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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity by G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker

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Source: *Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (Sep., 1988), pp. 486-487

Published by: The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Philosophy of Science Association

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/187669>

Accessed: 19-02-2021 20:38 UTC

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points to a fruitful direction of research: each of the papers is concerned in one way or another with some aspects of the actual practice of science. By focusing on the reality of science, that is, on the actual practice of science, philosophers and historians of science may bridge in a coordinated fashion the gap that exists in their composite discipline. One therefore welcomes the projected series of the Johns Hopkins Center in which each volume will address an issue that both philosophers of science and historians of science can usefully study.

It is hoped that these future volumes will not be marred by changing style that spans both the Clear and Direct and the Obscure and Elliptical, as is the case with the present volume. Faults such as inconsistent and redundant usages (for example, “empirical experimentation”), use of awkward and cumbersome words (for example, “physicize”, “epistemologizing”), quite a few typographical errors including an error in the formation of the two-body state (p. 203), an inconsistent inequality (p. 207), an incomplete name index and lack of a subject index, do not befit this important and timely book. *Giora Hon, Edelstein Center, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem.*

G. P. BAKER AND P. M. S. HACKER, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell (1985), xvi + 352 pp. \$49.95 (cloth).

*Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity* is an “analytical commentary” on the “core” of the Philosophical Investigations, the remarks on rules in sections 185 to 242. Like its predecessor, which covered the first 184 sections, this volume is an exemplary work of scholarship. Baker and Hacker continue to exhibit a remarkable grasp of the text and the layers of unpublished material that lie behind it. And they again demonstrate a deep understanding of the relationship of the arguments of the *Investigations* to those of the *Tractatus* and the transitional works. The result is a commentary of immense value not only for deciphering Wittgenstein’s often gnomic remarks about rule-following but also for illuminating the general thrust of his philosophy. Baker and Hacker may perhaps be criticized for being repetitive and for occasionally belaboring the obvious, but the clarity of their exegeses and the sensitivity of their critical analyses can hardly be faulted. If not the last word on the topic (it might for instance be argued that the therapeutic aspects of Wittgenstein’s thought are underrated), it is unquestionably a very important first one.

One of the more interesting aspects of Baker and Hacker’s discussion is the attention that they accord to Wittgenstein’s views about mathematics and to the ways in which these are linked with his philosophy of mind. In their view the early sections of the *Investigations* were intended to prepare the way for a discussion of mathematical concepts no less than for a discussion of psychological ones and it is helpful to use the one to elucidate the other. We should think of Wittgenstein’s deliberations concerning these subjects as “two fruits on the same tree”, each directed towards the goal of uncovering the confusions that surround the various normative concepts characteristic of language use. Once Wittgenstein has dismantled the Augustinian conception of language with its emphasis on naming and describing, Baker and Hacker suggest, it made sense for him to query the assumption that mathematical terms such as “2” and psychological terms such as “toothache” are names, and to dispute the common understanding of sentences such as “ $2 + 2 = 4$ ” and “I have a toothache” as descriptions.

In their introductory essays, Baker and Hacker shed considerable light on Wittgenstein’s attempt to negotiate the pitfalls associated with the idea of following a rule. They provide a helpful overview of the main features of rules and rule-governed practices along with a clear account of the significance of Wittgenstein’s conception of grammar as “the account book of language”. They do much to clarify Wittgenstein’s point that rule formulations are “grammatically connected” to the acts that accord with them and to sort out the various relationships that he delineates between following a rule, mastering a technique and conforming to a regular use or custom. Finally and most importantly they disentangle Wittgenstein’s observations about the publicity of rules and about the manner in which rule-following does (and does not) presuppose interpersonal agreement concerning definitions, judgments and forms of life. The upshot of the discussion is an account of Wittgenstein’s

treatment of rules that shows previous discussions to be superficial, muddled, misleading, spurious or worse.

The relevance of Baker and Hacker's observations for social scientists and philosophers of science cannot be overestimated. Few who read sections 185 to 242 of the *Investigations* bearing their comments in mind are likely to remain satisfied with the rumor that Wittgenstein's philosophy is hospitable to relativism and antithetical to the existence of methodological rules. The plain fact is that Wittgenstein never suggested that the correctness of an action is determined by the standards of the actor's social group, nor did he ever argue that the concept of rule-governed behavior is incoherent because every application of a rule presupposes another rule. To the contrary, he was as insistent as anyone that agreement does not determine truth, and it was one of his constant refrains that it is a mistake to think of rules causally as sources of actions. As Baker and Hacker remind us, Wittgenstein's aim was to expose philosophical superstition, not to challenge the obvious.

Baker and Hacker conclude with a long essay on "necessity and grammar" in which they attempt to "harvest" the second of the two fruits that they take the early sections of the *Investigations* to bear. Emphasizing that for Wittgenstein, mathematical propositions function as grammatical rules or norms of representation (understood, I take it, in a suitably deflationary way), they show how Wittgenstein can steer a course between Platonism and psychologism while doing justice to "the psychology of the *a priori*" (that is, the special way in which mathematical propositions strike us). Wittgenstein is able to do the seemingly impossible, Baker and Hacker aver, because his deliberations concerning rules put him in the special position of being able to accept commonsense claims about the truth and certainty of mathematical propositions even as he dismisses the philosophical theories that these claims are usually thought to require. It may well be necessary to augment Baker and Hacker's interpretation but it can no longer be doubted that the common conception of Wittgenstein as a wishy-washy conventionalist is badly awry. *Andrew Lugg, University of Ottawa.*