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ORIGINAL RESEARCH



Kripkenstein's Monster: An Origin Story

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Abstract

Kripke thought that the meaning paradox articulated in *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* arises due to a logical tension. This diagnosis, however, doesn't account for the enduring controversy surrounding the paradox. I argue that the meaning paradox stems instead from a tension inherent in two conflicting philosophical methodologies: theoretical internalism and theoretical externalism. Internalism, as a philosophical methodology, takes for granted the contents of our minds, whereas externalism takes for granted empirical data and shared notions of common sense. Two of the constraints on a straight solution to the paradox—the Guidance Constraint and the Error Constraint—rely for their plausibility on theoretical internalism and theoretical externalism, respectively. A straight solution thus rests on resolving the tension between these two conflicting philosophical methods. There are, accordingly, two ways to dodge the problem. Kripke's skeptical solution favors theoretical externalism, but a skeptical solution favoring theoretical internalism is available as well.

1 Introduction

Kripke, in *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, presents what he takes to be a novel form of skepticism: meaning skepticism. It seems that, for meaning to exist, there must be something that grounds meaning, something rule-like that is capable of justifying correct usage. But, Kripke thinks, Wittgenstein shows us that nothing can do the work that we need such a meaning-grounding entity to do. So there can be no meaning.

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Obviously this cannot be right. Speakers do mean things when they speak. Nevertheless, Kripkenstein's monster, as some have referred to the meaning paradox, still roves the philosophical landscape. Reductionists (Ginet, 1992; Heil & Martin, 1998; Lewis, 1983; Warren, 2020), non-reductionists (Boghossian, 2012; Miller, 2015; Stroud, 2002; Sultanescu, 2024), and partial reductionists (Ginsborg, 2011b) continue to level their most sophisticated attacks. And yet, like a Marvel superhero, the monster reemerges from the rubble after each confrontation (Guardo, 2023; Merino-Rajme, 2014; Miller, 2019; Sultanescu, 2021; Verheggen, 2015).

This paper does not level a frontal attack on the Kripkenstein meaning paradox. It takes a side-on approach, instead. How exactly does the meaning paradox arise, such that it is so resistant to attacks from all sides?

I argue that the paradox emerges from an underlying tension between two philosophical methodologies: theoretical internalism and theoretical externalism. This distinction, drawn from Stalnaker (2008), aims to capture two fundamentally different ways of approaching philosophical questions. Roughly, internalism takes for granted the contents of our minds, whereas externalism takes for granted our position in the world familiar to science and common sense. Illuminating the role of this methodological tension in the Kripkenstein paradox does more than reveal what makes the monster tick: it also reveals its weaknesses. In particular, my analysis reveals a second skeptical solution to the paradox. Kripke's skeptical solution adopts a thoroughly externalist theoretical perspective. A parallel kind of skeptical solution would opt to account for meaning from a thoroughly internalist perspective.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, in § 1, I argue that Kripke's diagnosis of the source of the paradox—as a logical or quasi-logical tension between the finitude of our minds and the infinite extension of rules—cannot be right. In § 2, I present my own diagnosis of the paradox, which appeals to a metaphilosophical distinction between what I call theoretical internalism and theoretical externalism. In § 3, I put this diagnosis to work, proposing an internalist alternative to Kripke's skeptical solution.

2 The Paradox

The Kripkenstein paradox consists of an argument to the effect that there is no meaning, which applies as much to thought as to the spoken and written word.¹ The paradox is articulated by means of a challenge from a devious skeptic, who aims to show that despite appearances, when we speak we do not mean anything at all.²

¹ Thus, as Guardo (2023) points out, the Kripkenstein paradox is "really two paradoxes": a paradox about *speaker* meaning (having to do with how a speaker means to use words, which Guardo calls the "ersatz paradox about intending") and a paradox about *linguistic* meaning (having to do with the meanings of linguistic symbols, which Guardo calls the "ersatz paradox about word meaning"). It may also be argued that there is a third paradox that goes beyond meaning, concerning the content of intentions writ large. Here, however, I focus on the Kripkensteinian challenge to meaning in particular.

² More precisely, the skeptic begins by challenging a speaker's *knowledge* of her meaning, and moves from this epistemic challenge to a metaphysical challenge. Ginsborg (2018) challenges the orthodox view

The challenge is to identify that which constitutes meaning. When I give the answer to '68+57', what makes it the case that I mean addition by '+' (such that the correct answer is '125'), rather than quaddition (which has it that the correct answer is '5')? A satisfactory answer must be some fact about me, the language user, that makes it the case that I mean addition. Since Kripke often speaks as if the meaning-constituting fact is a rule, I will speak in terms of rules as a shorthand for meaning-constituting facts more generally.

There are different ways of characterizing the constraints Kripke places on a straight solution. I will point to four such constraints.³ I focus on these four because they are helpful for characterizing both where Kripke (I think erroneously) locates the problem, and where I think the problem actually lies. These are:

- Infinity Constraint: a solution must indicate a meaning-making fact that determines the correct application of an expression not just in a limited number of situations, but in *any* possible application.
- Access Constraint: a solution must indicate a meaning-making fact to which speakers themselves have cognitive access.
- 3. *Guidance Constraint*: a solution must be consistent with the idea that a speaker's meaningful use of an expression is guided by her grasp of its meaning.
- Error Constraint: a solution must allow for error as well as success in the meaningful use of a term.

Though these are widely-acknowledged Kripkean (or Kripkensteinian) constraints on meaning, a brief explanation of each is warranted.

First is Infinity. I needn't actually apply a rule an infinite number of times (that would be impossible), but I need to be able to do so in any one of an infinite number of situations.⁴ The rule I grasp must, it seems, contain within it an infinite number of correct answers, because it must be able to guide me in any one of an infinite number

that the epistemic challenge is a merely rhetorical device, not crucial to the argumentative structure. See Miller (2024a) for a defense of the standard interpretation against Ginsborg's arguments.

³ Most scholars think that Kripke's skeptic places at least two constraints on a satisfying solution to the paradox, which fall into two broad categories. The first is something like my Error Constraint, which aims to capture the fact that meaning determines a term's extension and thus governs which of its applications are correct or incorrect. This condition is called "extensionality" in Miller and Sultanescu (2022) and "correctness" in Sultanescu (2022). The second oft-cited constraint is some version of a normativity constraint on meaning, the correct understanding of which is notoriously controversial (see, e.g., Boghossian, 2003; Ginsborg, 2022; Glüer et al., 2023; Hattiangadi, 2006; Miller, 2019; Whiting, 2016; Wikforss, 2001). My articulations of both Error and Guidance aim to remain as ecumenical as possible about the normativity of meaning, while staying true to Kripke (see also fn. 6, p. 5).

⁴ Kripke (1982), p. 7: "Although I myself have computed only finitely many sums in the past, the rule determines my answer for indefinitely many new sums that I have never previously considered." Furthermore, as Boghossian (2015, p. 357) points out, the Infinity Constraint applies to terms like 'dog' and 'green', as much as to terms like 'add', as "[e]ven if the actual world contains only a finite number of dogs, the semantical property of the word 'dog' that needs explaining is not merely the fact that it applies to all the dogs in the actual world, but also that it applies to all the dogs in all possible worlds; and to nothing else. And that is an infinitary fact about it."

of applications.⁵ This is the only way to be sure that we can disambiguate between, for instance, addition and any arbitrary quus-like variant.

The next constraint, Access, has to do with a language user's ability to epistemically access the rule. Kripke uses Access to explain why certain overly-intellectualized rules are incapable of solving the paradox, using the example of Peano axioms as unable to do the work required for meaning-making in the case of addition. He points out that, "[m]any of us who are not mathematicians use the '+' sign perfectly well in ignorance of any explicitly formulated laws of the type cited. Yet surely we use '+' with the usual determinate meaning nonetheless. What justifies us in applying the function as we do?" (Kripke, 1982, p. 17, fn. 12). What justifies *us*, thinks Kripke, must be something that *we* are in a position to appeal to: it must conform to the Access constraint.

Third is Guidance. Any satisfying solution to the paradox must point to a meaningmaking fact that directs the language user in the correct use of the rule.⁶ Guidance is tightly connected to Access, but the two constraints are worth addressing separately, as Guidance involves the causal role that the meaning-making fact must play in determining my application of a rule, in order for that answer to be more than just "an unjustified leap in the dark" (Kripke, 1982, p. 10). Kripke states that we "are guided in our application of it [the addition rule] to each new instance. Just this is the difference between someone who computes new values of a function and someone who calls out numbers at random" (Kripke, 1982, p. 17). If we mean to add, then we certainly do not call out numbers at random. The meaning-making fact, then, must guide me to the appropriate answer.

Fourth, and finally: Error. The Error Constraint aims to capture the uncontroversial idea that a term's meaning determines its extension (cf. Miller & Sultanescu, 2022, Sect. 2.1), and thus its correct usage. I call the constraint Error, instead of "correctness", because of Kripke's insistence that the possibility of erroneous usage is necessary for the possibility of successful usage. To suppose that a speaker will be correct *however* she answers, "only means that here we can't talk about right", says Kripke (p. 24), quoting Wittgenstein (*PI*, § 258). If there is no contrast class of error, there can be no success.⁷ The emphasis on error (rather than merely correctness) helps preserve what Miller (2020, p. 3) calls the "seems right/is right" distinction that Kripke thinks is indispensable for a satisfactory account of meaning. There must be a standard according to which we can distinguish between usage that seems right to

⁵ I will challenge this plausible-seeming implication of the Infinity Constraint in what follows. However, it will serve as a first pass at understanding the difficulty of meeting the Infinity Constraint.

⁶ Some, such as Ginsborg (2011a); Green (2018), argue that guidance is unnecessary for genuine meaning, and so is not a requirement on a satisfying solution to the paradox. However, it seems clear that Kripke thinks guidance is an important constraint on a straight solution, which is what concerns us here. For defenses of Guidance, see (Cleve, 1992; Horwich, 1984; Kusch, 2006; Merino-Rajme, 2014; Sultanescu, 2022; Wikforss, 2001).

⁷ As I've characterized it here, Error is consistent both with an "orthodox" and an "unorthodox" understanding of the normativity of meaning (Reiland, 2023; Whiting, 2016, 2024). According to the orthodox view, the normativity of meaning is to be understood in terms of norms of truth. According to the unorthodox view, there is a distinctive kind of semantic normativity to do with normative pressure to use a term in accordance with its meaning or use-conditions.

a particular speaker, and usage that really does accord with the meaning. This is the Error Constraint.

According to Kripke, the source of the paradox is the logical inconsistency of Infinity and Access. Kripke explicitly summarizes the skeptical challenge as "the problem of how our finite minds can give rules that are supposed to apply to an infinity of cases" (p. 54). This reading is further supported by Kripke's explication of his assertion that meaning states are "logically impossible". He says:

[I]t is logically impossible (or at least there is a considerable logical difficulty) for there to be a state of 'meaning addition by "plus" at all. Such a state would have to be a finite object, contained in our finite minds. (p. 52)

If I have the right sort of mental access to the meaning-making fact, then this fact must be "contained in" my mind. Anything contained in my mind (i.e., anything I have mental access to) must be finite; the meaning-constituting fact must be infinite; therefore, the meaning-constituting fact cannot be something that I have mental access to. Therefore, concludes Kripke, "[t]here can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word" (1982, p. 55).⁸

I think we should be suspicious of this diagnosis. The paradox is perplexing, even infuriating. But I don't think that it is founded in a *logical* difficulty or impossibility. This is because Access and Infinity do not present a contradiction.

There are two reasons to think that Access and Infinity are not as contradictory as Kripke thought. First, despite the name of the Infinity Constraint, the meaning-constituting fact does not (even according to Kripke's own articulations of the constraint) have to contain an infinite number of answers, strictly speaking, but rather an *indefinite* number of answers.⁹ We need the rule to be able to guide us in any possible circumstance that might arise, but that doesn't mean that the rule must have within it an infinity of applications. What it means is that the (cognitively accessible) rule must be capable of growing indefinitely to accommodate any new application. Pantsar (2015) calls these two types of infinity, infinity as an *object* and infinity as a

⁸ Even as Kripke is engaged in emphasizing the tension between Infinity and Access, he adds a footnote that seems to downplay it (1982, p. 52 footnote 34). Here Kripke argues that the paradox would not be resolved merely by granting the ability to mentally access an infinite addition table, because the skeptic could argue even then that the table could "be interpreted in a non-standard way" (ibid.). This seems to suggest that Kripke does not think that the real difficulty is a tension between Infinity and Access, after all, because it is not resolved by eliminating human mental limitations.

Here I think that Kripke is not dismissing the importance of the Infinity/Access tension altogether, but rather pointing out a different *kind* of Infinity/Access tension. The tension I've been focused on is the one that Kripke himself focuses on: that of a difficulty of an infinity of possible uses together with finite human faculties. What I think Kripke is emphasizing in the footnote is that there is another Infinity/Access difficulty that has to do with *justification* rather than correct usage. As I mention in my explanation of the Access constraint, the meaning-making fact must be able to justify *us* (and so be finite, since we can only access finite things), but it must also be able to answer the skeptic. And the skeptic can always pose a further question about our justification (*ad infinitum*). So even here, I think the central tension that Kripke wishes to highlight is between Infinity and Access, albeit of a slightly different sort. Thanks to an anonymous referee for pressing me on this point.

⁹ See, for instance, p. 7: "the rule determines my answer for indefinitely many new sums that I have never previously considered".

process. We need a rule capable of growing, of guiding us to its correct application in any and every new instance. In other words, we don't need an infinite *object* to be contained in our minds. All we need is the capacity to carry out a *process* that will lead us wherever we need to go.¹⁰

Second, even if the meaning fact did need to be an infinite object (rather than a process), it doesn't seem that grasping a rule (meeting the Access Constraint) requires that the mind somehow manages to squeeze within it every possible application of the rule. Perhaps the mind grasps only the ends of rails which really do reach to infinity.¹¹ It is difficult to see how we could know which rule we held onto without seeing its infinite applications, but that is an epistemic worry. Kripke's skeptic doesn't aim merely at showing that we aren't sure what we mean: he maintains that there is *noth-ing* that we mean.

The putative conflict between Access and Infinity turns out to be a red herring. If we want to know why the paradox arises, we must look elsewhere.

3 Internalist Guidance and Externalist Error

I maintain that the paradox stems not from a tension between Access and Infinity, but rather a tension between *Guidance* and *Error*. This is puzzling, as Guidance and Error do not seem obviously at odds. And in fact, there is no logical tension between the two. There is, however, a deep *methodological* tension between them. To resolve the meaning paradox, we must figure out the right way of philosophizing. Shall we rely first and foremost on the internalist, first-personal view from here, or shall we adopt a more objective, third-personal stance?

The section proceeds as follows. After highlighting the similarities between Guidance and Error, I emphasize the key difference between them, which I take to be a matter of perspective. Guidance is a fact about meaning as experienced from the first-personal point of view. Error is a fact about meaning as experienced from a third-personal point of view. This is revealed in how Kripke pumps our intuitions about both. I then make the case that these two points of view are indicative of two different ways of philosophizing: theoretical internalism and theoretical externalism. The reason that Guidance and Error are so difficult to reconcile is that they presuppose the adoption of different philosophical methodologies.

Both Guidance and Error provide normative constraints on a straight solution to the paradox. According to Guidance, meaning involves a palpable normative force

¹⁰ This kind of response to the Kripkenstein paradox may have been anticipated by Wittgenstein. Ginsborg (2020, 2022) argues that Wittgenstein thinks that rule following and meaning are to be explained by the human ability to "go on in the same way". Ginsborg's Wittgenstein posits a natural capacity to recognize and respond to "primitive normative fit between an item of behavior and the behavior that precedes it" (Ginsborg, 2020, p. 2), which in turn paves the way for meaning. If this is right, then the ability to carry out (indefinitely) the process of "going on in the same way" may be how Wittgenstein would have solved Kripke's paradox.

¹¹ Cf. Wright's (2001) aptly entitled *Rails to Infinity*. I doubt very much that Kripke would like this answer. Still, it is not clear that he has the resources to respond to it, at least as long as he maintains that the challenge is metaphysical rather than epistemological in nature.

capable of directing the rule-follower where to go. Error also captures something about the normativity of meaning, insofar as it tells us that the "rightness" of a right answer depends, in part, on the possibility of wrongness. Both, furthermore, provide what Glüer and Wikforss (2009) call "meaning engendered" normativity, as opposed to "meaning determining" normativity. That is, both Guidance and Error involve the kind of normativity that speakers are subject to in virtue of using words meaningfully (rather than specifying that meaning itself be grounded in something normative).

Notice, however, Guidance and Error are most plausible from two very different points of view. Guidance seems like something that must be true of meaning, considered as something I experience from the inside. Error, however, seems like something that must be true of meaning, considered as a fact about people in general, considered from the outside.

This difference in point of view is reflected in Kripke's articulation of the paradox. When Kripke advocates for Guidance as a constraint on genuine meaning, he tends to use the first person singular.

Even now as I write, I feel confident that there is something in my mind—the meaning I attach to the 'plus' sign that *instructs* me what I ought to do in all future cases. I do not *predict* what I *will* do... but instruct myself what I ought to do to conform to the meaning. (pp. 21–22, original emphasis)

The idea that we lack 'direct' access to the facts whether we mean plus or quus is bizarre in any case. Do I not know, directly, and with a fair degree of certainty, that I mean plus? (p. 40)

By contrast, when Kripke speaks of Error, he abandons the first person singular and begins speaking in the first person plural, or in the third person.

Nothing is more contrary to our ordinary view—or Wittgenstein's—than is the supposition that "whatever is going to seem right to me is right" (§ 258 [of *Philosophical Investigations*]). On the contrary, "that only means that here we can't talk about right". (pp. 23–24)

[W]hen asked to add certain numbers some people forget to 'carry'. They are thus disposed, for these numbers, to give an answer differing from the usual addition table. Normally, we say that such people have made a *mistake*. That means, for them as for us, '+' means addition, but for certain numbers they are not disposed to give the answer they *should* give, if they are to accord with the table of the function they actually *meant*. (pp. 28–29, original emphasis)

In the first quotation, Kripke speaks in first person plural ("we", "our") as he voices shared commonsensical notions of Error. In the second quotation, he uses the third person ("some people"), posing as an outside observer of human behavior.

I don't think the switch is accidental. It is reflective of two different theoretical stances from which Guidance and Error are most plausible. Guidance is most plausible from an *internalist* theoretical perspective, whereas Error is most plausible from

an *externalist* theoretical perspective. Kripke engages our internalist intuitions by emphasizing first-personal introspection, subtly encouraging his readers to do the same. Then, he pulls at our externalist intuitions by emphasizing shared common-sensical notions of the way the world is ("our ordinary view", what we "normally" say), and empirical phenomena (such as the datum that people make mistakes when adding).

The distinction I make here between *theoretical internalism* and *theoretical externalism* is drawn from Stalnaker (2008).¹² Stalnaker makes the distinction in order to be clear about his own philosophical motivations and proclivities (he counts himself as a theoretical externalist). However, he thinks the distinction is an important one that can help us understand a host of contemporary and historical philosophical debates.¹³ As Stalnaker explains it, the internalism/externalism divide is demarcated by "a contrast between decisions about where to start, between different assumptions about what is unproblematic" (2008, p. 2). While the theoretical internalist "begins with the contents of his mind—with what he finds by introspecting and reflecting", the theoretical externalist "proposes that we begin with the world we find ourselves in, and with what either common sense or our best scientific theories tell us about it" (2008, p. 3).

The distinction between theoretical internalism and theoretical externalism has to do with philosophical methodology: what are our starting points when we engage in philosophical theorizing? These starting points are not merely incidental: they determine the nature of our theorizing. By settling "what is unproblematic" (2008, p. 2), internalist and externalist starting points shape the way theorists "characterize the central philosophical problems" (ibid.) which in turn affects how they respond to these problems.

The exact nature of the starting points in question deserves further elaboration. The theoretical internalist and the theoretical externalist rely on different conceptions of what constitutes what I will call *fundamental evidence*. Fundamental evidence is the primary evidential value-bearer within an epistemic system.¹⁴ In metaphorical terms, fundamental evidence is the evidential "gold" of an epistemic "gold standard":

¹² Stalnaker calls the conflicting philosophical methods "internalism" and "externalism", rather than "theoretical internalism" and "theoretical externalism". I add the modifier to help distinguish theoretical internalism and externalism from a variety of other distinctions that go by the same name.

¹³ Stalnaker offers four different examples (2008, pp. 5–23): the problem of induction; the nature of visual experience; descriptivism and the causal theory of reference; and Putnam's paradox of theory interpretation. In each case, Stalnaker maintains that a skeptical problem (of induction, of the veridicality of visual experience, etc.) that appears deep and troubling from the perspective of a theoretical internalist is completely defused by later writers who adopt the perspective of a theoretical externalist.

¹⁴ I should be clear that by appealing to "fundamental" evidence, I am not presupposing a foundationalist epistemology. Fundamental evidence (as I use the term) has to do with the *types of evidence* to which one assigns evidential or justificatory value. One can think only certain kinds of things ultimately carry evidential weight without claiming that any individual propositions or token pieces of evidence are the things on which the entire epistemic structure rests. One can be a coherentist, or a radical contextualist like Stalnaker, and still think that only certain *kinds* of things have fundamental epistemic value. (Interestingly, Greco (2017a, b, 2023) proposes a view according to which even one's fundamental evidence can change depending on the kind of epistemic project. I assume here that philosophizing is a single context of inquiry: no matter what you're philosophizing about, the standards for a successful justification remain consistent given that philosophizing is the activity you intend to engage in.)

it is the sort of thing that is thought to have intrinsic epistemic value. The internalist takes as her fundamental evidence the contents of her mental life. The externalist takes as his fundamental evidence the world outside his mind. This is what explains the difference between the projects and problems of the internalist and the externalist. To use Wittgensteinian language, the questions of internalists and externalists are different because the two methodologies turn on different *hinges*.¹⁵ What serves as evidence is a fixed point on which doubts turn. One's presuppositions determine which questions it makes sense to ask.

Now we begin to see the Kripkenstein paradox take shape. Paradoxes are paradoxes in part because the premises seem obvious or otherwise incontestable. Both Error and Guidance seem undeniable, but they seem so from two very different theoretical points of view. Kripke relies on internalist appeals to introspection in order to get us to see Guidance as obvious, followed by externalist appeals to empirical evidence and shared notions of common sense in order to urge us to accept Error. We acquiesce, not noticing the slide between theoretical stances.

Kripke is, I think, somewhat aware of the difference between theoretical internalism and theoretical externalism that his presentation of the paradox exploits. In the introductory chapter of the book, he notes that,

There are two areas in which the force, both of the paradox and of its solution, are most likely to be ignored, and with respect to which Wittgenstein's basic approach is most likely to seem incredible. One such area is the notion of a mathematical rule, such as the rule for addition. The other is our talk of our own inner experience, of sensations and other inner states. (p. 4)

The reason that mathematics and inner experience resist the force of the paradox is that they are the least "mixed" examples. That is, mathematics seems straightforwardly externally verifiable and wholly mind-independent. Inner experience, by contrast, is necessarily understood through first-personal introspection of one's own mental states.

I think that Kripke chooses to have the skeptic challenge internalist intuitions by appealing to the meaning of '+' precisely because he recognizes that mathematics is one of the areas where we have the most robust intuition of a need for external verification and objective error.¹⁶ He starts with an internalist picture of meaning, and challenges it with the Error constraint. Of course, he could have done the reverse, had he been so inclined. As Kripke notes (pp. 14–15), Quine poses the problem from the "outside", instead, considering others' use of language the way a linguist might. From there, Kripke could have challenged the "outside" perspective with an appeal

¹⁵ For my purposes, it is enough that the internalist's and the externalist's conceptions of evidence are "hinge-like", whether or not they are hinges in the sense employed by contemporary hinge epistemologists (Coliva, 2015; Coliva & Moyal-Sharrock, 2016; Pritchard, 2016).

¹⁶ Although Kripke never states this explicitly, there is some indication that he is intentional in his choice of example. On p. 19 of *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, he says that although "these problems apply throughout language and are not confined to mathematical examples" it is nevertheless "with mathematical examples that they can most smoothly be brought out."

to inner experience. But for Wittgenstein as for Kripke, "the way the sceptical doubt is presented is not behavioristic. It is presented from the 'inside'" (p. 15).

This explains why it is that we want to accept both Guidance and Error as constraints on meaning. However, it does not explain why we cannot have our cake and eat it, too. Why is it so difficult to provide an account of meaning that allows for *both* Guidance and Error?

The answer is that the tension between Guidance and Error is an instance of the broader methodological divide between theoretical internalism and theoretical externalism. As I have characterized the distinction, each has its own conception of what constitutes fundamental evidence. The internalist's fundamental evidence, her evidential gold, are first-personal thoughts, desires, intentions, qualia, appearances, and other Cartesian, "internal" pieces of evidence. By contrast, the externalist's fundamental evidence consists of the empirical data, scientific findings, sense experiences, and other "external" pieces of evidence. Just as a financial system backed by gold can still make use of other forms of currency, the internalist and externalist can also appeal to a wide array of evidence. The difference is just that the value of this nonfundamental evidence will depend on its ability to be "cashed out" in terms of fundamental evidence.

Ideally, the theoretical internalist would find some way to account for the world the theoretical externalist takes for granted (using only internalist resources), and the theoretical externalist would account for the world the theoretical internalist takes for granted (using only externalist resources). As a matter of empirical fact, this has proved difficult. As Stalnaker notes (2008, pp. 5–23), external world skepticism, the problem of induction, and the problem of other minds are all deeply troubling for the internalist. The internalist can get an idealism-flavored version of the externalist's concrete and mind-independent world, but she struggles to account for both its concreteness and its mind-independence using only internalist evidence. The externalist, by contrast, struggles to account for intentionality, qualia, and self-knowledge. He can get a behaviorism-flavored version of the internalist's rich and multifaceted life of the mind, but he is hard-pressed to account for both its richness and its multifaceted ences using only externalist evidence.

Why is it so hard for the internalist to give us the world so easily provided by the externalist, and vice versa? This is an important question, for which I have no satisfying answer. Luckily, for the present purposes, why the difficulty exists isn't the point. The point is that it *does* exist, and that it presents challenges for internalists and externalists alike. When we philosophize, we must start with some conception of what counts as evidence for a philosophical view. Which conception we adopt determines which questions are difficult to answer, and which are easy to answer.

The Kripkenstein paradox, I contend, is born out of this more general metaphilosophical tension. An internalist will struggle to account for Error, or at least will struggle to account for the Error that seemed so undeniable to us from an externalist perspective. Likewise, an externalist will struggle to account for Guidance, or at least will struggle to account for the Guidance that seemed so obvious from an internalist perspective.

We can see this drama unfolding in *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*. As I noted, Kripke starts from the position of a theoretical internalist and challenges this intuitive picture of meaning from an externalist perspective. Mathematical examples make Error seem undeniable: sometimes we miscalculate. But then, the internalist is faced with a problem: "nothing in my internal mental history" (p. 21) can tell me that '125' is the appropriate, whereas '5' is an erroneous, answer to '67+58'. Error requires more than "a brute inclination" (p. 15) toward one answer rather than another, something *other* than "whatever is going to seem right to me is right" (p. 24). But it doesn't seem that the internalist can provide anything beyond this.

Of course, even from an internalist perspective, this seems wrong. It doesn't appear from the inside as if "whatever is going to seem right to me is right". On the contrary, it sometimes seems from my own perspective that I have indeed erred—I sometimes miscalculate or misjudge. The difficulty in providing Error from the first-person perspective is not that I seem, to myself, to be infallible. Rather, the difficulty for the internalist is that my own mind doesn't seem capable of grounding the sort of Error that occurs when I miscalculate. Although I can decide what I mean when I speak, I can't make it the case that I haven't erred, when in fact I have. My errors are not determined internally. They are determined by some fact that exists *external* to me. I am subject to error, not master over it. However, the theoretical internalist lacks the resources to vindicate this externally-determined kind of normativity. The best it seems she can offer is "whatever is going to seem right to me is right", and that just won't do.

Having articulated the difficulty of accounting for Error from an internalist perspective, Kripke turns to the difficulty of accounting for Guidance from an externalist perspective. He does this with a lengthy discussion of dispositions as a possible solution to the paradox. Dispositions are facts about the language user that are cashed out in evidential terms the theoretical externalist would approve of: observable behaviors. This makes them prime candidates for doing the work that we couldn't do by appealing to internally-accessible facts about my mind. The difficulty with dispositions, however, is that dispositions "fail to satisfy the basic condition on such a candidate [for a meaning-making fact]... that it should *tell* me what I ought to do" (p. 24, original emphasis). Dispositions cannot grant Guidance. And they cannot do so in part because what I ought to do depends on "a prior notion of my having an intention to mean one function rather than another" (p. 28). Dispositions capture what I *would* do, not what I *mean* to do. They capture external facts about my behavior, not internal facts such as Guidance.

In a recent defense of dispositionalism, Warren (2020, p. 277) points out that this move by Kripke seems "breathtakingly unfair to the dispositionalist". Kripke paints dispositionalists as trying to infer what I *mean* to do (a normative fact) from what I *am disposed* to do (a descriptive fact). But, per Warren, the sophisticated dispositionalist would never offer such a flatfooted response. In Warren's words, "instead of trying to infer a normative conclusion directly from a descriptive premise, dispositionalists are more likely to see semantic correctness as giving rise to normativity" (ibid.). The dispositionalist is committed to saying that one's meaning of, say, '+' derives from how one is disposed to use '+'—this much is undisputed. But the dispositionalist can argue that dispositions are nevertheless normative in the way required for a straight solution to the paradox (according to Warren) because there might be some (externally-determined) semantic normativity that determines whether my dis-

positions surrounding the use of '+' are correct or erroneous. The idea is that normativity is baked into our language, such that some dispositions to use '+' are correct, and others incorrect. This normativity is not derived from internal sources (one's own mind), but rather from some external source, such as community standards. If this is right, then Kripke's accusation seems to make a straw man of dispositionalism.

My reading of the paradox helps explain why Kripke's criticism is not so unfair after all.¹⁷ Warren's strategy allows dispositions to generate a certain kind of normativity: the external normativity of Error. However, even sophisticated dispositionalism cannot provide the internalist normativity inherent in Kripke's notion of Guidance.¹⁸ What one means by '+' derives in part from the fact that one is *guided* (i.e., that there is some internally-experienced normative pressure) to answer in one way rather than another. Without Guidance, there is no difference between meaning addition by '+' and calling out answers at random (Kripke, p. 17). But dispositions, no matter how sophisticated, cannot provide Guidance. Dispositions capture *external* facts (grounded in third-personally accessible behaviors). Only something *internal* (grounded in first-personally accessible facts) will do to give us the guidance required.

The philosopher who gets closest to articulating this fundamental difficulty inherent in the Kripkenstein paradox is Wright (2001). Wright argues that Wittgenstein and "his Kripkean ersatz" are focused on subjects which...

hover, puzzlingly and unstably, between two paradigms. To the left, as it were, stand genuine episodes and processes in consciousness.... To the right, by contrast, stand qualities of character—like patience, courage, and conceit—which are naturally viewed as constituted in the (broadly) behavioral dispositions of a subject, are fully manifest in the things he is inclined to say and do, and advert to no inner phenomenological causes of these inclinations. Descartes's conception of the mental tended to draw everything to the left-hand pole. The Rylean reaction, by contrast, attempts to colonize as widely as possible on behalf of the right. And the difficulty raised by the concepts [such as meaning] with which Wittgenstein was preoccupied is that we *are pulled in both directions simultaneously*. (2001, p. 177-8, emphasis added)

Wright's thesis, however, is that the tension between internalism and externalism is inherent in the very concept of *meaning itself*. By contrast, I argue that the tension found in the Kripkenstein paradox has to do with theoretical internalism and theoretical externalism, considered as philosophical methodologies. The real underlying source of the paradox has to do with two different ways we are tempted to approach meaning, as a subject of philosophical study.

¹⁷ At least, it is fair as long as we think that Kripke's demand for both Guidance and Error is fair—I'll raise this question in the conclusion of the paper.

¹⁸ This is also the case for other accounts which emphasize externalist-friendly solutions to the paradox, such as Lewis's (1983) appeal to natural properties. Natural properties might be able to explain why I mean to add rather than quadd, and therefore explain the sense in which '5' is an incorrect answer to '57+68'. Merino-Rajme (2014) rightly points out that this response fails to account for Guidance.

In effect, Kripke is asking us to take up two theoretical perspectives at once. He asks us to accept Error the way an externalist would, and then asks us to explain how such a thing could exist from an internalist perspective. And he asks us to accept Guidance the way an internalist would, and then asks us to explain how such a thing could exist from an externalist perspective. This approach to Guidance and Error effectively requires us to find a source of meaning that will satisfy everyone.

Making use of the internalism/externalism distinction reveals why the paradox has been at once so irresistible and so intractable. We can be prompted to accept both internalist and externalist intuitions, making both Guidance and Error seem downright indisputable. Nevertheless, there is a deep methodological difficulty in meeting both constraints at once: it seems there is no perspective from which it is possible to achieve both Guidance and Error.

The Kripkenstein paradox, according to this reading, is a symptom of a larger philosophical problem: what are the right starting points for our theorizing? What can we take for granted, and what needs explaining? This, in turn, has implications for the possibility (and desirability) of a straight solution to the paradox.

Before addressing the implications for a straight solution, however, I want to put my diagnosis to the test. If I am right that the paradox stems from a tension between two philosophical methodologies, then there ought to be two kinds of "skeptical" solution, rather than just one. Instead of trying to please both internalists and externalists, a skeptical solution would avoid the paradox by privileging a single theoretical approach. Thus there ought to be both an externalist-friendly skeptical solution and an internalist-friendly skeptical solution. In what follows, I make the case that this is so. Kripke's skeptical solution tends in the externalist direction. I also offer my own, internalist skeptical solution which is in many ways the mirror image of Kripke's.

4 Two Skeptical Solutions

According to Kripke, a "skeptical solution" is one which "begins by conceding that the sceptic's negative assertions are unanswerable" (p. 66). A skeptical solution does not attempt to offer a resolution of the paradox on the skeptic's own terms. Instead, it rejects one or more of the constraints on meaning set out by the skeptic. Perhaps the conditions the skeptic urges us to accept cannot be jointly met, but this hardly shows that we cannot have meaning. It just shows we cannot have the meaning the skeptic thinks we ought to want.

Kripke's skeptical solution will be familiar. He proposes that our ordinary practices surrounding meaning are justified by community standards, through agreement and disagreement with one another.¹⁹ Agreement about the appropriate usage of a

¹⁹ Though I focus here on what Kripke says, Guardo (2019) offers what he takes to be an improvement on Kripke's skeptical solution. Guardo's thought is that Kripke ought to do more to demonstrate that communication between interlocutors is possible even without a satisfying straight solution to the paradox. The result is a skeptical solution that is still externalist-friendly, but emphasizes maximizing interpersonal coordination of actions rather than community-determined correctness conditions for word usage (which Guardo argues end up being "idle wheels" within the machinery of successful communication).

term within a linguistic community does not and cannot meet the all the conditions offered in § 1, and so will not satisfy the skeptic. What agreement about appropriate usage of a term can do is explain what the assertability conditions are for the term 'meaning'. This, says Kripke, is enough to vindicate "our ordinary practice or belief" (p. 66).

Importantly, Kripke's skeptical solution completely leaves out the Guidance Constraint on meaning. The ground of meaning needn't guide anyone to the correct answer, nor need there be any significant difference (meaning-wise) between a very lucky guesser and someone who actively follows a rule. All we have, in the end, are assertability conditions: conditions according to which a community will say "yes, that is right", or "no, that isn't right". What is going on inside the minds of the individual language users, and their introspective understanding of their own intentionality, is irrelevant.²⁰ All that matters is whether the speaker's language usage is deemed by the community to fall within the acceptable range.

This is not to say that the thoroughgoing externalist can't have a *kind* of Guidance. Individual speakers' language usage will doubtless be shaped by the assertability conditions determined by the community. In this sense, then, individual speakers are "guided" by the rule.

However, it is important to note that this is hardly the Guidance that seemed so plausible from the point of view of the internalist. The Guidance Constraint required that the meaning-constituting fact had the capacity to normatively "instruct" individuals, to point a speaker to the right answer. Furthermore, the meaning-constituting fact was supposed to make the application of the rule to any novel situation clear. Community standards cannot guide a language user in novel situations; they can only censure responses the community deems incorrect or praise responses the community deems correct. They cannot instruct a person how she ought to respond in a situation which is new to her. At best, she will find herself labeled "wrong" or "right" after the fact. Sometimes, not even post hoc (dis)approval will be available—in truly novel situations, the community will not have standards, so there will be no fact of the matter about whether a given application of the rule is right or wrong.

Not only does Kripke's skeptical solution abandon the Guidance Constraint, it also relies heavily on Error. He takes for granted that there can be agreement and disagreement, making no interludes proposing skeptical possibilities involving "quagreement" and "quisagreement". On the basis of externalist fundamental evidence, he accepts that there is genuine Error. He then tells us what that error amounts to: deviation from community standards. This explanation is, again, very externalist-friendly. It relies on external community behaviors, and ignores what happens in individuals' minds. Indeed, in some sense, Kripke's skeptical solution reduces meaning itself to the difference between assertability and non-assertability, between agreement and disagreement with community standards—between, in other words, that which we

²⁰ Unless, perhaps, the community were to decide that such factors were to be included in assertability conditions. Still, this wouldn't satisfy the Guidance constraint as presented in the Kripkenstein paradox. Externally determined assertability facts (even if they involve facts about the speakers' intentions) don't themselves provide the grounds for this kind of internalist guidance.

call "incorrect" usage and that which we call "correct" usage. Meaning, in the end, boils down to error and correctness.

In addition to Kripke's skeptical solution, however, there ought to be another, radically different, sort of skeptical solution. There ought to be a skeptical solution which rejects Error, in favor of Guidance. Just as there is an externalist skeptical solution, there also ought to be an internalist skeptical solution to the paradox.

There are perhaps a number of different ways that an internalist skeptical solution could go.²¹ Here I offer my own version of such a skeptical solution. Much as Kripke's solution showed one way of giving a thoroughly externalist understanding of meaning, I will show one way to be thoroughly internalist about meaning.

The sort of internalist picture I have in mind will say that the thing that determines meaning is to be found in the speaker's own intentions. The meaning-maker, for the internalist, is not founded on externally determined community standards, but rather on internally determined personal standards. *I* determine what I mean. Just as Kripke made Error the cornerstone of his skeptical solution, the internalist makes Guidance the foundation of meaning.

This will seem utterly unsatisfying from an externalist point of view. Whence comes this alleged power? How are we to confirm its existence? Since the internalist starts from the point of view of a subject, rather than a third-personal theorist, this presents no big problem for her. My abilities, as experienced from the inside, are part of my epistemic starting point. Nothing needs to *give* me the power I have over my meanings. I just have it, and I know I have it because I exercise it. No matter that even God, if he looked in my mind, could not determine whether I mean plus or quus. *I* can determine whether I mean plus or quus, and that is plenty for the internalist.

The ability in question deserves some clarification, so allow me a short detour. According to Moran (2001), some of our mental states are known in a distinctive way: we know our own minds by *making up* our minds.²² When, at a party, I say, "I would like to go home now", I do not know that I am speaking the truth by appealing to some sort of evidence that I would like to go home (never mind whether this evidence is internal to the mind or external to it). I instead make an *avowal* to the effect of my wanting to go home. I know my own mind not by looking at it, but by making it up. I made up my mind about whether or not I wanted to stay at the party, and in so doing I made it the case that I wanted to go home.

Similarly, the internalist might maintain that what makes it the case that I meant '125' rather than '5' (in giving the answer to '57+68') is nothing other than the fact that I made up my mind that this was what I meant. When the skeptic challenges my answer and suggests that I meant '5', I scoff, because I know that what I mean by '+'

²¹ Though I came across these works subsequent to developing my own view, there are ways of interpreting both Campbell's (2024) and Ahmed's (2024) "individualist" notions of meaning such that both are internalist skeptical solutions in the way I have specified.

²² Wright's (2001, Chap. 5) "judgment-dependent" view of what constitutes meaning is similar to the one I propose here. Wright, however, takes his view to be offering a straight solution to the paradox, whereas mine is deliberately skeptical in nature. Another somewhat similar account comes from Green (2018), whose solution to the Kripkenstein paradox relies on a constitutivist account of self-knowledge. Green's solution cannot account for Guidance, but he denies that Guidance is a constraint on genuine meaning. I take Guidance to be a non-negotiable feature of the skeptical paradox as presented by Kripke.

would never result in such an answer. I tell myself what I should do, and in so doing I make it the case that I ought to do that very thing. In this way, the internalist thinks that Kripke is right to assert that, "I do not *predict* what I will do... but instruct myself what I ought to do" (p. 21, original emphasis).

Note, however, that positing an ability to "instruct myself" in this way allows for a variety of equally legitimate responses to the skeptic's suggestion that I meant to answer '5' rather than '125'. One option is to scoff at the skeptic, because I know that I would never mean to use '+' such that '5' is the correct answer to '57+68'. But, according to the internalist proposal, it is equally open to me to look the two answers up and down and decide that '5' is what I ought to have said. In so doing, I determine that quus is what I mean by '+', after all. According to the skeptical internalist, it is completely up to me to determine whether I mean plus or quus by '+'.

The skeptical internalist's meaning-making is akin to making a promise to oneself. We determine meaning by making certain commitments to ourselves, through the sort of mental determination that might be expressed in words by saying, "I hereby avow to use '+' to mean addition". All meaning thus involves a particular kind of Guidance: self-guidance.

Importantly, this kind of view involves a rejection of Error, at least of the externally-determined kind. The skeptical internalist affirms that "whatever is going to seem right to me is right": in an important sense, meaning *just is* deciding what I deem to be right. By deciding that it is so, I can make it the case that '5' is the correct response to '57+68'. It is even open to make such avowals retrospectively. I can build new guiderails where none were before, in cases of new symbols or unfamiliar applications of a rule. Or, if I choose, I can tear down old guiderails and set them up somewhere else by deciding to revise what I mean by a term.

Still, the internalist can have a *kind* of error. The skeptical internalist cannot accept the original Error Constraint on meaning, but she (much like the skeptical externalist) can fashion for herself a less demanding substitute. According to the internalist, I am not only the sole arbiter of my rightness. I also have the power to determine when I have made a mistake. What makes it the case that I have made a mistake are my own, self-devised rules. When I use '+' meaningfully, I lay down rules that bind me to particular kinds of use: in effect, I make a promise to myself to use '+' in certain ways and not others. Just as I can make promises to myself, I can also break them, intentionally or unintentionally. Perhaps, when attempting to add, I forget to carry. Once someone points this out to me, I can acknowledge that I failed to live up to the standards that I myself had set. My acknowledgement of error serves as its own kind of avowal: an avowal that my meaning is other than what my usage indicated, in a particular case.

But notice that this is a far cry from the Error that seemed so compelling from the point of view of a theoretical externalist. The Error Constraint aims to express a certain kind of bindingness in our meanings, a normativity that we are subject to, rather than master over. But the skeptical internalist maintains that we are only subject to our meanings insofar as we *choose* to be: my failure to carry is only an error (rather than what I meant to do) if I say it is. The "errors" of the internalist have all the force of duty to fulfill a promise made to oneself. Critics of such duties to oneself complain that "a duty binds a person, irrespective of what she herself decides", such that "insofar as a person has the power to release herself, the purported duty lacks its characteristic ability to place her in the very condition that we associate with duty" (Schofield, 2021, p. 47). The same sort of critique seems to apply to the internalist's version of error. The Error Constraint expresses the intuition that meanings bind a person, irrespective of what she herself decides. The internalist denies this kind of Error. If she is right about what meaning is, then we always have the ability to alter our meanings instead of admitting to making a mistake. We are only committed to our meanings as long as we choose to be, which is not a terribly binding sort of commitment.²³

This, the externalist will complain, robs Error of all its force. Real, satisfying Error implies that one cannot simply decide when one has made a mistake and when one is going to alter one's meaning in order to align with one's usage. The externalist wants the rightness and wrongness of an application of the rule to be up to something that is not the speaker herself: such radically speaker-dependent meaning would amount to chaos, to the inability to communicate. Indeed, it would be tantamount to private language.²⁴

The skeptical internalist does not flinch at the accusation that her view entails private language. All meaning *is* private. Only individuals have the right sort of access to and control over their intentions to allow for knowledge of what is meant. Of course, individuals may find it useful to shape and alter their meanings so as to mimic one another's, and encourage others to do the same. Or they may find the addition function more useful than the quaddition function, and so prefer to shape their meanings to conform more closely to the former. But this doesn't mean that what *makes* a meaning right or wrong is agreement with one another or with the world. Just as a skeptical externalist cannot provide Guidance, the skeptical internalist cannot allow for the objective rightness and wrongness of rule applications. The sole arbiter of what I mean—and therefore the sole determiner of success and failure in language use—is me.

Kripke himself considers, and rejects, a position adjacent to the skeptical internalist one I sketch here. The suggestion is that maybe meaning "denotes an irreducible experience with its own special *quale* known directly to each of us by introspection" (p. 41). This is not the same thing that I propose as an internalist skeptical solution, but it is similar. I suggested that meaning stems from an irreducible *ability* to determine one's own meaning, whereas Kripke suggests that meaning is an irreducible qualitative *experience of* one's own meaning. The ability to ride a bike to the corner store is hardly the same thing as the experience of riding one's bike to the corner store.

²³ An anonymous referee points out that the analogy to self-promising seems to seems to restrict meaningavowal to the present: I can decide what I *mean*, but not what *meant* (just as I can change what I promise myself now, but not what I promised myself in the past). As a matter of fact, I don't think that meaningavowal is constrained to the present in this way. According to the radical internalist, one can alter what one *meant* just as easily as what one *means*, by attributing an error to oneself in the past: "I always thought I meant addition by '+', but it turns out I meant quaddition all along". In the words of Wright (2001, 142, original emphasis), "a former intention *is not settled independently of [one's] judgement of the matter*". According to the skeptical internalist, by avowing it to be so, I can make it the case that I *always meant* quus by '+'. This is the radical nature of the internalist's skeptical solution.

²⁴ I'm very grateful to an anonymous referee for encouraging more careful elaboration of the second skeptical solution, and its rejection of Error as a constraint on meaning.

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Though I think Kripke's challenge fails, it is instructive to take a brief look at his objections in order to gain a fuller understanding of the stability of the internalist skeptical solution. Kripke rejects the qualitative experience view for three reasons. First, it cannot give the right sort of justification: namely, it cannot allow for externally-determined error. This, of course, is no problem for the thoroughgoing internalist. She outright rejects the demand for Error, at least on the skeptic's externalist terms.

Second, Kripke notes that if such a "qualitative state" exists, it doesn't seem (from the inside) to be relevantly different when deciding how to answer 57+68, and when deciding how to answer 5×7 . The thought is that, if qualia are the meaning-making facts (the "rules"), there should be a different quale (a different rule) for every meaning. But it simply doesn't seem like there are any such distinctive meaning-related qualia. This sort of view would indeed be problematic for an internalist, since the damning evidence are qualia themselves, which the internalist takes quite seriously.

However, this doesn't present a problem for the skeptical internalist view I have proposed. It is not that qualitative states guide one where to go, such that '125' has a distinct "feel" and '35' has a distinct "feel". Rather, meaning is generated by the ability that individuals have to guide themselves. Exercising the same ability in different circumstances needn't result in noticeably different qualia.²⁵ The feeling of riding one's bike to the corner store needn't be wildly different from the feeling of riding it to the library, even if one ends up somewhere distinct.

The third problem that Kripke has with the qualitative experience view is even more instructive. He says (p. 51),

If there really were an introspectable state, like a headache, of meaning addition by 'plus' (and if it really could have the justificatory role such a state ought to have) it would have stared one in the face and would have robbed the sceptic's challenge of any appeal.

I suggest that, for a thoroughgoing internalist, the introspectable ability to avow that one means addition by '+' *does* "stare one in the face". The skeptical internalist does not feel the force of the skeptical challenge, and she does not feel it *precisely because* she rejects that meaning facts ought to have the kind of ground the externalist insists

²⁵ This is somewhat similar to the direction that Ginsborg (2020) thinks that Wittgenstein goes, insofar as she thinks that the solution is to be found in an ability, rather than a state. Ginsborg, however, is very much aware that the ability she cites (the ability to "go on in the same way") would hardly be satisfying as a solution to the difficulty as posed by Kripke, since "going on in the same way") would hardly be satisfying as a solution to the difficulty as posed by Kripke, since "going on in the same way" is precisely what's at issue for him. Miller (2024b) also offers an ability-based account that, in contrast to Ginsborg, does aim to provide a solution to the Kripkenstein paradox. According to Miller, we can follow a rule without appeal to further rules by exercising an ability to apply a rule correctly. The ability in question is gained through training (in the practice of intentionally following the rule). Such training "all but guarantee[s]" (Miller, 2024b, p. 128) that we gain the correct ability (for instance, to respond to instances of the '+' function with the sum, rather than the quum, of the two numbers), because of a shared Wittgensteinian "form of life". The Moran-style ability I develop here offers an alternative to both Ginsborg and Miller. In contrast to Ginsborg, it does aim to answer Kripke's challenge. In contrast to Miller, it aims to give a skeptical solution, rather than a straight one.

on. It is only once she allows the externalist to begin placing demands like Error on her that she begins to feel the weight of explanatory burden.

Thinking of the Kripkenstein paradox in terms of a tension between theoretical internalism and theoretical externalism reveals a new kind of skeptical solution. Kripke embraces a skeptical solution which is thoroughly externalist, and therefore emphasizes Error at the expense of Guidance. But it is also possible to go thoroughly internalist: by sacrificing Error and exalting Guidance, we arrive at a radically different, internalist conception of meaning.

5 Conclusion

In this paper, I explained how the Kripkenstein meaning paradox is born out of the tension between two methodological approaches: theoretical internalism and theoretical externalism. To resolve the paradox, we must try to meet requirements set by both the internalist and the externalist. There are, accordingly, two ways to dodge the problem, corresponding to the two different philosophical approaches. One way is to go thoroughly externalist, and reject the requirements that rest on internalist intuitions. The other way is to go thoroughly internalist, and reject the requirements that rest on externalist intuitions.

The question that needs answering now is: how much *should* the meaning paradox trouble us? Now that we understand Kripkenstein's monster, what is the right way to respond to it?

The appropriate response to the Kripkenstein paradox, given that it is a symptom of a larger metaphilosophical tension, depends on one's reaction to the broader issue. There will be, on the one hand, those who take the source of the paradox as further proof that Kripkenstein's monster needs slaying. The meaning paradox is yet another symptom of a disease that must be cured. All of us, after all, are *both* (internalist) subjects and (externalist) theorists. It is part of the human condition to have to figure out how the subjective view from here corresponds to the view from nowhere.²⁶ To offer a straight solution to the paradox and slay the monster at last, we must somehow reconcile the two perspectives. We must find a way to reach the meaning of the internalist by appealing only to internalist fundamental evidence.

This, however, will be nothing short of a monumental task. The meaning paradox is indicative of a deep tension in philosophy between subject and object that ought not be passed over lightly. Kripkenstein's monster will never be slain until this deeper tension is resolved.

On the other hand, there will be those who take the source of the paradox to demonstrate that we ought to leave Kripkenstein's monster well enough alone. Attempting a straight solution is an ill-conceived project, because it is asking us to adopt an inconsistent philosophical perspective. We can arrive at an account of meaning, but not by accepting the skeptic's inconsistent terms. It is as if Kripke's skeptic sets us in a boat and proceeds to tell us to fly to Hawaii. One can get to Hawaii, but one must

²⁶ Relevant here, of course, is Nagel (1986).

either fly there on a plane or sail there on a boat. It is not only inappropriate but ludicrous to demand that we use a boat to fly or a plane to sail, and it is even worse to ask us to fly and sail at the same time. Once we realize what the skeptic is really asking of us, we may realize he is not worth answering.

If this is the case, then Kripkenstein's monster is no more than a legend meant to frighten philosophical ingenues. The truth of the matter is that the sophisticated philosopher, by adopting a consistent philosophical methodology, will never encounter it in real life.

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