'Caesar is a prime minister' makes sense, but 'Caesar is a prime number' does not because, if allow the 'charade', you see what it is trying to say cannot be said. In that way we could 'stake out' a line between what makes sense and what does not, what can be thought and what cannot, what is logical and what is illogical, what is possible and what is impossible. And we see both sides of this line or boundary: see how the land lies. And it is a line we can systematically get beyond to highlight where the line actually is. If, on the other hand, we deny 'positive' nonsense, the suggestion is that philosophy becomes a very different discipline all together. There is now no way of getting beyond the bounds of sense, any attempt to do so ends up with 'mere' nonsense, mere strings of word on a page, where the words do not mean what they do in sentences that do make sense. If we cannot get beyond the

line we can no longer stake out that line from both sides. Instead we have a limit from which we can get no further. Philosophy built on this restriction is more therapeutic by nature. It is simply in the business of clearing up what can be meaningfully said, or thought, clearing up what is possible. And the task is to show that we cannot do more than that, we cannot break the bounds of sense.

The notion that we could adopt an external, 'sideways-on', perspective on our practices or on our grasp of concepts is what both Dummett and McDowell read the latter Wittgenstein as rejecting. In Part Three we will need to return to the issue of 'sideways-on' looks, the distinction between limits as genuine limits as opposed to limitations, and what relationship there is between such issues and idealism. But we need something much more specific in play before any general comparison can take place: we want an explicit connection between the *Tractatus* and a 'sideways-on' perspective.

Diamond draws a contrast between two ways one might take the suggestion that there are no philosophical doctrines. First, one could read the *Tractatus* as containing a number of doctrines that Wittgenstein argues cannot be put into words. Such doctrines lack sense. If we were to read the *Tractatus* that way, according to Diamond, we are suggesting that once the ladder has been 'thrown away' you are left with truths about reality, although you cannot say anything about reality. So, it appears, there are ineffable truths. This kind of reading Diamond labels as 'chickening out'. Second, you could not 'chicken out' – and be 'resolute' instead - and maintain that the notion of

an unsayable truth is itself going to have to be thrown away. "One is not left with it at the end, after recognizing what the *Tractatus* has aimed at getting one to recognise"[216].

This supposed contrast needs further analysis. Diamond clearly thinks that there is value or insight to be gleaned from the *Tractatus*, despite the fact that, strictly speaking, the book consists of propositions that lack sense. It is not as though being 'resolute' amounts to simply throwing away the book, dismissing the project out of hand. What would it be, then, to understand or gain some insight from a person who talks nonsense? Diamond considers this is a further paper. The *Tractatus* argues, she suggests, that when you ascribe to someone the thought that *p*, you give what the person thinks by using a sentence you yourself understand. Understanding what a person says, for example, is shown by putting what s/he says in a sentence of your language. Crucial to this story is that what is not happening is a description of the other person's mind from the point of view of empirical psychology. But what are we to make, then, of the utterer of nonsense? Diamond accepts that understanding a person who utters nonsense is often required in philosophy. I may say to someone that they are under an illusion of some sort, and when I try to specify the illusion I myself mean something that doesn't make sense. The *Tractatus* asks us to understand Wittgenstein – understand the utterer of nonsense.

Diamond clarifies two ideas relating to nonsense-sentences and their role in the *Tractatus*. She argues, first, that no nonsense-sentences are closer to

[216] Diamond (1991b), p.182.

being true than any other. This, she says, places her in direct opposition to Anscombe – who (apparently) argues that there are some nonsense-sentences which would say something true if what they are an attempt to say could be said. This, for Diamond, introduces a hierarchy within nonsense-sentences:

> [Anscombe] works with the contrast between nonsense-sentences that have something, something true but unsayable, behind them, and those that have nothing but confusion behind them.[217]

For example, if we were to say "There is a distinction between objects and facts", that sentence aims at something that is true, although the sentence itself is nonsense. Diamond wants to reject such a picture. This discussion fleshes out some of Diamond's remarks on 'nonsense' and on the 'chickening out' reading of the *Tractatus*. A nonsense-sentence that had something true but unsayable 'standing behind' it would be an example of positive nonsense: what such a sentence gestures at is true, what it attempts to say (given the meaning of the terms in the sentence) is correct but it just cannot be said. "The philosophical perspective is fine, but you just need to shut up."[218] This amounts to 'chickening out', not taking on Wittgenstein's remarks resolutely enough. Diamond accuses Anscombe of doing just that.

Second, Diamond examines the role imagination plays in coming out with nonsense-sentences. Here she does want to draw a distinction between different kinds of nonsense. The distinction is not, she suggests, between 'good' and 'bad' nonsense – between nonsense gesturing at truth and mere

[217] Diamond (2000), p.158.
[218] Diamond (1991b), p.196.

nonsense. Nonsense-sentences, for Diamond, are all 'internally' the same – they are simply nonsense. But 'externally' they may actually differ. For example, in the case of a particular nonsense-sentence "its utterance may fail to reflect an understanding of oneself or of others; it may depend on this or that type of use of imagination."[219] It as not as if we can say a nonsense-sentence is elucidatory in virtue of the sentence it is, in virtue of the meaning of the terms and expressions involved, yet such a sentence may nevertheless elucidate in some way: "For a sentence that is nonsense to be an elucidatory sentence is entirely a matter of features external to it"[220] The crucial question is what exactly Diamond intends 'elucidate' to mean. In a footnote she argues that a proposition being an elucidation concerns the context of use rather than the content itself. Saying philosophy consists of elucidations and that philosophy is an activity amounts to saying the same thing. That is somewhat obscure. I think, again, it highlights how deep and fundamental Diamond's reading of Wittgenstein's context principle goes. Clearly Diamond is advocating a kind of nonsense that is simply nonsense, yet nevertheless can be used, in virtue of its 'external' features, to convey information.

Diamond examines contexts in which nonsense-sentences are put forward, investigating how imagination can play a role in the producing of nonsense: in particular in our imagining of a point of view for philosophical investigation. Such an illusory point of view is exactly, according to Diamond, what the *Tractatus* self-consciously gets itself into. The point of doing so is to

[219] Diamond (2000), p.159.
[220] Diamond (2000), p.159.

reveal that the attractiveness of the point of view results from an incorrect or false imaginative stance. Take, for example, the opening sentences (TLP 1, 1.1) of the book: "The world is everything that is the case. The world is the totality of facts, not things." Such sentences imagine being able to adopt a point of view from which the whole world can be surveyed. It is, we might say, a view from 'sideways-on'. That idea is meant to characterise philosophy as it has been practiced. Wittgenstein, for Diamond, does not intend us to grasp what it would look like from such a viewpoint even though we cannot put what we grasp into words. Rather; his point is to get us to understand a person in the grip of the illusion. "It understands him through entering into that illusion in order to lead him out of it; and the upshot will not be any grasp of what can be seen from the philosophical point of view of the world."[221] So, for Diamond, the *Tractatus* tells us that its own propositions belong to an activity – an activity of providing comfort to those attracted by philosophy. The self-understanding reached by this activity would, then, make a person recognise that to be attracted in such a way is mistaken. It is in this area, I take it, where Diamond sees a close connection between her interpretation of the *Tractatus* and McDowell's interpretation of the rule-following passages of the *Investigations*. Both see Wittgenstein recognising the motivation for a particular kind of standpoint, but both argue that Wittgenstein ultimately shows the reader what was mistaken in that motivation.

[6.4] Evaluation of Diamond's View

[221] Diamond (2000), p.160.

I think that is enough exposition: what of possible criticism? I set out Diamond's attempt to 'pin' the notion of ineffable truths on Anscombe and her interpretation of the *Tractatus*. But this is simply not supported by the text. Anscombe says the following about things that show themselves:

> That is to say: it would be right to call them 'true' if, *per impossibile*, they could be said; in fact they cannot be called true, since they cannot be said, but 'can be shewn', or 'are exhibited', in the propositions saying various things that can be said.[222]

That quotation does not suggest that things shown are true but unsayable; rather they *would* be true if we could do the impossible and say them. This means that they are actually *not* true. On the same page Anscombe raises the question of interest to Diamond. The things that would be true if they could be said are important. So can we, then, draw a distinction between the things that would be true if they could be said, and things that would be false if they could be said? Anscombe's answer is immediate: "It is impossible to speak like this"[223]. A clearer rejection of Diamond's interpretation of Anscombe's discussion is hardly possible. Only after this rejection does Anscombe move onto discussing a further distinction:

> Nevertheless there are utterances which at least sound like attempts to say the opposite of the things that are 'quite correct' in this sense; and there will be more error, or more darkness, in such attempts than in trying to say the things that are 'shewn', even if they are really unsayable.[224]

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222 Anscombe (1973), p.162.
223 Anscombe (1973), p.162.
224 Anscombe (1973), p.162.

We should note, first, that even here Anscombe cannot bring herself to endorse the distinction. It *seems as though*, or *sounds like*, there is a distinction between 'helpful' and 'plain' nonsense. Moreover, this is a *different* distinction to the one she sharply dismissed a few sentences before. Nonsense which is strictly speaking nonsense can nevertheless be helpful. Indeed, that is precisely what Diamond commits herself to when she says that nonsense can elucidate. It would simply be a mistake to equate 'positive' nonsense with 'helpful' nonsense. So to criticise Anscombe as 'chickening out' or not being 'resolute' enough in her interpretation is actually for Diamond to criticise the very distinction she is so keen to emphasise.

The theme that Diamond is attempting to pick a fight where no fight is wanted or even required is also taken up by White. White suggests that it would indeed be a careless thinker who advocated 'positive' or 'substantial' nonsense, or ascribed that view to the *Tractatus*. Moreover, no interpreters have actually done so. White's suggestion is that, if Diamond and other 'new' interpreters really do want to instigate a challenge to 'standard' interpretations then they will have to alter their target somewhat:

> The issue here is actually simple: what Diamond and Conant should be challenging is not the idea there is substantial nonsense, but the idea which they fail to distinguish from that – the idea that someone can maintain that a sentence is simply nonsense, but can simultaneously believe that one can, under appropriate circumstances use that sentence to communicate.[225]

[225] White (2000), p.14.

The idea being that if Diamond wants a distinctive view then *this* is the battle she must fight. Two points become immediately obvious, however. First, nonsense sentences, simply nonsense at that, are used to communicate all the time. White has a lovely example of a comment made regarding a move in chess. Playing Black, we might want to gain control of the a1 – h8 diagonal. By moving our bishop to h8 we achieve this in such a way that the bishop itself is (relatively) secure from capture. The example given is Bronstein's comment: "Bh8. I like this move a lot: Bj10 would have been even stronger."[226] This is, of course, nonsense. A chessboard only runs a-h, 1-8. So the term 'Bj10' lacks a determination of meaning. Even if the remark is made somewhat 'tongue-in-cheek', we can understand what Bronstein means, understand the underlying tactical point he is making. Secondly, Diamond is more than happy to accept that nonsense sentences are used to communicate. Indeed, we have already seen that she accepts they are an integral part of coming to understand Wittgenstein. Again, the criticism is that Diamond has failed to grasp that her view is just as committed to the distinction between 'helpful' nonsense and 'plain' nonsense as other interpretations. Moreover, that that distinction is different to the one between 'positive' and 'mere' nonsense.

A broader question could be raised here: Is the notion of ineffable truths (or an ineffable truth) plausible *at all*, irrespective of whether one wanted to attribute the idea to Wittgenstein? This question is taken up, and given a negative answer, by Moore in his paper "Ineffability and Nonsense".

[226] White (2000), p.19.

Moore suggests that not much by way of argument is needed to establish such a conclusion:

> I am inclined to say that we do not understand the notion of truth, at least when it is taken in its strictest sense, independently of what can be expressed; or rather, more cautiously, that we do not understand the notion of *a* truth independently of that.[227]

That is: we simply cannot grasp what an ineffable truth would be like, it just does not make sense. Moore claims that what is wrong with such a short answer is its shortness, not, as it were, its direction. The interesting question for Moore, and equally for us, is whether if we reject ineffable truths we thereby reject the idea of value in the ineffable. His answer to this further question is no, and I think it will be instructive to examine his discussion further.

What Moore has in mind is ineffable *understanding* as opposed to ineffable *truth*. Indeed, a lot of my comments in the previous few paragraphs have been concerned with the *understanding* that is conveyed by or manifest in sentences which are, strictly speaking, nonsense.

> Once we have taken account of the possibility of ineffable understanding, there are ways of construing the two readings whereby, to borrow a wonderful phrase of David Wiggins's from a different context, 'Suddenly it seems that what makes the difference between [them] has the width of a knife-edge.'[228]

If we recognise the possible value of ineffable understanding, the thought runs, we can get beyond viewing (if indeed we were ever trapped in such a

[227] Moore (2003), p.175.
[228] Moore (2000), p.180.

position) the 'new' and 'standard' interpretations of the *Tractatus* as differing over whether Wittgenstein held that there are ineffable truths. The two supposed camps can therefore be viewed differently. Those interpretations which claim that the *Tractatus* conveys 'something' that cannot be said can be seen as claiming ineffable understanding to be that 'something'. Those who claim that the *Tractatus* conveys nothing ineffable can be seen as limiting that 'nothing' to truths. Then, suggests Moore, we can see the supposed opponents "as being entirely consonant with each other."[229] This is, of course, dependant on offering a plausible account of ineffable understanding. Such an account, or a detailed discussion of Moore, is beyond me here. I would like to gesture at a possible link with Geach here, though. Ineffable understanding looks like that which Geach claims we can *test*. If a person masters the use of symbolic language partly in virtue of the statement 'There is a difference between what 'Brutus' stands for and what the predicate '___ killed Caesar' stands for', then the statement has conveyed some understanding to the person. Even though, what has been conveyed cannot be put into words or expressed. There is, then, a repeat of Geach's worry for Moore: whilst ineffable understanding makes sense for cases such as these, we do not know how to test that understanding has been conveyed in other cases such as ethics or religion.

It has only taken a brief period of critical reflection to establish that the supposed distinction between Diamond's 'new' interpretation will not do for our purposes. There are gestures and hints of certain misguided 'sideways-on' perspectives, but no substantial issues or connections have yet been

[229] Moore (2000), p.181.

identified. Indeed, it seems as though the opposition between 'new' and 'standard' interpretations is a shallow one. It might be worthwhile making explicit what *would* amount to a distinctive (albeit mistaken) interpretation of the *Tractatus*. I have something like the following in mind:

> Since the system itself implies that, in advancing it, one does not say what is so, no one advancing the system could say what is so. Presuming that the point of any system is to say what is so, this first development concludes that the system must be rejected.[230]

Earlier I discussed Geach's conception of a 'self-mate'. What we have here is a reading that follows through that thought. If we are really to take Wittgenstein's comments that his doctrines cannot be stated seriously, then we should simply reject his project out of hand. We really should just throw the book aside. Indeed, if we are to follow Diamond and others and be 'resolute' in our reading then such a position looks more principled. Sullivan labels such an uncompromising rejection "more honest"[231] than 'new' readings. This view is mistaken, and seeks to obliterate all that is of value from the *Tractatus*. But it does genuinely diverge from the 'standard' view, right at the beginning of debating what one is to do with this puzzling book.

[6.5] Conclusion

The conclusion we have reached is not that Diamond's way reading of the saying / showing distinction, her conception of 'nonsense' as it appears in the *Tractatus*, and her interpretation of the book in general is just *wrong*. On the

[230] Sullivan (2004), p.36.
[231] Sullivan (2004), p.37.

contrary; a lot of what Diamond's discussion is both sharp and informative. In particular, she is right that we ought to fully engage with Wittgenstein's remarks, not 'chicken out'.

There is an undoubted difference in tone or emphasis between Diamond (and her followers such as Conant) and other interpreters of the *Tractatus*. Diamond maintains that Wittgenstein's work is to be seen as a work of 'therapy' as opposed to theory or doctrine based. But all sides can agree that the *Tractatus* has a therapeutic aim: Wittgenstein does attempt to clear away confusion, make us recognise the futility of certain ways of thinking, recognise that we must simply and clearly state what can be said but "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent."[232] He does indeed speak of drawing a limit rather than staking out a line which can be surveyed from both sides. The concern raised in [6.4] was that Diamond's divergence from the 'standard' appears at best to be a shallow one. Diamond simply places greater emphasis on parts of the *Tractatus* that all interpretations agree is there. She makes 'therapy' the central focus of the book, bringing to the fore remarks that display that theme - relegating other doctrines and aspects of the book. That is not, however, enough of a divergence to create the kind of distinctiveness Diamond obviously intends by her interpretation.

This is not only a disappointing result for the so-called 'new' interpretation of the *Tractatus*, but also for our project in Part Two. What we wanted, and what examination of Diamond looked the most promising way of delivering, was seeing the same questions and lines of thought developed

[232] TLP 7.

in the *Tractatus* as we found in the *Investigations*. From there we could offer some comparison between the two. We have seen the start of connections with issues discussed in Part One: through the discussion of 'positive' nonsense and Diamond's claim that Wittgenstein is opposing a certain 'sideways-on' perspective. Unfortunately, what this perspective is for the author of the *Tractatus* and why it is mistaken remains unclear, as does any connection between the perspective and a threat of idealism. Diamond's remarks gesture at things that might serve as a good comparison between the approach of the early and latter Wittgenstein, but as yet there is no deep substantive issue to latch onto and discuss accordingly. The shortcut has not been successful.

But perhaps this is a little quick. What I am claiming to be a 'surface' disagreement, of emphasis or relevance, could still possibly be a reflection or instantiation of a much deeper and substantial divergence. Part of Diamond's whole approach is to show that Wittgenstein seeks to undermine a certain kind of 'realism'. Here are a couple examples:

> I believe that an understanding of Frege can help us to see our way past the false alternatives of realism and anti-realism in philosophy […] and to see the power of Wittgenstein's criticisms, in the *Tractatus* and later, of the conception of logic as science.[233]

> Frege, in the development of a concept-script as a tool for philosophical thought, allows us to get clear of the two alternatives, to leave them behind. […] Look somewhere *else*: That is what we can hear in Wittgenstein's later philosophy; look where you do not think there can be any reason for looking. That is there to be heard in the *Tractatus*, and

[233] Diamond (1991b), p.203.

> *it* simply makes clearer a message already to be heard in Frege's work.[234]

Indeed, Diamond argues that her paper on realism is the central one of the whole collection. I suggest, then, that we pursue the question of realism: 'to what extent, if any, was the author of the *Tractatus* a realist?' If we address that question perhaps we will find the kind of deep-rooted disagreement over how to interpret Wittgenstein that I have argued is conspicuous by its absence between Diamond's 'new' and other, 'traditional', interpretations. This is the task for the Chapter Seven.

[234] Diamond (1991d), p.142/3.

Chapter Seven

'Realism' and the *Tractatus*

[7.1] Introduction

Chapter Six concluded that the supposed conflict between so-called 'new' and 'traditional' interpretations of the *Tractatus* is neither a genuine nor a deep disagreement about how the book is to be understood. This is to been seen as a disappointment for the project of Part Two. Consideration of Diamond would, it was hoped, provide us with a shortcut to Wittgenstein's attitude towards questions of 'sideways-on' glances and a related threat of idealism. The debate between 'new' and 'traditional' readings does not bring Wittgenstein's treatment of these issues into clear focus. Chapter Six ended, however, with a hope that the issue of 'realism' *would* bring the relevant issues into play.

The question for Chapter Seven is, then, this: 'How much of a realist was the author of the *Tractatus*?' Pears offers us a relatively simple and straightforward answer:

> Wittgenstein's early system is basically realistic. Any factual sentence can be completely analysed into elementary sentences which are logically independent of one another because they name simple objects. […] Once a name has been attached to an object, the nature of the object takes over and controls the logical behaviour of the name, causing it to make sense in some sentential contexts but not in others.[235]

In this chapter I will argue that both Pears' interpretation and an alternative developed by Ishiguro and McGuinness (from which Pears' account is a recoil) are mistaken. This is to be seen as providing an analogous structure to the discussion as that developed in Part One. There we placed two readings, one labelled 'banal' the other 'fantastical', at the extreme ends of an interpretative spectrum and attempted to find a satisfactory position between the two. Here Pears' 'world-driven' view on the one side and Ishiguro / McGuinness' 'language-driven' view on the other are to be seen as the interpretative extremes to which we will be seek a 'middle-way'. In this chapter I will (tentatively) suggest that a McDowellian understanding of the relationship between language and the world is to be found in the *Tractatus* and provides the kind of 'middle-way' we seek. This will indeed bring us to 'sideways-on' looks and idealism.

The structure is as follows. [7.2] sets out, in rough detail, the opposition between 'world-driven' and 'language-driven' interpretations of the *Tractatus*. [7.3] argues that *both* must be rejected as readings of the book. Pears' criticisms of the 'language-driven' view are persuasive, but do not point to the 'world-driven' alternative he suggests. [7.4] sketches the McDowellian alternative, inspired by a remark in his *Mind and World*. [7.5] links this

[235] Pears (1987), p.88.

alternative to the idea of a 'sideways-on' perspective. [7.6] argues that a threat of idealism emerges in Wittgenstein's treatment of the 'sideways-on' perspective and, as with the *Investigations*, it is a pressing question whether Wittgenstein embraced idealism or ultimately found a way to reject it.

[7.2] 'World-driven' versus 'Language-driven' Interpretations

What is 'basic' or 'uncritical' realism? Pears tells us that:

> […] at the foundation of the system of the *Tractatus* there is a grid of elementary possibilities imposing certain absolute constraints on the logical structure of any language. That is uncritical realism[.][236]

The world consists of elementary possibilities which are either realised or not realised. Pears' suggestion is that, for Wittgenstein, there is no getting beyond or below this grid. "The grid is ultimate and any speculation that purports to go beyond it is senseless."[237] We cannot, for example, ask what the world would be like if an elementary possibility was not in a position to be realised. In ordinary discourse 'my coffee mug is on the table' can be realised or not realised *and* it also might be the case that I have no coffee mug and so the possibility (that it is on the table) is not there to be realised. This third contingency is precisely what is impossible at the ultimate level of analysis Pears takes Wittgenstein to be proposing.

But what does it mean to talk of 'the ultimate grid of elementary possibilities'? Pears argues that an elementary possibility is one with simple

[236] Pears (1987), p.26.
[237] Pears (1987), p.25.

objects at the nodal points. Wittgenstein, we are told, offers a reductive argument to show that all everyday factual sentences can be analysed down to sentences in which only simple objects are named. Pears reads the argument as follows: If there were any complex (non-elementary) things named in the complete analysis of ordinary factual sentences, then the analysing sentences would have senses only if certain other sentences were true. This is because complex things would not be there to be named in the first place unless their components were arranged in a way required for the existence of the complex thing. But the sense of a sentence about a complex thing cannot depend on the truth of another sentence about its components. Therefore the analysis must go further; to a point where all the words stand for simple objects.

Pears spends some time working through the premises of this argument.[238] For our purposes we need only concern ourselves with Pears' claim that it pushes the level of complete analysis down to a point where all that remains are objects 'devoid of internal structure':

> These simple objects are the pivots on which all factual discourse turns. So logic reveals the structure imposed on all factual discourse by the ultimate structure of reality. That is its connection with the world.[239]

Much has been made already of 'simple objects', objects devoid of internal structure. But what could such objects be or, indeed, be like? One of the real

[238] For the record, these are: (1) "We picture facts to ourselves" (TLP 2.1); (2) "The possibility of propositions is based upon the principle of the representation of objects by signs" (TLP 4.0312); (3) "The postulate of the possibility of the simple signs is the postulate of the determinateness of the sense." (TLP 3.23); (4) 'All things are complex' – this last premise is to be reduced to absurdity. Pears (1987), pp.73-4.
[239] Pears (1987), p.27.

interpretative difficulties is that Wittgenstein fails to offer any examples of simple objects or offer much by way of explanation as to what they must be like. Two conceptions of objects – material points and sense-data – are canvassed in the *Notebooks* but Wittgenstein evidently never settled on either of these. To say that objects are 'devoid of internal structure' is to say that when their corresponding names occur in propositions they do so without creating any inferential connections with other propositions. Such propositions are elementary, unlike 'This is red' and 'This is green' – which are necessarily incompatible[240].

> This is interesting but baffling, because it tells us what objects are not like without telling us what they are like. They must not have any internal complexity, but we are left to guess how they manage without it. It is like the *via remotionis* in theology: God is described by listing the properties that he does *not* possess. [241]

The objects of the *Tractatus* are clearly not everyday objects that we can, for example, bump into or spill our coffee over. On the Tractarian picture possible worlds are distinguished not by which objects are contained in them – as objects are constant across all possible worlds – but by the configuration and combination of the objects. Pears' interpretation has Wittgenstein believing that simple objects, whatever they may be, are 'dominant partners' in the object/name relationship. It is the object which explains the use of the name, the ways in which the name can figure in meaningful propositions is determined by the nature of the object.

[240] TLP 6.3751
[241] Pears (1987), p.67.

> True, we attach names and we maintain their attachment (if the need arises), but the nature and identity of each object is fixed independently of anything done by us […] the question, whether we contribute anything to the constitution of that world, is not even asked.[242]

It is up to us what sign we use to attach to an object. But this has no bearing on the nature or identity of the object in question which exists independently of our attaching a name to it, and indeed our existing at all. What is clear on Pears' interpretation, then, is that objects 'set the standard' for reference: the way simple objects are, and the inherent possibilities in such objects, explains the use of names in our language.

Standing opposed to 'basic realism' is a shared interpretation developed independently by Ishiguro and McGuinness. Ishiguro claims that Wittgenstein rejected the idea that the meaning of a name can be secured independently of its use in propositions, preferring instead the claim that meaning of a name can only be secured via the use of the name in propositions. Her thesis is that the existence of objects adds nothing whatsoever to the logical theory of the *Tractatus*. Correspondingly, the names of the *Tractatus* function as 'dummy names' – an analogy Ishiguro draws with proofs in elementary geometry:

> For example, we say 'Let a be the centre of the circle C' and go on to deduce the various relations it has to other things. We cannot however go on to suppose that a is not the centre of the circle, for a has no identity other than that of being just that. We may come to decide, after

[242] Pears (1987), p.29.

> using a dummy name 'a' that 'a' did not secure a reference. But as long as we use 'a' and talk of the object 'a' it is the centre of the circle C[.][243]

And so, the objects names pick out are radically different from normal spatio-temporal objects. The names we attach to such objects will behave (although Wittgenstein might not have explicitly recognised this[244]) just as dummy names behave. Crucial to Ishiguro's interpretation is her reading of Wittgenstein's context principle. This principle was identified in [5.1] and has surfaced throughout our discussion of the *Tractatus*. The principle, according to Ishiguro, means there is no securing "a reference [for a name] independently of and prior to its occurrence in a proposition."[245] We can speak of 'the object the name refers to', but only because we know the kind of propositions in which the name occurs. The key for Ishiguro is that the *Tractatus* refutes the idea that a name is like a label we tag onto an object which we can already – that is, prior to propositional use – identify.

McGuinness reaches a similar conclusion through grafting Tugendhat's[246] interpretation of Frege onto an interpretation of Wittgenstein. For Tugendhat, Frege's *Bedeutung* is best translated by 'significance', which itself is best understood as 'truth-value potential'. In the case of names, two names 'a' and 'b' have the same truth-value potential if and only if whenever each is completed by the same expression to form a sentence, the two sentences have the same truth-value.

[243] Ishiguro (1969), p.45.
[244] Ishiguro (1969), p.46.
[245] Ishiguro (1969), p.24.
[246] Tugendhat (1970).

> An object in the *Tractatus* which is the reference of a name or simple sign can be viewed as simply the truth-value potential of a certain expression. The semantic role of the supposedly possible simple sign or name is that of being combined with other simple signs or names to produce exactly the same truth-value. Any sign which in the same combinations will produce exactly the same truth-values is the same sign or has the same reference.[247]

'Reference' is relegated on this interpretation to semantic equivalence between expressions. McGuinness also endorses Ishiguro's claim that, for the *Tractatus*, there is no securing of reference prior to or independently of occurrence in a proposition.

Both Ishiguro and McGuinness accept that objects are required for Wittgenstein's theory. So why are they so hostile to labelling the *Tractatus* broadly 'realist' in nature? "The answer is that Wittgenstein's objects are not concrete objects which may sensibly be said to exist or not."[248] McGuinness continues:

> The answer to the question about realism then, is: Wittgenstein does indeed subscribe to the view Dummett attributes to Frege:
>
> > … the thoughts we express are true or false objectively, in virtue of how things stand in the real world – the realm of reference – and independently of whether we know them to be true or false (of whether we exist or can think at all);
>
> however, from Wittgenstein's point of view the words "the realm of reference" are a misnomer here. I have previously called it a myth, but I might equally call it rhetoric, to say as Dummett does:
>
> > … we do actually succeed in speaking about the actual objects, in the real world, which are referents of the names we use, and not about any intermediate surrogates for or representations of them.[249]

[247] McGuinness (1981), p.65.
[248] McGuinness (1981), p.72.
[249] McGuinness (1981), p.72. The quotations are from Dummett (1981), p.198, 196 respectively.

If we wanted to condense the disagreement further still we might say the following: Pears offers a 'world-driven' interpretation of the *Tractatus*. The objects dictate to or explain the workings of our language, in so far as names, once attached to their objects, must remain faithful to the inherent possibilities of those objects. Ishiguro and McGuinness, on the other hand, offer a 'language-driven' interpretation of the *Tractatus*. It is the use of names within propositions that determines the nature of the object referred to. It is our language that sets the standard for denoting a particular object or not. This is a deep-rooted disagreement. As McGuinness himself accepts, a disagreement here is a disagreement over the answer to "what is Wittgenstein doing in the *Tractatus*?"[250] Or, more specifically, what are the apparent metaphysical commitments of the early sections of the book actually about? Pears' view appears to be that such remarks are meant to be taken seriously as describing an independently constituted metaphysical structure. McGuinness, on the other hand, appears to take Wittgenstein's metaphysical comments not at face value:

> It may seem, indeed, that [Wittgenstein] argues that propositions with sense are possible only because some more primitive operations are possible – notably the correlation of names with objects, and it may seem that he goes on to argue that these more primitive operations are possible only because the world possesses certain characteristics. However, it will be clear on reflection that such arguments would be the sort of metaphysics that he condemns.[251]

[250] McGuinness (1981), p.63.
[251] McGuinness (1981), p.63.

If McGuinness is correct, Wittgenstein's metaphysical commitments are meant to be read ironically or dismissively once we recognise their place in the picture we are finally meant to abandon.

[7.3] Rejecting the Supposed Choice

We have in play an apparent choice between competing interpretations of the *Tractatus*. What is the relationship between language and the world? How do the names of our language have the meaning they do? One option is to ascribe explanatory priority to world; the other to ascribe explanatory priority to the use of names in language. Evaluation of the disagreement has to start with the *Tractatus* itself. Unfortunately both sides of this dispute can point to sections of the book for support.

Pears' view will appear to receive support from the picture or representational theory of meaning. For example:

> 2.15 That the elements of the picture are combined with one another in a definite way, represents that the things are so combined with one another. […]
> 2.1511 Thus the picture is linked with reality; it reaches up to it.

Not only is the aim of the picture theory to represent how things are in the world, but the success of the picture depends on its having something identical with what it is picturing. Chapter Five spent some time working out the implications of this. For our current purposes, there is no suggestion that

the picture sets the standard for the world to meet. If anything it appears to be the other way round.

Ishiguro and McGuinness' view could be taken to derive support from the context principle at TLP 3.3: "Only the proposition has sense; only in the context of a proposition has a name meaning." This, if taken as a comment on reference, could plausibly be taken as saying that a name only refers in the context of its occurrence in a proposition. The following might also be taken as support for the Ishiguro / McGuinness line:

> 3.326 In order to recognise the symbol in the sign we must consider the significant use.
> 3.327 The sign determines a logical form only together with its logical syntactic application.
> 3.328 If a sign is *not necessary* then it is meaningless. That is the meaning of Occam's razor. (If everything in the symbolism works as though a sign had meaning, then it has meaning.)

This *seems* to be suggesting that if the symbolism we employ works just as if a name stood for an object, then that name does indeed stand for an object. It might then read Wittgenstein as saying that use is primary and reference secondary.

The *Tractatus* has evidence in favour of that both interpretative stances. What we need, then, is a critical evaluation of the two views: whether either is plausible as a view and whether either is plausible as Wittgenstein's view. I will use Pears' criticisms of his opponents to frame this discussion. The shape of my discussion will be to accept Pears' criticisms but resist his conclusions.

Let us start with the context principle and what impact it has on 'world-driven' versus 'language-driven' interpretations. Pears accepts that any satisfactory interpretation of the context principle must start by recognising it as a rejection of a Russellian view where the attachment of names to objects is like the attaching of labels to luggage, all the work required for reference being completed once the labels are attached. Ishiguro and McGuinness, as we have seen, read the context principle as saying that "there is no securing of reference prior to occurrence in a proposition."[252] Pears maintains that we can allow for the recognition without going as far as the 'language-driven' interpretation. This, apparently more subtle, reading of the context principle allows for a Russellian 'ceremony' where a name is attached to an object. But the name will continue to represent the object only if the name occurs in propositions in a way that displays real possibilities for the object. That is: the name must remain faithful to the inherent possibilities of the object.

> If 3.3 is taken in this way, it *qualifies* the direct attachment of names to objects but does not *replace* it with something completely different. The initial act of attachment is necessary for representation but not sufficient.[253]

It is not immediately obvious what Pears means here. Matters are meant to be made clearer by analogy with the geometry of a painting of a room. An individual dot of paint is to be correlated with a particular point in the room.

[252] McGuinness (1981), p.66.
[253] Pears (1987), p.103.

For example, a spot of blue paint is to stand for a part of my coffee mug. The overall message conveyed by the painting depends on the painting of other dots correlated with their own individual points in the room – another part of my mug, a point of the table and so on. "Now the qualification works like this: the painted dots must present real possibilities for the points out there."[254] I think Pears has something of the following in mind. There is indeed a kind of ceremony or naming game that takes place. This name stands for this object, that name for that object, and so on. What the context principle amounts to, for Pears' reading of Wittgenstein, is a qualification that the ceremony is required to link a name with its object but in and of itself it would never be enough to *maintain* that link. The link is held in place by the name remaining faithful to the object – remaining faithful to the inherent possibilities of the object in question. And that is achieved by recognising in what contexts one can deploy the name meaningfully.

What evidence might be offered in favour of this reading of the context principle against that offered by McGuinness and Ishiguro? In the *Notebooks* Wittgenstein appears reluctant to push logical analysis to a point where the objects to which names are attached are not identifiable. For example:

> My difficulty surely consists in this: In all propositions that occur to me there occur names, which, however, must disappear on further analysis. I know that such a further analysis is possible, but am unable to carry it out completely. In spite of this I certainly seem to know that if the analysis were completely carried out, its result would have to be a proposition which once more contained names, relations, etc. In brief

[254] Pears (1987), p.76.

> it looks as if in this way I knew a form without being acquainted with any single example of it.
>
> I see that the analysis can be carried further, and can, so to speak, not imagine its leading to anything different from the species of propositions that I am familiar with.[255]

Part of what appears to be happening in this remark is Wittgenstein's awareness that complete analysis, even though it must be possible, is beyond his current capacity. But, argues Pears, nothing in this passage or passages like it completely rules out being able to independently identify objects. It is not as though Wittgenstein is telling us that *in principle* such identification is impossible, rather that in practice we appear unable to do it. So, for Pears, a Russellian ceremony is not being ruled out by anything that Wittgenstein says.

That a 'ceremony' itself presents little problem for the system of the *Tractatus* is suggested by the following:

> 2.02331 Either a thing has properties which no other has, and then one can distinguish it straight away from the others by a description and refer to it; or, on the other hand, there are several things which have the totality of their properties in common, and then it is quite impossible to point to any one of them.

As Pears quite rightly points out, this remark allows for one to identify an object by a definite description that it happens to uniquely satisfy. Ishiguro claims that objects cannot be given by definite description, on the Tractarian conception, because they are 'independent of what is the case'. Her argument must be roughly this: Objects exist independently of what is the case. Objects

[255] *NB*, 16th June 1915.

must, therefore, be identified independently of what is the case. Identification by definite description is not independent of what is the case. Therefore, objects cannot be identified by definite description. Pears swiftly rejects this line of reasoning. There is nothing here that rules out using definite descriptions to identify objects in the manner of 2.02331. Moreover, just because something necessarily exists does not debar it from being picked out in such a way: "The necessary existence of the number 5 does not stop us telling a child that it is the number of toes on one foot."[256]

Stemming from this disagreement over the context principle is Pears' second objection to the 'language-driven' interpretation. Ishiguro and McGuinness maintain the following:

> The *Tractatus* view entails that it is the use of the Name which gives you the identity of the object rather than vice versa.[257]
>
> Wittgenstein does indeed mention that states of affairs are combinations of objects and introduces objects themselves into the *Tractatus* before he says anything about the necessity for a proposition to be articulated and to consist of simple signs, but I believe that the order of his exposition reverses the order of his thinking.[258]

These remarks concern what we might call 'direction of explanation'. What Ishiguro and McGuinness are suggesting, or at least not distancing themselves from, is that the use of a name in propositions explains or determines what object the name stands for. The reference of a name will be the object that meets the standard set by the use of the name in propositions.

[256] Pears (1987), p.107.
[257] Ishiguro (1969), p.34.
[258] McGuinness (1981), p.65.

Pears' objection is that such a reading cannot be reconciled with Wittgenstein's heavy emphasis on the contact between names and objects. For Pears, names represent objects by being attached to them and through continuous respect for the inherent possibilities of the objects:

> 4.0311 One name stands for one thing, and another for another thing, and they are connected together. And so the whole, like a living picture, presents the atomic fact.

As Pears rhetorically asks: "How could this possibly be said by anyone who believed that the references of the names were fixed *after* this bit of language had been set up?"[259] The image suggested by 4.0311 is that a name picks out an object and the names combined together present a picture of the way the world is. To suggest that language is up and running before the references of the names are established – as Ishiguro and McGuinness seem to do – flies in the face of this.

It is actually worthwhile pausing to consider the option we are now rejecting. What *would* it mean to say that the references of names are fixed only *after* the relevant tract of language had been 'set up'? To 'set up' a language must mean to construct a list of names, rules for how the names function, how the names may legitimately be combined, establish various connectives and so on. We are being asked, on the 'language-driven' view, to imagine all that being in play yet the references of the names remaining undecided. But that just seems implausible. The whole point of constructing a

[259] Pears (1987), p.109.

language is to talk about things, convey to others our thoughts on the passing show. To put it another way: ascribing reference to the names of our language cannot come *after* the language is up and running because it is part and parcel of constructing a language in the first place.

Pears criticisms are useful not just because they successfully demonstrate how the opponent to his view is mistaken as interpretation of Wittgenstein, but they also serve to show that such a view is implausible as it stands. It is worthwhile noting a related concern. Dummett subjects Tugendhat's reading to detailed and rather devastating criticism. McGuinness (in his grafting of Tugendhat's Frege onto Wittgenstein) actually omits discussion of Dummett's central objection: that Tugendhat's account misses the whole point of Frege's introduction of *Bedeutung*. Tugendhat's view amounts to assuming that the job of determining the truth-values of sentences has already been done; the whole semantic account of the language has been set out. This is because 'truth-value potential' can only be introduced *after* the semantics of the language have been given. Frege held that sentences containing names without a bearer do not admit of being true or false. To get this result would require the notion of a bearer of a name to already be in play. In the case of proper names, then, Frege's *Bedeutung* as the relation between a name and an object in the world must already be deployed.

> Thus the primary purpose for which the notion of reference was introduced has been assigned to something else, no longer called

> 'reference', while the notion of the truth-value potential, which has usurped this name, no longer has this function to perform.[260]

The point of *Bedeutung*, for Frege, is to point at something beyond language and is inexorably linked to what Dummett calls "Frege's realism"[261]. For Dummett, Frege thinks that a concept, a relation or a function is 'wholly extra-linguistic' – in that the existence of such things does not depend on our having an expression for them as they are part of the real world. The only way we can grasp, say, what a referent of a predicate is is via language – but it remains independent of language. Although we conceive of it through language we take it as an expression concerning a part of reality. On Tugendhat's interpretation of Frege, all this is lost. Truth-value potential is ineradicably language-dependent. As Dummett rather nicely concludes:

> In philosophy we must always resist the temptation of hitting on an answer to the question how we can define such and such a notion, an answer which supplies a smooth and elegant definition which entirely ignores the purpose which we originally wanted the notion for.[262]

To summarise this in terms of what has gone before: 'Truth-value potential' (or, we might say, semantic equivalence) can only be introduced after language has been 'set up'. But reference is different in precisely this regard: it cannot be introduced after such a process because the whole point of setting up a language is to talk about things in the world.

[260] Dummett (1981), p.202.
[261] Dummett (1981), p.200.
[262] Dummett (1981), p.203.

I have suggested that the 'language-driven' view is not only mistaken but cannot be faithful to the author of the *Tractatus*. Must we now accept that the 'world-driven' view is the one Wittgenstein in fact endorsed? I think not. Earlier I quoted a passage from the *Tractatus* which Pears deploys against the 'language-driven' view of Ishiguro and McGuinness. A similar remark appears in the *Notebooks*:

> One name is representative of one thing, another of another thing, and they themselves are connected; in this way the whole images the situation – like a tableau vivant.
> The logical connection must, of course, be one that is possible as between the things that the names are representatives of, and this will always be the case if the names really are representatives of the things.[263]

This does indeed point against Ishiguro and McGuinness. Unfortunately, Pears recoils too far from that interpretation. Pears tells us that the above quotation makes clear

> that the things, with their inherent possibilities of combination, are the dominant partners in their relations with names. It also explains why the *Tractatus* begins with an account of objects and does not introduce pictures until 2.1. The opening ontology is not something we are supposed to discount because it is an attempt to say things that can only be shown.[264]

But why think that Wittgenstein's remarks point to a 'world-driven' story of explanation? Certainly, it is difficult to imagine anyone who endorsed a 'language-driven' view of these matters coming out with such remarks.

[263] *NB*, 4th November 1914.
[264] Pears (1987), p.112.

Names and objects must be connected so as to respect the way the objects are. But that does not entail that the objects are in anyway prior to the workings of our language. Pears' mistake is to assume that just because Wittgenstein fails to offer priority in one direction that he must then be offering priority in the opposite direction. Pears is fond of calling his view the 'middle ground interpretation', with Ishiguro and McGuinness on one extreme flank, the equation of objects with sense-data on the other. But a genuine middle ground would say that there is no priority at all.

Let me try and expand on this further. We have already seen Ishiguro and McGuinness claim that securing the referent of a name independently of its occurrence in a proposition is ruled out by the *Tractatus*:

> [The *Tractatus*] does not suppose that the elementary propositions in which use is made of certain names are connected with reality by the correlation of those names with objects independently identifiable. This is because the notion of independent identification of objects in the *TLP* sense is an incoherent one. Only in a proposition does a name have meaning, so that there cannot be a pre-propositional act of giving a meaning to a name by, for example, pointing to an object.[265]

Pears wants to reject such a reading of Wittgenstein. For him, and as we have seen, Wittgenstein does indeed allow independent identification of objects (by definite description). But what could such a rejection amount to? We have a disagreement over 'securing the reference of a term independently of the context of use of that term.' But what should one say about that issue irrespective of the peculiarities of the *Tractatus*? It must come down to what

[265] McGuinness (1985), p.136.

we take 'securing a reference' to mean. If 'securing' simply meant attaching a name to an object in some kind of ceremony then it does indeed look plausible that one might secure the reference of a term independently of the context of its use. That looks more like *stipulating* than *securing* a reference though. This stands for this, that stands for that, and so on. We have already seen that this would not be good enough even for Pears. In order to secure a reference, for his interpretation, one must maintain the link between name and object. But another reading naturally presents itself here. In this sense, 'securing a reference' is not like attaching a label to baggage *or* even attaching and then remaining faithful to the inherent possibilities of the baggage. Rather, it means placing it within the context of a whole language, how the corresponding name can be deployed within a language. We ought to recognise that attaching a reference to a name is part and parcel of, rather than a separate step from, setting up a language. And if this is what is meant by 'securing' nobody ought to claim that the referent of a name can be secured 'independently' of its occurrence in propositions. We use words in propositions all the time, to somehow think that we could settle and maintain a link between names and their objects independently of such contexts looks both perverse and impossible.

To put this in terms that have gone before: as far as Pears is correct to say that no view that the references of names are settled *after* language has been set up can sensibly be attributed to Wittgenstein, Pears is wrong to propose that the references of names are settled *before* language is up and

running. The correct answer has to be that the references of names are settled along with or as part of the setting up of language. Both the 'language-driven' and 'world-driven' views look unpalatable in and of themselves and as interpretations of Wittgenstein. What we ought to do is reject the choice. But what are we to say then about the relationship between language and the world?

[7.4] A McDowellian Understanding

I'll take my cue from a suitably pithy remark in McDowell's *Mind and World*. Having raised for discussion the view, roughly, that the kind of things one can think depends on the way the world is, McDowell comments:

> The *Tractatus* is often read on these lines … Opponents of the kind of reading Pears gives sometimes tend to find in the *Tractatus* a thesis of priority in the opposite direction, or at least not to distinguish their interpretations clearly from this kind of thing. (That might merit a protest of idealism.) But I doubt whether either claim of priority is to be found in the *Tractatus*.[266]

This doubt of McDowell's final sentence is the very position we find ourselves in. Before going further it might be instructive to pause over 'priority'. The kind of priority I have focused on so far is one of *explanation*. That is, a priority where *a* is needed to explain *b*. In order to explain why my coffee mug fails onto my office floor when I drop it I need to invoke a discussion of gravity. McDowell's point, or at least part of it, is that the author of the *Tractatus* would have no truck for explanatory priority in any direction. How

[266] McDowell (1994), p.28, footnote 5,.

might this work? The idea must be that we don't need *a* to explain *b* or *b* to explain *a* because neither *a* nor *b* can be explained without the other. They are already interdependently meshed together. In our case, we cannot explain the structure of our language without the world yet equally we cannot explain the layout of the world without our language. This idea could also be cashed out in terms of *conceptual* priority. That is: I cannot conceive of *b* without first conceiving of *a*. The 'world-driven' view would be that one simply cannot conceive of language prior to or independently of the world; the 'language-driven' view the opposite. McDowell's suggestion should then be read as saying that we cannot conceive of the world without language, yet equally we cannot conceive of language without the world. One is not independent or prior to the other, both must stand or fall at the same time.

But how can we offer a satisfactory account of the relationship between us and the world without accepting some priority one way or the other? It appears as though there is a gulf between the workings of our language and the world. The natural way of thinking here is that one side must be prior to the other; a secure foundation from which to bridge the divide.

> Ordinary modern philosophy addresses its derivative dualisms in a characteristic way. It takes its stand on one side of a gulf it aims to bridge, accepting without question the way its target dualism conceives the chosen side. Then it constructs something as close as possible to the conception of the other side that figured in the problems, out of materials that are unproblematically available where it has taken its stand.[267]

[267] McDowell (1994), p.94.

McDowell's suggestion, I think, is that there is no gulf to cross in the first place and hence no need to start from one side or the other, using those resources to construct a bridge. That may appear to be reductionism: on the one hand we could attempt to reduce language to the world – language amounts to a mere mapping of the way the world is – on the other we could attempt to reduce the world to the workings of our language (and that might indeed merit a protest of idealism). Reductionism would attempt to remove the apparent gulf, but it is clearly not what McDowell has in mind. His suggestion would be that our language and the world are already intertwined and connected such that there is no need to cross a gulf. Yet this is so without impinging on either side and without making one explainable by the other.

All this talk of bridges and gulfs and divides is admittedly sketchy. We ought to bring some of this imagery back down to Earth. What, in McDowell's eyes, would the faulty pictures look like here? The 'world-driven' view defended by Pears says something like this: we start with a naming game and then go on to build a language out of it. So I would start by assigning names to objects by definite description. I would then have a list of names and what they stand for. 'Mug' stands for this object on my desk, 'window' stands for the thing I'm gazing out of most days, and so on. Once I have completed that stage, I have a long list of names, I then go on to create a language. This is faulty, at least in part, for McDowell because it purports to start from a position prior to the mastery of language – that we could somehow conceive of the relation between reality and our way of

characterising it without already having a mastery of communication. The 'language-driven' view offered by Ishiguro and McGuinness starts with propositions that make sense and works in the opposite direction. So we proceed by listing all those propositions that make sense. For example: 'My mug is red', 'That book has a red cover', 'The post-box is red' and so on. Once we have established in which propositional contexts a word can meaningfully figure we can then go on to establish what the name refers to. This is wrong for McDowell, I think, because it starts from a position where we can communicate with one another yet is supposedly prior to talking about the world. As McDowell puts it in "Anti-Realism and the Epistemology of Understanding":

> in theorizing about the relation of our language to the world, we must start in the middle, already equipped with command of a language; we cannot refrain from exploiting that prior equipment, in thinking about the practice, without losing our hold on the sense that the practice makes.[268]

McDowell claims that we cannot but start from such a position – a position already encompassing mastery of a language. If we adopted (better: attempted to adopt) the position of a detached exile the whole project would come crashing down around our ears.

The thought I want to extract from McDowell's remark in *Mind and World* is a relatively straightforward one. We were faced with what looked like a choice: either the *Tractatus* maintains that reality sets the standard for

[268] McDowell (1998b), p.330.

our language to meet or, alternatively, our language dictates to reality. The McDowellian thought is that we need not come down in support of either of those dubious views. There is simply no priority in either direction. The question now is whether the *Tractatus* really held the kind of view we have developed out of McDowell's remarks.

One advantage of the McDowellian reading is that it allows us to accept what is right in *both* the Pears and Ishiguro/McGuinness accounts, instead of having to choose between them. Ishiguro and McGuinness are clearly correct in holding that the names of the *Tractatus* are indeed peculiar items, and reference to them is not a straightforward manner. Ishiguro is also right in her claim that cashing out the contrast between the early Wittgensteinian theory of meaning and the latter as one between a 'naming' theory and a 'use' theory is misleading. There is indeed a 'use' element to the *Tractatus*, although not as developed or as comprehensive as in the latter work. We can also accept that Pears is right to recoil from the fully-fledged 'language-driven' interpretation. The *Tractatus* assigns no priority to language over reality. In short, this interpretation offers us the opportunity to take what is right from the two competitors – give full justice to those parts of the book which appear to support their interpretations – without thereby accruing all their faults.

Moreover, a McDowellian reading of the relationship between language and reality in the *Tractatus* creates space for a much more satisfying reading of the context principle than that offered by the two competitors. On

the one side, the 'language-driven' view gives too much weight to the context principle as a principle concerning reference. Ishiguro and McGuinness do not give proper content to Wittgenstein's insistence on the strong connection between a name and its object. On the other side, Pears' interpretation is deeply unsatisfying because it relegates the context principle in Wittgenstein's thought to something little more than an amending principle. I think the understanding generated along McDowellian lines offers the possibility of a satisfying middle ground between uncompromising contextualist and uncritical realist interpretations of the context principle. To explain this, I want to start with this question: Why ought we to feel uncomfortable with 'uncompromising contextualism'? Moreover, what is 'uncompromising' about the reading offered by Ishiguro and McGuinness?

Dummett has remarked that the context principle of *Grundlagen* is too 'thin' for the kind of realism about mathematical objects Frege wishes to adopt.

> The context principle, as enunciated in *Grundlagen*, can be interpreted as saying that questions about the meaning (*Bedeutung*) of a term or class of terms are, when legitimate, internal to the language.[269]

For the Frege of this period, we know the meaning of a term when we know the conditions for the truth of any sentence containing that term. So, argues Dummett, any legitimate question regarding what the reference of a term is must be reducible to a question within the framework of language. But why is

[269] Dummett (1991a), p.192.

this 'thin'? On this rendering of the context principle, ' "The direction of *a*" refers to something' must be true because it reduces to 'The line *a* has a direction'. ' "The direction of *a*" refers to the direction of *a*' comes out as trivial because it simply reduces to 'The direction of *a* is the direction of *a*'. Dummett claims that this makes the context principle analogous with the redundancy theory of truth. That theory is 'thin' in the sense that '*p* is true' just reduces to '*p*'. The 'thin' reading does nothing more than oppose nominalism. Hence it is questionable whether the kind of realism Frege defends is really supported by the context principle of *Grundlagen*.

Dummett argues that we need to adopt a more 'robust' reading if we are to make the context principle (as a comment on reference) viable as the basis for the kind of realism Frege wants. The idea is that identifying the referent of a term must be seen as an 'ingredient' in coming to recognise the truth-value of a sentence in which the term occurs. It is simply not good enough, this thought runs, that our language works and the fact that it works guarantees that the terms we employ have a genuine reference. What we also need, this 'robust' story demands, is an explanation of *how* it is that the referent of the term plays the role it does, an explanation of our language working as it does. As Dummett puts it:

> It is not enough that truth-conditions should have been assigned, in some manner or other, to all sentences containing the term: it is necessary also that they should have been specified in such a way as to admit a suitable notion of identifying the referent of the term as playing a role in the determination of the truth-value of a sentence

> containing it. With that further condition, the context principle ceases to be incoherent. [270]

It is difficult to grasp what Dummett really means here. But I *think* I have a similar concern over Ishiguro and McGuinness' interpretation of Wittgenstein's context principle. Their interpretation, at least as far as I have characterised it in this chapter, holds that the reference of a term is settled merely by looking at how the term is used in various propositional contexts. Moreover, if the term functions as if it genuinely refers to an object then it does in fact refer to an object. Such a principle fails to explain or account for how the objects the names stand for play a role in settling those contexts, how the world influences and moulds our language. It fails to offer an account of reference which is a matter of combination between us and the world. And, to deploy Dummett's terminology, the principle in Ishiguro/McGuinness' hands is too thin for what Wittgenstein required of it.

The obvious alternative is to claim that the context principle of the *Tractatus* is, in Dummett's sense, robust. As a comment on reference, it would be saying the following: a name refers only insofar as it appears in meaningful propositions, but it must be explained how the referent of that name plays a role in that proposition being meaningful. And, again, this interpretation allows us to accept what is right on either side of the debate, without also having to accept what looks clearly unpalatable. Ishiguro and McGuinness are right that Wittgenstein was heavily influenced by Frege and 'bought into' the context principle completely. Pears is also right that

[270] Dummett (1991a), p.239.

Wittgenstein, in the *Tractatus*, was clearly heavily influenced by the strong relationship between a name and its bearer. But in order to respect these insights we do not need to offer an extreme form of contextualism or an extreme form of realism.

I will not pretend to have convinced anyone that the McDowellian understanding of the *Tractatus* proposed here is the correct one. There would need to be a working out of the position through close textual analysis of the book to support such a claim. (That strikes me as a worthwhile research project.) What I do hope to have shown, however, is that there is space for such an interpretation, that it avoids the pitfalls whilst reaping the benefits of other interpretations, and has no obvious flaws.

We began with the question: 'How much of a realist was the author of the *Tractatus*?' The conclusion is that Ishiguro and McGuinness are correct in claiming that the *Tractatus* seeks to undermine a certain kind of realism. This is the 'uncritical' or 'basic' realism that Pears attributes to Wittgenstein, where reality is prior to (dictates to) our language. But undermining that kind of realism does not push Wittgenstein to the other extreme. Against McGuinness, Wittgenstein's talk of the 'realm of reference' is not mere myth or empty rhetoric. We do succeed in talking about reality; our propositions are true or false in virtue of the way objects are combined in the world. Such objects are not merely a reflection of our ways of speaking about them. In other words: rejecting uncritical realism does not entail idealism. Moreover,

once we consider the realism being rejected we might well wonder whether we should have ever been attracted to it in the first place.

The question of realism was raised as a reaction to, and disappointment with, the supposed conflict between so-called 'new' and 'traditional' interpretations of the *Tractatus*. Our initial engagement with Diamond did not bring into play the kind of issues that were the focus of Part One. Our current discussion, as I will go on to show in the next two sections, does however get the relevant issues in play.

[7.5] The View From 'Sideways-On'.

Sullivan has argued that establishing that the *Tractatus* "rejects any 'side-on' perspective is easy."[271] How so?

> 2.173 The picture represents its object from without (its standpoint is its form of representation), therefore the picture represents its object rightly or falsely.
> 2.174 But the picture cannot place itself outside of its form of representation.

The form of a picture amounts to a standpoint on the reality it represents. The picture cannot, as it were, step outside of its own form. This places restrictions on what can and cannot be represented from a certain point of view. But nothing here immediately looks like a view from 'sideways-on', in the sense developed in Chapter Three through engagement with Dummett and expanded through evaluation of McDowell in Chapter Four, as it leaves open

[271] Sullivan (2005), p.54.

the option of moving to a different standpoint to represent what we could not represent from the original standpoint. But Sullivan now asks us to consider:

> 4.12 Propositions can represent the whole reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it – the logical form.
> To be able to represent the logical form, we should have to be able to put ourselves outside logic, that is outside the world.

Wittgenstein, as we examined in Chapter Five, is insistent that the logical form of a proposition – that which the proposition must share with the reality it is representing so as to be a representation of it – cannot itself be represented. This highlights just how all-embracing the logical perspective is for Wittgenstein: there is only one logical perspective, *the* logical perspective, out of which we cannot stand. "We cannot think anything unlogical, for otherwise we should have to think unlogically."[272] So we could, as it were, shuffle around within the logical perspective, getting different standpoints on our propositions. But what is being ruled out here by Wittgenstein is the idea that we can step outside of the singular unity of the logical perspective.

In this way, establishing that the author of the *Tractatus* rejected a general view from 'sideways-on' is indeed easy. To step outside of logic would be an attempt to view logic from the outside, from 'sideways-on'. The shape of this thought is analogous with that developed in Part One: an attempt to step outside a practice and reflect on that practice. Recognising the impossibility of such a positioning with regard to logic is a general instance of

[272] TLP 3.03

rejecting the view from 'sideways-on'. Sullivan claims that any view of logic from 'sideways-on' is rejected by the *Tractatus*. But further examination is required. From all that has been said so far it seems one could reject the general conception of a view from 'sideways-on' – one where we, as it were, step outside of logic – yet advocate a specific kind of 'sideways-on' stances towards particular logical principles.

By way of example, consider Dummett's paper "The Justification of Deduction". The central question there is how both the validity and usefulness of deductive argument can be accounted for: "How can any process possess both these features at once?"[273] We naturally think that, in some sense, the premises of deductive inference contain the conclusion, yet, at the same time, deduction is a fruitful exercise which can advance our knowledge and understanding. Frege says that the connection is "as plants are contained in their seeds, but not as beams are contained in a house."[274] Dummett complains that more is needed than mere analogy.

Dummett sets up a debate between views labelled 'holism' and 'molecularism' about language. Holism argues that

> the meaning of an individual sentence is characterised by the totality of all possible ways within the language for establishing its truth, including ones which involve deductive inference.[275]

The idea is that we cannot give or explain the meaning of a sentence fully without an account of the language of which it forms a part. Molecularism

[273] Dummett (1978), p.301.
[274] Frege (1963), §88.
[275] Dummett (1978), p.302.

argues that each sentence possesses an individual content which may be grasped without knowledge of the entire language. Holism does seem to offer an answer to Dummett's question. Deduction is useful because it allows us to arrive at firm conclusions; it is justified because it is part of an overall practice which is itself justified. Dummett complains, however, that these apparent benefits only come at great cost. Holism, he argues, removes our natural inclination to seek a justification of deduction because there simply is no justification for it beyond the general justification of the language. Indeed, there will be no specific justifications for any of our practices. Dummett's main problem with Holism is that it has thus forbidden us from offering a theory of meaning whatsoever. For:

> No sentence can be considered as saying anything on its own: the smallest unit which can be taken as saying something is the totality of sentences believed, at any given time, to be true; and of what this complex totality says no representation is possible - we are part of the mechanism, and cannot view it from outside.[276]

Holism presents language as a bubble from which we cannot escape to give a representation of it. But equally we cannot move around within the bubble to justify or account for certain aspects of language, for the justification of one aspect is justification for all, accounting for one fragment of language involves accounting for it all. In contrast, argues Dummett, molecularism at least pushes us in the natural direction of giving justification for particular

[276] Dummett (1978), p.309.

practices like deduction, and leaves open the possibility of giving a theory of meaning. Holism is just too pessimistic.

It is worth pointing out that even on the molecular view complete independence is impossible. The meaning of a sentence depends on meanings of the words involved, the words themselves feature in other sentences. Dummett accepts that the fragments of language might be large.

> Nevertheless, it is essential to such a molecular view that there must be, for each sentence, a representation of its individual content which is independent of a description of the entire language to which the sentence belongs[.][277]

To put this in context with what has gone before: Dummett can accept that we cannot 'step outside' of logic but reject the idea that there is one all-embracing logical perspective. The idea appears to be that different fragments of our language can be accounted for without assuming any knowledge of the content of those fragments. More generally, different parts of logic could be brought into consideration independently of other areas of logic. This does not mean all of logic can be questioned in one go, no more than a ship at sea can be completely dismantled and reconstructed in one go, for there would be nowhere to stand to carry out such an investigation. But it does mean we can move about within the framework of logic (analogous to moving about onboard the ship) to ask for independent justification of individual fragments (to reconstruct this part or that whilst remaining afloat).

[277] Dummett (1978), p.304.

In conclusion, showing that the *Tractatus* rules out a very general 'sideways-on' perspective on logic is, as Sullivan suggests, a straight-forward matter. Settling whether the book rules out other, more specific instances, of viewing certain domains from 'sideways-on' is not so easy. He could, for all that has so far been said, agree with Dummett and maintain that specific 'sideways-on' stances on particular logical principles are possible. At a more general level, whether Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* was concerned by the *same* 'sideways-on' standpoint that concerned him later in the *Investigations* has yet to be considered.

[7.6] Wittgenstein and Idealism

Part One ended with the following thought: to give interesting and plausible content to Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following appears to demand reading the author of the *Investigations* as being influenced by and tempted towards a kind of transcendental idealism. What is unclear, however, is whether such idealism was the terminus of Wittgenstein's thought or rather a station to be passed through along the way (philosophical 'therapy' is meant somehow to reveal that transcendental idealism is the correct answer to a misguided question that itself ought to be abandoned). The task for this section is to question whether evidence for either, or indeed both, of those thoughts can be found in the *Tractatus*. I will argue that there is such evidence. Before giving the detail, perhaps the general shape of what I want to argue will be illuminating. I will want to say that McDowell's 'no-priority'

thesis is the kind of realism that is the only viable answer at the empirical level, at the level of language as a going concern. This realism is to be seen as going hand in hand with a kind of transcendental idealism.

Where does the interest in idealism appear in the *Tractatus*? The obvious place to look is Wittgenstein's discussion of solipsism:

> 5.62 In fact what solipsism *means*, is quite correct, only it cannot be *said*, but shows itself.
> That the world is *my* world, shows itself in the fact that the limits of the language (*the* language which I understand) mean the limits of *my* world.
>
> 5.64 Here we see that solipsism strictly carried out coincides with pure realism. The I in solipsism shrinks to an extensionless point and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it.

This chapter has focused on the objects of the *Tractatus* and how reference to them is secured. How are we to get from that to idealism? The answer lies with logical form and the all-embracingness of logic: Wittgenstein's rejection of a general 'sideways-on' perspective. We have seen Wittgenstein's logical atomism in some detail. Objects are simple and independent of one another. But through this independence Wittgenstein builds a kind of unity. Objects are the fixed form of the world; as we have seen worlds are distinguished not by the objects they contain but by the combination of those objects. "Empirical reality is limited by the totality of objects. The boundary appears again in the totality of elementary propositions."[278] Crucial to this is Wittgenstein's notion of logical space. Wittgenstein tells us that the facts in logical space are the

[278] TLP 5.5561

world[279]. "Everything is, as it were, in a space of possible atomic facts. I can think of this space as empty, but not of the thing without the space."[280] This unity points to the evidence needed to establish not only the interest in idealism but Wittgenstein's holism, the view that places him in opposition to Dummett [7.4].

> 3.42 Although a proposition may only determine one place in logical space, the whole logical space must already be given in it.
> (Otherwise denial, the logical sum, the logical product, etc., would always introduce new elements – in co-ordination.)
> (The logical scaffolding round the picture determines the logical space. The proposition reaches through the whole logical space.)

A proposition only picks out one place in logical space. But all of logical space is, in a sense, contained in or given by a single proposition. Wittgenstein's holism is that in assessing one aspect of logic we thereby bring all of logic under consideration. There is no possibility of detaching fragments to discuss independently of the whole.

> 5.47 It is clear that everything which can be said *beforehand* about the form of *all* propositions at all can be said *on one occasion*.
> For all logical operations are already contained in the elementary propositions. For "*fa*" says the same as "(∃*x*). *fx*. *X*=*a*".
> Where there is composition, there is argument and function, and where these are, all logical constants already are.
> One could say: the one logical constant is that which *all* propositions, according to their nature, have in common with one another.
> That however is the general form of proposition.

[279] TLP 1.13
[280] TLP 2.013

This is the all-embracingness of logic and the one single logical perspective. It is in clear opposition to Dummett's molecularism. As Moore rather nicely puts it: logic, for Wittgenstein, "is the unity that attends every possibility."

> It is also the unity of the self-consciousness. I recognise it when I view the world self-consciously from my own particular point of view, and come to see everything as being how it is from that point of view. The world's unity *is* the possibility of its being represented from a single point of view. What cannot be represented from my point of view cannot be represented, and is not part of the world. So the world is *my world*. How things are is how they can be truly represented as being, and how they can be truly represented as being is how they can be truly represented as being *for me*.[281]

Our task is to find the connection to idealism. Claims like "the world is *my* world" certainly have an idealistic ring to them. The image suggested is one where the world is framed by my forms of representation. But such a claim is liable to strike one as false. Of course, we want to say, reality is not imposed on in such a way by us. It would amount to saying I can dictate the way the world is. If this were Wittgenstein's view it would appear to place him in direct conflict with the early, metaphysical, sections of the *Tractatus*. As I have laboured to show in this chapter those remarks point towards a kind of realism, albeit not the basic realism advocated by Pears. Moreover, 5.64 suggests a unity of realism and idealism – that the two strictly thought through coincide. So the kind of realism I have attributed to Wittgenstein is supposed to sit comfortably with idealism.

[281] Moore (1997), p.150.

The idealism must, then, be transcendental in nature. Part of understanding that must come from seeing what has happened to the subject in statements like 'the world is my world'. The subject here is not an empirical one, one that is part of the world, but rather a metaphysical one. Take the example of our visual field (TLP 5.6331). Something is clearly wrong with a first-person perspective that places the eye in the visual field. The eye can have no place in a representation of the field as it is the perspective of the representation. A genuine first-person perspective would also not have any boundary drawn round it. In the same way, the subject should not be placed in the world but rather seen as the perspective of the representation of the world. So when Wittgenstein claims that 'the world is my world' the 'my' is not me, my physical body, but rather a perspective from which the world is viewed. So the idealistic claim is not one about the facts that make up the world, but about how the world is possible for us. Roughly the thought is: the world reveals a certain character to us, in doing so it reveals that the world and my world are one and the same.

In discussion of rule-following in Part One the harmony between empirical realism and transcendental idealism was meant to be maintained by a distinction between saying and showing. All that could legitimately be said from within language as a going concern is ordinarily realist: anything else would, at best, amount to spouting falsehoods. The same structure can be read in the *Tractatus*. Chapter Five dealt with the inexpressibility of form. The form of our propositions cannot be said but only shown. The suggestion,

taken from the remarks on solipsism, is that transcendental idealism exhibits the same structure; it cannot be said that idealism is true but it reveals itself by showing to us that the world is my world, that I am not something in the world but rather something that holds the world together from a transcendent perspective. Now, trying to say something intelligible about transcendental idealism, from the empirical standpoint, is of course to try and say what cannot be said. This interpretation of Wittgenstein aims to allow realism and idealism to cohere by using the saying / showing distinction.

The question arose with regard to the *Investigations* whether transcendental idealism was the terminus of Wittgenstein's thought or a stop along the line. A similar question arises with regard to the *Tractatus*. I want to end by sketching a way of developing the view that Wittgenstein ultimately 'diagnosed' the faults with transcendental idealism even though he felt its allure. Part Three will continue this discussion in greater detail.

Say we drew the subject and its world in a way akin to the eye and its field of vision. It is clear that the boundary of the subject's world would not be the boundary of all that is case. To capture the world completely would require an external perspective on the original drawing. Sullivan takes this not to point towards transcendental idealism, but rather show the futility of it:

> Wittgenstein diagnoses it instead as an imposition of an external representation that distorts the very thing it was invoked to capture, the internal connection between thought and the world. Once that is recognised as a distortion one has no further use for the external

> perspective, and the threat of the idealist reduction it carried then simply lapses.[282]

The crucial point here seems to be the idea that the external representation of the subject and its world will not provide what we thought we were looking for in the first place. We have the subject in its world, the perspective external to that yet it does not provide us with the relationship between thought and the world. I think the idea is that once we follow Wittgenstein and accept the subject is not part of the world but rather somehow the limit of the world we recognise that the subject has been purged of all perspectival elements – it 'shrinks'. The subject is not a mindedness in one direction or another; it simply is the general perspective. It then seems that there is nothing for idealism to get a hold of at all. It is no longer an option to say that reality is constructed by a way of representing it. The world and my world, where this 'I' is the purged subject, are one and the same. Whether anything like this interpretation of the *Tractatus* is adequate will be considered in Part Three.

[7.7] Conclusion

This chapter began with the question: 'how much of a realist was the author of the *Tractatus*?' I argued that both the 'world-driven' interpretation advocated by Pears and the 'language-driven' interpretation developed by Ishiguro and McGuinness should be rejected. Neither view is plausible in itself and neither seems to fit the *Tractatus*. I sketched a more suitable alternative, inspired by a remark made by McDowell. Pursuing the question

[282] Sullivan (2005), p.56.

and the subsequent attempted answers does, I argued, bring the same kind of issues of 'sideways-on' glances and threats of idealism into play with regard to the *Tractatus* as identified in Part One with the *Investigations*. It remains a pressing question whether the *Tractatus* embraces transcendental idealism or ultimately finds a way to reject it. Part Three has the task of connecting the issues of 'sideways-on' glances with idealism and saying something about the continuity, or lack thereof, of Wittgenstein's attitude towards such a connection.

Part Three:

Connections and Continuity

Chapter Eight

'Sideways-on' Glances and Transcendental Idealism

[8.1] Introduction

Some stock taking is required. Part One examined the rule-following passages of the *Investigations*. I argued that, despite substantial difficulties in working out the details of the view, McDowell's interpretation of Wittgenstein must be along the correct lines. In contrast to other interpretations, it offers us a chance of reading Wittgenstein as arguing for a position both non-banal and not obviously false. Despite this, Part One did not reach a settled conclusion on the author of the *Investigations*. Wittgenstein was shown to be interested in a kind of standpoint: what was labelled a view from 'sideways-on'. The rule-following passages also display an interest in (and, we might say, temptation towards) a kind of idealism. This, I argued, is not the shallow idealism that Dummett originally read in Wittgenstein, but a kind of transcendental idealism. No conclusion was reached on either of these issues, nor were they connected in any detailed way.

Part Two ended with the question of realism and the *Tractatus*: to what extent, if any, was Wittgenstein a realist? I argued that the correct reading of

the book cuts between the 'world-driven' view offered by Pears and the 'language-driven' view offered by Ishiguro and McGuinness. Taking my cue from McDowell, I argued that no claim of priority between language and reality is to be found in the *Tractatus*. Despite this, Part Two did not reach a settled conclusion. Wittgenstein was shown to be interested in the limits of thought and the possibility of a standpoint that could survey those limits. The remarks on solipsism show Wittgenstein was interested in a kind of idealism. Again, I argued, this idealism is transcendental in nature. Again no conclusion was reached on either of these issues, nor were they connected in any detailed way.

This chapter forms Part Three. The aim is to bring together, as best I can, these results. The shape of the chapter is as follows: First, a connection between 'sideways-on' looks and transcendental philosophy is made. These two issues have been in play for some time without a substantial connection being made. [8.2] sketches a straightforward conception of how the two issues fit together. I draw on a recent debate between Moore and Sullivan. Rather than focusing on what these authors disagree about, I focus on their shared method for determining whether Wittgenstein was or was not a transcendental idealist. Roughly, the measure claims that insofar one is committed to rejecting the possibility of a view from 'sideways-on' one is rejecting the possibility of transcendental reflection on the given domain. Second, I apply this measure to both the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations*. [8.3] uses a paper by Goldfarb to clear the ground for application of the measure to

the *Tractatus*. Goldfarb accuses certain realist interpretations of the book of failing to appreciate Wittgenstein's opposition to an external perspective. This is both correct and useful in bringing out what the view from 'sideways-on' *is* for the author of the *Tractatus*. Goldfarb is in error, I argue, in that his alternative to realism is just as guilty of adopting this perspective. I go on to argue that applying the measure of [8.2] to the *Tractatus* yields the conclusion that Wittgenstein was no idealist. [8.4] uses a debate between Dummett and McDowell to clear the ground for the measure's application to the *Investigations*. Dummett demands that a theory of meaning should be 'full-blooded'. I examine what this comes to and McDowell's Wittgenstein-inspired claim that the best one can hope for is a 'modest' theory. Dummett's view features as one adopting a stance from 'sideways-on' that so bothers Wittgenstein. I argue that McDowell's Wittgenstein (and, given the conclusion of Part One, Wittgenstein himself) does not reveal the view from 'sideways-on' to be mistaken or incoherent. We are simply told not to occupy the position because of the disastrous consequences of doing so. The result is that applying the measure of [8.2] has the author of the *Investigations* committing himself to presenting limits as limitations and, hence, to transcendental idealism. [8.5] is the third stage in which the results are brought together. The section discusses what this might say toward the question of continuity and ends by raising a concern that, in the case of the *Investigations*, the measure is just too crude to capture Wittgenstein's thought.

[8.2] A Measure

What is the relationship between transcendental idealism and viewing something from an external perspective (as I have characterised it: viewing things from 'sideways-on')? In this section I sketch a conception of the relationship between these two ideas. In a recent discussion Moore and Sullivan have disagreed over how Wittgenstein stood towards transcendental idealism at different stages of his philosophical life. They agree insofar as Kantian questions and the corresponding 'transcendental twaddle' were deep and pressing for Wittgenstein throughout. They disagree over whether and when Wittgenstein actually lapsed into a kind of linguistic transcendental idealism. Very roughly, Moore holds that it is in the *Tractatus* that Wittgenstein 'succumbed' to such an idealism whereas the *Investigations* finds a way to ultimately dissolve the appeal and threat of such a view. Sullivan holds the reverse: it is in the *Investigations* that Wittgenstein commits himself to transcendental idealism whereas the *Tractatus* dissolves any drive towards such a view. I do not want to tackle this disagreement, as it were, 'head-on'. Instead I want to focus on part of the common ground in this debate. Moore and Sullivan agree on the method for deciding whether Wittgenstein was or was not an idealist of the relevant type. The thought is that whenever Wittgenstein represented limits as limitations he started himself on a path that leads to transcendental idealism. It is here, I intend to show, that the connection with a view from 'sideways-on' is to be made.

What does it mean to present a limit as a limitation? We say that a space is limited by its geometry. There are no points excluded from that space. If we accepted only Euclidean geometry we might say that its principles simply define what it is to be a spatial object. There is no boundary between geometrical points that fall within that space and those that do not. If, on the other hand, we distinguish between Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometry the limitations of the former are no longer equivalent to genuine limits. For now what we have is a contrast: certain geometrical shapes are excluded by the former which are not by the latter. Limits are being represented as limitations: a boundary is being presented as sitting between something instead of there being no boundary at all.

In the Transcendental Aesthetic Kant remarks:

> Since we cannot treat the special conditions of sensibility as conditions of the possibility of things, but only of their appearances, we can indeed say that space comprehends all things that appear to us as external, but not all things in themselves, by whatever subject they are intuited, or whether they are intuited or not. For we cannot judge in regard to the intuitions of other thinking beings, whether they are bound by the same conditions as those which limit our intuition and which for us are universally valid. If we add to the concept of the subject of a judgement the limitation under which the judgement is made, the judgement is then unconditionally valid. The proposition, that all things are side by side in space, is valid under the limitation that these things are viewed as objects of our sensible intuition.[283]

Here Kant is contrasting limits as limits with limits as limitations. The former holds that the limits genuinely are limits: the kind of thing nothing of the relevant kind can stand outside of. The latter holds that the limits are set by

[283] Kant (1933), A27/B43.

something to do with us, our limitations. Kant claims that from the human perspective we can say that space belongs to all things that appear to us as external, but we cannot make the claim that space belongs to all things in themselves. The limits of our intuition might not coincide with the limits of other thinking beings intuition because they might have different limitations. The contrast is between genuine limits and mere limits *for us*. Kant is defending the latter and he is, of course, a transcendental idealist.

The content of the idealism that so vexed Wittgenstein was different. Wittgenstein was interested in understanding the limits of thought: what can be thought (what makes sense) and what cannot (does not). But the general shape, of which Kant's discussion of space is one example, also holds good for Wittgenstein. A genuine limit is not something we can draw a boundary to or around. Presenting a limit as a limitation is to leave open the possibility of there being genuine thoughts beyond what, for us, is the limit of thought. That would be to draw a boundary to highlight a contrast.

In a recent paper Sullivan makes a connection between this and idealism: "Adrian [Moore] and I are agreed that the crucial step in embracing or resisting idealism is in succumbing to or resisting the construal of limits as limitations."[284] But where, we might ask, is the threat of idealism coming from? There is nothing here that *entails* a kind of transcendental idealism. The point, I take it, is that presenting limits as limitations invites a question that needs an answer: what could account for such a harmony between reality and our way of representing it?

[284] Sullivan (unpublished), p.2.

> There are only two ways in which we can account for a *necessary* agreement of experience with the concepts of its objects: either experience makes these concepts possible or these concepts make experience possible. The former supposition does not hold in respect of the categories (nor of pure sensible intuition); for since they are *a priori* concepts, and therefore independent of experience, the ascription to them of an empirical origin would be a sort of *generatio aequivoca*. There remains, therefore, only the second supposition – a system, as it were, of the *epigenesis* of pure reason – namely, that the categories contain, on the side of the understanding, the grounds of the possibility of all experience in general.[285]

Both the limits and the limitations could have been fixed differently. Here Kant surveys two possible answers as to how they might have become aligned. Either reality makes concepts possible for us through imposing its will upon us, or concepts impose an order on reality. Kant clearly takes the second of these options to be the only plausible answer. (One might think that there is a third option: neither reality nor concepts impose on each other but, rather, something else shapes and maintains a harmony between them. Kant goes on to mock those who hold that God performs such a role.) According to Moore and Sullivan, Wittgenstein agreed with Kant: the only explanation for why it is that limits and limitations match is that our concepts impose on reality. And so, for Wittgenstein, we must adopt a form of linguistic transcendental idealism.

Where is the connection with viewing things from 'sideways-on'? The thought is that in order to represent limits as limitations one must be in a position to do so. The way I have characterised the issue is over whether a

[285] Kant (1933), B166/7

contrast is in play or not: whether nothing of the relevant type can stand outside of the domain or whether a boundary sits between, contrasts, things that fall either side of that boundary. In order to make a contrast one must be in a position to see both sides of the boundary; one must, as it were, be above the terrain to view what falls on one side and what fails on the other. This is to view matters from 'sideways-on'. What makes presenting limits as limitations possible is the external perspective.

In summary, the measure is this: we will be in a position to 'read off' Wittgenstein's attitude towards transcendental idealism when we answer whether he was presenting the relevant limits as limitations. If he was, at least according to Moore and Sullivan, he succumbed to the appeal of such idealism. To present limits as limitations invites a question that, for Wittgenstein as it was for Kant, the only viable answer one could offer is the transcendental idealist one. We can only get to the position of presenting limits as limitations if an external perspective on the given domain is possible. That is: through being able to view the relevant terrain from 'sideways-on'. That is a sketch of a line of thought. It neatly offers us a way of coming to conclusions that were conspicuous by their absence in both Parts One and Two. It also promises us something to say about the relationship between the early and later periods. The task now is to bring into view a clearer conception of the kind of view from 'sideways-on' that motivated both the early and later Wittgenstein. The aim is to clear the ground so as to be able to deploy the measure of this section to Wittgenstein's thought in both periods.

[8.3] The *Tractatus*

To get the relevant issues in play for discussion of the *Tractatus* I want to return to a discussion left 'hanging' in Chapter Five. The *Tractatus* is clearly concerned with, amongst other things, the conditions for language being able to represent reality. Wittgenstein's answer is that this is only possible in virtue of a proposition and what it represents sharing a certain structure or a certain form:

> 2.17 What the picture must have in common with reality in order to represent it after its manner – rightly or falsely – is its form of representation.

And so, Wittgenstein argues, propositions and what they represent must share a logical structure.

> 2.15 That the elements of the picture are combined with one another in a definite way, represents that the things are so combined with one another.
> This connexion of the elements of the picture is called its structure, and the possibility of this structure is called the form of representation of the picture.
> 2.151 The form of representation is the possibility that the things are combined with one another as are the elements of the picture.

A concern raised (and not answered) in Chapter Five was *how*, from Wittgenstein's point of view, this correlation is supposed to come about. Simple names are proxies for simple objects. Language represents the world. Wittgenstein tells us that pictures reach out to reality (TLP 2.1511), that the correlation between elements are like feelers that touch reality (TLP 2.1515).

But the reader is still left puzzling as to how this is supposed to happen. In the *Investigations*, clearly reflecting on the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein writes:

> Thought, language, now appear to us as the unique correlate, picture, of the world. These concepts: proposition, language, thought, world, stand in line one behind the other, each equivalent to each.[286]

The concern is that we need an explanation of how this harmony comes about: how simple names and simple objects line up so neatly. The *Tractatus* itself offers no explanation.

This has not stopped commentators offering an answer on Wittgenstein's behalf. One example is the so-called 'dubbing interpretation'. The idea is that the harmony is established by something we do. That is, through an intentional act of some kind: *this* word stands for *this* object, *that* word stands for *that* object, and so on. If we are successful in this mental association of words with objects then language and reality will line up neatly. In doing so we will map the layout of reality with our propositions. Pitcher, for example, cites evidence from pre-*Tractatus* writings to support such an interpretation: "*By* my correlating the components of the picture with objects, it comes to represent a situation and to be right or wrong." (*Notebooks* 26.11.14)

> And elsewhere in the *Notebooks*, he speaks of my – presumably the speaker, writer, or thinker of a proposition – correlating names with things. […] But *how* do I do it? From what Wittgenstein says [at *Tractatus* 3.11], I suspect he thought that correlating elements of a picture (or proposition) with elements of reality is a mental act – the

[286] *PI* I §96

> mental act, namely, of meaning or intending the former to stand for the latter.[287]

This interpretation is given fuller expression in Hacker's *Insight and Illusion.* Hacker seeks to show that – despite Wittgenstein's claims to the contrary – there are deep epistemological and psychological assumptions in play in the *Tractatus*. Indeed, Hacker argues, the connection between names and objects depends on such assumptions. Again, Hacker cites pre-*Tractatus* remarks to defend this interpretation:

> In the *Notebooks* 1914-16, the general impression is given that such correlation must be the result of some mental act of meaning or intending a certain word to signify an object one has in mind. It is an act of will which correlates a word with an object.[288]

Hacker goes as far as to claim that the *Tractatus* 'relegates' philosophical semantics to psychology:

> Whatever correlates a name with an object, be it mental act, some other mechanism or even the 'rule' embodied in ostensive definition, it must bring it about that the name is used in the future for the same object. How identity is established however, is, from the *Tractatus* viewpoint, a matter of psychology.[289]

In summary, then, the dubbing interpretation claims that the harmony between language and reality is brought about by our correlating names with objects so that the names remain faithful to the inherent possibilities of the object. This correlation is a mental act, it is something we do. I said that Hacker gives the dubbing interpretation its fullest expression. I think,

[287] Pitcher (1964), p.88.
[288] Hacker (1972), p.45.
[289] Hacker (1972), p.56.

actually, it is an interesting question whether his settled view conforms to this thumbnail sketch. We will return to this shortly.

Chapter Seven distinguished between two incompatible ways of reading the *Tractatus*: a 'world-driven' interpretation and a 'language-driven' interpretation. The disagreement was shown to turn over quite how Wittgenstein's context principle is to be read. The former holds that reality dictates to (sets the standard for) language. Pears claims that, for Wittgenstein, simple objects are the 'dominant partners' in their relationship with simple names. Once names are attached to objects they must remain faithful to the inherent possibilities of those objects. As Pears puts it: "the nature and identity of each object is fixed independently of anything done by us […] the question, whether we contribute anything to the constitution of [the] world, is not even asked."[290] The 'language-driven' interpretation holds that language sets the standard for reality. There is, according to this reading of Wittgenstein, no securing of a reference of an expression prior to or independent of its occurrence in a proposition. For example, Ishiguro claims that the *Tractatus* refutes the idea that a name is like a label we tag onto an object which we can already, prior to propositional use, identify. Thus, on this view, we cannot talk about 'actual objects' in the 'real world'. Names are the dominant partners; they set the standard of fit.

The dubbing interpretation, as so far presented, falls squarely into the world-driven camp. It makes clear that the world sets the standard of fit. For our dubbing to be successful, we will have to dub names onto objects.

[290] Pears (1987), p.29.

Whether things go well depends on whether we maintain a link with the inherent possibilities of those objects. Given that the interpretation falls into this camp and that I claimed in Chapter Seven that the 'world-driven' view is mistaken, it is incumbent on me to show how and why the dubbing interpretation goes wrong. And, indeed, I do think it is wrong.

There is a tension here. I do not want to give the impression that any kind of dubbing is wrong. There appears to be a perfectly harmless kind of dubbing that takes place that I would not (indeed could not) deny. Psychologists and linguistics might be interested in our attaching certain signs to objects in the world. So, for example, the English word 'horse' means horse, the French word 'cheval' means horse and so on. That certain signs stand for certain things is something we have brought about and is contingent on the kinds of beings we are. If I were claiming that Wittgenstein rejected this kind of dubbing I would be claiming that Wittgenstein wanted to obliterate psychology: maintain that it had nothing worthwhile to investigate. But Wittgenstein's attitude towards psychology was not like that. It was, rather, an uninterested shrug of the shoulders: 'I don't know what the psychologist might say here and, frankly, I don't much care'. We need, then, to distinguish between a perfectly harmless kind of dubbing that might interest psychologists and linguists and a more problematic philosophical type of dubbing. The issue for the philosopher is the harmony between language and reality. The worry is that the harmony is brought about by something. We can think about the world because the world is a certain way

that we can latch onto. The alternative would be that we can think about the world because language imposes a structure on the world. I think, for Wittgenstein, looking at it in terms of direction is wrong. The McDowellian understanding sketched at the end of Chapter Seven argued that, for Wittgenstein, the relationship between language and reality is an 'internal' one: not that one is dependent on, or a mere reflection of, the other but that each is equally internal to the other.

My strategy is to use an unpublished (but quite old) paper by Goldfarb as a foil for my discussion. I want to draw both positive and negative conclusions from Goldfarb's remarks. The positives will be that Goldfarb quite nicely challenges the dubbing interpretation and links this to Wittgenstein's rejection of a kind of 'external perspective'. The negatives will concern Goldfarb's characterisation of this perspective: I will claim that his alternative view is guilty of falling into the 'language-driven' camp and so adopts the very external perspective Wittgenstein is concerned to repudiate.

Here is Goldfarb's conclusion in his own words:

> My suggestion, bluntly put, is that there is no call for dubbings at all in Wittgenstein's view; all talk of them and worry about their constitution ought to be jettisoned. Rather, the account rests content in language. All that we need to say or should want to say about a name's going proxy is exhausted by logical form.[291]

Our first task is to see how he gets to this conclusion. Both Pitcher and Hacker claim that TLP 3.11 offers support to the idea that a mental act of dubbing is required to correlate names and objects.

[291] Goldfarb (unpublished), p.10.

> 3.11 We use the sensibly perceptible sign (sound or written sign, etc.) of the proposition as a projection of the possible state of affairs. The method of projection is to think of the sense of the proposition.

The suggestion is that the 'thinking' referred to here is the mental act of dubbing. Goldfarb claims this goes wrong in that it requires us to understand 'thinking' as something apart from the system of the *Tractatus*. The dubbing interpretation of Wittgenstein takes him to be explaining basic features, such as reference, of language in mental terms; that philosophy of mind raises important questions that need to be tackled on its own terms. Goldfarb argues that, in fact, Wittgenstein was driven by the thought that it is through the philosophy of language that these and other problems are to be solved: language is the starting point of all philosophical inquiry.

> To overstate it a bit: if unanalyzed notions of mental processes are to play the basic role in the account of language, then Wittgenstein's taking a proper account of language as solving all philosophical questions is completely undermined.[292]

To illustrate this point further, Goldfarb asks to consider what a thought *is* for the author of the *Tractatus*: "The logical picture of the facts is the thought" (TLP 3) and "The picture is a fact" (TLP 2.141). Thoughts, then, are facts. If a thought is a fact it will be made up of constituents. So, to take Goldfarb's example, the thought "α refers to a" contains constituents corresponding to the sign α and the object a. When seen like this a thought presupposes the very thing (a correlation between words and reality) that the dubbing

[292] Goldfarb (unpublished), p.5.

interpretation says it is supposed to explain. For the thought to genuinely be a thought its constituents must already stand for elements of reality: the content of a thought depends on a working language already being in place. So, for the system of the *Tractatus*, a thought could not be the link between names and objects the dubbing interpretation requires. As Goldfarb puts it: "Everyday mental talk – like all everyday talk – receives its content only by fitting into the Wittgensteinian framework."[293] If we retain the idea that *something* must provide the link between language and reality, that some sort of dubbing must take place even if it is not a thought, then it has to be something outside of the world. This is because the dubbing would have to happen prior to and independent of language. What this something might be is, Goldfarb claims, quite "unexplained and mysterious."[294]

Whether Hacker's final, settled, view in *Insight and Illusion* really conforms to the thumbnail sketch of the dubbing interpretation offered here is questionable. Goldfarb's claim is that the dubbing interpretation has slipped into a 'mystery-act' interpretation: for the dubbings can no longer be seen as part of the world. I actually think that might be Hacker's point. Hacker is well aware that, for Wittgenstein, we can only grasp language from, as it were, the 'inside'. This is clear from Hacker's engagement with the perplexing remarks on solipsism: "*The limits of my language* mean the limits of my world." (TLP 5.6) Hacker ends up reading Wittgenstein as an empirical realist and a transcendental solipsist. Tied to this idea is Wittgenstein's distinction between

[293] Goldfarb (unpublished), p.6.
[294] Goldfarb (unpublished), p.9.

saying and showing. For Hacker, the *Tractatus* holds transcendental idealist theses which, although profoundly important, are literally inexpressible. What the solipsist means is correct but it cannot be said; it shows itself.

> Thus everything the realist wishes to say can be said; and nothing the Wittgensteinian solipsist wishes to say can be spoken of. There will be no practical disagreement between them, nor will they quarrel over the truth-values of propositions of ordinary language. But the analysis of such propositions will manifest the transcendental truths that cannot be said.[295]

So Hacker's settled view is a lot more sophisticated than the dubbing interpretation so far considered. If we are now to ask how the harmony between language and reality is supposed to come about, it seems clear that Hacker would happily agree that the correlation is not made in the world but is rather part of the possibility of the world. Goldfarb is keen to play down the role of transcendental philosophy in the *Tractatus*. The position reached in Chapter Seven was that Wittgenstein was heavily influenced by and engaged with transcendental questions.

As we have seen, Goldfarb's alternative to the dubbing interpretation is that we jettison talk of dubbings altogether. Instead we should recognise that, for Wittgenstein, logical form accounts for the correlation between names and objects. Interestingly, Goldfarb claims that a feeling of uncomfortableness on leaving matters there – the feeling that there still should be more of an account of the correlation – rests on an "uncritically realist"[296] view of objects and demand for an impossible 'external perspective'. To illustrate his point Goldfarb outlines an objection that might be offered

[295] Hacker (1972), p.81.

[296] Goldfarb (unpublished), p.11.

against his recommendation that Wittgenstein's view rests content with shared logical form: that some further account is required to avoid ambiguity. We are asked to imagine a case where distinct objects possess the same intrinsic possibilities of combination: a and b have the same logical form. Suppose that the signs α and β share this logical form and that Φ stands for the property P. What are we to make of the expression Φα & ~Φβ? Does this represent the situation where a has P but b does not have P or the situation where b has P but a does not have P? It seems as though something more than simply shared logical form is required to avoid such ambiguity. But, argues Goldfarb:

> We must examine the stance from which this formulation is made. In it, we set language on the one hand – the names α and β – against the substance of the world, objects, on the other. Hence we presuppose possession of some external perspective that provides us with a grasp of objects apart from our understanding of the language.[297]

Goldfarb's point is that such an external perspective is alien to the doctrines of the *Tractatus*. The perspective requires a conception of the layout of reality independent of language. We may be tempted to think that the *Tractatus* fails to offer a satisfying account of the correlation between names and objects. But the frustration comes about only if we assume the kind of perspective the *Tractatus* rules out must be possible. In fact there is no need for anything more than an account of language.

[297] Goldfarb (unpublished), p.11.

> The heart of my suggestion is thus that in the Tractarian view there can be no conception of the world apart from language. The notion of object is given only via operating with names. There is no realm, independently intelligible, onto which language must latch. Rejected too is any general (external) notion of reference, of a proposition's being about something. The task is not to explain, given objects on the one hand and language on the other, how language represents configurations of objects. For it is only the structure of language that gives us the conceptions of objecthood and representation.[298]

I said that I wanted to make both positive and negative remarks on Goldfarb's position. This is the place to make some positive noises. It should be clear that I am sympathetic to the general drift of Goldfarb's remarks insofar as they oppose reading a certain kind of realism into the *Tractatus*. The above quotation makes clear that, for Wittgenstein, reality does not dictate to language; there is no independently intelligible conception of the world that language must reflect. I think that is correct exegesis of the *Tractatus*. I am sympathetic to the idea that no further account or explanation of the correlation between names and objects is required. I also think that Wittgenstein is interested in assessing the possibility of an external perspective. Indeed, part of the task for this section is to look at Wittgenstein's attitude to such a possibility.

The negative remarks centre on a worry that Goldfarb pushes matters too far and ends up with a view that lapses into something akin to a 'language-driven' interpretation. Such a concern *seems* to bother Goldfarb in places. He tells us that "Wittgenstein, on my reading, is no realist, but neither is he an anti-realist."[299] But Goldfarb is happy to endorse the following:

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[298] Goldfarb (unpublished), p.13.

[299] Goldfarb (unpublished), p.13.

> Only given a proposition – and hence, on Wittgenstein's account, only given the whole structure of language – can we talk of Bedeutung at all. […] Whatever conception of objects language gives us, that is simply what objects are.[300]

Such remarks give language the priority. Goldfarb's view is one in which reference is relegated to semantic equivalence. Chapter Seven argued that the right thing to say, for Wittgenstein, is to reject the notion of priority either way. Goldfarb appears to think that he can avoid his interpretation of Wittgenstein lapsing into anti-realism by showing that such a move would be just as guilty of attempting to adopt an external perspective as the realist interpretation. The idea must be that the kind of view required to motivate anti-realism can only be had from placing language on one side, reality on the other and comparing them. Goldfarb's position is supposed to cut down the middle. We are supposed to recognise that there is no alternative account of the world to realism or anti-realism, that to question what reality is really like is empty, because there is no external perspective that would be required for such things.

> The point may be put more positively. Wittgenstein is trying to teach what our talk of objects amounts to. From where we sit, we can say there are objects, "out there". […] we can use these words, but what we thereby do is merely to point to something exhibited by language. What we cannot do with them is stake out a metaphysical, realist position.[301]

My concern is that this simply will not do: it saddles the *Tractatus* with an uninteresting and unappealing kind of idealism. It might be useful to

[300] Goldfarb (unpublished), p.13/14.

[301] Goldfarb (unpublished), p.14.

compare and contrast Goldfarb and Pears. In Chapter Seven I expressed sympathy with Pears' 'recoil' from the language-driven interpretations of the book. Pears correctly records that Wittgenstein was no empirical, straightforward, idealist. My criticism was that this 'recoil' went too far: in resisting an idealist reading Pears offered a hard-nosed realist reading in its place. Such a realist picture could not make Wittgenstein's context principle as central as it clearly is for the *Tractatus*. In this section I have expressed sympathy with Goldfarb's 'recoil' from an example of the 'world-driven' strand of interpretation. Goldfarb is correct in holding that an uncritical kind of realism is not to be found in the *Tractatus*. My criticism here is that Goldfarb 'recoils' too far: he ends up adopting a 'language-driven' and hence idealist interpretation. So both Pears and Goldfarb are correct in their motivation for resisting a certain reading of Wittgenstein but both go too far in the opposite direction. It is a nice symmetry, but it also highlights how difficult the middle ground is going to be to both find and occupy.

This concern with Goldfarb is still at a very general level. I want to offer something more specific. We are told that the 'ambiguity objection' (above) to Goldfarb's view depends on adopting an incoherent position: an external perspective. This position involves a kind of triangulation between the world, language and ourselves. It is only by adopting the incoherent external position that our worry whether a has P and b does not have P or vice versa can get hold. Goldfarb tells us that we should remain content with logical form. But what would the author of the *Tractatus* say here?

5.5302 Russell's definition of "=" won't do; because according to it one cannot say that two objects have all their properties in common. (Even if this proposition is never true, it is nevertheless *significant*.)

2.0233 Two objects of the same logical form are – apart from their external properties – only differentiated from one another in that they are different.

2.202331 Either a thing has properties which no other has, and then one can distinguish it straight away from the others by description and refer to it; or, on the other hand, there are several things which have the totality of their properties in common, and then it is quite impossible to point to any one of them.
For if a thing is not distinguished by anything, I cannot distinguish it – for otherwise it would be distinguished.

The first passage claims that the statement 'a and b have all their properties in common' is a significant one. The second passage claims that either two objects are distinguished and we can distinguish them or they are not distinguishable so we cannot distinguish them. It might then seem puzzling how it could be that 'a and b have all their properties in common' is a significant proposition. The thought seems to be that it is only if a and b are distinguished that one can make sense of them as not distinguishable. To recognise that the proposition would be significant must mean, then, that a and b are distinguished. From within language as a going concern a having P and b not having P is a different supposition to b having P and a not having P. The specific concern I have with Goldfarb is this: It is only if one is viewing matters from outside that the worry of ambiguity dissipates. Goldfarb is suggesting that one could simply flip the names a and b without there being any problem. Instead of a having property P, b would have property P. From

within language as a going concern, however, where we are interested not just in the names but the very objects themselves, it is something to worry about whether a has P or not and whether b has P or not. The names are attached to certain objects for us and any flip is going to bother us. To dismiss the threat of ambiguity requires adopting a position outside of language as a going concern. It is only on the outside that we could be in a position to assess whether the flip creates problems or not. It requires an external perspective. The conclusion is, then, that Goldfarb's interpretation of the *Tractatus* has Wittgenstein adopting the very external perspective the book repudiates.

What does this mean for the chances of setting the measure of [8.2] against the *Tractatus*? The measure focuses on whether Wittgenstein was presenting limits as limitations. I argued that presenting limits as limitations is possible only when we are in a position 'above' the relevant domain; if we are viewing the domain from 'sideways on'. What Goldfarb's paper nicely brings out (but, I think, fails to avoid itself) is Wittgenstein's hostility to a 'sideways-on' perspective. We cannot, argues Wittgenstein, step outside of a certain perspective in which we are placed: the single all-embracing logical perspective. This shows that the very possibility of presenting limits as limitations was not open to the author of the *Tractatus*: there is no contrastive notion, limits are genuine limits. Therefore there is no question to which transcendental idealism would be but one answer.

The position reached is akin to Sullivan's reading of the book. We examined this briefly at the end of Part Two. Once we accept Wittgenstein's

claim that the subject is not part of the world but rather the limit of the world we recognise that the subject has been purged of all perspectival elements – it 'shrinks'. The subject is not a mindedness in one direction or another; it simply is the general perspective. It then seems that there is nothing for idealism to get a hold of at all. It is no longer an option to say that reality is constructed by a way of representing it. The world and my world, where this 'I' is the purged subject, are one and the same. If we apply the measure of [8.2] this is the kind of result we get.

[8.4] The *Investigations*

To clear the ground for the measure to be applied to the *Investigations* I want to touch on a long-running debate over what one ought to expect from a theory of meaning for a language. McDowell has claimed that certain anti-realist views are guilty of adopting the kind view from 'sideways-on' that the later Wittgenstein sought to repudiate. These anti-realist views inform the 'fantastical' readings of the rule-following passages examined in Part One. McDowell has used Wittgenstein as an ally against such views, most notably against Dummett's view that a theory of meaning must be 'full-blooded'. My aim here is not to resolve the issue; but rather to assess McDowell's objection insofar as it represents what Wittgenstein thought.

Dummett has long held that a theory of meaning must be 'full-blooded' and not 'modest'. I use these terms in the technical sense he introduced:

> [It is said that to] demand of the theory of meaning that it should serve to explain new concepts to someone who does not already have them is to place too heavy a burden upon it, and that all we can require of such a theory is that it give the interpretation of the language to someone who already has the concepts required. Let us call a theory of meaning which purports to accomplish only this restricted task a *modest* theory of meaning, and one which seeks actually to explain the concepts expressed by primitive terms of the language a *full-blooded* theory.[302]

Dummett's commitment to full-bloodedness has surfaced in his requirement that a theory of meaning must not "take as already given any notions a grasp of which is possible only for a language-speaker."[303] In recent work Dummett has maintained that an explanation of how language works "must take nothing for granted."[304] Roughly, then, Dummett's requirement is that a satisfactory theory of meaning must not use concepts that are intelligible only to individuals who already have a language relevantly similar to ours. The theory should, rather, seek to explain the concepts involved to someone who lacked them. Whilst this may sound straightforward, once we start to work out what the requirement actually means matters become much less clear.

The first puzzle is that full-bloodedness, as Dummett sets it out in "What is a Theory of Meaning? (I)" above, appears to demand that a theory of meaning explain each and every concept of a language to an individual who failed to have a grasp of them. As McDowell rightly points out, if that were Dummett's view it would be crazy:

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[302] Dummett (1993a), p.5.
[303] Dummett (1991), p.13.
[304] Dummett (2006), p.37.

> any theory (of anything) would need to employ *some* concepts, so that a formulation of it would presuppose prior possession of them on the part of any audience to whom it could sensibly be addressed.[305]

In his "Reply to John McDowell" Dummett accepts this point: "there obviously can not be a theory that could be grasped by someone who is devoid of all concepts."[306]

> As [McDowell] remarks, I got it more right in 'Truth': where it is not possible to convey a concept, what the theory of sense must do is explain what it is to have that concept, or, more exactly, what it is to use a given word as expressing that concept; this is why a theory of meaning must comprise an explicit theory of sense, and not merely display sense in the strictly semantic core of the theory (the theory of reference or of semantic value). This account of a speaker's possession of a concept expressible in the language must make intelligible his acquisition of that concept by coming to speak the language: it must therefore describe a practice the mastery of which does not demand prior possession of the concept. The object is to explain what it is for the expressions of the language to have the meanings that they have. To do this, it must make the minimum presupposition concerning the conceptual resources required to understand the theory.[307]

This remark is, I think, crucial to understanding Dummett. There appear to be three positions in play – positions that might be occupied by individuals in the community in which the theory of meaning is being constructed. First, there is the theorist or he who is offering the theory. Dummett makes clear that the explanation the theorist ought to aim at is to explain not the concept but rather what it is to have the concept. This is cashed out in terms of describing a practice to be mastered. Second, there is the audience to whom the theory is aimed. This is the group wanting and assessing the theory of

[305] McDowell (1998d), p.88.
[306] Dummett (1987), p.267.
[307] Dummett (1987), p.267.

meaning for a language. Third, there is the practitioner: the person actually engaging in the practice the theorist is aiming to explain or describe. Dummett (as far as I know) never makes these three positions explicit. I think keeping them in mind helps illuminate what he goes on to say. Dummett tells us that the theory ought to describe a practice 'mastery of which does not demand prior possession of the concept' in question. This is best read as a comment about the practitioner. As I read Dummett the emphasis then shifts to the audience: what the theorist should be aiming to convey to them. Accepting McDowell's comments Dummett maintains that we could only convey the theory to those who have the minimal relevant conceptual background.

I turn now to an example Dummett himself goes on to offer.

> What is it to grasp the concept *square*, say? At the very least, it is to be able to discriminate between things that are square and those that are not. Such an ability can be ascribed only to one who will, on occasion, treat square things differently from things that are not square; one way, among many other possible ways, of doing this is to apply the word "square" to square things and not to others.[308]

This account of what it is to possess the concept *square* employs the very concept it is supposed to explain. If this were an attempt to confer possession of the concept *square* to an individual who lacked it it would appear to be a total failure. In other words: it would be useless as an attempt to convey the concept to an audience. They would understand the description only if they

[308] Dummett (1993b), p.98.

already had the concept. McDowell puzzles over this and attempts to explain why Dummett is happy with his example.

> The point is, I conjecture, that it uses the word "square" only in first intention – that is, never inside a content-specifying "that"-clause. Thus, although the concept is employed, it is not, so to speak, *displayed* in its role as a determinant of content; a grasp of that role is not taken for granted.[309]

We ought, I argue, to read Dummett's description of what it is to grasp the concept *square* as being said about the practitioner by the theorist to an audience. It is an attempt to characterise what it is to have the concept *square*. It conveys practice to be mastered by the practitioner. McDowell claims (and Dummett at least implicitly accepts) that this shows that the description is adequate: it does not rely on the practioner grasping the concept in a role 'determinant of content.' That is, the concept is used in the description but never features in clauses like 'believes that such and such is square' or 'asserts that this is square' and so on.

To help see this I turn to a recent discussion where Dummett distinguishes between different types of concepts: Those concepts 'that have to do with the use of language' and those concepts *not* to do so. Dummett offers a non-exhaustive list of such concepts: "telling, saying something, talking about something, asking, answering, subject matter, denial, retraction"[310] and so on. *Square* is clearly not a concept to do with our use of language. One immediate question is whether the same kind of explanation

[309] McDowell (1998d), p.91.
[310] Dummett (2006), p.37.

that Dummett finds satisfactory for *square* could be offered for concepts to do with our use of language. So would Dummett be happy with, for example, the following explanation of the concept *says*?

> What is it to grasp the concept *says*? It is to be able to discriminate between people who are saying things and those who are not. Such an ability can be ascribed only to one who will treat people saying things differently from those who are not; one way is to apply the word 'says' to a person and not to others.

I do not think so. The impression Dummett gives is that the distinction between concepts to do with our use of language and those not to do so maps a distinction between absolute and relative bans on use in explanations. Concepts not to do with the use of language, such as *square*, are banned insofar as they cannot appear within content-specifying that clauses. Dummett appears to think that concepts to do with our use of language cannot appear at all in our explanations. This rules out the attempted explanation of *says*.

As we have seen, Dummett accepts that the theorist must make *some* allowance on the part of the audience to whom the theory is addressed. They cannot be taken to be devoid of all conceptual resources altogether. It is not as though the theory should be able to be conveyed to a rock or a sofa. I think it is worth pursuing, however, quite what Dummett allows to be built into the 'minimal presupposition' and whether it is really enough. By way of initial suggestion, we might expect Dummett to deploy the distinction between concepts to do and not to do 'with our use of language.' That is: that we

cannot assume the audience grasp concepts to do with our use of language whereas concepts not to do so could safely be assumed.

But that would not be good enough. It is hard to think of the theorist explaining *anything* to the supposed Martians if he cannot assume they grasp concepts such as expressing a thought or saying something or asserting something and so on. Even quite straightforward things such as, say, the rules of a game look impossible - let alone complex concepts. Take an explanation of the rules of chess; the different possible movements of the types of pieces, the conditions for victory and so on. It would be a waste of time if the Martian did not so much as grasp that the supposed explanation was purporting to be an explanation of something. Dummett argues that the explanation would have to satisfy the Martians "if they could be conveyed to them"[311]. But if we read his restriction in the way currently being suggested there simply is no way an explanation could convey anything whatsoever to such creatures.

Dummett uses the example of chess to illustrate his point about language. We can imagine a case where we train a Martian to play chess. We somehow convey to it the rules of the game, how one wins and so on. The Martian could then get to the point where it could move the pieces around in accordance with the rules and in that way imitate playing chess. But such creatures cannot be said to actually be *playing* chess. The difference between the Martian and a competent player of chess is that the player grasps the point of playing. It may seem obvious to us: the point of playing chess is to

[311] Dummett (2006), p.37.

win. The Martian may well have gathered from our explanations what the conditions for victory are, but those explanations do not convey the point of playing. Dummett's view is that we will only have succeeded in our task of explaining the game to the Martian if we can convey that point. It is to win, rather than, say, to lose or to play as quickly as possible. We could get the Martian to imitate speaking our language, to learn what each sentence of the language means. But we will only succeed, for Dummett, if we can also convey the point of communicating – we cannot assume that the Martian grasps this. Again, we ought to wonder how plausible this story is. If we cannot assume that the Martian recognises the aim of communicating how are we to be expected to communicate with it? My concern is that if this reading of the requirement is faithful to Dummett then it is not a requirement one can meet. There simply do not appear to be the conceptual resources for the theorist to engage with. Or, in other words, there simply has to be more built into the 'minimal presupposition' than is currently on offer.

A better idea is perhaps this: the theorist cannot explicitly use any concepts that 'have to do with our use of language' in his explanations. The idea is that one should aim at offering an explanation without deploying the very concept one is seeking to explain. This kind of interpretation is suggested by the following:

> [On] pain of circularity, we cannot *use* these concepts in framing our explanation: we cannot take for granted an implicit grasp of these [those 'to do with the use of language'] concepts, for they are among the things that have to be made explicit if our explanation is to make

> perspicuous what we already know without being able to say what it is we know.[312]

On the reading of Dummett's requirement we would allow those offering the explanation to assume that the Martian understands communication as, roughly speaking, human beings conceive it and assume that it recognises that they are trying to tell it something. In essence, assume that they are rational creatures much the same as us. This builds much more into the conceptual resources allowed in the 'minimal presupposition'. In doing so, I think it makes Dummett's view look much more plausible. Whether Dummett himself would go along with this is another matter (and one beyond our current remit).

So where have we got to? The initial characterisation of the requirement for full-bloodedness has given way to a sophisticated and difficult notion. It looked as though Dummett was demanding a theory of meaning explain each and every concept to an individual who lacked them. In reply to McDowell Dummett makes clear that the theory of meaning should describe a practice mastery of which does not require a prior grasp of the concept. I attempted to throw light on this, and Dummett's puzzling examples, by distinguishing three positions: theorist, audience and practioner. Quite the extent of the 'minimal presupposition' Dummett allows on behalf of the theorist about the target audience was also discussed. I am certain that there is much more to be said about Dummett's requirement. But I think we have enough in play for our purposes.

[312] Dummett (2006), p.37.

McDowell's central objection to Dummett's restriction is rooted in the idea that, for Dummett, understanding what a sentence means, or what a person means by the words he uses, is to be represented as *consisting in* behavioural responses. This should be seen as a comment on what is grasped by the practioner: what is grasped by someone who has mastered the practice the theory of meaning seeks to describe. These behavioural responses are taken to be purged of all the relevant conceptual material – they cannot, for example, be represented as grasping the thought that *p*. The interesting question is why McDowell is so confident that Dummett's (and anti-realist's in general) account of meaning must end up like this. In "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule" McDowell tells us that according to anti-realism

> people's sharing a language is consisted by appropriate correspondences in their dispositions to linguistic behaviour, as characterised without drawing on command of the language, and hence not in terms of the contents of their utterances.[313]

This is developed out of the anti-realist thesis that we understand certain concepts only when we can distinctively manifest our understanding. McDowell's characterisation of the anti-realist is that, for such a person, initiation into a language consists in acquiring certain behavioural propensities that are describable without using the notion of meaning. McDowell claims that such a view is flawed: all the anti-realist can present is individuals who match in certain respects, who make similar noises when prompted. There is no room here for meaning to get into the picture, no room

[313] McDowell (1998g), p.249.

for us to make sense of a person using words to express thoughts or judgements. McDowell takes the anti-realist (Kripke and Wright are his targets) to attempt to "humanize this bleak picture"[314] by introducing the notion of community – a group of individuals doing the same thing. But, argues McDowell,

> if regularities in the verbal behaviour of an isolated individual, described in norm-free terms, do not add up to meaning, it is quite obscure how it could somehow make all the difference if there are several individuals with matching regularities.[315]

If the individual is wooden it is difficult to see how a collection of wooden individuals could magically bring meaning back into the picture. So, argues McDowell, the anti-realist conception of a linguistic community degenerates "into a picture of a mere aggregate of individuals whom we have no convincing reason not to conceive as opaque to one another."[316]

The purpose of this section is to see how McDowell brings Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following to bear on the question of full-bloodedness. McDowell uses those passages in his attack on Dummett. So, for example:

> "How am I able to obey a rule?" – if this is not a question about causes, then it is about the justification for my following the rule in the way I do.
>
> If 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."

[314] McDowell (1998g), p.252.
[315] McDowell (1998g), p.252/3.
[316] McDowell (1998g), p.253.

> (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.)[317]

McDowell equates the idea that we can keep digging, keep putting our spade in even though we have reached rock bottom, with Dummett's restriction. The anti-realist is, then, taken to be someone whose account of language consists in 'sub-bedrock' terms. A 'sub-bedrock' explanation of meaning is a characterisation of what someone means by the words they use in meaning-free terms. The anti-realist, McDowell tells us, fails to appreciate Wittgenstein's warning that the ground we have reached really is the end of the matter and we cannot dig any further. We cannot offer a meaning-free explanation of meaning. Put this way, McDowell's opposition to Dummett's restriction is an instance of the former's opposition to any reductionary account of meaning. In essence, McDowell is claiming all anti-realist pictures cannot escape from a wooden input/output model.

Building on the 'wooden' claim, McDowell enlists Wittgenstein as both ally and inspiration for his main objection to full-bloodedness. We are asked (once again) to consider Wittgenstein's example[318] of a pupil being ordered to carry on the series '+2'. He finds it natural to continue '998, 1000, 1004, 1008…'. Rather than '998, 1000, 1002, 1004…' Wittgenstein's point, argues McDowell, is that any stretch of linguistic behaviour can be made out to cohere with an indefinite number of patterns. In the addition case, the pupil's behaviour up to 1000 coheres with both '+2' and, say, '+2 up to 1000, +4 up to

[317] *PI* I §217.
[318] *PI* I §185.

2000…' and so on. Indeed, the behaviour coheres with disjunctions such as '+2 or …'.

> If we have to capture the pattern in someone's writing a series of numerals otherwise than in terms like "obeying the instruction to go on adding 2", there are always alternative patterns that fit any stretch of such behaviour[.][319]

McDowell argues that Dummett is right to resist psychologism about meaning – the thought that meaning resides beneath linguistic behaviour – and instead argue that meaning must be observable in the linguistic behaviour itself. But Dummett goes wrong, McDowell continues, in the 'wooden' limitations of such linguistic behaviour.

> The implication is this: if the fact that speakers mean this rather than that by, say, a word did consist in the sort of thing Dummett says it must consist in, it *could* not lie open to view in their linguistic behaviour.[320]

McDowell's claim is that if linguistic behaviour is 'wooden' then the best we could ever hope for is a hypothesis about what another person means. McDowell takes Wittgenstein's point to be that avoiding psychologism involves humanising linguistic behaviour: allowing others to come into direct contact with the content of what people are saying and doing. In short, this amounts to a rejection of the 'wooden' input-output picture of linguistic behaviour.

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[319] McDowell (1998a), p.115.

[320] McDowell (1998a), p.116.

What are we to make of McDowell's Wittgenstein-inspired objection to full-bloodedness? Crucially, it seems right to say that a genuine Wittgensteinian thought is being brought to bear. Mere behaviour is, in and of itself, never going to be enough to characterise meaning. Meaning cannot be reduced down to such simple 'soundings off'. The reason why, for Wittgenstein, is that to think otherwise is to leave oneself facing a paradox about meaning. We examined this paradox in [1.2.2]: If going '998, 1000, 1004' and going '998, 1000, 1002' are both – on some interpretation –in accordance with the rule '+2', then *whatever* I do can be seen to be following the rule. This worry is expressed at §198 and repeated in the first paragraph of §201:

> This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because any course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if *any* action 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.[321]

So, if *any* action can be seen, by an interpretation, to be a 'correct' manner of following the rule, then the whole notion of 'correctness' appears to have been lost. McDowell appears to be on safe ground insofar as he is reporting Wittgenstein.

For our purposes here it makes sense, I think, to bracket the question whether Dummett (and indeed anti-realists in general) are *really* committed to the kind of behaviourism McDowell claims that they are. It is indeed odd to think of Dummett as an example of someone missing the importance of

[321] *PI* I §201.

rationality in language. Dummett accepts that the use of language "is *the* rational activity *par excellence*."[322] Whilst I want to note this, it is beyond the remit of this section to pursue this disagreement any further.

What is relevant to this section is an assessment of the Wittgensteinian view McDowell has sketched. On McDowell's interpretation the view from 'sideways-on' does not appear to be dissolved or ultimately revealed as empty. On the contrary: adopting the standpoint is quite intelligible. We would be required to adopt an external perspective on our 'forms of life', the kind of considerations we all find natural. The objection offered to full-bloodedness tries to point us away from adopting an external perspective. It does so not by claiming that there is something wrong in the motivation for full-bloodedness: that there is something suspect in wanting a theory of meaning to achieve such a position. Nor does the objection say that once we adopt the perspective required we find it was not what we expected after all. The objection simply says: do not occupy such a position because paradox will result. Crucially, though, to make that objection one needs to have the whole of the terrain in view. As I described it in [8.2], one needs to stand 'above' the landscape to survey it. That is: the 'sideways-on' is required for the '+2' objection to make any sense. So far from rejecting the external perspective full-bloodedness seems to demand, the Wittgensteinian objection requires that very standpoint in order to raise its objection to full-bloodedness.

[322] Dummett (1987), p.256.

It might be useful to put this in terms of meaning. McDowell's Wittgenstein holds that meaning cannot be reduced. In particular meaning cannot be reduced to mere behavioural responses to certain environmental stimuli. We cannot, as it were, explain away what it is that the practioner of the language understands by certain words in terms independent of meaning. The crucial question is: 'why not?' McDowell's answer, based on Wittgenstein's reflections on following a rule, is that there simply will not be enough to capture meaning in the materials we have remaining. But to be in a position to assess whether there will or will not be enough conceptual material requires a perspective above the terrain. The reductionism is faulty not because of something incoherent in the position it seems to require but because adopting that position runs into problems of the '+2' variety.

On this line of thought the *Investigations* does not dissolve or reveal ultimately to be empty the view from 'sideways-on'. On the contrary: McDowell's objection to full-bloodedness seems to show Wittgenstein requires that very perspective. What does this mean for applying the measure of [8.2]? Does Wittgenstein present limits as limitations and, hence, commit himself to idealism? There is evidence to say that he does. Consider again §217. The question raised is what justification one might have for following a rule in a certain way. Why am I justified in carrying on '1002, 1004…'? We are asked to imagine a case where we offer a number of purported justifications as to why this way to go is right as opposed to any other way. Wittgenstein accepts that justification will eventually give out: we reach bedrock and can

go no further. Then, we are told, all there is left to say is: 'This is simply what I do'. This is a contrastive account. It builds in a certain perspective on the final thing to say about justification: this is simply what I do as opposed to what some other creature might do. It presents a boundary; something sitting between certain actions on one side and certain other actions on the other side. It presents a limit as a limitation: something perspectival is in play. In contrast, a genuine limit here would leave the answer: 'There is nothing more to say: this is simply what the rule '+2' requires.'

[8.3] argued that Goldfarb's interpretation of the *Tractatus* presented Wittgenstein as adopting the very external perspective he was concerned to repudiate. The problem there was with the interpretation: Goldfarb's view ended up collapsing into a language-driven interpretation and its associated problems. This section has reached a similar position, but a different conclusion presents itself. McDowell's interpretation of Wittgenstein, in particular the way in which Wittgenstein is deployed against Dummett's demand that a theory of meaning be full-blooded and not modest, has Wittgenstein having to adopt an external perspective. This is the view from 'sideways-on' that Wittgenstein seems so keen to repudiate. In contrast to Goldfarb's interpretation, McDowell has Wittgenstein right. Indeed, the central conclusion of Part One was that if anyone comes close to an interpretation of Wittgenstein that has the reflections on rule-following coming out as interesting, plausible and coherent it is McDowell's interpretation. The problem with the *Investigations* - that it appears to be

presenting limits as limitations - is not the interpreter but the position being interpreted. The author of the *Investigations* may have wanted to expose a certain perspective as ultimately empty, but his remarks require that such a position can be adopted. Wittgenstein does, it seems, succumb to transcendental idealism.

[8.5] Conclusion

This chapter has brought together the results of Parts One and Two. [8.2] sketched a conception, prominent in the recent literature, of the relationship between transcendental idealism and the view from 'sideways-on'. Such a conception promised a measure by which one could determine whether Wittgenstein was or was not a transcendental idealist. The supposition is that if Wittgenstein was presenting limits as limitations (as opposed to genuine limits) he was a transcendental idealist. To present a limit as a limitation is to propose a boundary between certain parts of a domain: a boundary to what can be thought, what makes sense, what can be experienced and so on. If one presents limits as limitations one needs to supply an account of the harmony between reality and the way we represent it. The proponents of the measure maintain that, for Wittgenstein, the only suitable answer to that question is transcendental idealism. This connects transcendental idealism to 'sideways-on' looks in the following way: in order to present limits as limitations one must be in a position to do so; survey what lies on either sides of the boundary. If Wittgenstein can be shown to be rejecting or ultimately revealing as empty the view from 'sideways-on' he will have removed possibility of

asking the question to which transcendental idealism is the answer. Or so the measure proposes.

[8.3] applied the measure to the *Tractatus*, using a paper by Goldfarb to clear the ground. I argued that Goldfarb correctly reports that the naïve 'dubbing' interpretation of the book is unsatisfactory, as is the kind of realism on which it is based. Goldfarb highlights Wittgenstein's opposition to an external perspective (a view from 'sideways-on') that would require stepping outside of the single all-embracing perspective of logic. I argued that Goldfarb's paper was in error in the alternative it attributed to Wittgenstein: Goldfarb's interpretation ended up itself adopting the very external perspective Wittgenstein was concerned to repudiate. In rejecting the possibility of a view from 'sideways-on' Wittgenstein can be seen as rejecting the possibility of presenting limits as limitations. According to the measure this yields the result that the author of the *Tractatus* was no transcendental idealist.

[8.4] applied the measure to the *Investigations*, using a debate in the philosophy of language as background. Some time was spent working out quite what Dummett's demand that a theory of meaning for a language be 'full-blooded' as opposed to 'modest'. I argued that Dummett's view is best understood by distinguishing three positions: theorist, audience and practioner. McDowell's central criticism to full-bloodedness was assessed not as an objection to Dummett but insofar as it accurately reported Wittgenstein. I argued that McDowell does report Wittgenstein right, but the objection this

poses to full-bloodedness requires a realisation of what things look like from the external perspective that is supposedly under attack. The position is held to be faulty because of the paradox that results in occupying it. The *Investigations,* it seems, does present limits as limitations and so, according to the measure, succumbs to transcendental idealism.

I now have to say something about the connection between the two periods. With the *Tractatus* the measure is a useful tool. The book paints a picture which is, at heart, a simple and straightforward one. This lends itself to the kind of measure proposed in [8.2]. I am satisfied the conclusion reached in [8.3] is the right one from an interpretive point of view. I am much less satisfied with the conclusion reached in [8.4]. We saw in Part One (particularly the exegesis of §§185-242 in Chapter One), the *Investigations* paints a complex and anything but straightforward picture. Different themes overlap and interrelate in ways which appear at first glance to be incompatible and matters which appeared clear of a first reading are slippery to keep a grasp on through detailed evaluation. Part One struggled to find a reading of Wittgenstein that had him saying something both non-banal and plausible. Even when it was settled that McDowell has Wittgenstein right there remained a worry as to what precisely McDowell's interpretation came to. That is enough to raise a general concern that the measure of [8.2] is likely to be too crude and simplistic: the *Investigations* will not lend itself to a straightforward 'reading off' of a position. This, of course, does mean I think the *Tractatus* is 'easy' to understand and the *Investigations* 'hard'. The point is

the clarity of the system of the *Tractatus* lends itself to the measure in a way the *Investigations* does not.

This is all very general. Let's see if the general concern can be demonstrated in something specific. As indicated above, Moore and Sullivan agree on the measure to be used. They disagree with the results the measure yields. They end up reading passages of the *Investigations* very differently. Commenting on §217, Moore recognises the position we reached in [8.4]:

> Wittgenstein does seem to be guilty of some fundamental error, then. He does seem to suggest that we need a shift of direction here; that we need to appeal to limitations rather than to limits; that we need, in yet another metaphor, to dig beneath bedrock and say, as [Sullivan] nicely puts it, what *would* occupy the place of a further justification if only there *were* such a place. And, in suggesting these things, he does seem to cast the limits in question, which depend on the *limitations* in question, as themselves limitations. In sum, he seems to embrace transcendental idealism.[323]

Moore thinks that this is the wrong way to read Wittgenstein. He proposes that in the rule-following passages Wittgenstein was not concerned with the question: 'What justifies you in carrying on a certain way?' This commits Moore to saying that in §217 Wittgenstein is not discussing justification but some other question like: 'How do you know what to do here?' or 'How are you able to obey a rule?' Offering a justification would, argues Moore, at a very general level be a way of answering those latter questions. "It is because *my having* those justifications *is*, at that level, how I know what to do; *is* how I am able to obey the rule. (This is a 'grammatical' point, not an empirical

[323] Moore (unpublished), p.5.

one.)"[324] Eventually reasons or justifications would give out. We would be left saying 'This is simply what I do.' If this were an answer to a question of justification it would, Moore agrees, be presenting a limit as a limitation. But, he argues, it is perfectly harmless as an answer to the latter kinds of questions: 'How do you know what to do here?' and so on.

The upshot, for Moore, is that Wittgenstein was not presenting limits as limitations after all, and so could not have succumbed to transcendental idealism. Part of Moore's answer is to say that the contingencies Wittgenstein highlights are part of the framework of our ways of carrying on. Crucially, limits are not being made to rest on limitations:

> It is our *grasp* of limits. In particular, it is *which* limits we grasp. If we had been different in various specifiable ways, we would have had different rules. But that is *not* to say, what would indeed be absurd to say, that the rules we actually have would themselves have been different.[325]

This thought also appears in *Points of View*. There Moore tells us that Wittgenstein is right to highlight just how deep contingency goes. To recognise this, however, is not to say that had our practices been different 2 + 3, say, would not have equalled 5, or that if our language had been different there could have been male aunts. The idea is that if the practices of our language had been different we would not have had the rules or concepts we in actual fact have. It remains the case that 2 + 3 must equal 5 and that the

[324] Moore (unpublished), p.6.
[325] Moore (unpublished), p.7.

concepts *male* and *aunt* exclude each other. Contingency does indeed go deep for Wittgenstein.

> But in so far as this means that there is a contingent grounding for what is necessary, it neither threatens the necessity nor indicates any dependence of the form of reality on any aspect of our representations.[326]

In short, there is no drive towards idealism.

Moore's view, as so far reported, might strike the reader as puzzling. The idea has been that, despite what might look like evidence to contrary, the author of the *Investigations* does not present limits as limitations. As such, there is no question of idealism. This means Moore is forced to say things about the rule-following passages that might appear at first glance to sound strange. Notably that Wittgenstein was not interested in the question: 'what justifies you going that way?' But there is another strand of thought in Moore's work that I have yet to bring out; something that brings us much closer to McDowell's interpretation of Wittgenstein. It is the idea, the third theme in Chapter One, encountered in Wright's reading in Chapter Three and developed by McDowell as seen in Chapter Four, that Wittgenstein was a Quietist. It was developed in Part One in connection with Wittgenstein's avowed 'anti-theoretical' stance. Here is how Moore introduces it:

> when I say that Wittgenstein was not a transcendental idealist, I do not mean that he confronted these issues and rejected transcendental idealism, still less that he embraced some other "ism" in its stead.

[326] Moore (1997), p.133.

> Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy would not have allowed for that. For Wittgenstein philosophy was a kind of therapy. Its purpose was to cure us whenever, through the misuse of our own language, we became troubled by unanswerable pseudo-questions posing as deep problems.[327]

The discussion of McDowell's interpretation of the rule-following passages in Chapter Four introduced similar considerations. It was unclear whether McDowell's Wittgenstein was supposed to be embracing transcendental idealism or ultimately using the appeal of the doctrine as a stage to a kind of Quietism. Moore envisages Wittgenstein as rejecting transcendental idealism by rejecting the questions to which it would be the right answer. Questions like: 'what justifies you in going such a way?' or 'what does meaning addition by '+' consist in?' If these questions were genuine pressing questions the answer Wittgenstein would offer is that, ultimately, our ways of carrying on depend on what we all find natural. Moore's point is that there is something wrong, for Wittgenstein, in the questions themselves.

I need to end with *something* about continuity, even if the final fate of McDowell's interpretation is left unresolved. As expected in the Introduction, there is both deep continuity and deep discontinuity in Wittgenstein's thought. Parts One and Two showed how the same kind of worries about the limits of thought, what makes sense and what does not run throughout Wittgenstein's work. In both periods there is a clear worry about the possibility of a certain 'sideways-on' perspective. The shape of Wittgenstein's discussions is also strikingly similar: in that a kind of transcendental idealism

[327] Moore (1997), p.126.

appears as both threatening and appealing in Wittgenstein's thought. The discontinuity appears in the approach Wittgenstein offers in reply to the threat. In the *Tractatus*, transcendental idealism is identified and discussed. It is taken on, as it were, on its own terms and revealed ultimately to be empty. In the *Investigations*, transcendental idealism is the only answer that looks to have Wittgenstein's support: if there are genuine and pressing questions here then the transcendental idealist answer is the right one. Wittgenstein's reply, if indeed there is one, appears to be that the question itself is faulty. Recognising this obliterates the appeal of the idealism. The conclusion we have reached here is that the straight solution of the *Tractatus* has something going for it; the more 'round-about' solution of the *Investigations* is a lot more questionable. Applying the measure of [8.2] yields the result that the later Wittgenstein was a transcendental idealist. The worry raised in this section is whether the simplistic measure could ever do full justice to the interrelated and overlapping themes of the *Investigations* or, indeed, the subtlety of Wittgenstein's approach to idealism. We are left, then, holding that *perhaps* a full recognition and understanding of Wittgenstein's avowed Quietist approach can yield a different conclusion to that of the measure. It is going to depend on whether the proposed 'therapy' really dissolves the motivation for asking the questions to which transcendental idealism is the best answer or it simply amounts to a 'do not occupy that position because it has disastrous consequences.' Clearly it will be a hard act to pull off.

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