

Wittgenstein on Rule Following:  
A Critical and Comparative Study of  
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## Abstract

This thesis is a critical and comparative study of four commentators on the later Wittgenstein's rule following considerations. As such its primary aim is exegetical, and ultimately the thesis seeks to arrive at an enriched understanding of Wittgenstein's work through the distillation of the four commentators into what, it is hoped, can be said to approach a definitive interpretation, freed of their individual frailties.

The thesis commences by explicating the position of Kripke's Wittgenstein. He draws our attention to the 'sceptical problem' of how we are to resolve the apparently paradoxical situation that whilst we seem to use language meaningfully, there is no fact about us that constitutes our meaning one thing as opposed to something else, and consequently the possibility of our actually meaning anything seems to evaporate. Kripke interprets Wittgenstein as accepting the validity of the sceptical problem, but seeking to establish that the force of the problem is radically diminished because the justification which it has shown to be unobtainable is actually unnecessary for rule following to take place.

McDowell tries to show that Kripke is mistaken when he views Wittgenstein as endorsing scepticism in this way, because he sees Kripke as failing to appreciate a section of *Philosophical Investigations* which suggests that one ought to reject the sceptical paradox by correcting the misunderstanding which gives rise to it. McDowell reads Wittgenstein's claim as being that we mistakenly think we are caught in a dilemma which requires us either to endorse the sceptical paradox or to subscribe to a mythological picture of rule following; whereas, so the thought goes, we must reject the entire dilemma.

Although McDowell's criticism of Kripke is essentially correct, he is motivated to that criticism by an incorrect reading of Wittgenstein. Central to this misinterpretation is his failure to note Wittgenstein's belief that universal scepticism is nonsensical. Winch does much to flesh out the nature of

Wittgenstein's claim here, although he makes the mistake of *attributing* to Kripke that position which the latter finds in *Philosophical Investigations*. Despite inheriting this error from Winch, Diamond nonetheless improves on his attempt to characterize the shortcomings of Kripke's reading as an *interpretation* of Wittgenstein, enabling the thesis to reach a conclusion about Wittgenstein's understanding of rule following.

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## Abbreviations

References to works of Wittgenstein are made by the following abbreviations:

*BB*    *The Blue and Brown Books*

*CE*    'Cause and Effect: Intuitive Awareness'

*LFM*   *Wittgenstein's Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics,*  
          *Cambridge 1939*

*NB*    *Notebooks 1914-1916*

*OC*    *On Certainty*

*PI*    *Philosophical Investigations*

*RFM*   *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*

*TLP*   *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

*Z*     *Zettel*

### Wittgenstein as Sceptic (1): The “Sceptical Problem”

Saul Kripke considers Wittgenstein’s discussion of rule following to be the foundation stone around which the other concerns of the *Philosophical Investigations* are built, and from which those concerns emanate. Given this, insofar as the rule following considerations address a specific philosophical problem, that problem is going to be foundational, or fundamental, with regard to the rest of philosophy, or at least with regard to the rest of *Wittgenstein’s* philosophy. And of course this is an important distinction; for if Wittgenstein’s philosophy is going to be of relevance to philosophers (if it is going to *be* philosophy) it needs to address their concerns. These need not be their present concerns – Wittgenstein might present a problem that no one has seen before. Kripke holds the achievement of the *Investigations* to be that Wittgenstein brings to our attention just such a hitherto unseen problem, and to see how the rule following considerations are fundamental, he thinks, we need to see the nature of this problem. In doing this, Kripke has it, not only do we see that the *Investigations* should be interpreted in a way which places the discussion of rule following at their heart, but also we are forced to address the fundamental problem as just that – an urgent topic for our own philosophy. The activities of interpreting and philosophizing do not come apart here.

Wittgenstein has invented a new form of scepticism. Personally I am inclined to regard it as the most radical and original sceptical problem that philosophy has seen to date, one that only a highly unusual cast of mind could have produced. Of course he does not wish to leave us with his problem, but to solve it: the sceptical conclusion is insane and intolerable. It is his solution, I will argue, that contains the argument against ‘private language’; for allegedly, the solution will not admit such a language. But it is important to see that his achievement in posing this problem stands on its own, independently of the value of his own solution of it and the resultant argument against private language. For, if we see Wittgenstein’s problem as a real one, it is clear that he has often been read from the wrong perspective. (Kripke, 1998, p. 60)

The ‘sceptical problem’ that Kripke refers to in this passage is the problem of how we are to resolve the apparently paradoxical situation that whilst we

seem to use language meaningfully, there is no fact about us that constitutes our meaning one thing as opposed to something else, and consequently the possibility of our actually meaning anything seems to evaporate. He arrives at this characterization of the sceptical problem by developing Wittgenstein's assertion at *PI* 201 that, 'this was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule.' His characterization of the problem runs as follows. We use the word 'plus' to stand for the function, addition, and by means of a combination 'of my external symbolic representation and my internal mental representation' (Kripke, 1998, p. 7), we 'grasp' the rule for addition. Our grasping of the rule for addition determines that even though we have applied the rule only a limited number of times in the past, we will follow it on an indefinite number of appropriate occasions in the future. Kripke then imagines a situation where he undertakes a particular calculation for the first time, and he uses the example of '68 plus 57'; the result he obtains, as we might expect, is '125'. He asks us to imagine a bizarre sceptic who questions his belief in the correctness of his answer, given that he did not explicitly instruct himself that '68 plus 57 equals 125' prior to application of the function, addition, and cannot, therefore, be certain which rule he actually applied in the past when he thought he was adding – perhaps he was 'quadding', where quaddition is a function that generates the same results as addition for every previous calculation in which Kripke thought he was adding, but which produces the answer '5' for the sum '68 plus 57'. In other words, the sceptic challenges Kripke to justify his belief that he followed the rule for addition on the finite number of past occasions in which he thought he was applying that function. The sceptic is not questioning Kripke's ability to add; rather, the issue is whether there is any fact about the latter's rule following which constitutes his meaning to add when he thinks he is adding, and which 'contains' within it appropriate justification for the belief that he is following the right rule. Simply put, we are seeking that fact about a rule follower's mental state which makes his belief that he is following a certain rule both true and justified.

Kripke points out that in order for him to be able to understand the sceptic's problem, and to attempt a response, they must agree on the meaning of the language in which the debate currently takes place; the sceptic does not, therefore, question the present use to which Kripke puts his words, but simply asks whether this accords with his past use of them.

The ground rules of our formulation of the problem should be made clear. For the sceptic to converse with me at all, we must have a common language. So I am supposing that the sceptic, provisionally, is not questioning my *present* use of the word 'plus'; he agrees that, according to my *present* usage, '68 plus 57' denotes 125. Not only does he agree with me on this, he conducts the entire debate with me in my language as I *presently* use it. He merely questions whether my present usage agrees with my past usage, whether I am *presently* conforming to my *previous* linguistic intentions. The problem is not "How do I know that 68 plus 57 is 125?", which should be answered by giving an arithmetical computation, but rather "How do I know that '68 plus 57', as I *meant* 'plus' in the *past*, should denote 125?" If the word 'plus' as I used it in the past, denoted the quus function, not the plus function ('quaddition' rather than addition), then my *past* intention was such that, asked for the value of '68 plus 57', I should have replied '5'. (Kripke, 1998, pp. 11-12)

By appealing to 'ground rules' here, Kripke is seeking to provide a foundation ("the ground") in and against which the problem can be formulated. To clarify what is wrong with *that*, on Wittgenstein's position as he interprets it, he examines a possible response to the sceptic which runs as follows. When one follows a rule one does not merely extrapolate from past examples of the rule's application to future instances; rather, the rule itself – i.e., instructions for the application of the rule and not merely *examples* of its application – was internalized when one initially learned to follow it. In other words, the rule itself, or at least the directions for its application, are explicitly available to one's mind, having been put there by the act of learning at some earlier time; and, so the thought goes, it is this, rather than past applications of the rule, that 'justifies and determines my present response' (Kripke, 1998, p. 16).

Kripke points out that the sceptic will reply to this position by claiming that whatever description or interpretation one gives of rule following, one can never be certain that what one presently means by that description is the

same as the meaning that it had when one used it in past cases. In other words, an interpretation of rule following which attempts to display at the most basic level what it involves is just as susceptible to scepticism as any previous interpretation that it tries to improve upon.

Here of course I am expounding Wittgenstein's well-known remarks about "a rule for interpreting a rule". It is tempting to answer the sceptic by appealing from one rule to another more 'basic' rule. But the sceptical move can be repeated at the more 'basic' level also. Eventually the process must stop – "justifications come to an end somewhere" – and I am left with a rule which is completely unreduced to any other. How can I justify my present application of such a rule, when a sceptic could easily interpret it so as to yield any of an indefinite number of other results? It seems that my application of it is an unjustified stab in the dark. I apply the rule *blindly*. (Kripke, 1998, p. 17)

The appeal to ground rules, of course, was just such an attempt to provide 'basic' rules by means of which the problem itself could be "interpreted". Given this, the sceptical problem itself is as susceptible to the very scepticism it propounds as any other rule following behaviour, and there can never be any fact of the matter about which rule one is following. Since language use is a species of rule following, there is never any fact of the matter as to what one means when one uses language, which is just to say that all language is meaningless.

Kripke is keen to counsel us against seeing the sceptical problem as being merely epistemological, and it is easy to see how somebody could make the mistake of thinking that it was. The received view is that knowledge is justified true belief, and we have seen that the sceptic is challenging both our justification for maintaining that we are following a particular rule, and the truth of our following a particular rule; it seems therefore as though the sceptic is simply denying that we (or anyone else) can know which rule it is that we are following. However, the claim is not that we can have no knowledge of the rule that we are following because our epistemic access to the facts about the rule is of a degree which fails to justify our belief, but that *there are no relevant facts here*. In other words, we cannot be justified in our

beliefs about rules because there is nothing – no fact about us – about which to have those beliefs; and the reason why it is never true that we are following a particular rule is that there is no fact about us to make it true, so it is never false either, which is just to say that in the absence of an appropriate fact we simply cannot talk about truth or falsity in the context of rule following. That, then, is the sceptical problem.

## Wittgenstein as Sceptic (2): The “Sceptical Solution”

In the face of the sceptical problem, Kripke sees Wittgenstein as having, in principle, two routes to a solution available to him. On the one hand he could seek a ‘straight’ solution, which would show the scepticism actually to be unfounded; on the other hand he might pursue a sceptical solution, taking as its starting point the validity of the sceptical problem, but seeking to establish that the *force* of the problem is radically diminished because the justification which it has shown to be unobtainable is actually unnecessary for rule following to take place. Wittgenstein, Kripke has it, adopts the latter strategy, and does so in the following way. Given that he agrees with the sceptical view that there can be no truth of the matter as to which rule an agent can be said to be following, Wittgenstein can no longer hold, as he did in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, that the meaning of an expression is given by its truth conditions – not only are there no conditions in which an expression is true, but there are none in which it is false either. Instead, he replaces the view of language centred on truth conditions with one based ‘on *assertability conditions* or *justification conditions*’, where these describe the ‘circumstances [under which we are] allowed to make a given assertion’ (Kripke, 1998, p. 74).

Wittgenstein replaces the question, “What must be the case for this sentence to be true?” by two others: first, “Under what conditions may this form of words be appropriately asserted (or denied)?”; second, given an answer to the first question, “What is the role, and the utility, in our lives of our practice of asserting (or denying) the form of words under these conditions?”

Of course Wittgenstein does not confine himself to declarative sentences, and hence to assertion and denial, as I have just done. ... Thus, if we speak properly, we should not speak of conditions of ‘assertion’, but rather, more generally, of the conditions when a move (a form of linguistic expression) is to be made in the ‘language game’. (Kripke, 1998, pp. 73-74)

In the case of an individual, isolated, rule follower, the ‘assertability conditions’ that allow that person to follow a rule in the way he is inclined to are just those conditions in which he follows that inclination. His confidence that he is following the rule in the right way is enough for him to be doing so.

The sceptical argument showed that he has no internal standard which can require him to follow the rule in a particular way; and since he is isolated, he has no external standard either. However, such an “anything goes” approach to rule following does not accord with our usual understanding of it: we think that, insofar as past rule following guides our future behaviour, we ought to be able to judge of a rule follower that he has followed the rule incorrectly, that he has made a mistake. Indeed, we may want to say that he is so mistaken to the extent that he is not following any rule *at all*. Given this, it seems that the idea of an isolated individual following a rule simply as it strikes him has no genuine content – he may not be following any rule at all, despite thinking that he is. ‘To think one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule ‘privately’; otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it’ (PI 202).

Of course, if we consider the rule follower as no longer isolated but instead a member of a community, we can see that others will then have genuine justification conditions for assessing the rule following of the individual and for attributing (correct or incorrect) rule following to him. Imagine, for example, that the person in question is a child who is being taught to add. His teacher will only judge that he has grasped the rule for addition when he responds to addition calculations in ways appropriate for someone who has genuinely learnt how to add. The teacher will consider those responses to be appropriate when they accord with the responses that the teacher would herself give. This characterization of rule following depends on the fact that ‘our actual community is (roughly) uniform in its practices with respect to addition’ (Kripke, 1998, p. 91). In the case of addition, the teacher is a rule follower because she has been deemed to have mastered the rule by the community of adders, inasmuch as she follows the rule for addition (roughly) as other adders do so. Someone who uses language in (roughly) the way that the community does will, likewise, be admitted to the community of language users. Insofar as language is something that is used within a community, then, Wittgenstein’s picture of language requires not only an account of the conditions under which an expression can be used, but also a description of what that use amounts to

within the life of the community, i.e., the utility of using that particular expression or following some rule.

In short, Wittgenstein does not deny the sceptical claim that there is no fact about us which justifies our belief that we are following particular rules. Rather, we are justified in believing that we are rule following when others attribute appropriate concept possession to us within the context of the life of the community, and we do so in return. This is what agreement in form of life amounts to, and it is why there could never be a private language, the use of which, by definition, would be unregulated by anyone other than the private linguist.

That is Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein's reply to the sceptical argument.

### Wittgenstein as Avoider of Scepticism: McDowell *contra* Kripke

When Kripke develops the paradox in *PI* 201, recall, he takes himself to be expounding a 'radical and original sceptical problem': something which is a *genuine* problem for any philosopher, including Wittgenstein. John McDowell has tried to show that Kripke is mistaken when he views Wittgenstein as endorsing scepticism in this way, because such an attribution requires him to overlook that paragraph of *PI* 201 which immediately follows the paradox, and which reads:

It can be seen that there is a misunderstanding here from the mere fact that in the course of our argument we give one interpretation after another; as if each one contented us at least for a moment, until we thought of yet another standing behind it. What this shews is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation*, but which is exhibited in what we call "obeying the rule" and "going against it" in actual cases. (*PI* 201)

Wittgenstein's claim here is that we are unable to find an interpretation which satisfies us that it constitutes just what it is to grasp some rule. For example, in the case of learning to add, we might think that someone grasps the rule for addition when they correctly interpret the instruction of the teacher; but we are then required to give an account of just what it is to interpret correctly, and on this model that will itself be an interpretation, involving us in an infinite regress. We cannot find an interpretation which contents us for more than a moment because an interpretation can always be further interpreted. Kripke, McDowell has it, sees Wittgenstein as accepting the reasoning that shows us to be incapable of arriving at an interpretation which satisfies us for any length of time, and consequently takes him to arrive at the sceptical conclusion that there is nothing which constitutes my following a particular rule. In other words, Kripke's Wittgenstein holds that because the line of reasoning which seeks an interpretation is perpetually fruitless, acceptance of the sceptical paradox is the only way to end that regress. McDowell thinks that Kripke is here guilty of misinterpreting Wittgenstein, and he says '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' (McDowell, 1998, p. 229, my emphasis).

If we make the mistake of searching for an interpretation which satisfies us, McDowell says, we will be caught on the horns of a dilemma. One of those horns is the paradox; and the other horn is constituted by a mythological characterization of meaning and understanding which we are forced to adopt if we are to avoid the paradox. The "last" interpretation must be an interpretation which cannot be further interpreted, and "irresistibly" we picture this as consisting in the operation of a mechanism.

Understanding an expression, then, must be possessing an interpretation that cannot be interpreted – an interpretation that precisely bridges the gap, exploited in the sceptical argument, between the instruction one received in learning the expression and the use one goes on to make of it. The irresistible upshot of this is that we picture following a rule as the operation of a super-rigid yet (or perhaps we should say "hence") ethereal machine. (McDowell, 1998, p. 230)

The dilemma apparently requires us either to endorse the sceptical paradox, or to subscribe to this mythological picture of rule following as the operation of a mechanism. Kripke, McDowell has it, appreciates Wittgenstein's attacks on the mythology, but takes these as motivation for accepting the sceptical paradox. According to McDowell, however, the work that the second paragraph of *PI* 201 does is to show that we must reject the entire dilemma.

One of Wittgenstein's main concerns is clearly to cast doubt on this mythology. But his attacks on the mythology are not, as Kripke suggests, arguments for acceptance of the "sceptical paradox". That would be so if the dilemma were compulsory; but the point of the second paragraph of *PI* 201 is precisely that it is not. The mythology is wrong from us, in our need to avoid the paradox of the first paragraph, only because we fall into the misunderstanding; the attack on the mythology is not support for the paradox, but rather constitutes, in conjunction with the fact that the paradox is intolerable, an argument against the misunderstanding. (McDowell, 1998, pp. 230-231)

McDowell is unclear about exactly where the misunderstanding lies if we adopt the interpretation picture of rule following. At one point, we have seen, he says that the misunderstanding which he is talking about is in the reasoning on which the paradox depends. Immediately after that characterization he tells us that *both* the paradox *and* the other horn of a dilemma – the picture of rule following as the operation of an ethereal machine – depend on our mistaken belief that we need to find the last interpretation which the interpretation picture of rule following requires. The problem with this, however, is that the picture of rule following as the operation of an ethereal machine is supposed to be the ‘irresistible upshot’ of the picture of rule following as interpretation. But if this is correct, then the former picture *just is* a “fleshed out” version of the latter picture – i.e., McDowell has conflated the premise presenting us with the dilemma and one of the latter’s horns.

It looks, then, as though the two horns of the dilemma are really the sceptical paradox on one horn and the picture of rule following as interpretation on the other. When we put things this way, the interpretation picture and scepticism are presented as *alternatives*. In a sense they are alternatives: if we are sceptics about rule following then we do not subscribe to a picture of rule following, and vice versa. But in that case the sceptical paradox does not depend on the interpretation picture – it is an alternative to it. McDowell is therefore inconsistent when he claims that the paradox both depends on, and is an alternative to, the interpretation picture.

The reason why Wittgenstein introduces the sceptical paradox is that the interpretation picture of rule following *leads to it*. McDowell is, therefore, simply wrong when he claims that the ethereal machine picture is *the irresistible upshot* of the interpretation picture. The word ‘irresistible’ implies necessity, which is why the two pictures are essentially synonymous as far as McDowell is concerned. But the mythology cannot be irresistible if the interpretation picture leads people to scepticism.

No one considers scepticism unless they are forced to. When Wittgenstein says that our arrival at the sceptical paradox shows a misunderstanding in the reasoning which got us there, he is rejecting the reasoning precisely because when we followed it through we had scepticism forced on us. No interpretation can content us for more than a moment because every one is subject to further interpretation, which means that there *is no* final interpretation. The interpretation picture of understanding had it that meaning just is the final interpretation. So, no final interpretation, no meaning. Wittgenstein does reason to scepticism; but this constitutes an argument for the rejection of the reasoning, not for commitment to the scepticism which it led to. McDowell's "third way" is a position that rejects the reasoning which leads to scepticism without committing oneself to scepticism. In that sense he correctly interprets Wittgenstein. What he fails to see, however, is that the rejection of the reasoning comes *because it leads to* scepticism. That is what makes the characterization of the reasoning and the paradox, as two horns of a dilemma, look odd – the reasoning is no *alternative* to scepticism, but *entails* it.

Of course, having followed through the interpretation picture and seen that it leads to scepticism because we cannot find the "last" interpretation, we might simply ignore the pressure to become sceptics by positing the existence of a last interpretation which we cannot find. The ethereal machine is just such an *ad hoc* last interpretation that might be posited by someone dogmatically intent on preserving the interpretation picture of rule following. In such a case one would see that the interpretation picture leads to scepticism, and given the intolerable nature of such an outcome, one would be led to satisfy the requirements of the picture by philosophically suspect means. I think that McDowell would in fact put things a little differently, saying something more like the following. The interpretation picture requires an interpretation which cannot be interpreted; but every interpretation can be further interpreted. So either we conclude that there is no final interpretation, and become sceptics about rule following, or we posit a special kind of interpretation which *is* the final interpretation, i.e., an ethereal mechanism. The problem for McDowell, however, is that there is not really a choice here:

if we are serious about doing philosophy we will see that the positing of such a mechanism is suspect, and this will force us towards scepticism. In other words, the notion of an ethereal machine does not flesh out the interpretation picture in any legitimate way at all.

This should not surprise us in the context of the *Investigations*, because Wittgenstein does not regard the picture of the ethereal mechanism, with McDowell, as a development of the interpretation picture. Rather, the interpretation picture is suggested to us by the mechanism picture once we have examined the latter closely. Wittgenstein's thinking goes something like this. We want to say that there is a way of grasping a rule in a flash which is more immediate than simply grasping the *use* of the rule in a flash. This way of speaking leads us to posit a fact which this more direct grasp consists in, despite our finding no such type of fact.

"It is as if we could grasp the whole use of the word in a flash."  
Like *what* e.g.? – Can't the use – in a certain sense – be grasped in a flash? And in *what* sense can it not? – The point is, that it is as if we could 'grasp it in a flash' in yet another and much more direct sense than that. – But have you a model for this? No. It is just that this expression suggests itself to us. As the result of the crossing of different pictures.

You have no model of this superlative fact, but you are seduced into using a super-expression. (It might be called a philosophical superlative.) (*PI* 191-192)

We think that a machine is a good picture or model to use for this superlative fact because a machine seems to have its future movement completely determined within it from the very moment it is made, analogously to the way a rule seems to have all future applications of it contained within its initial grasping. But in saying this, we forget that machines *change*, insofar as parts of them break, melt, wear, etc.

The machine as symbolizing its action: the action of a machine - I might say at first – seems to be there in it from the start. What does that mean? – If we know the machine, everything else, that is its movement, seems to be already completely determined.

We talk as if these parts could only move in this way, as if they

could not do anything else. How is this – do we forget the possibility of their bending, breaking off, melting, and so on? Yes; in many cases we don't think of that at all. (PI 193)

When we grasp a rule, we know how to follow it in the future; but what it is to follow that rule is shown by the way it is used. If we struggle with this it is because we think that the original grasping of the rule has to encompass the future development of the rule, but that it cannot do this because following a rule is an activity. In other words, we find it difficult to reconcile the fact that a rule is grasped at a particular time with the fact that following a rule is a practice.

“It's as if we could grasp the whole use of a word in a flash.” - And that is just what we say we do. That is to say: we sometimes describe what we do in these words. But there is nothing astonishing, nothing queer, about what happens. It becomes queer when we are led to think that the future development must in some way already be present in the act of grasping the use and yet isn't present. – For we say that there isn't any doubt that we understand the word, and on the other hand its meaning lies in its use. (PI 197)

But then (and this is key), given that rule following is not like the operation of a mythically rigid machine, but rather like the operation of a (normal) machine, i.e., insofar as it is something we do in a “non-rigid” way, we want to ask how a rule can *show* us what we are to do at a particular moment in time. It looks as though we just need to act in accordance with our ongoing practice of following the rule, but given that this practice is not rigidly determined, *anything* can be interpreted as being in accordance with that practice. Wittgenstein's response is this: we do not act in accordance with a rule by acting in a way which we *think* is appropriate – i.e., by interpreting the rule. Rather, what it is to act in accordance with the rule is nothing other than to act in that way which we learnt to act when we grasped the rule. Rule following is not interpretation but practice.

“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.” - That is not what we ought to say, but rather: any interpretation still hangs in the air along with what it interprets, and cannot give it any

support. Interpretations by themselves do not determine meaning.

“Then can whatever I do be brought into accord with the rule?” – Let me ask this: what has the expression of a rule – say a sign-post – got to do with my actions? What sort of connexion is there here? – Well, perhaps this one: I have been trained to react to this sign in a particular way, and now I do so react to it.

But that is only to give a causal connexion; to tell how it has come about that we now go by the sign-post; not what this going-by-the-sign really consists in. On the contrary; 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. (*PI* 198)

The interpretation picture of rule following, then, is what we arrive at when we try to make sense of the idea that rule following is both normative and a practice. In other words, having seen that the picture of a real machine is analogous to following a rule insofar as neither rigidly determines all its future operations, we are inclined to think that we *therefore* have to interpret the rule. We think that if a rule does not rigidly determine future instances, it cannot show us what to do in some future instance.

Therefore, not only is McDowell wrong to claim that the mythical picture of the super-rigid machine is the *irresistible* upshot of the interpretation picture, but, more strongly, the former picture is not even an *upshot* of the latter. Rather, the interpretation picture is what we seem to be endorsing if we misunderstand the direction of Wittgenstein’s attack, taking him to be undermining the normativity of rules.

If I am right, then the interpretation picture is not something to which Wittgenstein’s interlocutor actually *subscribes*, but is rather a device by means of which Wittgenstein can be shown that his rejection of the super-rigid machine picture has undesirable consequences. The interlocutor *knows* that the interpretation picture leads to scepticism, and that is the point, because he is attributing it (mistakenly) to Wittgenstein. He sees the interpretation picture, and hence scepticism, as the irresistible upshot of Wittgenstein’s rejection of the super-rigid mechanism picture; but he knows that Wittgenstein will not want to subscribe to the interpretation picture, and is

therefore challenging him to show how he can avoid holding this picture given that he has rejected the rigid determinacy of rules.

McDowell is quite correct when he denies, *contra* Kripke, that the rejection of the mythological machine picture entails scepticism.

Kripke cannot distinguish rejecting the “superlative fact” of *PI* 192 - rejecting the mythology – from refusing to countenance a fact in which my attaching a determinate meaning to “plus” consists – accepting the paradox. (McDowell, 1998, pp. 230-231nn)

However, McDowell cannot distinguish between accepting scepticism because one has rejected an account of rule following and accepting scepticism because an account of rule following leads to it. Insofar as he thinks that one has a choice between the super-rigid mechanism / interpretation picture and scepticism, he sees Kripke as rejecting the former and accepting the latter. What Kripke actually does, though, is read Wittgenstein as *accepting* the interpretation picture, and therefore, since it leads to scepticism, as accepting scepticism “*as well*”.

For McDowell, rejecting the mythology equates to rejecting the interpretation picture, and therefore subscribing to scepticism because one has dispensed with one’s account of understanding. When Kripke rejects the “superlative fact” of *PI* 192, however, he is rejecting the last interpretation of a rule, which would rigidly determine the application of that rule. Rejecting the last interpretation, recall, amounts to rejecting the super-rigid mechanism conception of rule following; and that amounts to scepticism because the absence of a last interpretation means that there is *no* interpretation which will content us that it constitutes just what it is to follow a rule.

The super-rigid mechanism picture would only be synonymous with the interpretation picture if the latter posited the existence of a last interpretation – i.e., a super-rigid, determining mechanism – which it does not posit. Therefore, despite being correct in his criticism of Kripke, McDowell is actually motivated to that criticism by an incorrect reading of Wittgenstein.

It is because McDowell cannot distinguish between scepticism one is left with if one rejects one's account of rule following and scepticism *entailed* by one's account of rule following, that he fails to articulate the *depth* of Wittgenstein's animus towards scepticism.

McDowell uses the bipartite structure of a dilemma to reason in the following way. Our choice is between scepticism and a mythical account of rule following. Scepticism is intolerable; therefore we must adopt the mythology, but this is unacceptable. Hence we must adopt a third alternative. The apparent problem with this is that it seems to begin with the rejection of scepticism, insofar as McDowell simply *assumes* that we will avoid scepticism come what may. He talks about 'the attempt to resist the paradox of 201' (McDowell, 1998, p. 230), but fails to give any account of what might motivate such an attempt. Logically, it is unclear why we ought to reject the sceptical horn of the dilemma if we have already rejected the alternative horn; and I suspect that is why McDowell apparently begins with the rejection of scepticism.

In his early notebooks (and later, in section 6.51 of the *Tractatus*) Wittgenstein says:

Scepticism is *not* irrefutable, but *obvious nonsense* if it tries to doubt where no question can be asked.

For doubt can only exist where a question exists; a question can only exist where an answer exists, and this can only exist where something *can* be said. (*NB*, p. 44e)

John W. Cook has shown (see Cook, 2000, pp. 167-168) that these remarks were prompted by the following claim of Russell's:

Universal scepticism, though logically irrefutable, is practically barren; it can only, therefore, give a certain flavour of hesitancy to our beliefs, and cannot be used to substitute other beliefs for them. (Russell, 1972, p. 74)

How are we to understand Wittgenstein's remarks? Cook says that '[Wittgenstein's] comment, I believe, is pretty much self-explanatory: a doubt can exist only where an *answerable* question can be asked' (Cook, 2000, p. 11, Cook's emphasis). The problem with this characterization is that it implies the existence of unanswerable questions: but Wittgenstein claims that 'a question can only exist where an answer exists'. If Wittgenstein is right, therefore, it looks as though talk of a question being answerable serves only to emphasize just what a question is. In other words, there is no such thing as an unanswerable question.

This looks like a preposterous claim because we are inclined to think that there are many questions which we cannot answer: questions such as, "What happened to Lord Lucan?" to which we just do not, and perhaps cannot, know the answer. The root of our difficulty here is that we equate the answer to a question with the *correct* answer to that question. Wittgenstein's claim is not, however, that a question is something to which a correct answer can be given; rather, his point is just that a question is something which demands an answer. If I ask you a question I expect an answer, and that is because of the way 'question' is used – what it means. Conversely, it only makes sense for an utterance to be an answer if that utterance is a response to a question or enquiry of some sort. When Wittgenstein says that a question can only exist where an answer exists, then, his claim is grammatical, not empirical – it is a claim about the meaning of 'question' (and also that of 'answer').

Wittgenstein claims that we can only doubt where something can be said. His point is that in order to doubt the truth of a proposition that proposition must already have been asserted. And if I doubt the truth of something, I *question* its truth. In other words, scepticism *presupposes* (some) understanding, and that is sufficient to show that universal scepticism – i.e., doubting the possibility of any meaning or understanding, and hence rule following – is impossible. Furthermore, since we require understanding and meaning in order to *articulate* the notion of universal scepticism, the latter is not even *intelligible*, since it presupposes what it is trying to deny. If there

existed a genuinely thoroughgoing sceptic, we would not be able to understand them. And 'scepticism' would have no meaning here, because they would not be doing anything meaningful or understandable – they would not be able to communicate with us in any way or sense.

It is important to realize, therefore, that when Wittgenstein denies the irrefutability of scepticism, he is not claiming that scepticism *can* be refuted. Rather, insofar as genuine (i.e., universal) scepticism is nonsensical, talk of refuting scepticism is also nonsensical.

One should not be troubled by the fact that the remarks under consideration come from notebooks kept prior to the publication of the *Tractatus*. To see that Wittgenstein's views on this aspect of scepticism remained unchanged throughout his life, we need only look at the following extracts from *On Certainty*.

If you tried to doubt everything you would not get as far as doubting anything. The game of doubting itself presupposes certainty. (OC 115)

There are cases such that, if someone gives signs of doubt where we do not doubt, we cannot confidently understand his signs as signs of doubt.

I.e.: if we are to understand his signs of doubt as such, he may give them only in particular cases and may not give them in others. (OC 154)

The mythological picture of rule following is adopted precisely because one seeks an account of rule following; and when it leads to scepticism it is rejected because it ceases to be an account of rule following – it self-destructs, as it were. The account initially appears to be something which it is later shown not to be. Scepticism is a notion which is *brought into play* by inadequate accounts of rule following, thereby *revealing* their inadequacy. If we find scepticism intolerable, it is because we want an account of rule following, and the account that we actually had has destroyed itself by morphing into scepticism.

That is why it is extremely difficult to understand what McDowell's assumption – that we find scepticism intolerable – actually amounts to, unless we see scepticism as being a position arrived at by the failure of an account that we thought was the real picture of rule following. This amounts to the claim that scepticism “goes deep”: that it *destroys* the possibility of rule following. It is what scepticism would really mean, its gravity, that shows Wittgenstein that there is a way of following a rule which is not an interpretation. No one could seriously be sceptical about meaning, which is why Kripke's resuscitation of meaning looks so strange: there ought to be nothing to resuscitate, i.e., to give an account of meaning, he has to assume the existence of meaning, which obviously contradicts his professed scepticism. If we are looking for something, find what we think we are seeking, and then realize that we have really found nothing, we have not found what we are looking for. We do not start by deciding that we are not going to look for nothing, and then decide that we might look for something instead. What it means to look involves the idea of looking for (or at) something: it is because of this that we do not need to state that we are not going to look for nothing. Rule following is our starting point, and if our account of it leads to the conclusion that there *is no* rule following, something has gone wrong here. To right that wrong, we need to find an account of rule following which does just what it is supposed to do.

McDowell's interpretation of Wittgenstein begins with the assumption that scepticism is intolerable, which is what allows him to separate scepticism from the faulty account of rule following, placing them on different horns of a dilemma. Wittgenstein, we have seen, begins with the assumption that we want an account of rule following. Of course, both presuppose a foundation of understanding, and Wittgenstein saw this – indeed, that was his real starting point, the fact that we understand each other. What McDowell fails to make clear, however, is why, given that we understand, scepticism *should ever be something to be entertained*. In other words, he does not show how someone can be *led* into making use of the term 'scepticism' by a faulty account of rule following. Furthermore, he fails to articulate the point that scepticism about understanding is intolerable *because it is nonsensical*, i.e.,

that scepticism about rule following is a form of misunderstanding. Wittgenstein wants to show us that we have misunderstood what we are doing if we arrive at scepticism. 'It can be seen that there is a *misunderstanding* here ...' (*PI* 201, my emphasis).

McDowell's failure to see that universal scepticism is not just unwarranted but nonsensical prevents him from seeing that Kripke is wrong to view scepticism as a genuine problem for Wittgenstein.

He claims that because Kripke ignores the second paragraph of *PI* 201, he misses the "straight" solution contained there. Recall that 'straight solution' was the expression used by Kripke to refer to a species of solution to the paradox; such a solution would work by showing the scepticism to be unwarranted. McDowell interprets Wittgenstein as rejecting both the paradox and the interpretation picture of rule following. Our main point of clarification has been to emphasize that he dismisses the picture *because* it leads to the paradox – i.e., the picture is rejected because it is shown to fail in its attempt to describe rule following. Nonetheless, McDowell is correct when he says that Wittgenstein rejects the sceptical paradox because it is based on a misunderstanding.

Interestingly, McDowell softens his position with regard to Kripke's 'ignoring' of the second paragraph of *PI* 201. In 1984's 'Wittgenstein on Following a Rule' he says that '201 goes on with a passage for which Kripke's reading makes no room' (McDowell, 1998, p. 229), and that 'the paradox of *PI* 201 ... can be attributed to Wittgenstein only at the cost of ignoring, like Kripke, that section's second paragraph' (McDowell, 1998, p. 261). However, 1993's paper 'Meaning and Intentionality in Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy' says that there is a reading of Wittgenstein according to which:

...the way to follow Wittgenstein's instruction to think of "a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation*" is to reconceive what sort of fact or state of affairs someone's grasping a rule is. Instead of conceiving it as a state of affairs involving her having something in mind, we should conceive it as a state of affairs involving her occupying a position in a community. (McDowell, 1998, p. 269)

This looks very much like the reading we would expect Kripke to give of the second paragraph of *PI* 201. McDowell claims that, on this reading, the sole error that Kripke makes is to insist that only facts about the contents of someone's mind could *constitute* his or her rule following. Of course, Kripke's talk of justification conditions and the utility of expressions just is talk of the states of affairs or facts which need to obtain if we are to be prepared to *ascribe* rule following to someone. So according to Kripke, Wittgenstein's solution to the sceptical paradox is itself sceptical because it explains rule following by reference to facts which cannot themselves be what rule following consists in.

McDowell thinks that the difference between the straight solution which he outlines above, and Kripke's sceptical solution, is not substantive but merely one of notation.

But now it seems a merely notational issue whether we count a story about social recognition and the like, with Kripke, as a "sceptical solution", replacing any picture of a fact or state of affairs in which someone's understanding consists, or as a "straight solution", saying in a regress-proof way what the relevant facts or states of affairs come to. The important thing is surely what is common between these positions, namely the idea that to avoid the regress, we must deny that a person's understanding could be her having something in mind. (McDowell, 1998, pp. 269-270)

If there is no substantive difference between a straight solution and a sceptical one, as McDowell claims, then it seems that we can give up talk of solutions being either sceptical or straight. McDowell is correct when he implicitly suggests that we can give up this talk, but his reasoning is misguided, since it presumes that both the sceptical solution and the straight solution are intelligible.

As we have seen, Wittgenstein actually holds, quite rightly, that universal scepticism is nonsensical. It follows that Kripke's notion of a sceptical solution – a solution which admits of such scepticism – is also

nonsensical. We have it, therefore, that there *is* a substantive difference between a sceptical solution and a straight one – the latter makes sense whereas the former does not – and *that* is why we can give up talk of solutions to the problem of the regress being either sceptical or straight. In other words, since the only talk about solutions to the regress which makes sense is that which characterizes solutions as straight, anything which really is a solution is going to be straight: and that means that if we are talking meaningfully about such solutions, the straightness of them is implicit within that discussion. Hence, there is in fact no need to make explicit the straightness of solutions in meaningful talk about them.

Insofar as Kripke's position is nonsensical, in order to make sense of (something resembling) that position, we must alter it. That is why, I think, we are inclined not simply to view the reading which McDowell outlines above as a reading *sympathetic* to Kripke, but to actually *attribute* that interpretation to the latter – i.e., to see Kripke as claiming that rule following *consists in* just those facts by means of which we explain rule following.

McDowell softens his stance towards Kripke because, in the later paper, he takes himself to have described a reading of Wittgenstein which does not ignore the second paragraph of *PI* 201, and with which Kripke's position shares what is important to it. Actually, I have claimed, we cannot help but attribute the former to Kripke if we are to find his position intelligible. The effect that this has had, without McDowell realizing it, is actually to reinforce the *depth* of the inadequacy of Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein. Kripke does not in fact ignore the section of the *Investigations* which shows that Wittgenstein is not a sceptic, as it is accommodated within his "sceptical solution", but we can only make sense of that solution if the sceptical component is jettisoned. Kripke's interpretation is inadequate because it does not make sense.

McDowell shows us that we can give up talk of solutions to the sceptical paradox being either straight or sceptical. However, because he fails to note that Wittgenstein views universal scepticism as nonsensical, he

does not see that the sceptical paradox *is not a problem* for Wittgenstein, and is therefore something which does not demand a *solution*. We saw earlier that it is because McDowell fails to notice that the interpretation picture of rule following leads to scepticism that he views scepticism as a potential alternative to that picture. If one sees that it does not make sense for an account of rule following to lead to scepticism about rule following, one will reject such an account. This rejection hardly constitutes a *solution* to the *problem* of scepticism. Wittgenstein's claim that there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation does not provide a description of rule following which solves the "problem"; rather, it provides a description of rule following which *does not lead to* the "problem". Wittgenstein's description of rule following could only be a solution for you if you thought that it could co-exist with the sceptical "problem", in which case you would misunderstand his description. For a solution to be such, it must exist at the same time as the problem it solves. If you understand and accept Wittgenstein's description of rule following, you will see that it does not lead to scepticism, and scepticism will not be a problem for you. Wittgenstein does not *solve* the sceptical paradox, he *dissolves* it. That is why I think it is a mistake to view the second paragraph of *PI* 201 as a solution to the sceptical paradox.

Wittgenstein's problem is to steer a course between a Scylla and a Charybdis. Scylla is the idea that understanding is always interpretation. This idea is disastrous because embracing it confronts us with the dilemma ...: the choice between the paradox that there is no substance to meaning, on the one hand, and the fantastic mythology of the super-rigid machine, on the other. We can avoid Scylla by stressing that, say, calling something "green" can be like crying "Help!" when one is drowning – simply how one has learned to react to this situation. But then we risk steering onto Charybdis – the picture of a basic level at which there are no norms; if we embrace that, I have suggested, then we cannot prevent meaning from coming to seem an illusion. The point of *PI* 198, and part of the point of 201-202, is that the key to finding the indispensable middle course is the idea of a custom or practice. How can a performance both be nothing but a "blind" reaction to a situation, not an attempt to act on an interpretation (avoiding Scylla); and be a case of going by a rule (avoiding Charybdis)? The answer is: by belonging to a custom (*PI* 198), practice (*PI* 202), or institution (*RFM* VI-31).

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. (McDowell, 1998, p. 242)

According to McDowell, Wittgenstein's problem is to replace the interpretation picture of rule following whilst preserving the normativity of rules. This characterization assumes that the interpretation picture accounts for that normativity. As we saw earlier, however, the interpretation picture leads to scepticism precisely because it fails to indicate how a rule determines what we do when we follow it: *any* behaviour can be *interpreted* as being in accordance with a rule. And we also saw that Wittgenstein's interlocutor is using precisely this feature of the interpretation picture – its failure to accommodate normativity – to show that, insofar as it apparently follows from Wittgenstein's rejection of the rigid determinacy of rules, such a rejection must be mistaken. There are two points here. The first is that were Wittgenstein to be replacing the interpretation picture, his task would not be to find an account which *preserved* normativity, but rather to find one which *accommodated* normativity. The second point is that the interpretation picture – and the scepticism which it entails given that it fails to account for normativity – would only present a problem for Wittgenstein if he thought that it could be a genuine picture of rule following. But its very failure to accommodate normativity shows him that it is not a genuine picture of rule following, and he concludes that a practice is a way of following a rule which is not an interpretation, thereby dissolving the problem genuinely facing anyone who thinks that there could be an interpretation picture of rule following.

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. Kripke's reading credits Wittgenstein with the thesis that the notion of meaning something by one's words is "inapplicable to a single person considered in isolation" (p. 79). The upshot is similar, then; and it cannot be denied that the insistence on publicity in Kripke's reading corresponds broadly with a Wittgensteinian thought. But it makes a difference how we conceive the requirement of publicity to emerge.

In my reading, it emerges as a condition for the intelligibility of rejecting a premise – the assimilation of understanding to interpretation – that would present us with an intolerable dilemma. (McDowell, 1998, p. 243)

When McDowell says that Wittgenstein's characterization of rule following is a condition for the intelligibility of rejecting the interpretation picture of rule following, what he means is that *because* we have an alternative to the latter, we are *therefore* able to reject it. But Wittgenstein's actual claim puts things the other way around: we must reject the interpretation picture because it leads to scepticism, and *this* – the rejection – shows that there is a way of following a rule which is not an interpretation. The idea that it is not intelligible to reject an account of understanding unless one has an alternative to it looks suspiciously like inference to the best explanation, where each explanation satisfies us only until a better one comes along; and *that* looks suspiciously like the interpretation picture of rule following itself, where each interpretation contents us only for a moment. McDowell's mistake is to suggest that we can only reject an account of understanding from within that account, when of course the fact of the matter is that we reject an account of understanding because we have discovered that it is *not really* an account of understanding. He seems to think that when one rejects *an account* of understanding, one rejects understanding, which is why he claims that it is only intelligible to reject an account of understanding when one has an alternative – otherwise, the thought goes, one would reject *understanding* and not replace it with an alternative conception of understanding. But what does 'alternative conception' mean here? When we reject an account of understanding we can say that there must be another description of understanding *because we understand*. We do not need an account of understanding in order to understand – understanding is prior to any description of it.

Wittgenstein's point is not that we have to situate our conception of meaning and understanding within a framework of communal practices; his point is that the concepts of meaning and understanding *just are* situated within a framework of communal practices.

### Wittgenstein as Dissolver of Scepticism (1): Winch *contra* Kripke

In his paper 'Facts and Superfacts', Peter Winch also makes the point that rule following is prior to any account of it. He does so in response to Kripke's claim that, like Berkeley and Hume, Wittgenstein removes conflict between his philosophical view and the common sense view by analyzing the latter in a way congenial to the former (see Kripke, 1998, pp. 62-66).

Wittgenstein takes very great pains to distinguish his critique [of the temptation to use a 'philosophical superlative'] from any rejection of our ways of using the problematic expressions in the context of our normal practice. Kripke is cool about this aspect of his thought. He compares it with Berkeley's insistence that his denial of 'material substance' involves no rejection of anything believed in by the vulgar; and with Hume's remark that 'tis in vain to ask, *Whether there be body or not?* That is a point, which we must take for granted in all our reasonings'.

There are undeniable parallels here which are important not only historically but as indications of the underlying philosophical pressures which have led such people to write in this vein. But there are big differences too and Kripke takes little account of these. 'Personally I think such philosophical claims are almost invariably suspect', he proclaims in his bluff, comprehensive way (p. 65). He does not notice for instance that the distinction Wittgenstein emphasizes is not so much that between 'philosophical' and 'common sense' *statements* about what rule-following consists in, as that between our ordinary *practice* of rule-following and the philosophical *explanations* we are inclined to give of that practice. What Kripke calls 'common sense philosophy' is an *interpretation* of our practice just as much as is, say, scepticism; and our practice is prior to any interpretation. (Winch, 1997, pp. 56-57)

Like McDowell, Winch draws our attention to Kripke's apparent inability to appreciate the paragraph in *PI* 201 which follows the "sceptical paradox". However, unlike McDowell, the exact nature of Winch's accusation is unclear, since he simply uses that paragraph as an example of the way in which Kripke's account is confused by his failure to see the distinction between practice and explanation. On the one hand, he might be saying that Kripke simply ignores or overlooks the appropriate paragraph; on the other hand, the claim may be that whilst Kripke does find room for the paragraph in his

account, the resulting interpretation is an inadequate one. Winch says, 'Having pointed out that it will be impossible to distinguish accord and disaccord with a rule if we suppose that any course of action can be interpreted as being in accord with it, Wittgenstein *then* goes on to say that this whole argument rests on '*a misunderstanding*' (my [i.e., Winch's] italics). The misunderstanding consists in failure to see that 'there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation*, but which is exhibited in what we call "obeying the rule" and "going against it" in actual cases" (Winch, 1987, p. 57). His emphasis of 'then' in this passage seems to suggest that Kripke ignores or misses what Wittgenstein goes on to say. If that suggestion is intended, then Winch is simply wrong, because, as we have seen, the relevant passage is fully accommodated by Kripke's "sceptical solution". However, if Winch is claiming that Kripke's reading is inadequate because it attributes scepticism to Wittgenstein, he is right, but he fails to make the point with any force.

One way of reading Winch's point goes something like this. Scepticism is an interpretation of our practice. Kripke thinks that Wittgenstein is committed to scepticism given the failure of the interpretation picture; however, insofar as scepticism is an interpretation, one cannot both reject the interpretation picture and accept scepticism. Hence, what our rejection of the interpretation picture shows – and this, so the thought goes, is Wittgenstein's point – is that there is a way of following a rule which one cannot be sceptical about. On this reading, Kripke's mistake is to think that one could give up the interpretation picture and yet hold that species of interpretation which is scepticism.

The intended lesson of this characterization is that whilst one might think endorsement of scepticism follows from the abandonment of the interpretation picture, one would be mistaken. However, in itself, this need not trouble Kripke. Recall that Wittgenstein's original problem with the interpretation picture was our failure to arrive at an interpretation which contents us that it is the *final* interpretation. Scepticism *does* seem to be a final interpretation: it sounds the death knell for all other interpretations; so it

looks as though one can quite happily hold *both* the interpretation picture *and* scepticism about meaning etc. This certainly fits with our earlier conclusion that Kripke sees Wittgenstein as committed to scepticism *because the interpretation picture leads to it*. Indeed, it was McDowell's mistake to think that Kripke actually has Wittgenstein reject the interpretation picture and *therefore* commit to scepticism, rather than adopting the scepticism *entailed by* the interpretation picture.

In fact, I do not think Winch is merely suggesting that one cannot both reject the interpretation picture and adopt scepticism. Rather, he is pointing out that scepticism is exactly the sort of interpretation which *fails to satisfy us* that it constitutes just what it is to follow a rule. Far from making McDowell's mistake, Winch actually sees that the interpretation picture, when it is followed through, leads to scepticism; and he understands that it is this arrival at scepticism which motivates Wittgenstein to reject the interpretation picture. But Winch seems to suggest (and he is by no means clear) that because scepticism is just another interpretation, it is no more satisfying than any other, because it can always be further interpreted. In characterizing scepticism as an interpretation, Winch is pointing out that it is a means by which we attempt to account, in some sense, for our behaviour. That is what it means to say that practice is prior to interpretation.

This claim would not, I suspect, cause Kripke any consternation – after all, he would want to say that he is sceptical *about* rule following, i.e., that he interprets rule following behaviour in a sceptical way. Put like this, the statement that practice is prior to interpretation just looks like a trivial truism: interpretation requires something to be interpreted; and of course, such a claim is undoubtedly a *basic* one. But we have allowed in here a base which is not doubted; and that runs counter to Kripke's professed *universal or thoroughgoing* scepticism. It does not make sense to claim of an interpretation that it doubts what it is interpreting, so Kripke's suggestion that he interprets rule following in a sceptical way is *meaningless*, and obviously so. If we were genuinely sceptical about everything, we would not be talking about anything; and in fact we would not be talking at all.

Part of the reason for the lack of clarity in 'Facts and Superfacts' is that by calling scepticism an interpretation, Winch suggests that it makes sense. Of course, in some circumstances, scepticism does make sense: but that species of scepticism is not universal. As we have seen, Winch apparently holds that scepticism's failure to content us is entailed by its being an interpretation, insofar as an interpretation can always be further interpreted. But in fact, it does not even make *sense* to call universal scepticism an interpretation, since it attempts to deny what it presupposes. What Winch should have said, then, is something like the claim that scepticism is an attempt at interpretation, and that our practice is prior to all such attempts. If scepticism fails to satisfy us, that is because it does not make sense: there is no interpretation where we think we require one.

So this explicit criticism of Winch's, although diminished in its force at a local level by his lack of clarity, in fact points to a much deeper and more damaging claim, and one which we have come across already: Kripke's position does not even make sense. Perhaps we should not be surprised by the slightly cursory nature of 'Facts and Superfacts', since that paper is to some extent intended as an extension of the earlier paper '*Im Anfang war die Tat*'. In the latter paper, Winch does a great deal to flesh out the nonsensical nature of universal scepticism, and it is to that work which we now turn.

Winch draws our attention to notes which Wittgenstein made at least partly in response to Russell's paper, 'The Limits of Empiricism'. In that paper, Russell claims that language use involves perception of a causal relation from sense data to asserted knowledge. This relation, the thought goes, is intuited insofar as knowledge of it is gained solely within the circumstances which give rise to it. Perception of the relation is more than a thoroughgoing empiricist is entitled to, therefore, because it is a *condition* for the verbal statement of empirical knowledge.

... when I know that I said "cat" because there was a cat, I am not knowing that, in large numbers of similar instances, similar visual appearances have been followed by similar utterances. This may

be true, but it is not what I am asserting. I am asserting something which I can know without going outside what is now happening. This is essential, since the knowledge in question is required for the connexion of sensible occurrences with the verbal assertion of them. ... If this view is accepted, we can say that the verbal premisses of verbal empirical knowledge are sentences perceived to be caused by something perceived. If we refuse to admit "cause" in this sense, it seems impossible to explain the connexion between what we perceive and the words in which we describe it. And science, as organized knowledge, requires words. The possibility of empirical science, therefore, if the above argument is correct, depends upon the possibility of perceiving causal or quasi-causal relations. (Russell, 1936, pp. 136-137)

Winch takes Russell's point to be that our use of language must be founded on a certainty immune to falsification, and that if this were not the case, if the relation between sense data and verbal utterances *could* in fact be refuted by further experience, the possibility of meaning anything at all by our words would be destroyed.

I think Russell's thought here is: if I had to 'go outside' what is now happening, the evidence might show that there is, after all, no causal connection between my words and the sensible occurrences. That would mean I was mistaken in what I thought I meant, perhaps even in supposing that I meant anything at all. And if I can't ever be sure beyond the possibility of refutation that I mean something, how can I ever be sure that I mean anything at all? Perhaps all my utterances would turn out to be meaningless noises. So Russell's position is that our use of language must be based on an ultimate certainty, a knowledge *that something is so*, which is invulnerable to further falsification. (Winch, 1987, pp. 47-48)

We might be reminded here of Russell's claim, in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, that 'Universal scepticism, though logically irrefutable, is practically barren' (Russell, 1972, p. 74). In other words, scepticism, logically speaking, is perfectly possible; but for practical reasons we want to use language. And now we can add that in order for language to be useful – in order for it to be *meaningful* – it must be based on certain knowledge, otherwise it will admit of scepticism. So for language *to be* language, it must be based on infallible certainty.

Winch points out that Wittgenstein agrees with Russell inasmuch as 'an unhesitating 'certainty' is fundamental to language' (Winch, 1987, p. 49). However, whereas for Russell that certainty is infallible, and necessarily so in order to keep scepticism at bay, Wittgenstein observes that talk of scepticism only comes in when language already has a foundational certainty.

*The basic form of our game must be one in which there is no such thing as doubt. – What makes us sure of this? It can't surely be a matter of historical certainty. ...*

So what does it mean to say: at first the game has to start without including doubt; doubt can only come into it subsequently? Why *shouldn't* doubting be there right from the start? But wait a minute – what does doubting look like? The point is – whatever it feels like or however it is expressed, its *surroundings* are quite different from those we are familiar with. (For, since doubt is an exception, the rule is its environment.) (Do these eyes have any expression if they are not part of a face?)

As things are, the *reasons* for doubting are reasons for leaving a familiar track. (CE, pp. 411-412)

His point here is that doubting only takes place against the background of behaviour which cannot *itself* be doubting; and that is not an empirical claim ('a matter of historical certainty') but a grammatical one: if our activity was to begin with "doubting", whatever was in fact being done, it would not be doubting, which is just to say that we would not *call* it doubting. Russell's claim that the foundational certainty of language is infallible suggests that it would *make sense* to say that one might be mistaken in one's perception of the causal connection between sense data and verbal articulation. But our language use does not begin with doubting, which means that it is simply nonsensical to talk of the foundation of language being either right or wrong, because such talk admits of the possibility of doubt.

... imagine a mother who is sceptical right from the very beginning: If her child cries, she shrugs her shoulders and shakes her head; sometimes she looks at him inquiringly, examines him; on exceptional occasions she also makes vague attempts to comfort and nurse him. - Were we to encounter such behaviour, we definitely wouldn't call it scepticism; it would strike us as queer and crazy. – "The game can't begin with doubting" means: we shouldn't call it 'doubting', if the game began with it. (CE, p. 414)

Russell characterizes the certainty which grounds language as infallible because he wants to justify our language use – i.e., the infallible certainty emerges as a necessary condition for language. Wittgenstein's claim that infallibility has no sense here, entails the notion that the certain foundation confers no further justification on subsequent language use over and above the fact that that is simply how we behave. In other words, the necessity which informs our language use is grammatical – it is internal to that behaviour, and receives no prior justification.

“The game can't start with doubting” – What we ought to say is: the game *doesn't* start with doubting. – Or else: the “can” has the same justification as it has in the assertion: “Street traffic can't begin with everyone doubting whether to go in this, or rather in that direction; in that case it would never amount to what we call ‘traffic’ and then we shouldn't call their hesitation ‘doubting’ either.” (CE, p. 413)

Russell seeks to provide us with a foundation to language which is not itself, as he sees it, susceptible to scepticism in the way that language is. However, in order to articulate what he takes to constitute that foundation, he is required to make what he clearly realizes to be a controversial application of the word “cause”. But then his claim seems essentially to involve language, which is hardly surprising, but nonetheless damaging. After all, by his own lights, we are perfectly able to be sceptical about the meaningfulness of what he is saying. In other words, Russell must not only insist upon the infallibility of his pre-linguistic perception, but also upon the meaningfulness of the language in which he claims the existence of that perception. If he is prepared to do this, then he is simply assuming the meaningfulness of language, and his argument drops out of the picture as unjustified and superfluous to the language in which it is couched; if, on the other hand, he will not concede the meaningfulness of that language, he cannot advance his argument as something about which one cannot be sceptical. Either way, he has failed to insure language against scepticism.

... the heart of [Russell's position] ... is that we understand what our words mean only because we see them to be caused by something extralinguistic; if this ‘perception of the cause’ is itself conceivable only

*within* an established use of language, the foundation for language, which Russell thought he had provided, collapses. He is simply going round [*sic*] in a circle – *within* language. (Winch, 1987, p. 48)

Wittgenstein's point is not that language cannot be insured against scepticism, but that language *is not* insured against scepticism. If scepticism attempts to question the meaning of every instance of language use, it quickly collapses, because such thoroughgoing scepticism would have no way of finding its target: after all, language *just is* meaningful. Such scepticism would have to question the meaning of 'scepticism'; but then, what would 'question the meaning' mean here? 'Doubting – *I might say* – has to come to an end somewhere' (CE, p. 412, my emphasis). Scepticism is only an interpretation – only makes sense – for as long as it allows something to be interpreted. That is the point which Winch fails to make clear when he characterizes scepticism as interpretation.

A more obvious and clear cut mistake is made by Winch in 'Facts and Superfacts' when he claims that Kripke's initial characterization of rule following constitutes exactly that kind of misunderstanding which Wittgenstein is warning us against in the second paragraph of *PI* 201. He says:

To convince ourselves that Wittgenstein is not attacking a straw man we need look no further than the passage from page 7 of Kripke's book that I quoted earlier, where it is said that I grasp a rule 'by means of my external symbolic representation and my internal mental representation'. Here, in the very identification of what is under discussion, we find the misunderstanding Wittgenstein characterizes by saying that 'we give one interpretation [read 'representation'] after another; as if each contented us at least for a moment, until we thought of yet another standing behind it' (section 201). (Winch, 1987, pp. 57-58)

In this passage Winch seems to completely lose sight of the fact that Kripke's project is an *interpretive* one: in providing the description of rule grasping which he does, Kripke takes himself to be simply restating the conception of rule following as interpretation which Wittgenstein himself articulates. Kripke need not subscribe to such a characterization: indeed, his own statement of intentions suggests that he probably does not.

In the following, I am largely trying to present Wittgenstein's argument, or, more accurately, that set of problems and arguments which I personally have gotten out of reading Wittgenstein. With few exceptions, I am *not* trying to present views of my own; neither am I trying to endorse or to criticize Wittgenstein's approach. (Kripke, 1998, p. 5)

Of course, as we have seen, Kripke is mistaken to think that Wittgenstein *holds* the interpretation picture and the scepticism which it subsequently leads to. And we might even concede to Winch, for the sake of argument, that Kripke is driven to this misinterpretation of Wittgenstein by some sort of belief that the interpretation picture of rule following represents a plausible philosophical position. However, the fact remains that Kripke is explicating what he takes to be *Wittgenstein's* philosophical position, plausible or otherwise; and it is difficult to see, therefore, how Kripke is supposed to represent a target of substance for Wittgenstein's rejection of the interpretation picture – that Kripke has misunderstood a criticism made by Wittgenstein hardly, *in itself*, renders him prone to that criticism. Winch says:

I think it is important that Kripke shows no sign of regarding this characterization of what is involved in grasping and applying a rule as in any way philosophically tendentious or questionable. It is supposed to express the common understanding of what following a rule is. This is an essential element in his thesis that 'Wittgenstein's main problem is that it appears he has shown *all* language, *all* concept formation to be impossible, indeed unintelligible' (p. 62). (Winch, 1987, p. 55)

Kripke has expressly told us that, with a few exceptions, he is not concerned to present us with his own views. Perhaps he *does* regard the interpretation picture of rule following as philosophically questionable. As far as he is concerned that is unimportant, *contra* Winch. The important thing, for Kripke, is that Wittgenstein subscribes to this characterization; the important thing, as far as *we* are concerned, is that this represents a *misinterpretation* of Wittgenstein. Kripke's characterization of the interpretation picture is *not* supposed to express the common understanding of what following a rule is: it is supposed to express *Wittgenstein's* understanding of what following a rule is.

Kripke does think that the problem which Wittgenstein has brought to our attention is itself 'an important contribution to philosophy' (Kripke, 1998, p. 7). But identifying a difficulty does not commit one to holding the philosophical position which leads to that difficulty; indeed, one way of dealing with the difficulty – Wittgenstein's way – is to *dispute* the philosophy on which it depends. That Kripke does not treat the difficulty in this way, or interpret Wittgenstein as doing so, does *not* commit him to the belief that the difficulty cannot be so treated. Kripke is concerned with exegesis of Wittgenstein's position, and he sees *Wittgenstein* as regarding the interpretation picture 'of what is involved in grasping and applying a rule as in no way philosophically tendentious or questionable'. Winch seems to conflate the identification of a problem – i.e., a topic for philosophy – with the belief that such a problem is itself philosophically *unproblematic*, and therefore something which demand a solution. That is why he quotes Kripke disapprovingly in the passage above, his suggestion being that it is an unquestioning subscription to the interpretation picture, and hence to the problem leading from it, which motivates Kripke to hold that Wittgenstein behaves likewise. In other words, Winch is implying that Kripke is simply *wrong* to claim that Wittgenstein faces a problem as described, and that he is led into this error of interpretation *by his own philosophical commitments*. However, the quotation from Kripke is essentially *correct* since the interpretation picture *does* provide a problem for Wittgenstein and his interlocutor, although what Kripke fails to understand is that Wittgenstein subsequently *dissolves* the problem by showing it to be philosophically questionable. In this way, Kripke is found wanting on a matter of interpretation, but he does not even venture a philosophical opinion on the treatment of the problem – and the latter is not a failing but rather a matter of *method*.

Winch's claim that Kripke's misunderstanding comes 'in the very identification of what is under discussion' is unclear. Presumably, Winch's point is that Kripke takes the discussion to be about a certain conception of rule following, whereas Wittgenstein takes the discussion to be about (the practice of) rule following. But that is incorrect, since both Wittgenstein *and*

Kripke are concerned with just what it is to follow a rule; and this is hardly surprising as Kripke is concerned to interpret Wittgenstein. Kripke's actual misunderstanding comes in his interpretation of the discussion itself. If he had misunderstood what is under discussion, it is not even clear that we would be in a position to claim that he misinterprets the discussion. A discussion requires that its participants discuss a subject: if two people are talking to each other about different things, but think they are talking about the same thing, then they are not having a discussion. Kripke himself is not a *participant* in the discussion – that role is taken by Wittgenstein and his interlocutor, with Kripke simply interpreting their debate – but to be able to represent *their* discussion, Kripke needs to identify their topic of debate. Were he to fail to do so, what he then went on to refer to as their discussion would in fact fail to be theirs, despite being a discussion.

Winch seems to be claiming that Kripke misidentifies the topic of Wittgenstein's discussion. If he is right, Kripke must subsequently be discussing something different to Wittgenstein's topic. But if he is discussing something different, what he says can be of no use whatsoever as an interpretive tool with regard to what *Wittgenstein* is saying, since he is not interpreting Wittgenstein incorrectly, but rather not interpreting him *at all*. And if that is correct, then most of 'Facts and Superfacts' itself aims its blows at a straw man. Kripke misunderstands *what* Wittgenstein says about rule following. If he had misunderstood altogether *that* Wittgenstein was talking about rule following, his attempted interpretation would not be an interpretation.

Kripke's account of the 'sceptical solution' talks of the utility of expressions, and Winch points out that this constitutes a misrepresentation of Wittgenstein's claim that the meaning of an expression is its use in the language. Winch refers us to the following passage in *Zettel*.

Why don't I call cookery rules arbitrary, and why am I tempted to call the rules of grammar arbitrary? Because 'cookery' is defined by its end, whereas 'speaking' is not. That is why the use of language is in a certain sense autonomous, as cooking and washing are not. You

cook badly if you are guided in your cooking by rules other than the right ones; but if you follow other rules than those of chess you are *playing another game*; and if you follow grammatical rules other than such-and-such ones, that does not mean you say something wrong, no, you are speaking of something else. (Z 320)

Wittgenstein's point here is that some rule following activities, such as cooking, can be characterized and understood without following the rules involved in them, insofar as one can specify the desired ends of such activities, together with the best or right ways of attaining them. In the context of such behaviour it makes sense to talk of the use or purpose to which rules are put, because *different* rules can be followed to achieve the same (or at least similar) types of results, and we can talk about and compare those rules from a position outside the activity of following them. In the case of language, however, to talk about something *just is* to follow the rules of grammar which constitute such talk, so that rules of language use cannot be specified without *following* some of those rules. Kripke misinterprets Wittgenstein inasmuch as his claim that we can assess the utility of expressions suggests that we can evaluate language from a position external to it. Wittgenstein again tries to show what is wrong with this view when he says:

The words "right" and "wrong" are used when giving instruction in proceeding according to a rule. The word "right" makes the pupil go on, the word "wrong" holds him back. Now could one explain these words to a pupil by saying instead: "this agrees with the rule – that not"? Well yes, if he has a concept of agreement. But what if this has yet to be formed? (The point is how he reacts to the word "agree".)

One does not learn to obey a rule by first learning the use of the word "agreement".

Rather, one learns the meaning of "agreement" by learning to follow a rule.

If you want to understand what it means "to follow a rule", you have already to be able to follow a rule. (RFM, V, 33)

Understanding what it means "to follow a rule" is itself an instance of rule following, because all language use is rule following behaviour. Apparently commensurate with this thought is Winch's claim in *The Idea of a Social*

*Science and its Relation to Philosophy* that all meaningful behaviour consists in rule following. He says:

I have claimed that the analysis of meaningful behaviour must allot a central role to the notion of a rule; that all behaviour which is meaningful (therefore all specifically human behaviour) is *ipso facto* rule-governed. (Winch, 1990, pp. 51-52)

Winch then goes on to consider the following objection. It seems that only *some* forms of human behaviour actually involve rules, so that, for example, someone living an anarchist lifestyle does not follow rules in the way that (say) a monk does. He responds to this by pointing out that we are mistaken if we think that the difference between the two types of lifestyle consists in one involving rule following whereas the other does not; rather, he continues, the differences are to be found in the *types* of rules which each follows. A monk lives a life strictly governed by explicit rules, whereas the rules which an anarchist follows are neither pre-determined nor constraining. Both types of lifestyle are understandable, insofar as they *make sense* as a form of human behaviour; and for this reason, consideration of rule following cannot be eliminated from the description of either way of living.

In the 1990 preface to the second edition of the book, Winch recants on the notion of rule following so described.

My strategy was to sketch what I took to be the central feature of Wittgenstein's discussion of the notion of following a rule, in its application to the use of language, and to apply that discussion to human behaviour much more generally. That still seems to me a good strategy: not least because it is a central feature of what Wittgenstein writes about language that this can only be seen for what it is if looked at in the more general context of behaviour in which it is embedded. But unfortunately I was far from sufficiently careful in the way I expressed the relevance of the notion of a rule, both to language and to other forms of behaviour.

... where I first discussed the matter seriously, I did not explicitly write that all uses of language are rule-governed. But ... [later] ... I was much less circumspect.

One of the best statements of the truth of the matter, it seems to me, is in Sections 81 and 82 of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, Part I:

F.P. Ramsey once emphasized in conversation with me that logic was a 'normative science'. I do not know exactly what he had in mind, but it was doubtless closely related to what only dawned on me later: namely, that in philosophy we often *compare* the use of words with games and calculi which have fixed rules, but cannot say that someone who is using language *must* be playing such a game.

...

What do I call the rule by which he proceeds? – The hypothesis that satisfactorily describes his use of words, which we observe; or the rule which he looks up when he uses signs; or the one which he gives us in reply if we ask him what the rule is? – But what if observation does not enable us to see any clear rule, and the question brings none to light? – For he did indeed give me a definition when I asked him what he understood by 'N', but he was prepared to withdraw and alter it. – So how am I to determine the rule according to which he is playing? He does not know it himself. – Or, to ask a better question: What meaning is the expression 'the rule by which he proceeds' supposed to have left to it here? (Winch, 1990, pp. xiii-xiv)

It looks as though Winch takes himself to be mistaken in his original assertion that all uses of language are rule-governed, and he seems to be quoting the passages from *Philosophical Investigations* as evidence for this. Apparently his thought, although he fails to make it explicit, is that Wittgenstein is here describing a use of language which *is not* rule-governed. To see how Winch has misinterpreted Wittgenstein it is helpful to examine the passage in *Philosophical Investigations* which immediately follows those quoted above.

Doesn't the analogy between language and games throw light here? We can easily imagine people amusing themselves in a field by playing with a ball so as to start various existing games, but playing many without finishing them and in between throwing the ball aimlessly into the air, chasing one another with the ball and bombarding one another for a joke and so on. And now someone says: The whole time they are playing a ball-game and following definite rules at every throw.

And is there not also the case where we play and – make up the rules as we go along? And there is even one where we alter them - as we go along. (*PI* 83)

In this passage Wittgenstein is clearly trying to loosen our grip on the idea that game playing requires players to be following definite rules which exist prior to any particular instance of such activity; he does this by describing various types of game playing activity about which it would be nonsense to say that definite rules are always being followed. By analogy, he is claiming, although a language user may not be deliberately following explicit rules of grammar that existed prior to his following them, nor even aware of the fact that he is following rules *at all*, this does not mean that he is not following rules. Indeed, the fact that he exhibits understanding shows us that he is a rule follower, and Wittgenstein's point is that we need to reconcile these two facts: that an agent can both be a rule follower and not be consciously aware of which rules he is following.

Of course there exist explicit rules of grammar for many (although not all) established languages, and yet a language like this can be used in such a way that what is spoken is not always in accordance with those rules: for instance, consider the case of ungrammatical slang. However, for such language to *be* language, to be understood, it must consist in a species of rule following, otherwise it will be nonsense – which is just to observe that language is something which *has* a grammar, explicit or otherwise. One of the things that distinguishes natural languages from artificial languages is that in the case of the former, explicit rules of grammar are representations of rules which are already present in the language, whereas in the case of the latter the language cannot be used until *after* at least some of its grammatical rules have already been formulated (and these rules will be formulated in a natural language). Language – understanding, rule following – exists prior to explicitly formulated rules.

Exactly the kind of erroneous reading of Wittgenstein which I am attributing to the later Winch is explicitly articulated by A.C. Grayling, who says:

Wittgenstein describes a group of people playing various ball-games (PI, I, 83). They start, say, with football, and after a while change to netball, then rugby, and so on. Between starting

and abandoning recognized games they throw the ball about aimlessly, chase one another, and bombard one another with the ball. Wittgenstein says that it would be a mistake to think that every stretch of this activity is rule-governed. The thought is that there are, familiarly enough, games without rules. They are games because of their family resemblance to games with rules. And the implication is that language-games are analogous. (Grayling, 1991, p. 72)

Wittgenstein implies that it is a mistake to say of those who amuse themselves with a ball that 'the whole time they are playing a ball-game and following definite rules at every throw'. Grayling takes this to mean that when such people use the ball in a way which does not constitute the playing of an established game, that behaviour is not rule governed. By analogy, I suspect that Grayling would interpret Wittgenstein's question in *PI* 82 – 'What meaning is the expression 'the rule by which he proceeds' supposed to have left to it here?' – as a rhetorical question, the answer to which is "none". However, Wittgenstein does *not* suggest that one is mistaken if one says that people who use a ball in the way he describes are following rules at every throw; rather, an error would be made if one were to claim that it is *definite* rules which are followed during such behaviour. And the analogous question can be seen as a genuine search for the meaning of 'the rule by which he proceeds' given that we have ruled out of consideration *a certain kind* of rule – that which is clear and immune from change.

Wittgenstein claims that 'we often *compare* the use of words with games and calculi which have fixed rules, but cannot say that someone who is using language *must* be playing such a game'. That he says '*such* a game' [my emphasis], rather than simply "a game", suggests that there are some games which do not have fixed rules. This might be taken to contradict his rejection of the suggestion that '*the whole time they are playing a ball-game and following definite rules at every throw*' [my emphasis], since he apparently wants to deny that they *are* playing a game at every stage of their activity. In fact, I think, Wittgenstein is denying that they are playing a game with *definite* rules, and simultaneously making the point that their activity is not therefore *unified* into a *single* game by such rules. Wittgenstein frequently warns us against thinking that language has the unity of a calculus;

here, by analogy, he is warning us against the idea that game playing must have such a unity. In *The Blue Book*, he says:

... remember that in general we don't use language according to strict rules – it hasn't been taught us by means of strict rules, either. We, in our discussions on the other hand, constantly compare language with a calculus proceeding according to exact rules.

This is a very one-sided way of looking at language. In practice we very rarely use language as such a calculus. For not only do we not think of the rules of usage – of definitions, etc. – while using language, but when we are asked to give such rules, in most cases we aren't able to do so. We are unable clearly to circumscribe the concepts we use; not because we don't know their real definition, but because there is no real 'definition' to them. To suppose that there *must* be would be like supposing that whenever children play with a ball they play a game according to strict rules.

When we talk of language as a symbolism used in an exact calculus, that which is in our mind can be found in the sciences and in mathematics. Our ordinary use of language conforms to this standard of exactness only in rare cases. Why then do we in philosophizing constantly compare our use of words with one following exact rules? The answer is that the puzzles which we try to remove always spring from just this attitude towards language. (*BB*, pp. 25-26)

Wittgenstein clearly tells us here that whilst we may not be able to give rules of language use, that does not mean that they are not there to be given; rather, it just shows us that they are not exact or strict. Inasmuch as this passage anticipates the sections of *Philosophical Investigations* which we have been discussing, it is obvious that Wittgenstein takes 'definite' to be synonymous with 'strict' and 'exact' as far as rules are concerned. Someone might claim, however, that just because rules cannot be clearly seen by us in an agent's behaviour, or clearly identified by that agent himself, it does not follow that the rules which *do* govern that behaviour are *not definite*.

Wittgenstein anticipates such an objection:

Consider also the following proposition: "The rules of a game may well allow a certain freedom, but all the same they must be quite definite rules." That is as if one were to say: "You may indeed leave a person enclosed by four walls a certain liberty of movement, but the walls must be perfectly rigid" – and that is not true. "Well, the walls may be elastic all right, but in that case they have a perfectly determinate degree of elasticity" – But what does this say? It seems to say that it must be possible to state the elasticity, but that again is

not true. "The wall always has *some determinate* degree of elasticity - whether I know it or not": that is really the avowal of adherence to a form of expression. The one that makes use of the *form* of an ideal of accuracy. As it were like the form of a parameter of representation. (Z 441)

Wittgenstein's claim here is that it just does not make sense to say that rules can be both definite and flexible, and he puts any temptation to assert the contrary down to the malevolent influence of a certain ideal of expression. Again, he is warning us against seeing language as the symbolism of an exact calculus. This passage shows us that when Wittgenstein says, in *PI* 84, that 'the application of a word is not everywhere bounded by rules', he is not claiming that there exist uses of words such that they are not rule governed, as Grayling suggests; rather, when a word is applied in such a way that it is not *bounded* by rules, that activity *does* consist in rule following, but the relevant rules are not definite insofar as they are subject to change. Change here means change *in* the rules themselves, rather than change *of* rules – i.e., instead of one rule being substituted for another, the existing rule is subject to development.

The later Winch agrees with Grayling in reading Wittgenstein as asserting the existence of language use which is not rule governed, and as such he is guilty of misinterpretation. Insofar as he takes Wittgenstein to be denying that all language use is rule governed, Winch now wants to disregard his earlier claim that all meaningful behaviour consists in rule following. Whilst it is unclear whether Wittgenstein would want to claim that all meaningful behaviour is rule following behaviour – although I suspect that he would – the passage in *Zettel* about rules of cookery to which, as we saw, Winch himself refers us, shows that any attempt to generalize from language use to rule following behaviour in general is misguided. The rules which are followed in cookery, and those which are followed in language use, are different *types* of rules; and one of the differences between them, although Winch cannot see this, is that the rules of cookery are definite in a way in which the rules of language use are not. Not only, therefore, is Winch mistaken in his belief that Wittgenstein sees some language use as not being

rule governed, but the former also misunderstands the latter when he claims that it is commensurate with Wittgenstein's thought to generalize from discussion about rules of language use to that about rules of any meaningful behaviour. Part of the difficulty here is that it is unclear what the relationship between language and meaningful behaviour is supposed to be. Winch seems to conflate the meaning which language has with the meaningfulness of behaviour: he sometimes talks as though the rules of language are the rules of the behaviour in which language is embedded; however, for example, the rules of cookery are *not* the rules of the language in which a recipe is couched.

When Wittgenstein says that rules can be vague or flexible, he is trying to show us that if we start our philosophizing with an ideal conception of rule following, we will fail to see what rule following in language use is really like.

The idea now absorbs us, that the ideal '*must*' be found in reality. Meanwhile we do not as yet see *how* it occurs there, nor do we understand the nature of this "must". We think it must be in reality; for we think we already see it there. (*PI* 101)

I think that one of the reasons why Wittgenstein has been so widely misinterpreted with regard to his remarks on rules is that his insistence on language use consisting in rule following looks exactly like the sort of prior ideal which he is warning us against. Indeed, one might be tempted to say that he has manipulated the notion of a rule to such an extent that his use of the term 'rule' no longer conforms to its actual meaning, and that this runs counter to his assertion that 'What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use' (*PI* 115). And by claiming that language use involves rule following even when rules cannot be identified in that behaviour, Wittgenstein seems to be contradicting his claim, in *PI* 124, that philosophy cannot give language any foundation, but can only describe it.

## Wittgenstein as Dissolver of Scepticism (2): Diamond *contra* Kripke

In 'Facts and Superfacts', as we have seen, Winch takes Kripke to be endorsing the interpretation picture of rule following. This amounts to the claim that Kripke comments on Wittgenstein in such a way as to present his own philosophical views on the topic. Later in the same paper, Winch says:

The foregoing illustrates how inextricably interwoven are the details of Wittgenstein's treatment of these questions and his insistence that 'It is not our aim to refine or complete the system of rules for the use of our words in unheard-of ways' (section 133). For this reason there seems to me to be a massive misunderstanding in Kripke's following remark, which is central to his conception of Wittgenstein as a sceptic *a la* Hume: 'had Wittgenstein ... stated the outcome of his conclusions in the form of definite theses, it would have been difficult to avoid formulating his doctrines in a form that consists in apparent sceptical denials of our ordinary assertions' (p. 69). But if Wittgenstein *had* written in the mode Kripke plainly thinks would have been more candid, he would have been saying something of a quite different, and much less interesting, kind than what he in fact did say. Kripke quite explicitly rejects this. '... I choose to be so bold as to say: Wittgenstein holds, with the sceptic, that there is no fact as to whether I mean plus or quus' (pp. 70-1).

This way of putting things goes with Kripke's view (which he shares with Dummett) that Wittgenstein tried, in the *Tractatus*, to explain the meanings of sentences in terms of their truth-conditions, but replaced this view, in *Philosophical Investigations*, with 'a picture of language based ... on *assertability conditions* or *justification conditions*: under what circumstances are we allowed to make a given assertion?' (p. 74). (Winch, 1987, pp. 58-59)

This is clearly a different claim: his point is that Kripke misinterprets Wittgenstein precisely because the former misunderstands the latter's philosophical *method*. Winch here thinks that it is an enormous mistake to couch Wittgenstein's findings in the terms of a different philosophical approach: if you lose what is important in Wittgenstein's method, you distort the content of his findings – and then you are no longer interpreting Wittgenstein, or at least not interpreting him *correctly*. The mistake which Kripke makes, therefore, is to impose a methodology on Wittgenstein which is not the latter's own. Implicit within this criticism is the thought that Kripke exemplifies just that way of approaching philosophy which is liable to lead

one into holding the interpretation picture. However, operating with a conception of philosophy which is apparently conducive to viewing the interpretation picture as the correct account of rule following does not necessarily commit Kripke to holding that view. By attributing endorsement of the picture to Kripke, Winch illegitimately assumes that it does so commit him; in other words, Winch conflates misunderstanding of Wittgenstein's views on rule following and misunderstanding of rule following itself.

In her paper 'How long is the standard meter in Paris?', Cora Diamond says that 'Winch does indeed make clear that Kripke's distinction between assertion-conditions and truth-conditions is inseparable from Kripke's underlying philosophical views' (Diamond, 2001, p. 134). It is not entirely clear what the suggestion is here: she might be claiming that the distinction is inseparable from Kripke's underlying views *because it is one of those views*, although a more plausible reading would have the claim as being that the distinction *follows from* those views. This reflects a lack of clarity in Winch himself: it is unclear whether he sees Kripke's view about assertion conditions as on a par with his position on method, or as a view following from that methodological commitment. I suspect that he intends the latter, insofar as one's stance on the aims and methods of philosophy will colour one's subsequent interpretation of Wittgenstein. The key point here is that this represents a weaker claim than Winch's earlier attribution of the apparent *views* of Wittgenstein, so interpreted, to someone utilizing such a method; and Winch seems to confuse the two claims. Diamond inherits this confusion from him so that, in the quotation above, she appears to lose sight of the fact that Winch casts Kripke's distinction between assertion conditions and truth conditions as a view *on how Wittgenstein is to be interpreted*, rather than simply a philosophical opinion that there is such a distinction. Of course, a commitment to interpreting Wittgenstein in terms of such conditions does not preclude one from giving one's own account of rule following in terms of them, although it does not commit one to doing so either. All that is required for such an interpretation is the belief that one is carrying it out faithfully in accordance with the aims and methods of philosophy. It is because their respective positions differ on these aims and methods that Kripke's

misinterpretation can be put down to his imposing on Wittgenstein a conception of philosophy which is not the latter's own. However, by expressing what he takes to be Wittgenstein's ideas within the framework of such a conception, Kripke does not commit himself to holding those ideas. Interpreting someone from the point of view of a certain methodological conception of philosophy, and holding an opinion commensurate with that conception, are importantly different.

Diamond (like Winch) has difficulty distinguishing interpretation according to philosophical commitments from philosophical commitment to the substantive views expressed in an interpretation, and it is because of this that she views Kripke as being concerned to *engage in debate* with Wittgenstein in both *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* and *Naming and Necessity*. She says:

One thing that may strike us, reading Kripke on Wittgenstein on the standard meter, is the contrast with his treatment of Wittgenstein on rules. Whatever one thinks of his interpretation of Wittgenstein on rules, Kripke clearly spent much time thinking about it and discussing it; whereas in the case of Wittgenstein on the meter rod, he appears to have taken Wittgenstein's view to be not worth pondering – it is simply something Wittgenstein got wrong; it is useful merely as an example, and there is no suggestion that Kripke spent any time thinking about what was going on in the passage which he quotes and criticizes. (Diamond, 2001, pp. 107-108)

I would suggest that Kripke's two treatments of Wittgenstein differ in this way because he is engaged in different enterprises. In the case of Wittgenstein on rules, he is explicitly concerned with exegesis of Wittgenstein's position, and not with presentation of his own philosophical views. In the case of the standard metre, however, Kripke uses Wittgenstein's remark on the standard metre as a *means by which* to present his own philosophical opinions. I suspect also that Kripke may well consider the remarks on rule following to be *in need of* interpretation, whereas, his thought would continue, Wittgenstein's claim about the standard metre is so straightforward as to be easily understood without such a treatment. Diamond's paper succeeds in showing that he is wrong if he believes this, but that is unimportant; the

important point is that Kripke is not concerned with interpretation in his discussion of the standard metre. That he uses Wittgenstein's claim to introduce his own discussion is shown by the fact that he *assumes* for the sake of argument (*his* argument) that Wittgenstein is wrong.

Another sort of example in the literature is that one meter is to be the length of *S* where *S* is a certain stick or bar in Paris. (Usually people who like to talk about these definitions then try to make 'the length of' into an 'operational' concept. But it's not important.)

Wittgenstein says something very puzzling about this. He says: 'There is one thing of which one can say neither that it is one meter long, nor that it is not one meter long, and that is the standard meter in Paris. But this is, of course, not to ascribe any extraordinary property to it, but only to mark its peculiar role in the language game of measuring with a meter rule.' This seems to be a very 'extraordinary property', actually, for any stick to have. I think he must be wrong. If the stick is a stick, for example, 39.37 inches long (I assume we have some different standard for inches), why isn't it one meter long? Anyway, *let's suppose that he is wrong* and that the stick is one meter long. Part of the problem which is bothering Wittgenstein is, *of course*, that this stick serves as a standard of length and so we can't attribute length to it. *Be this as it may (well, it may not be)*, is the statement 'stick *S* is one meter long', a necessary truth? (Kripke, 2000, p. 54, my emphasis)

It is clear that Kripke is not concerned to *establish* either the truth or the falsity of Wittgenstein's claim about the standard metre; rather, he uses the problem which he takes to be bothering Wittgenstein in order to introduce the question which is bothering *him* – namely, whether the statement 'stick *S* is one meter long' is a necessary truth. Kripke understands Wittgenstein's problem as having two component parts: first, whether a standard of length actually *has* a length, and second, whether we are entitled to *attribute* that length to the standard. Kripke's problem relies for its sense on an affirmative answer to the first part, but the second component is not, he thinks, relevant in that way. For this reason, Kripke simply *assumes* that the standard metre is one metre long, whilst simultaneously remaining non-committal on the question of whether we can actually attribute that length to it. His assertion that 'of course' the question of attribution is part of the problem which is bothering Wittgenstein, supports my suggestion that Kripke regards that problem as clearly understandable without any interpretation. It is important

to note that Kripke regards the claim as puzzling because he thinks it is wrong, not because he has difficulty in understanding its substance.

Kripke does not ponder Wittgenstein's view on the metre rod, then, because he is concerned neither to interpret that position nor to argue against it. Rather, it is a means by which to introduce his own views of (he has it) a related yet different problem. That he uses Wittgenstein's view as an example does not commit Kripke to the belief that it is useful *merely* as an example, as Diamond has it. Rather, *Naming and Necessity* is not the place for a detailed articulation of that view, being instead a forum for Kripke's own opinions; and the opposite is true in the case of *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, which is concerned not with Kripke's own views but with exegesis of those presented by Wittgenstein. Diamond cannot see this because she thinks that interpretation is inseparable from the presentation of one's own philosophical views. Thus, she is inclined to believe that because Kripke uses Wittgenstein without interpreting and discussing him, the former must consider there to be nothing of philosophical merit in the position of the latter, nothing 'worth pondering'. She says, 'there is no suggestion that Kripke spent any time thinking about what was going on in the passage which he quotes and criticizes' (Diamond, 2001, p.108). However, the lack of a suggestion hardly provides anything more than the flimsiest of evidence to support the claim that Kripke did not in fact spend any time thinking about what was going on in the passage. And it is important to see that Kripke's 'criticism' of Wittgenstein on the standard metre is essentially just an intuitive response, and is certainly not offered as a conclusive refutation. Hence, claims like, '... Kripke's *argument against* Wittgenstein essentially depends only on the rod's having a definite length' (Diamond, 2001, p.114, my emphasis), are symptomatic of a confusion about Kripke's aims and methods which is like *his* misunderstanding of *Wittgenstein's* aims and method, as brought out by Winch.

Diamond's mistaken belief that Kripke is concerned with the same sort of enterprise when he considers Wittgenstein on rules as when he talks about

the standard metre is important because it helps us to understand the nature of the connection between the two discussions as she sees it.

Winch does indeed make clear that Kripke's distinction between assertion conditions and truth conditions is inseparable from Kripke's underlying philosophical views; my point here is that it has a direct connection with the 'reflexive' understanding of measurement which we see in Kripke's discussion of the standard meter. (Diamond, 2001, p. 134)

The claim here is that, just as Kripke's underlying philosophical views lead him to distinguish between assertion conditions and truth conditions, so, analogously, his conception of measurement commits him to the same distinction. To see how Diamond arrives at this position we need to outline her comparison of Kripke and Wittgenstein on the standard metre.

Kripke argues that the metre rod, *S*, can be used to define 'one metre' by stipulating that one metre is the length of *S* at some particular time *t*<sub>0</sub>. This definition is designed to allow variation in the length of the rod over time due to heating, etc. He asks whether it is a necessary truth that *S* is one metre long at *t*<sub>0</sub>, and he says that it is not, as 'one metre' picks out something – viz., a certain length – which *S might not* have possessed at *t*<sub>0</sub>.

There is a certain length which [a man] wants to mark out. He marks it out by an accidental property, namely that there is a stick of that length. Someone else might mark out the same reference by another accidental property. But in any case, even though he uses this to fix the reference of his standard of length, a meter, he can still say, 'if heat had been applied to this stick *S* at *t*<sub>0</sub>, then at *t*<sub>0</sub> stick *S* would not have been one meter long.' (Kripke, 2000, p. 55)

Diamond draws our attention to part 2, section 15 of *The Brown Book*, where Wittgenstein articulates the idea that there are two distinct uses of the word "particular". The first kind is comparative, insofar as it expresses a relation between two things, and Wittgenstein terms this the transitive use. In contrast with this is the intransitive use, which does not involve a comparison but rather emphasizes, or expresses concentration on, a property of a particular thing.

Now the use of the word “particular” is apt to produce a kind of delusion and roughly speaking this delusion is produced by the double usage of this word. On the one hand, we may say, it is used preliminary to a specification, description, comparison; on the other hand, as what one might describe as an emphasis. The first usage I shall call the transitive one, the second the intransitive one. ... These examples would perhaps be more striking if we substituted the word “peculiar” for “particular”, for the same comments apply to “peculiar”. If I say “This soap has a peculiar smell: it is the kind we used as children”, the word “peculiar” may be used merely as an introduction to the comparison which follows it, as though I said “I’ll tell you what this soap smells like: ...”. If, on the other hand, I say “This soap has a *peculiar* smell!” or “It has a most peculiar smell”, “peculiar” here stands for some such expression as “out of the ordinary”, “uncommon”, “striking”. (*BB*, p. 158)

Wittgenstein thinks that the intransitive use of ‘particular’ is liable to lead us into philosophical confusion, because we are inclined to treat it as a reflexive version of the transitive use, comparing a thing to something about it. For example, I might say that my friend has a certain style (‘certain’ here behaves like ‘particular’), and if someone asked me what I meant by this, I could describe his style as consisting in, say, his always wearing a smart suit and tie. That would be a case of the transitive use of ‘a certain style’. But I might instead have been attending to his general demeanour, the way he “holds himself”, rather than his dress; and in this case, my response to the question could take one of two forms: I might say “Well, he has *this* style”; or I might reply, “I’m just attending to his overall behaviour”. The latter response would recognize my use of ‘a certain style’ as intransitive, whereas the former would suggest that it is a reflexive case of the transitive use (see *BB*, p. 160).

For Kripke, if someone stipulates that stick *S* is one metre long at time  $t_0$  in order to fix the reference of the term ‘one metre’, she knows *a priori* that the stick has that length (see Kripke, 2000, p. 56). Diamond points out that this is an example of an intransitive use of ‘particular length’ masquerading as a reflexive case of a transitive use. In other words, when we say that stick *S* is one metre long, we are not, *contra* Kripke, comparing the length of the stick to a certain length which we stipulated by means of the length of *S*, which is a roundabout way of saying that we are not comparing the length of *S* with itself; rather, we simply stipulate that *S* is one metre long at time  $t_0$ . Hence, it

does not make sense to say that one *knows a priori* that *S* is one metre long at *t*<sub>0</sub>, not because we know *a posteriori*, but because talk of knowledge here is nonsensical, as we do not use 'know' in this way. Diamond emphasizes that this is analogous with Wittgenstein's point in *PI* 279, when he exhorts us to 'Imagine someone saying: "But I know how tall I am!" and laying his hand on top of his head to prove it'. Somebody's claiming that they know the length of stick *S* at time *t*<sub>0</sub> simply because they have stipulated that it is that length, is like them claiming that they have knowledge of their height because they can lay their hand on their head. Both claims to knowledge are absurd because the behaviour which is offered as grounds for them is not what we understand as granting such support.

Kripke's notion that stick *S* can be compared *a priori* with a certain length stipulated by means of that stick assumes that the length is intrinsically capable of being a measure independently of any *activity* of measuring. One might be led to this position, Diamond tells us, by the fact that any stick used in measuring is inert *in itself*, insofar as *it* does not measure the length of an object against which it is held – a point which is suggested by Wittgenstein's interlocutor in the following passage.

"Put a ruler against this body; it does not say that the body is of such-and-such length. Rather is it in itself – I should like to say - dead, and achieves nothing of what thought achieves." (*PI* 430)

Central to such a conception, then, is the notion that the stick is simply a means by which thought makes contact with that certain length which *is* the measure; and that the use to which the stick is put is important only in this regard. Diamond thinks that this is analogous to Kripke's position on rules, insofar as he maintains that there is nothing about us which justifies our belief that we ought to follow a particular rule – in other words, that past rule following behaviour is inert inasmuch as it cannot guide our present behaviour. Diamond views Kripke's account of the 'sceptical paradox' as an elaboration of this point.

Wittgenstein's idea that we might want to say that the *stick* can't say that the body to be measured is of such-and-such a length connects most directly not with Kripke on the meter rod, but with Kripke on rules. When Kripke discusses Wittgenstein on rules, he considers the example of doing the sum  $68 + 57$ , which he imagines to be a sum which he was not explicitly taught, and which he has not done in his past arithmetical practice. The problem here, the problem to which Wittgenstein draws our attention, is, Kripke thinks, that in such a case there is *nothing that tells him* that the answer he should give to "How much is  $68 + 57$ ?" is 125 not 5. This account of the problem shows that, as he is conceiving the situation, any table which he has used, any examples which he has worked over, are, as it were, *dead and inert*. They are silent; they don't tell him that 125 agrees with them, and that 5 is inconsistent with them. The Wittgensteinian paradox, as Kripke explains it, is essentially an elaboration of this 'inertness' of our examples and rule formulations (written, spoken, or in our minds). They can be interpreted in various ways; they cannot themselves tell us how to go on when we are confronted with  $68 + 57$ . They are (that is) like the meter rod, when it appears a mere dead piece of wood or metal, incapable itself of saying that a body is of such-and-such a length. (Diamond, 2001, pp. 126-127)

The thought, then, is this: just as, Kripke has it, the metre stick is inert insofar as it is merely a means by which a certain length is picked out, so, analogously, rule following behaviour is normatively inert – the stick is not *itself* a measure, and rule following behaviour does not itself embody rules. Diamond further extends the analogy between Kripke on the standard metre and Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein on rules by suggesting that, as far as Kripke is concerned, prior to seeing the Wittgensteinian paradox we think that the rule following behaviour which we exhibit when we are engaged in adding enables us to pick out an arithmetical function which the appropriate rule consists in. By its very nature, the thought continues, that function can be used to establish the correctness of any individual example of addition. And just as the particular length denoted by 'one metre' enables us to measure the length of anything which *has* a length, including the metre stick itself, so the addition function can be used to 'measure' the correctness of *any* attempt at adding, including the original addition sums which were used to fix the function as the reference of the word 'plus'.

According to Kripke's account, Diamond continues, the Wittgensteinian paradox constitutes an elaboration of the inertness of rule following behaviour because it serves to undermine this confidence in the ability which we think we have to grasp some particular function. Any attempt to connect with such a function by means of rule following behaviour apparently connects with an infinite number of other functions. Hence, that behaviour does not enable one to grasp any rule.

Diamond has therefore brought out an important *disanalogy* between Kripke's claim that the metre stick is inert and the assertion that rule following behaviour is inert. On the one hand, he holds that the metre stick is dead insofar as it is merely a means by which thought connects with that length which is the actual measure; on the other hand, the inertness of rule following behaviour is bipartite: not only does such behaviour actually fail to constitute what it is to grasp a rule, but, *furthermore*, it cannot connect with any particular function which would confer correctness on it. The disanalogy is even more pronounced when we note, as Diamond fails to do, that Kripke's Wittgenstein is not denying the possibility of having the required epistemic access to the appropriate function simply because we cannot single that function out from infinitely many others; rather, he takes that inability to connect with any particular function as revealing that *there are no* relevant (i.e., normative) functions. In other words, Diamond has failed to heed Kripke's warning that the sceptical problem is not merely epistemological. We can clarify our understanding of the supposed inertness of rule following behaviour as follows, therefore: not only does rule following behaviour actually fail to constitute what it is to grasp a rule, but, furthermore, it cannot connect with any function which would confer correctness on it because no such functions exist.

This disanalogy is important because it clearly vitiates Diamond's belief that Kripke is concerned with the same ends in both his consideration of the standard metre and his remarks on Wittgenstein about rules – namely, argument with Wittgenstein and the advancing of his own philosophical views. Her analogy between the two treatments is supposed to show that

she is correct in her belief, and that they will therefore stand or fall together. Crucially, however, the opinions expressed in the two works could not consistently be held together. If Kripke himself subscribed to the sceptical problem that there are no relevant facts for us to grasp, and therefore nothing to justify our rule following behaviour, he ought for the sake of maintaining a consistent metaphysics to have been moved to a similar conclusion regarding the standard metre – viz., whilst we think that we pick out a certain length by means of, but not consisting in, the standard metre, we actually fail to do so because no such “ethereal” length exists. We have seen that Diamond does recognize the existence of a disanalogy here, but that she does not realize its full extent – i.e., she sees it as merely epistemological, rather than metaphysical. In other words, she takes Kripke’s understanding of the sceptical problem to consist in the thought that whilst our epistemic access to rules is limited to the extent that it fails to justify our belief, nonetheless those rules are there to be distinguished between if only we had the capacity to do so. Read from such a viewpoint, Kripke’s thought would be that whilst a particular length and rules have the same metaphysical status, we nonetheless have a degree of epistemic access to the former that we just do not have to the latter. However, it is not clear that this would help Diamond, as it is far from obvious why there would be such a difference – at the very least, Kripke would have been obliged to have given an argument to account for it. Such speculation is ultimately unimportant, though, as it is clear that the disanalogy operates at the metaphysical level. If Kripke subscribed to the account of rule following which he finds in Wittgenstein he would be endorsing metaphysical views incompatible with those which he expressed in his earlier work. Given this, were Diamond correct to hold that he does so, one would expect a repudiation of the earlier views in the later book, but Kripke does no such thing. The incompatibility of the two views in this regard, then, looks as though it supports my earlier claim that Kripke does not necessarily endorse the views on rule following articulated in his interpretation of Wittgenstein.

So that we might understand the relationship between the standard metre and rules as Wittgenstein sees it, Diamond directs our attention to the

*Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics*, from which I will quote at length.

I once said: A calculation could always be laid down in the archive of measurements. It can be regarded as a picture of an experiment. We deposit the picture in the archives, and say, "This is now regarded as a standard of comparison by means of which we describe future experiments." It is now the paradigm with which we compare. – It is as if somebody said to me, "How do you write a capital F?" I write one. Then he declares, "From now on this is *the* capital F" or "All capital F's shall be described in terms of this one, as more or less deviations from it."

...

Making this picture of so-and-so's experiment and depositing it in the archives – you might call doing it an *honour*. We should only do it if the experiment was of a very peculiar kind. For instance, it must be connected in certain ways with what is likely to be the result of other similar experiments. That I should take this procedure as the standard procedure means a whole lot: that it is the right procedure and at the same time removed from possible tests – this is bound up with a lot of opinions of mine about what's going to happen.

*Turing*: The difficulty is that there is not a finite number of multiplications. You can only put a finite number of multiplications in your archives; and when I do a multiplication which is not in your archives, what then?

*Wittgenstein*: Well, what then? – This is like counting to a number which has not been counted to.

Now what is it that we are going to deposit in our archives? We might say, "We are not going to deposit single multiplications, but only general rules."

But let us go into this question. We have the metre rod in the archives. Do we also have an account of how the metre rod is to be compared with other rods? There might be a point sometimes in putting an account – say, a picture – of the way in which we compare them; or instruments used for this purpose.

Couldn't there be in the archives rules for using these rules one used? Couldn't this go on forever?

But this has nothing to do with the fact that the number of multiplications is infinite. In fact, that it has no connexion with it is an important point. The idea that it is connected with it comes from the idea that the examples, being infinite, are too numerous to go into the archives.

We might put into the archives the multiplication table. It will be put in to keep this technique. Anyone who wants to know how people do it can go in and find out: "Yes, that's how people do it."

Or we might put into the archives just one multiplication – as a paradigm for the technique. As we might keep a paradigm of pure colour.

Why keep

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It would make sense to do this if everyone knew from it how to multiply in other cases. (Compare induction.)

Or we might keep in the archives a general description of multiplying.

But to go back to Turing's difficulty: "an infinity of multiplications". We *might* say every new multiplication made is a new rule made.

Then why make multiplications at all?

Supposing we do a multiplication: the use of this is that we aren't willing to recognize a rule of multiplication *unless* it can be got in a particular way. For instance, we do not accept the rule that  $1500 \times 169 = 18$ ; we should not call that a multiplication. – The way in which it can be got we accept or acknowledge as a *proof* of it.

...

The point is this. Suppose I put into the archives a general rule and a few examples; and you now give a new example. This might be a new rule – and we need not put this into the archives, but we might do so. The fact is that we *recognize* it. – To say that it is infinite doesn't mean that there is such a large number that we can't get it into the archives. The fact that there are or are not an infinite number of examples is entirely irrelevant. (*LFM*, pp. 104-106)

The claim here is that the contents of an archive such as that in Paris where the standard metre is kept are going to be just what is required in the course of some language game. For example, the language game of measuring will require us to deposit a standard of length in our archive, although we may well need to add further items if the standard itself is not sufficient for us to understand clearly how the rod is to be used in order to make comparisons – such a further requirement might be a description or picture of the requisite method, or instruments pertinent to this end. Wittgenstein points out that there is a temptation to think that the archive must contain general rules rather than individual samples or standards. This temptation originates in the thought that we can only check a multiplication, say, against an item in the archive if that item explicitly connects with our calculation in some sense. Such an explicit connection must, it seems, be established either by the fact

that the very same calculation is in the archive, or by the presence there of a general rule for multiplication. The same sort of worry is articulated by the idea that a sample of multiplication establishes a rule which then requires further rules for *its* use, and so on *ad infinitum*. Wittgenstein deals with these worries by warning that movement from the idea that there is an infinite number of (say) possible calculations, to the further idea that there must be an infinite number of rules in an archive, contains a mistake. We might think that every multiplication “made” is a new rule made, but clearly we perform that calculation prior to having that rule; and this fact gives the lie to the idea that we must have such a rule in our archive if we are to carry out the multiplication. What we *do* need in the archive is whatever is required for us to carry out a new multiplication and to *recognize* the rule as being a rule of *multiplication*. Thus, the content of the archive pertaining to multiplication may well be a general rule together with some examples, but it may just be a solitary multiplication serving as a paradigm for the technique. What we put in the archive will be whatever is necessary and sufficient for people to know from it how to go on and multiply. In this sense it will be infinite – i.e., it will be utilizable in all future instances – but this does not mean that there must be an infinite number of examples in the archive, and the number of instances in which use is actually made of the archive is irrelevant.

Diamond tells us that Wittgenstein here develops an analogy between rules of multiplication and standards of measurement like the metre rod. She is correct, but that way of putting things is liable to mislead us into attributing to Wittgenstein the thought that multiplication involves rule following whereas measurement does not. His real point, however, is that what we put in the archive will be just what is required for us to go on and rule follow. Sometimes that will be a general rule; sometimes it will be a general rule in conjunction with examples; and sometimes it will simply be one or two examples. Just because an example might not look like a rule, this does not mean that it is not sufficient to show us how to rule follow. Diamond would have made the point more clearly if she had said that Wittgenstein develops an analogy between rules *and standards* of multiplication and *rules and standards* of measurement, or perhaps even just between rules of

multiplication and rules of measurement. She is clearly aware of the need to consider the relationship between standards of length and rules of measurement:

There are connections between defining a standard of length (something that is a measure of length) and having rules determining how length is measured. It would be possible to examine the relation between Kripke on the standard meter and Kripke on Wittgenstein on rules by starting with the implications of Kripke's treatment of the standard meter for the question what [*sic*] it is for something to be a measure, and how that does or doesn't involve rules. (Diamond, 2001, p. 107)

However, Diamond fails to give explicit consideration to the involvement of rules in measurement as far as Kripke is concerned, preferring instead to draw an analogy between Kripke on the standard metre and Kripke on Wittgenstein on rules. This is interesting because, as we have seen, that analogy is a limited one, insofar as Kripke could not consistently hold both his view on the standard metre and that position on rules which he attributes to Wittgenstein; if the former was a genuine analogue of the latter, Kripke would surely have to commit himself to scepticism about the possibility of epistemic access to a "particular length". Kripke's position would become even more intolerable if the picking out of that length was supposed to be an *example* of rule following or to involve rules in some other sense. Thus, were Kripke prepared to hold an inconsistent metaphysics in the sense that he would allow the existence of some entity which is "a certain length", but not the existence of some fact in which a rule consists, to be consistent in his inconsistency he would then be committed to the denial that measurement involves rule following. This is a highly implausible position to adopt, however, as measurement seems a clear case of rule following, and it is extremely unlikely that Kripke intends to hold it. Of course, Diamond may well want to deny that measurement involves rule following, which is perhaps why she couches Wittgenstein's comparison between multiplication and measurement in terms conducive to such a position (although this seems unlikely given the following statement: 'That rules for doing something or other are rules for the determination of the length a thing has depends upon

*the length a thing has* entering [people's] lives in a multiplicity of ways' (Diamond, 1989, p. 16)). But Wittgenstein talks in the passage above as though the metre rod and any picture or instrument used to enable measurement are themselves synonymous with rules.

In 'Facts and Superfacts', Winch says:

What *is* the supposition that 'no truth conditions correspond' to the statement in question? Kripke acknowledges (p. 69) that Wittgenstein would recognize the perfect propriety of saying, in suitable circumstances, things like 'It's true that, or a fact that, Jones meant addition when he wrote "+"'. We may add, given *Philosophical Investigations* section 136, that Wittgenstein would say that '*in our language* we apply the calculus of truth-functions to it.' We can do this perfectly well in a way that will enable us to apply the truth-functional calculus: and there is nothing in *Philosophical Investigations* to say we cannot. Furthermore there is no reason at all, as far as I can see, to take Wittgenstein to mean that our application of the calculus of truth-functions to what we call a proposition is incidental, or inessential to what we understand a proposition to be. On the contrary, its being essential is one of the main sources of our temptation to give it the wrong sort of emphasis.

Kripke plainly regards such an argument as this as weaseling. He seems to think that however much Wittgenstein may protest that of course it's perfectly all right for anyone to say that a statement of the problematic sort is true or false, he's still not really admitting that such a statement states a genuine fact. But what are we to understand as a *genuine fact*, if not what is stated by a statement we take to be true? Kripke, I think, gives no other acceptable explanation. (Winch, 1987, p. 62)

Diamond reminds us that Kripke understands the genuine fact in question as being that function which has been fixed as the reference of some term such as 'plus', and which enables us to 'measure' the correctness of our use of that term. We use the term correctly when we connect with the appropriate function, and any statement that one intended to use the term correctly is true just in case one intended to connect with that function. Of course, as Kripke understands Wittgenstein, no such functions exist, and thus the meaning of a term is given not by its truth conditions but (in part) by its assertion conditions. In this way, Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein involves a distinction between truth conditions and assertion conditions; Diamond sees

a Kripkean account of measuring as analogous, insofar as she understands it as consisting in the belief that measurement is to be understood either as an attempt to connect with some particular length, or to give assertion conditions for attribution of measurement. It is striking that Diamond casts this account as being a Kripkean one, rather than *the* Kripkean understanding, or Kripke's own account. I suspect she does this because she is at least partly aware that once again she is stretching the analogy between Kripke on Wittgenstein on rules, and Kripke on the standard metre, further than it in fact goes. Assertion conditions have no place in Kripke's understanding of measurement – rather, as far as he concerned, an intention to measure *always* reaches to a certain length. The type of activity which Diamond has in mind as an example of assertion conditions being given for ascription of measurement, is the use of the human foot as a standard, where there are in fact many such standards in existence, with varying lengths. Her thought is that the term 'one foot' cannot in this case refer to a definite length, and hence there is no fact of the matter of something's being a foot long. However, on Kripke's construal of measurement, it simply would be the case that a particular length is stipulated as the reference of the term 'one foot', by means of the length which is an accidental property of the measurer's foot. Diamond is incorrect, therefore, when she says that Kripke's conception of measurement commits him to a distinction between truth conditions and assertion conditions, as the latter just do not enter into his understanding of the topic.

The passage from 'Facts and Superfacts' above is unclear as to whether Winch sees Kripke as *failing* to give any explanation of what is to be understood as a genuine fact, or whether he simply views the explanation which Kripke *does* give as unacceptable. Either way, Winch is finding fault with Kripke's interpretation from the perspective of somebody working in accordance with (as he sees it) Wittgenstein's method; and this is obviously connected with Winch's earlier suggestion that Kripke misinterprets Wittgenstein because he misunderstands the latter's method. The problem with this is that it begs the question against Kripke regarding what Wittgenstein's method actually is, and the effect which that method has on

the content of what he says. Kripke thinks that Wittgenstein's remarks can be recast without losing the essence, at least, of those claims; Winch, on the other hand, denies that this is possible – but such a denial does not, in itself, provide us with an argument for the rejection of Kripke's interpretation. It is, I suspect, their belief that they have understood Wittgenstein's method correctly which leads both McDowell and Winch to suggest that Kripke at best overlooks the section of *PI* 201 which claims that, 'What [the paradox] shews is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation*, but which is exhibited in what we call "obeying the rule" and "going against it" in actual cases' - when in fact that section is fully accounted for by Kripke's "sceptical solution".

Diamond also begs methodological questions against Kripke. She states that, 'I want to put Kripke-on-Wittgenstein-on-rules into a wider context of Kripke-in-disagreement-with-Wittgenstein' (Diamond, 2001, p.104). Diamond uses Wittgenstein to argue against the position which she sees Kripke as committed to holding in both his interpretation of Wittgenstein on rules and his remarks on the standard metre. Early on in the paper, she says that Kripke's attempt to make his definition of the metre length more precise reveals how different his approach is from Wittgenstein's; and this is followed by remarks which are intended to show that Kripke assumes a certain conception of the issues without comment. Diamond herself recognizes that this claim might be seen as begging questions against Kripke's method, pointing out that 'These comments of mine involve a refusal to go along with Kripke's way of separating what he thinks of as epistemological issues from metaphysical ones, including the metaphysics of reference, and so it could be argued that they beg questions against him' (Diamond, 2001, pp. 105-106). As we have seen, Diamond characterizes Kripke's declaration of the *a prioricity* of knowledge possessed by someone who stipulates a certain length as a philosophical confusion arising out of language, of a type identified by Wittgenstein. In effect, therefore, her point is that Wittgenstein has implicitly indicated a problem with Kripke's philosophical method; but the latter will most likely respond by simply denying that the former, via Diamond, has revealed a genuine difficulty within his account of measurement.

If Kripke did hold the view of rule following articulated in *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, as Diamond thinks he does, and which she sees as the analogue of his stance on the standard metre, then she would beg the same sort of methodological question in both cases. I have tried to demonstrate that it is a mistake to see Kripke as engaged in the same sort of enterprise when he discusses Wittgenstein on rules as when he makes use of Wittgenstein's example of the standard metre: the former is an exegetical exercise, and Kripke is not committed therefore to the philosophical opinions contained within the resultant interpretation. Both Winch and Diamond try to show what is wrong with the account of rule following articulated in Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein by characterizing him as the embodiment of just that position which Wittgenstein seeks to criticize. However, given that Kripke is seeking to offer the view of rule following which he finds in Wittgenstein – and not necessarily his own understanding of the topic – it begs the question against him to claim that such a characterization must be wrong because it is shown to be so by what Wittgenstein himself has to say. In other words, if one simply criticizes Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein by offering an alternative opinion as to how the latter ought to be read, one has not shown *how* Kripke's reading fails as an *interpretation*.

Kripke can be shown to interpret Wittgenstein incorrectly through identifying aspects of the latter's philosophy which cannot be accommodated within the reading given by the former. As we have seen, both McDowell and Winch are mistaken when they suggest that the second paragraph of *PI* 201 is just such an element. In the case of scepticism, however, whereas McDowell simply *assumes* that we will seek to avoid it come what may, and thereby begs the question against Kripke's sceptical Wittgenstein, Winch draws our attention to Wittgenstein's explicit view of universal scepticism as nonsensical. Unfortunately, Winch does not himself directly point out the consequences of that view for Kripke's interpretation, although he does state that 'Kripke's book is an outstanding example of the reading of Wittgenstein against which my paper [*Im Anfang war die Tat*] was directed' (Winch, 1987, p. 54).

Diamond, on the other hand, *does* point out that Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein on rule following itself exemplifies a philosophical confusion with which Wittgenstein clearly takes issue: namely, it characterizes rule following in such a way as to employ statements about meaning which appear to constitute 'reflexive' examples of 'transitive' sentences. For example, when Kripke says that 'I, like almost all English speakers, use the word 'plus' and the symbol '+' to denote a well-known mathematical function, addition (Kripke, 1998, p. 7), his thought is that the word and symbol must have their meaning conferred on them by a function to which they reach. Wittgenstein's 'sceptical paradox' is supposed to show that such reference, and hence meaning itself, is impossible. However, insofar as Kripke's claim *is meaningful*, it simply makes clear that what we mean by 'plus' and '+' is bound up with what we mean by 'addition'. When things are put like that, the claim is unproblematically transitive, in the sense that it clarifies – but does not seek to *justify* – the meaning of one term by linking it with that of another.

The fundamental question, in Kripke's account of his own central example, is whether by the word "plus" he has meant the plus function. He had, supposedly, always thought he had meant plus by the word "plus," but the Wittgensteinian argument is then supposed to show that that is doubtful. But now what is this that he is supposed to have thought, before the paradox? We can here raise a question whether the sentence giving what he is supposed to have thought, "By the word 'plus' I meant the plus function," is what it looks as if it may be, namely a 'reflexive' use of a kind of sentence which has an unproblematic 'transitive' use. Sentences of the form "By 'A' I meant B," where the expression replacing "A" is different from that replacing "B," would be transitive uses of the kind of sentence in question. ... One can frequently clear up an ambiguity in what one said by giving a different expression and saying that that is what one meant. We have seen that, in other cases of intransitive uses of sentences which have both transitive and intransitive uses, it is possible to slide into philosophical confusion by treating the intransitive cases as special reflexive cases of the transitive use. Or, at any rate, this is what Wittgenstein tried to show. (Diamond, 2001, p. 130)

Kripke interprets Wittgenstein as embracing scepticism about meaning because he takes him to have shown that no appropriate facts exist to confer meaning on a statement. The response which Wittgenstein would make to the claim which Kripke has put into his mouth, as we saw whilst discussing McDowell, is that the very arrival at scepticism of this interpretation picture shows that it is not what we wanted; what we began by seeking was an account of meaning, and of rule following more generally. In other words, that meaning is not given to sentences in a reflexively transitive way indicates not that there *is no* meaning, but that meaning is otherwise – that it is intransitive. ‘What this shews is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not an interpretation*, but which is exhibited in what we call “obeying the rule” and “going against it” in actual cases’ (*PI* 201). Diamond has shown that Kripke’s interpretation fails not in its ability to accommodate the foregoing passage, as McDowell and Winch would have it, but in its ability to do so in a way which would not be regarded by Wittgenstein as itself exemplifying a particular type of philosophical confusion.

Diamond makes clear that Kripke’s characterization of measurement and his interpretation of Wittgenstein on rules are analogous to the extent that they both treat an intransitive use of language as a reflexive case of a transitive use. I have tried to show, however, that the philosophical opinions contained within the two works are also importantly *disanalogous*, and that Diamond therefore distorts the nature of her achievement when, like Winch, she addresses Kripke as someone who, of necessity, subscribes to the picture of rule following which he attributes to Wittgenstein.

I concluded my discussion of McDowell by claiming that he is guilty of misinterpretation when he says that, ‘Wittgenstein’s point is that we have to situate our conception of meaning and understanding within a framework of communal practices’ (McDowell, 1998, p. 243); Wittgenstein’s real point, I said, is that the concepts of meaning and understanding *just are* situated within a framework of communal practices. In her paper, ‘Rules: Looking in the Right Place’, Diamond does much to clarify what it means to say that our concepts and rules are to be found in our behaviour. A claim like McDowell’s

implies that, insofar as our concepts of meaning and understanding are “things to be positioned” within a framework of communal practices, we possess those concepts in abstraction from those practices. Of course, he does suggest that there is a relation holding of necessity between the framework and the conception; but my point is simply that McDowell talks as though concepts can be considered as things which exist independently from the public life that expresses them. Diamond characterizes such a notion as:

... the idea that there being a complex life with [say] colour terms, a life involving agreement, is one thing, and that our having our colour concept is *something else*, standing or not standing in a relation of logical or conceptual dependence to that complex life involving agreement. (Diamond, 1989, p. 19)

She is talking about colour here in reference to *Zettel* 351, where Wittgenstein remarks:

“If humans were not in general agreed about the colours of things, if undetermined cases were not exceptional, then our concept of colour could not exist.” No: - our concept *would* not exist. (Z 351)

As Diamond points out, if one assumes that it makes sense to ask whether human agreement is a necessary condition for the existence of concepts, one will see Wittgenstein as maintaining the position that whilst it is possible for a concept to exist in the absence of such agreement, as a matter of fact it would not do so. However, she continues, the real aim of the remark is to expose as mistaken the assumption that such an apparent question is genuinely intelligible, originating as it does from the temptation to view concepts as existing independently in some sense from the complex public life in which they are manifest. If human beings did not generally agree in the application of concepts, that would *be* their not having those concepts; in other words, it is a mistake to talk as though the existence of a concept is something which is brought about as a consequence of a state of affairs, not because the concept exists prior to or independently from those circumstances, but because it *consists in* them.

To see that Diamond's interpretation here is the correct one, we need only remind ourselves that Wittgenstein rejects the characterization of language suggested by Russell, according to which meaning necessarily requires infallible certainty as a prior condition; rather, Wittgenstein has it, the necessity which informs our language use is grammatical, in the sense that it is internal to that behaviour.

In the paper currently under consideration, Diamond is concerned to explicate the following exhortation made by Rush Rhees: 'Show how rules of grammar are rules of the lives in which there is language; and show at the same time that rules have not the role of empirical statements' (Rhees, 1970, p.45). Rhees, in turn, is trying to bring out the import of claims like:

The concept of pain is characterized by its particular function in our life.

Pain has *this* position in our life; has *these* connexions; (That is to say: we only call "pain" what has *this* position, *these* connexions).

Only surrounded by certain normal manifestations of life, is there such a thing as an expression of pain. Only surrounded by an even more far-reaching particular manifestation of life, such a thing as the expression of sorrow or affection. And so on. (Z 532-534)

Diamond points out that Wittgenstein and Rhees are trying to direct our attention to the specific individual places which words occupy in our behaviour. For an utterance to be an application of a concept, to obey rules of grammar for the use of that particular aspect of language, depends upon the many ways in which the use is manifest in our lives. There might exist people who made utterances similar to our own, so that they initially seemed to use an aspect of language in the same way as us, but for whom that behaviour entered into their lives in entirely different ways. And then, whatever they were doing when they made those noises, it would not be what we do when we make them. In other words, it is the human commerce with a word, in all its complexity, that shows which concept is being employed when the word is used.

The important thing to note is that, although people might go through proceedings which, taken in isolation, resemble our weighings or measurings, these proceedings may be woven into their lives very much as ours are, or much less so, or hardly at all. Whether it is, for example, a rule of grammar in the language they speak that 'A rod has some determinate length' depends upon how closely the role in their life of the proceedings that resemble our determinations of length is like the role in our life of our similar proceedings. That rules for doing something or other are rules for the determination of the length a thing has depends upon *the length a thing has* entering their lives in a multiplicity of ways. After training, we engage in a practice marked by the absence of discordant results in the measuring of medium-sized objects. That fact is tied directly to another: that we ask: 'How tall is he?', 'What is the length of the room?' or 'How far above the floor are the windows?' and not just questions like 'What was the number on the part of the tape nearest to the bottom of the window when you laid the tape against the wall?' or 'What did Smith get when he laid the tape against the wall?' We ask the first sort of question, and the answers we get are then relied on by us in many ways: length is in our lives separated from *who* did the measuring. (Diamond, 1989, pp. 16-17)

Part of what Diamond shows us in this passage is that, say, the kind of questions which we will ask – i.e., the language that we will use – in any given situation depends upon the type of activity in which we are engaged at that time. By putting things this way, however, we are in danger of suggesting merely that our language must be appropriate for the circumstances in which we use it, and that meaning is lost when this condition fails to be satisfied. Of course, we *will* fail to make sense if we use language inappropriately, but the deeper lesson which Diamond hopes to bring out is that concepts like sense, meaning, and understanding depend on the lives in which they are found not merely for the ways in which they are applied, but for their very *existence*. In other words, whilst one makes a mistake if one thinks that language can be abstracted from the various uses which are made of it, a further error is committed if this is taken to mean *simply* that language cannot be separated from the appropriate expression of concepts whilst remaining meaningful. Rather, the crucial point is that concepts *exist* insofar as they are themselves constituted by the multifarious ways of living in which they are to be found.

When Kripke gives his interpretation of Wittgenstein in terms of assertability conditions, he accommodates the claim that grasping a rule ‘is exhibited in what we call “obeying the rule” and “going against it” in actual cases’ (*PI* 201). However, he fails to see the complexity of the behaviour which Wittgenstein is referring to here, because, I suspect, he thinks that each ‘actual case’ of rule following is to be “judged on its own merits” rather than as an element of a life involving rule following. On the Kripkean reading, a teacher will judge that her pupil has grasped the rule for addition when he responds appropriately to addition calculations – i.e., when he comes out with utterances which the teacher considers to be justified under the conditions in which he makes them. But the problem here is that it may be merely coincidence that the pupil has come out with these utterances; and in fact, he might, *quite by chance*, come out with a correct answer to *every* addition problem which is placed before him. According to Kripke’s interpretation, that is enough to say that the pupil grasps and follows the rule for addition, and does so correctly; whereas, of course, it ought to be clear that in such a case the pupil has done neither, although we might say that he has behaved in accordance with the rule without being aware that he has done so. As Diamond puts it:

[Kripke] thinks of telling whether someone is following a rule simply in terms of assertion-conditions; you can say someone is following ‘Add 2’ if what he comes out with is what you would come out with too. You can plug the assertion-conditions into any case in which sequences of sounds come out of someone’s mouth, and that will be telling what rule, if any, he is following. (Diamond, 1989, p. 29)

The account of rule following which Kripke finds in Wittgenstein fails to be plausible because it neglects the importance and variety of rule following in our lives. For example, in the case of the pupil who always comes up with the correct answer to an addition calculation by chance, his failure to have grasped the rule for addition will be exposed by his inability to use the concept in varied ways and circumstances. Suppose that his mother asks him to demonstrate his adding prowess to her. On Kripke’s story, she needs to provide him with a problem to solve – but in fact, if he has indeed grasped the rule for addition, she might reasonably expect him to come up with both a

problem and its solution. Or she might ask her son to *explain* his procedure for getting from the problem to its solution; or even explain, if he has grasped the concept of money, how adding a number of items together in a shopping basket affects their individual prices. All of these proceedings are different, but they all reflect, in some way, the role and importance of the concept of addition in our lives. According to Kripke's interpretation, these forms of behaviour are superfluous to the question of whether the child can add or not; one might say that on his reading they follow from the ability, whereas, Diamond has shown us, for Wittgenstein they are actually constitutive of it.

The pupil who by chance answers every addition calculation correctly is, in a sense, like a calculator, although of course a calculator does not obtain its answers by chance, but as a result of its having been programmed. We do not say of a calculator that it possesses the concept of addition, or that it follows the rule of addition to arrive at calculations. It *would* be necessary, however, for whomsoever was doing the programming to possess the concept, and to follow the rule, despite the fact that programming a machine to add is not adding. Similarly, for somebody to use a calculator in order to add, they must possess the concept and follow the rule, despite the fact that they are not *themselves* carrying out the calculation. These are grammatical remarks on the concept of addition.

... if meaning is explicable in terms of assertion-conditions, it is explicable independently of what the life is like within which the asserting goes on. The human commerce with the word, how it enters people's lives, has nothing to do with the meaning of what people say or even with the fact that what they are doing in making sounds is saying something. I am suggesting a contrast, that is, between two kinds of philosophical approach to questions about meaning. Take 'fear'. To give its 'assertion-conditions' would be to specify the kind of behaviour which entitles someone to say of another person that he is afraid, and to give some kind of story about the conditions in which we are entitled to come out with assertions about our own fear. The assertion-conditions for ascriptions in the past tense would have to be given as well; generalisations about fear would also have to be included. There would be no attempt, though, to include in such an account how the commerce with the word 'fear' is interwoven with the rest of the lives of the people who use the word. No connections would need to be made with the way fear enters the lives and thoughts and

interests of human beings. How, then, does the contrast go with Wittgenstein's approach? Here is how not to put it: he says that meaning is given, not by assertion-conditions, but by place-in-life. Rather, he thinks that, when we raise philosophical questions about meaning, we are for various reasons inclined not to attend to the place words have in our lives: to the very particular places. To give an account of meaning in terms of assertion-conditions is to remain with our eyes fixed in the wrong direction. A sound that people came out with when certain conditions were fulfilled would not be a word meaning fear; it is also most unclear why it might be thought that this was a word at all, or that what these people were doing was asserting. (Diamond, 1989, pp. 14-15)

Insofar as his interpretation abstracts the expression of concepts from the wider context of a life involving rule following, then, Kripke creates a difficulty over the difference between following a particular rule incorrectly, and correctly applying a different rule. He says, in the case of the child learning addition:

... the child must produce, almost all the time, the 'right' answer. If a child insists on the answer '7' to the query '2+3', and a '3' to '2+2', and makes various other elementary mistakes, the teacher will say to him, "You are not adding. Either you are computing another function" – I suppose he would not really talk quite this way to a child! - "or, more probably, you are as yet following no rule at all, but only giving whatever random answer enters your head." (Kripke, 1998, pp. 89-90)

The problem is this. If the child is either "computing another function", or not following *any* rule, then he is not following the rule for addition *incorrectly*, but is not following it *at all*. Kripke states that when the child gets a 'computation' wrong (a curious way of putting things, since people do not compute), he can still be said to have followed the rule for addition provided that the majority of the answers which he has produced have been correct, and that he is 'recognizably ... 'trying to follow' the proper procedure' (Kripke, 1998, p. 90). However, it is far from clear what trying to follow the proper procedure comes to on Kripke's account, since the teacher only knows that the child has tried to follow that procedure when he actually follows it – i.e., when he gives the correct answer to a calculation. Indeed, she has no way of telling whether

the child has tried, and failed, to follow the proper procedure for addition, or whether, on the other hand, he has in fact followed a different procedure correctly.

Diamond makes clear that this inability of Kripke's account to distinguish between someone's following a rule incorrectly, and their actually following a different rule, is rooted in his failure to appreciate the depth of Wittgenstein's remarks on agreement in rule following.

When we ask what Wittgenstein takes the significance to be of agreement in following a rule, we tend to have in mind simply the fact of people agreeing on what they take to be the application of the rule to this and that case, and we treat that sort of agreement in isolation from the role in people's lives of following rules. We think of one person saying '1002' after '1000' in applying the rule 'Add 2', and everybody else also saying '1002' in the same circumstances: that, we think, is 'agreement'. What we are ignoring, then, is the place of this procedure in a life in which following rules of all sorts comes in in an enormous number of ways. In fact, of course, we are not just trained to go '446, 448, 450' etc. and other similar things; we are brought into a life in which we rest on, depend on, people's following rules of many sorts, and in which people depend on us: rules, and agreement in following them, and reliance on agreement in following them, and criticizing or rounding on people who do not do it right – all this is woven into the texture of life; and it is in the context of its having a place in such a form of human life that a 'mistake' is recognisably that. ...If there were a bunch of people 'going on' with one number after another in the same way when you said 'Add 2' to them, and we knew nothing else of their lives, we should have no idea what they were up to. If Wittgenstein had held that *such* agreement made right and wrong possible, one would indeed have to ask how it could accomplish that. But suppose that there *were* all these people who said '1002' after '1000', and I was the one who said '1004' instead. What (in this present story) do they have to do with me? If I am making a mistake in using *their* rule, I must be using their rule. But what in the story lets us say that I am using their rule? All that this story has in it is the coincidence of what we come out with up to a certain point; but, unless there is more to the story than that, I am not doing what they are doing, and the fact of their going on '1002' shows nothing about my having made a mistake. (Diamond, 1989, pp. 27-28)

On Kripke's interpretation, agreement in following a rule consists in the fact that 'our actual community is (roughly) uniform in its practices with respect

[say] to addition' (Kripke, 1998, p. 91), and that on the basis of this empirical claim we can attribute possession of the concept of addition to those who engage successfully in those practices (or at least *try* to so engage). In other words, the suggestion is that we can stipulate conditions under which a competent rule follower will be justified in conferring the same status on somebody else because we, as competent rule followers ourselves, behave in (roughly) the same ways when we follow the same rule. But the problem with this is that it (virtually) completely ignores the enormous *variety* in rule following behaviour, as well as the further complex ways in which people try, but *fail*, to follow rules. In neglecting this variety and complexity in the ways in which we agree in our use of rules and rely upon such agreement, Kripke's reading loses sight of the circumstances in which we might say of somebody that she has made a mistake in following a rule – circumstances which are rich enough to show us that despite having done so incorrectly, she has been trying to employ a particular concept. These circumstances cannot intelligibly be abstracted from their very particular places in our lives and characterized as conditions under which we would be justified in attributing rule following to an agent, but rather reveal themselves in our actual commerce with rules: behaviour which is constitutive of what it is to follow rules, and to make mistakes in doing so.

## Conclusion

Kripke is guilty of misinterpretation when he characterizes Wittgenstein as being sceptical about meaning. However, his erroneous reading is not rooted in the overlooking or ignoring of a section of *PI* 201, as McDowell and Winch would have it, since the passage in question is clearly accommodated within the “sceptical solution” which he offers on Wittgenstein’s behalf. Rather, there are two elements of Wittgenstein’s remarks on meaning which Kripke *cannot* account for. The first of these is the claim that universal scepticism is nonsensical; and the second, that one is confused if one characterizes meaning in such a way as to employ statements with an unproblematic transitive use as though they were reflexive. These points are brought out by Winch and Diamond respectively.

For Wittgenstein, rule following is practice, insofar as rules are constituted by agreement in behaviour. All language use, he has it, is rule-governed, even when rules cannot be identified in that behaviour – although the rules of language use are not always definite and are subject to change.

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