Wittgenstein and Scepticism about Meaning and Rule-Following:

A Kripkean Reading

By

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at University of Dublin, Trinity College,
Department of Philosophy

July 2011

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Declaration

This thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other University. This thesis is entirely my own work.

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Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Jim Levine. I have benefitted immensely from his dedicated supervision, his generosity with his time, and his detailed feedback on my work.

I would like especially to thank my parents, Betty and Francis, for their love and support. I wish to thank my sisters Deirdre and Imelda and my brother Frank for the many ways in which they have supported my studies and given their encouragement. The thoughtfulness of all my family has meant a great deal.

I would also like to thank Mary, PJ, and all the Phelans. I am thankful for having had two families behind me during my studies, and I wish to thank my in-laws for their support during my years in college.

I was lucky enough to begin my philosophy studies with Dr. James Kelly. He has been a great friend and colleague ever since, and I would like to thank him for his friendship and advice on all things logic- and modality-related.

I have had a very enjoyable postgraduate experience at Trinity, and this is in no small part due to the wonderful postgraduate students I have worked with over the years.

Finally and most importantly, I would like to thank my wife Sinéad, who has been the greatest source of inspiration in my life. Her love, warmth, and companionship have made every step of this journey joyful and meaningful. I dedicate this thesis to her.

Summary

In this thesis, I propose a defence of Saul Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein's later discussion of meaning and rule-following. The most striking feature of Kripke's *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (*WRPL*) is that it depicts Wittgenstein as a type of sceptic about meaning and rule-following. There are three specific components to this: firstly, that Wittgenstein developed a *sceptical challenge* to the view that we mean something by the words we use (or that we follow rules); secondly, that he believed that the challenge could not be met with a 'straight solution' and thus that he accepted a *sceptical conclusion* concerning meaning and rule-following; and thirdly, that he proposed a *sceptical solution* that sought to present an alternative positive picture of the legitimacy of semantic discourse (of making utterances such as 'Jones means addition by "+"') while somehow accommodating this sceptical conclusion. One of the major difficulties is that there is significant ambiguity concerning all three of these components of Kripke's reading. I thus make the interpretation of *WRPL* one of the central tasks of the thesis. The main claim that I defend is that when both Wittgenstein and Kripke's Wittgenstein are properly understood, they can be seen to coincide in essential respects. I argue that all three of these components of Kripke's sceptical reading correspond to fundamental features of Wittgenstein's later philosophy.

My approach is to clarify each of these points by focussing on the notion of 'meaning-constitution', which figures centrally both in Kripke's text and in practically all of the commentaries on and responses to it. My interpretation of Wittgenstein takes this concept and uses it as the key to understanding his transition to his later approach to meaning (and rule-following). I argue that Wittgenstein, in both his early and middle periods, adopted a particular account of meaning-constituting facts, or of what meaning 'consists in'. But I argue that his later approach is characterised by the rejection of all such accounts and of the notion of meaning-constitution itself. My main contention is thus that Kripke has succeeded in capturing the central feature of Wittgenstein's later approach to meaning, viz. that he sought to elucidate the concept of meaning – and our practices of ascribing meaning to the words we use – without appealing to meaning-constituting facts (e.g. facts about my mental states).

The thesis is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter I focus exclusively on the difficulties associated with interpreting *WRPL* itself, and hence with understanding Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein. I focus mainly on the issues of the nature of the sceptical challenge and the formulation of sceptical conclusion that Kripke's Wittgenstein ultimately accepts on the basis of it. Drawing on the writings of George Wilson and Martin Kusch, I argue in favour of two aspects of their 'factualist' readings of *WRPL*: firstly, the characterisation of the sceptical argument as beginning with a particular inflationary or realist assumption about meaning-constitution and concluding with the sceptical paradox that denies that any word has meaning; and secondly, the interpretation of Kripke's Wittgenstein as being distinct from the *radical* sceptic in the sense that he rejects the sceptical paradox and concludes by reductio with the negation of the original assumption about meaning-constitution. However, I also attempt to incorporate various lessons from criticisms of the factualist reading, most notably Alexander Miller's objections concerning the proper scope of the sceptical challenge (which he argues is wider than some factualist readers recognise). I use these objections and other considerations to support the claim that Kripke's Wittgenstein should be interpreted as opposed to all conceptions of meaning-constitution, or to the whole approach that attempts to clarify or explain meaning by positing the existence of meaning-constituting facts. I argue that Kripke's Wittgenstein is a sceptic in the specific sense that he denies the existence of meaning-constituting facts of any kind, and that his 'solution' is sceptical in this sense only. I distinguish this from the radical sceptic's position that rejects

the entire notion of meaning and the basic legitimacy of semantic terms such as 'means'. This feature of my interpretation of *WRPL* goes against those factualist readings that hold that Kripke's Wittgenstein's sceptical solution incorporates meaning-constituting facts of a certain kind. I address these differences in the final chapter when I focus on the sceptical solution.

In the second, third, and fourth chapters, I develop a detailed interpretation of Wittgenstein's later views on meaning and rule-following that corresponds to my depiction of Kripke's Wittgenstein in the first chapter. In the second chapter, I defend two main claims regarding the later Wittgenstein: (1) that he developed an argument that can be called sceptical in the sense of establishing a sceptical paradoxical conclusion; and (2) that his response to this argument is the same as Kripke's Wittgenstein's (as I have interpreted it in the first chapter), i.e. to reject the paradoxical conclusion and to conclude by rejecting the flawed assumption about meaning-constitution that led to it. This provides partial support for my view that Wittgenstein is a sceptic in the specific sense that he rejects the existence of meaning-constitution facts of any kind. I continue my defence of this in the third chapter. My focus, though, extends to Wittgenstein's views on necessity because they seem to contain a straightforward counterexample to my non-constitutive reading. More specifically, in his middle period Wittgenstein characterises necessary propositions as disguised grammatical rules that *constitute* the meaning of the constituent terms of the propositions; and hence his rather peculiar conception of necessity incorporates a conception of the constitution of the meaning of certain terms (e.g. mathematical or logical terms). Furthermore, since there does not seem to be a major difference between his middle and later views on this issue, the objection is that he did adopt a particular conception of meaning-constitution in his later period. I explore this issue by considering Michael Dummett's 'full-blooded conventionalist' interpretation of the later Wittgenstein on necessity, which essentially equates necessity with what we take to be necessary. I use Dummett's classification of 'realist', 'moderate constructivist' and 'radical constructivist' accounts to situate the different possible accounts of the constitution of necessity, rule-following, and meaning. Reflecting on Dummett's debate with Barry Stroud, as well as Gordon Baker and P. M. S. Hacker's reading and Bernard Williams's idealist reading, I argue that the later Wittgenstein is opposed to all of these types of constitutive account of necessity. I thus argue that there is no way of arguing from Wittgenstein's views on necessity to the claim that he adopted an account of meaning-constituting facts.

In the final chapter, I elaborate on my readings of both *WRPL* and Wittgenstein's writings. I turn my attention to what could be called the positive response to these sceptical considerations. I argue that Kripke's depiction of Wittgenstein as proposing a 'sceptical solution' succeeds in capturing the later Wittgenstein's philosophical standpoint, particularly as manifested in his remarks in *Philosophical Investigations* concerning practices, regularities, and customs of use, and communal agreement. I also briefly consider Kripke's claim that the impossibility of private language follows as a corollary from Wittgenstein's positive non-constitutive conception, but this is not my central focus and so many of the problems connected with this are only partially addressed. I conclude by connecting this Kripkean non-constitutive reading with Wittgenstein's numerous assertions concerning his quietism or opposition to presenting philosophical theses or explanations. I argue that Kripke's reading of Wittgenstein's orientation in the sceptical solution captures this quietist stance in a way that the various types of constitutive readings (including Baker and Hacker's and Dummett's) do not.

Abbreviations

Wittgenstein Texts:

ACL   *Wittgenstein's Lectures: Cambridge, 1932-1935* (1979)

BB   *The Blue and Brown Books: Preliminary Studies for the 'Philosophical Investigations'* (1969)

BT   *The Big Typescript: TS 213* (2005)

LCL   *Wittgenstein's Lectures: Cambridge, 1930-32* (1980)

LFM   *Wittgenstein's Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics: Cambridge, 1939* (1976)

OC   *On Certainty* (1974)

PG   *Philosophical Grammar* (1974)

PI   *Philosophical Investigations* (2001)

PR   *Philosophical Remarks* (1975)

RFM   *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* (1978)

TLP   *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1933)

WVC   *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle* (1979)

Z   *Zettel* (1981)

Kripke text:

WRPL   *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (1982)

Introduction

The main aim of this thesis is interpretive. On the one hand, I defend a particular interpretation of Wittgenstein's later views on meaning and rule-following; and on the other, I defend a particular interpretation of Saul Kripke's *WRPL*, which proposes a controversial reading of Wittgenstein. My main claim is that when both Wittgenstein and Kripke's Wittgenstein are properly understood, they can be seen to coincide in essential respects. In this sense, I intend to defend Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein. My reading is best characterised as 'Kripkean' because, although it accepts most of the main interpretive claims defended by Kripke, it seeks to go beyond them in important matters of detail and especially in connecting these claims with Wittgenstein's writings. Since its publication, Kripke's *WRPL* has been attacked as a distortion of Wittgenstein's later philosophy. Kripke was aware from the outset that his interpretation is highly unorthodox, and he even included the disclaimer in his introduction that his intention is the relatively modest one of explicating 'Wittgenstein's argument as it struck Kripke, as it presented a problem for him' (*WRPL*, 4). Unfortunately, this has only contributed to the near complete consensus that his interpretation is deeply flawed or inaccurate. Part of my task in this thesis is thus to challenge this consensus and to show that his disclaimer is unnecessary.

The most striking feature of Kripke's *WRPL* is that it depicts Wittgenstein as a type of sceptic about meaning and rule-following. There are three specific components to this: firstly, that Wittgenstein developed a *sceptical challenge* to the view that we mean something by the words we use (or that we follow rules); secondly, that he believed that the challenge could not be met with a 'straight solution' and thus that he accepted a *sceptical conclusion* concerning meaning and rule-following; and thirdly, that he proposed a *sceptical solution* that sought to present an alternative positive picture of the legitimacy of semantic discourse (of making utterances such as 'Jones means addition by "+"') while somehow accommodating

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this sceptical conclusion. One of the major difficulties we face here is that there is significant ambiguity concerning all three of these components of Kripke's reading. This is why I make the interpretation of *WRPL* one of the central tasks of the thesis.

My approach is to clarify each of these points by focussing on the notion of 'meaning-constitution', which figures centrally both in Kripke's text and in practically all of the commentaries on and responses to it. Kripke's Wittgenstein's sceptical challenge can be characterised in the following way, making the notion of meaning-constitution explicit: the sceptic challenges me to identify some fact about myself – some meaning-constituting fact – that demonstrates that I mean something by a particular term (e.g. a fact that shows that by '+' I mean the *addition* function rather than some other arithmetical function, such as *quaddition*[1]); the sceptical conclusion that there are no such meaning-constituting facts is drawn (because there is nothing to rule out that, e.g., I mean *addition* rather than *quaddition* by '+'); and a sceptical solution is proposed that attempts to accommodate this negative conclusion.

My interpretation of Wittgenstein takes this concept of meaning-constitution and uses it as the key to understanding his transition to his later approach to meaning. I argue that Wittgenstein, in both his early and middle periods, adopted some particular account of meaning-constituting facts, or of what meaning 'consists in' (as Kripke also puts it; see *WRPL*, 87). But I argue that his later approach is characterised by the rejection of all such accounts and of the notion of meaning-constitution itself. My main contention is thus that Kripke has succeeded in capturing the central feature of Wittgenstein's later approach to meaning, viz. that he sought to elucidate the concept of meaning and our practices of ascribing meaning to the words we use without appealing to meaning-constituting facts (e.g.

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[1] Kripke defines the quaddition (or 'quus') function as yielding the same values as the addition function for any two numbers that are less than 57. But if either of the numbers being 'quadded' are greater than 57, the value is 5. See *WRPL*: 8-9.

facts about my mental states). A similar claim can be made in relation to rule-following because, as will become clear, the issues are analogous. I use these points to clarify the specific sense in which I take both Wittgenstein and Kripke's Wittgenstein to be sceptics about meaning and rule-following. To avoid confusion, the scepticism could be called a 'philosophical scepticism' in the sense that it rejects a certain natural or persuasive philosophical approach to explaining meaning and rule-following by positing the existence of facts that are constitutive of them. Although this philosophical scepticism is quite radical in rejecting all such facts (and thus merits being called a type of scepticism), it should be distinguished from the more radical kind of scepticism that rejects the notions of meaning and rule-following altogether. On the contrary, the entire purpose of the 'sceptical solution' as I interpret it is to clarify the legitimacy of these notions without relying on the kinds of constitutive facts that philosophers are inclined to posit.

Below is an outline of how I defend my main interpretive claims in each of the four chapters of the thesis.

In the first chapter I focus exclusively on the issues raised by Kripke's reading of Wittgenstein and do not yet consider whether his reading is accurate. Rather, I analyse the arguments of Kripke's Wittgenstein without any concern at this stage with whether they can be attributed to Wittgenstein. This strategy enables me to address at the outset a lot of the ambiguities that are present in Kripke's *WRPL* and which have contributed to it receiving such a hostile reception as an interpretation of Wittgenstein. These ambiguities relate to all of the key components of his reading, but most significantly concerning the relation between the characters of Wittgenstein and the sceptic about meaning in his dialectic, and whether Wittgenstein is depicted as rejecting the existence of facts about meaning outright or merely particular conceptions of meaning. Throughout the first decade of commentaries on *WRPL*, Kripke's Wittgenstein has most often been interpreted as identical to the sceptic and

accordingly as a semantic 'non-factualist', i.e. as denying the existence of facts about meaning and arguing that the proper role of semantic discourse is not to depict such facts. More recently (from the mid-1990s to the present), in opposition to these readings, various 'factualist' readings of *WRPL* have been proposed that have argued that Kripke's Wittgenstein is distinct from the radical sceptic who asserts that 'There is no such thing as meaning anything by any word', and have argued that his target is a certain mistaken (realist or platonist) assumption about meaning. These readings are called factualist because they leave open the possibility that Kripke's Wittgenstein accepts the existence of facts about meaning, provided that they are distinct from the kind that have been rejected. Taking George Wilson and Martin Kusch as representatives of this factualist reading, I argue in favour of certain aspects of a factualist reading of *WRPL*. However, my agreement with Wilson and Kusch consists primarily in their reconstruction of the sceptical argument. They both characterise that argument as beginning with a particular inflationary or realist assumption about meaning-constitution and concluding with the sceptical paradox that denies that any word has meaning. However, they both also hold that Wittgenstein parts with the sceptic by rejecting this paradoxical conclusion and concluding by reductio with the negation of the original assumption about meaning-constitution. On these points, I am in agreement with the factualist readers. But I attempt to incorporate various lessons from criticisms of the factualist reading, most notably Alexander Miller's objections concerning the proper scope of the sceptical challenge (which he argues is wider than some factualist readers recognise). More importantly, though, I use these objections and other considerations to support the claim that Kripke's Wittgenstein should be interpreted as opposed to all conceptions of meaning-constitution. This contradicts an important feature of factualist readings. I conclude by characterising the specific sense in which Kripke's Wittgenstein's solution is sceptical, and how this contrasts with the more radical scepticism about meaning.

In the second chapter, I make a first attempt at developing a detailed interpretation of Wittgenstein's later views on meaning and rule-following. Many of the issues and problems that I considered in the first chapter are treated here, but specifically in the context of Wittgenstein's writings. I interpret Wittgenstein's middle period view in terms of the rejection of one conception of meaning-constitution (his own earlier referential or 'Augustinian' conception) in favour of another (a calculus or rule-based conception). However, I argue that his transition to the later period, in which the notions of practice, custom, and communal agreement become more prominent, is characterised by the rejection of the approach to meaning that seeks to identify meaning-constituting facts. I contrast my 'non-constitutive' reading with the far more widespread and influential constitutive readings, such as those of David Pears, Gordon Baker and P. M. S. Hacker. I consider the main lines of argument in Wittgenstein's discussion of meaning and rule-following in *PI*, and argue for a reading of them that contrasts in significant respects with those of John McDowell, Robert Brandom, and Meredith Williams. I argue for a reconstruction of Wittgenstein's 'master arguments' that closely mirrors Kripke's reading. The result is to argue for two main claims: (1) that Wittgenstein developed an argument that can be called sceptical in the sense of establishing a sceptical paradoxical conclusion; and (2) that Wittgenstein's response to this paradox is the same as Kripke's Wittgenstein's (as I have interpreted it in the first chapter), i.e. to reject it and to conclude by rejecting the flawed assumption about meaning-constitution that led to it. This provides partial support for my view that Wittgenstein is a sceptic in the specific sense that he rejects the existence of meaning-constitution facts of any kind (and thus is a sceptic in the same sense as Kripke's Wittgenstein). I continue my defence of this in the third chapter.

My focus in the third chapter turns to his views on necessity because these views seem to contain a straightforward counterexample to my non-constitutive reading. More

specifically, in his middle period Wittgenstein characterises necessary propositions as disguised grammatical rules that *constitute* the meanings of (certain of) the constituent terms of the propositions. Hence, his rather peculiar conception of necessity is such that it incorporates a conception of the constitution of the meaning of certain terms (e.g. mathematical or logical terms). And since there does not seem to be a major difference between his middle and later views on this issue, the objection is that he did adopt a particular conception of meaning-constitution in his later period. I explore this issue by considering Michael Dummett's 'full-blooded conventionalist' interpretation of the later Wittgenstein on necessity, which essentially equates necessity with what we take to be necessary. I use Dummett's classification of 'realist', 'moderate constructivist' and 'radical constructivist' accounts to situate the different possible accounts of the constitution of necessity, rule-following, and meaning. Reflecting on Dummett's debate with Barry Stroud, as well as certain moderate constructivist readings including Baker and Hacker's, I argue that the later Wittgenstein is opposed to all three types of constitutive account of necessity. I thus argue that there is no way of arguing from Wittgenstein's views on necessity to the claim that he adopted an account of meaning-constituting facts. I also consider and reject Bernard Williams's transcendental idealist reading which falls outside Dummett's threefold classification of constitutive accounts.

In the final chapter, I make Kripke's Wittgenstein a central focus once again, but specifically with regard to his positive response to his own sceptical challenge. Kripke refers to this response as a sceptical solution and following the first chapter I interpret this as the attempt to elucidate the legitimacy of semantic discourse (including assertions such as 'Jones means addition by "+"') without appealing to the existence of meaning-constituting facts of any kind. I argue that Kripke's claim that Wittgenstein replaces a truth-conditional conception of meaning with an assertability-conditional conception should be interpreted in

these terms. I address certain further issues that arise concerning Kripke's interpretation, specifically whether the sceptical solution is factualist in any sense and whether it can answer the charges of incoherence levelled against it by Paul Boghossian and Crispin Wright. In the second half of the chapter, I connect the positive picture of meaning in the sceptical solution with Wittgenstein's later remarks on the role of the notions of practices, customs, and communal agreement in elucidating the notions of meaning and rule-following. I also briefly consider Kripke's claim that the impossibility of private language follows as a corollary of Wittgenstein's positive non-constitutive conception, but this is not my central focus and so many of the problems connected with this are only partially addressed. I conclude by connecting this Kripkean non-constitutive reading with Wittgenstein's numerous assertions concerning his quietism or opposition to proposing philosophical theses or explanations. I argue that Kripke's reading of Wittgenstein's orientation in the sceptical solution captures this quietist stance in a way that the various types of constitutive readings (including Baker and Hacker's and Dummett's) do not.

Although my primary concern in the thesis is with the correct interpretation of Wittgenstein's later writings and Kripke's *WRPL*, there are a number of deep issues in the philosophy of language and philosophy of mathematics that are raised in the process. They include: what it is to mean something by a term or follow a rule; what it is for a proposition or a proof to be necessary; the different kinds of scepticism about meaning; and the coherence of scepticism about meaning. Kripke's Wittgenstein is often considered as a figure of interest in his own right – independent of the question of whether it is an accurate representation – and this is because *WRPL* engages with these issues in an original way. A huge literature exists simply on this figure and particularly concerning the sceptical argument presented in *WRPL* and how best to respond to it. Throughout the thesis, my main concern is

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with Wittgenstein's and Kripke's Wittgenstein's responses to these issues. But in some cases, I also try to consider the question of whether these responses are plausible. Furthermore, owing to the relevance of Kripke's *WRPL* to contemporary philosophy of language, if my claim that it contains an essentially accurate reading of Wittgenstein is correct, then a consequence will be that Wittgenstein will be shown to be relevant to these contemporary debates. It might be responded that Wittgenstein can already be viewed as relevant, without this detour through *WRPL*. This may be so, but my reading can hopefully add to this, or perhaps even identify ways in which Wittgenstein can be shown to be very close to contemporary issues that have hitherto seemed remote from his concerns.

The rather complex context in which the discussion in this thesis is situated can be characterised in terms of the following strands that pertain to either the interpretation of Wittgenstein or of Kripke's *WRPL*:

(1) The constitutive readings of Wittgenstein

These are very diverse and in some cases far removed from one another. They include: Stroud (1965), Baker and Hacker (1985), Pears (1988), and Dummett (1959, 1993). In many of these cases it is not obvious that they are constitutive readings, but I will argue that they attribute a constitutive account of some kind to Wittgenstein.

(2) The non-constitutive readings of Wittgenstein

Although the only clear-cut example is Kripke's reading (as I interpret it), it is suggested in other readings, including those of David Stern (1995) and Crispin Wright (not in his own judgment-dependent conception, but in his 2007 interpretation).

(3) The non-factualist readings of Kripke's Wittgenstein

The most common type of reading since the publication of *WRPL* and including those of: Colin McGinn (1984), Wright (1984), McDowell (1984), and Boghossian (1989).

(4) The factualist readings of Kripke's Wittgenstein

Beginning with Wilson's (1994), but also including Alex Byrne (1996), David Davies (1998), and Kusch (2006).

(5) The factualist *responses* to Kripke's Wittgenstein

Readings that respond by rejecting the terms of the sceptical challenge and posit facts about meaning that correspond to a conception of meaning different to the sceptic's. McDowell's modest platonist and Wright's judgment-dependent conceptions are responses of this kind.

My non-constitutive reading of both Wittgenstein and Kripke's Wittgenstein engages with all of these strands. In particular, it brings together the non-constitutive readings of Wittgenstein with certain features of the factualist readings of Kripke's Wittgenstein, and argues against the opposing types of readings. Hence, as indicated above, Wright's (2007) seems to involve proposing a non-constitutive reading of Wittgenstein:

It is no good searching Wittgenstein's texts for a more concrete positive suggestion about the constitutive question. Indeed his entire later conception of philosophical method seems to be conditioned by a mistrust of such questions. (2007, 488)[2]

Although the interpretation of Wittgenstein as being opposed to philosophical theorising is common, the connection that Wright makes between this and the rejection of 'the constitutive question' is not. This, I will argue, is shown by the fact that the majority of readings of the later Wittgenstein are constitutive in one way or another, and so implicitly or explicitly interpret him as proposing an answer to the constitutive question. However, my task here is

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[2] See also: 'He is saying, in effect, that there is no well-conceived issue about the "constitution" of facts about what rules require, instance by instance, or about what enables us to keep track of such facts' (2007, 489).

not merely to defend a non-constitutive reading of Wittgenstein, but to interpret Kripke's Wittgenstein along similar lines. I do this by drawing heavily on the factualist readings (but also modifying them in accordance with this non-constitutive standpoint).

The factualist readers have recognised from the outset that their way of reading *WRPL* has the implication of making Kripke's Wittgenstein 'look recognisably like Wittgenstein himself' (Byrne 1996, 339). For example, Wilson states that the negative reaction to *WRPL* has been due in large part to a misunderstanding of it:

> The critics, and they are many, who have judged that Kripke's account of Wittgenstein is not 'a good fit' with the texts he scrutinizes have themselves read Kripke in a badly distorted fashion. Several of the elements of Kripke's interpretation that may seem not to mesh with Wittgenstein's remarks fall easily into place when the worst distortions have been eliminated. (1998, 121)

It is perhaps going too far to say that the features of Kripke's interpretation 'fall easily into place' when they are properly understood. But there certainly is an opening here to reconsider the accuracy of Kripke's reading from a new and more charitable perspective. So far in the literature, the most sustained treatment of this issue has been in Kusch's (2006), which builds on Wilson's factualist reading. However, Kusch is more concerned with the position of Kripke's Wittgenstein in its own right, and it is only in the final chapter of his book that he engages in detail with the interpretive question. I attempt to extend this further in the thesis by making the interpretive question my primary concern.

One final point to mention is that although the factualist reading of *WRPL* does provide a fresh perspective from which to consider Kripke's reading, I am critical of certain important features of it. Hence, I believe that the factualist reading needs to be modified if its depiction of Kripke's Wittgenstein is to be considered an accurate representation of the later

Wittgenstein. My main objection to this reading is that it holds that Kripke's Wittgenstein provides an alternative account of meaning-constituting facts. But, besides misinterpreting *WRPL*, this distances Kripke's Wittgenstein from Wittgenstein. Rather, to defend the accuracy of Kripke's reading we must appreciate how they are both opposed to accounts of what constitutes meaning or rule-following, or of what they consist in:

> It is important to realize that we are *not* looking for necessary and sufficient conditions (truth conditions) for following a rule, or an analysis of what rule-following 'consists in'. (*WRPL*, 87)

> The mistake is to say that there is anything that meaning something consists in. (*Z*, §16)

Chapter One: *Kripke's Wittgenstein and Scepticism about Meaning*

1.0: Introduction

In this chapter I will defend the following claims concerning the interpretation of Kripke's *WRPL*: firstly, that Wilson and Kusch are correct that Kripke's Wittgenstein employs the sceptical argument in the context of a reductio that concludes with the negation of a particular realist assumption about meaning-constitution; secondly, that this sceptical argument can, however, be generalised in such a way as to be used to undermine a whole class of different assumptions about meaning-constitution; thirdly, that Kripke's Wittgenstein is distinct from the radical sceptic because he does not accept the radical sceptical conclusion that 'there can be no such thing as meaning anything by any term'; and fourthly, that Kripke's Wittgenstein should nevertheless be viewed as a sceptic in the separate sense that he denies the existence of meaning-constituting facts of all kinds. This last claim is only given a partial defence in this chapter, but it prepares the way for my arguments in the subsequent chapters that Wittgenstein and Kripke's Wittgenstein are connected by the fact that they are both sceptics in this sense.

1.1: Kripke's Wittgenstein's sceptical challenge

Kripke begins his analysis of Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following and meaning by stating that it can be viewed as presenting 'a new form of philosophical scepticism' (*WRPL*, 7). He interprets Wittgenstein as presenting a sceptical challenge to the view that our thought and behaviour are rule-governed and, moreover, to the view that we mean anything by the words we use. In Chapter 2 of his book, he discusses the details of this sceptical argument, the conclusion of which is the radical sceptical claim that 'There is no such thing as meaning anything by any word' (*WRPL*, 55). He distinguishes between a 'straight solution' and a

'sceptical solution' to this sceptical challenge. A straight solution is one that shows 'that on closer examination the scepticism proves to be unwarranted' (*WRPL*, 66). The most direct way of doing this would be to identify a class of meaning-constituting facts, but it is also possible to show that the scepticism is unwarranted by rejecting one or more of the terms of the challenge and identifying a class of meaning-constituting facts that differ from those that would satisfy the sceptic.[3] By contrast, a sceptical solution accepts that the sceptical challenge cannot be answered and therefore seeks to salvage the notion of meaning while accepting (a version of) the sceptical conclusion. Kripke argues on Wittgenstein's behalf that none of the straight solutions are adequate, and in Chapter 3 of *WRPL* he outlines the structure of a sceptical solution and attributes it to Wittgenstein. We are told that the main features of the sceptical solution are that it rejects the notion of facts about meaning corresponding to meaning ascriptions, and replaces the truth-conditional conception of meaning with an assertability-conditional conception. There are many important points of detail concerning each of these types of response, which I will discuss throughout this and the fourth chapter. To begin, I will consider some of the details of Kripke's characterisation of the sceptical argument.

Kripke formulates the sceptical challenge in terms of the example of the meaning of the symbol, '+', but he states that it applies to 'all meaningful uses of language' (*WRPL*, 7). The signs 'plus' and '+' are used to denote the mathematical function, *addition*, which is defined for all pairs of positive integers. Kripke writes:

> One point is crucial to my 'grasp' of this rule. Although I myself have computed only finitely many sums
> in the past, the rule determines my answer for indefinitely many new sums that I have never previously
> considered. This is the whole point of the notion that in learning to add I grasp a rule: my past intentions

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[3] This is the strategy adopted, e.g., by McDowell and Wright. See section 1.7.

Given the finitude of my past uses of the symbol for addition, there are an infinite number of possible uses that I have not yet in fact made. The discussion then turns to the consideration of one such new use of the symbol. Kripke, for convenience, takes the example of the use of the symbol in the computation '68 + 57'. Even if we have done this sum before, there are an infinite number of sums that we have not, and this example just stands in for one of them (*WRPL*, 8). Carrying out this computation, I obtain the answer '125', and I am confident that it is the correct answer.

It is at this point that Kripke introduces 'a bizarre sceptic' (*WRPL*, 8) who questions whether '"plus", as I intended to use that word in the past, denoted a function which, when applied to the numbers I called "68" and "57", yields the value "125"'. Kripke goes on: 'Perhaps, [the sceptic] suggests, as I used the term 'plus' in the past, the answer I intended for "68 + 57" should have been "5"!' (Ibid.). The sceptic continues by stating that if, in my past use of '+', I intended '68 + 57' to denote 125, then this cannot be because I gave myself explicit instructions to that effect. By hypothesis, I never previously encountered this particular computation, and so I never explicitly told myself that '125' was the correct answer to it. Because in the past I could have given myself only a finite number of examples instantiating this function, there is room for scepticism regarding any new use of the sign I believe to denote this function. Kripke's sceptic states:

So perhaps in the past I used 'plus' and '+' to denote a function which I call 'quus' and symbolise by '(+)'. It is defined by:

$$x \,(+)\, y = x + y, \text{ if } x, y < 57$$
$$= 5 \qquad \text{otherwise.}$$

Who is to say that this is not the function I previously meant by '+'? (*WRPL*, 8-9)

The sceptic thus states that it is possible that I always meant quus by my use of 'plus' and '+', and challenges me to show that this is in fact incorrect, that I in fact meant addition by 'plus' and '+'.

It should be noted that Kripke's original formulation of the sceptical challenge is 'based on questioning a certain nexus from past to future', viz. 'the nexus between past "intention" or "meanings" and present practice: for example, between my past "intentions" with regard to "plus" and my present computation "68 + 57 = 125"' (*WRPL*, 62). The force of the challenge is conveyed by the observation that there are an infinite number of binary functions besides addition (e.g. quaddition) that are compatible with my entire past use of the sign '+'. How can I be certain that in the past I grasped the addition function, rather than one of these other functions, when I used '+'? This argument is formulated in such a way that the meaningfulness of my present use of words is not placed in doubt; i.e. my present use is assumed to be legitimate in order to formulate the sceptical argument regarding my past use of a particular term (see *WRPL*, 12). But it is obvious that there is nothing peculiar about my past use, or about the sign '+', and so the argument can eventually be generalised to all terms, and to every person's use of any term at any time.

A few points of clarification should be made. Kripke emphasises that in the sceptical challenge, 'Neither the accuracy of my computation nor of my memory is under dispute' (*WRPL*, 11); and neither is the arithmetical truth that '68 + 57 = 125' (see *WRPL*, 13). Hence, 'it ought to be agreed that *if* I meant plus, then unless I wish to change my usage, I am justified in answering (indeed compelled to answer) "125", not "5"' (*WRPL*, 11). What *is* challenged is that I meant plus by '+' in the first place. This is significant because it reveals

an important aspect of how the sceptic conceives of what it is to mean something by a term. The sceptic assumes that if I did mean plus by '+', then this entails that the correct application of '+' is determined in a potential infinity of particular cases and that I am compelled to apply it in just these ways. This assumption about meaning is also apparent in what Kripke calls the 'two conditions' that the sceptic puts on an adequate response to his challenge (*WRPL*, 11). Firstly, my response must 'give an account of what fact it is (about my mental state) that constitutes my meaning plus, not plus' (Ibid.). Secondly, the meaning-constituting fact I identify 'must, in some sense, show how I am justified in giving the answer "125" to "68 + 57"' (Ibid.). Throughout this chapter, a major problem that I will address is that of how to accurately characterise this assumption about meaning-constitution that the sceptic makes in mounting his challenge, as well as the role it plays in the challenge (specifically in determining what counts as a straight solution) and whether it can take different forms. For now, I merely wish to highlight that some such assumption is in play in the sceptical challenge.

Kripke devotes a large part of Chapter 2 of *WRPL* to considering and rejecting various candidates of meaning-constituting facts. Such a fact could, e.g., be about my past 'dispositions' to use the sign in a particular way (see *WRPL*, 22-37). The response, then, would state that even though I did not explicitly think of this specific use of '+' when I grasped it, I was disposed to answer in accordance with the addition function in the sense that if I had been asked at the time about the computation, '68 + 57', I would have answered '125'. I will not, though, go into the details of this or other candidates here because I only want to elucidate the form of the sceptical challenge as presented by Kripke. These straight responses can be either reductive in the sense of identifying some non-intentional fact about me (e.g. facts about my dispositions) as underlying my meaning, or non-reductive in the sense of positing some primitive act of meaning. The sceptic argues that no such fact

(intentional or non-intentional) can be found that could determine or 'constitute' my meaning addition by '+' rather than some other function; and he states that we must conclude that there is no fact as to what I meant by '+' in the past. Generalising to all terms, language users, and times, the sceptic concludes that no-one ever means anything by any term (see *WRPL*, 21).

This is a very broad outline of the sceptical challenge to meaning that Kripke reconstructs from Wittgenstein's later writings. I will devote the rest of this chapter to considering some of the most important features of it. There are a number of fundamental questions that arise in the context of this challenge. For example, Kripke tends to give conflicting answers to the questions concerning what the sceptical conclusion is, whether Wittgenstein accepts it, whether Wittgenstein thereby rejects the existence of facts about meaning, and whether Wittgenstein and the sceptic about meaning are the same character in his dialectic. In section 1.6, I will address some of these issues by directly considering *WRPL*, but before that I will consider some of the most illuminating responses to (and elaborations of) Kripke's reading that have been proposed in the literature. These commentators throw some much needed light on these issues, and in section 1.6 I will evaluate how well grounded they are in Kripke's text. The result will be to provide a detailed picture of Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein, which will prepare the way for the assessment of its accuracy in the rest of the thesis.

1.2: Wilson on the sceptical argument and the constitution of meaning

My discussion of Kripke's Wittgenstein's (henceforth KW) sceptical challenge to meaning in the previous section identified a number of significant ambiguities and points in need of clarification or elaboration. These features of Kripke's presentation have been recognised by many readers and have led to the attempt to reconstruct KW's sceptical argument in a more

rigorous and transparent manner. It is debatable whether the resulting reconstructions should be seen as interpretations or developments of Kripke's study. For the most part, the philosophers that I am most interested in who take it upon themselves to reconstruct the argument (e.g., Wilson 1994, Soames 1998, and Kusch 2006) view the result as merely a clearer presentation of the argument that is already present in Kripke's study. I will address this particular point in section 1.6. In this section my concern is with one particularly influential and, in my view, very successful reconstruction of KW's sceptical argument, viz. that of Wilson (1994, 1998, 2006, and forthcoming). My interest in Wilson's reading of Kripke's *WRPL* also stems from the fact that he provides a very illuminating analysis of the relation between the characters of KW and the sceptic – an analysis which, we must admit, is a great deal clearer than Kripke's own. As noted in the previous section, one of the main ambiguities in Kripke's discussion is whether KW and the sceptic are the same character. Wilson takes the view that they are distinct; and much of the success of his reconstruction consists in characterising their respective commitments and showing how they are distinct. Furthermore, this greater clarity on KW's stance with respect to scepticism about meaning provides the basis from which to evaluate the relation between KW and Wittgenstein himself.

The best place to begin the discussion of Wilson's reading of *WRPL* is with his observation that 'the skeptic is what Kripke calls "a classical realist" about meaning' (1998, 105). Wilson is referring to the fact that KW's sceptic enforces some fairly substantial 'conditions' on what any candidate of meaning-constituting fact must satisfy. 'Classical realism' is the expression that Kripke occasionally uses to refer to the conception of meaning that the sceptic presupposes and hence which is manifested in these conditions. At various points throughout *WRPL*, Kripke speaks of 'the classical realist picture' of meaning as a picture in which 'the general form of explanation of meaning is a statement of the truth conditions' (*WRPL*, 73). Although Kripke tends to characterise this picture in relation to

sentences, it also takes in the meaning of other types of expressions, such as predicates and functional expressions. For example, the classical realist characterises the meaning of sentences in terms of truth-conditions, the meaning of predicates in terms of properties, and the meaning of functional expressions in terms of functions. Wilson's reading connects these features of Kripke's discussion, i.e. he interprets the conditions or constraints that KW's sceptic places on an adequate response to his challenge in terms of this general classical realist picture of meaning. His reconstruction of KW's sceptical argument is thus based on making this classical realist assumption explicit and identifying each step leading from it to the sceptical conclusion. I will now consider this reconstruction and suggest certain modifications where necessary.

Wilson's writings, from his (1994) to his (forthcoming), offer slightly different formulations of the crucial classical realist assumption. The following formulation is taken from his (1998, 106)[4]:

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[4] For the sake of a more succinct statement of the sceptical argument, I have made two modifications to Wilson's presentation of its main premises, including this classical realist one. Firstly, while Wilson tends to focus on the particular case of predicates, I have chosen to state them in the more general form pertaining to any term. Secondly, I shorten Wilson's presentation by one step by combining two premises in his statement of the argument into one premise in mine. Wilson distinguishes the 'classical realist' premise, which states that 'If S means something by a term "Φ", then there is a non-linguistic item that has been established by S as the meaning-constituting standard of correctness for her application of "T"' from what he calls the 'Grounding' premise, which states that 'If there is a non-linguistic item that has been established by S as the meaning-constituting standard of correctness for her application of "Φ", then there must be facts about S that fix the non-linguistic item as the standard S has adopted' (see 1998, 106-07). I combine these into the single premise: 'If S means something by a term "Φ", then there are facts about S that establish a non-linguistic item – out of an indefinite range of alternatives – as the meaning-constituting standard of correctness for her application of "Φ"'. This modification is superficial and merely allows for the more succinct presentation I give in this section. The effect is to cut out one step, i.e. if we were to follow Wilson's original presentation, then when the 'Basic Sceptical Conclusion' is drawn (see below), we could infer by modus tollens the negation of the antecedent of the Grounding premise; and on this basis infer again by modus tollens the negation of the antecedent of the classical realist premise, which when generalised gives us the 'Radical Sceptical Conclusion'. But on my presentation, the Basic Sceptical Conclusion allows us to infer in a single step by modus tollens the negation of the antecedent of the classical realist premise, and to generalise to the Radical Sceptical Conclusion.

Classical Realism (CR): If a speaker means something by a term 'Φ', then there are facts about the speaker that establish a non-linguistic item – out of an indefinite range of alternatives – as the meaning-constituting standard of correctness for his application of 'Φ'.

This statement is designed to be general enough to capture the classical realist picture of the meaning of any type of expression. For example, in the case of a functional expression, the 'non-linguistic item' that the speaker establishes as governing his application of the expression would be a function. On the basis of this fundamental assumption, Wilson characterises the main steps leading to the sceptical conclusion. Wilson, though, distinguishes between two different sceptical conclusions, one more radical than the other (see his 1994, 240-241; and 1998, 107-108):

Basic Sceptical Conclusion (BSC): There are no facts about the speaker that establish a non-linguistic item – out of an indefinite range of alternatives – as the meaning-constituting standard of correctness for his application of 'Φ'.

Radical Sceptical Conclusion (RSC): The speaker does not mean anything by 'Φ'.

If we look closely at each of these propositions, their relation becomes apparent. CR is a conditional proposition, which states in the consequent the necessary condition for the constitution of the meaning of a term. The Basic Sceptical Conclusion, BSC, is the negation of the consequent of CR; it denies that the necessary condition for the constitution of meaning is satisfied. This is the conclusion that KW's sceptic reaches after considering and rejecting all of the main candidates of meaning-constituting facts (e.g. dispositions to use the term in certain ways). BSC is distinguished from the Radical Sceptical Conclusion, RSC, which is the negation of the antecedent of CR. This (or rather, this negation generalised to all

speakers and terms) is the sceptic's ultimate conclusion and follows from CR and BSC together.[5]

In order to fully represent the sceptical argument in accordance with Wilson's analysis, with each step transparent, let:

P = A speaker means something by a term 'Φ'.

Q = There are facts about the speaker that establish a non-linguistic item – out of an indefinite range of alternatives – as the meaning-constituting standard of correctness for his application of 'Φ'.

Using these, we can represent the three central propositions as follows:

CR = If P, then Q

BSC = not Q

RSC = not P

The sceptical argument can then be succinctly stated:

(1)	If P, then Q	(i.e. CR)	Assumption
(2)	not Q	(i.e. BSC)	Following the case-by-case analysis of the candidates for such facts

Therefore:

| (3) | not P | (i.e. RSC) | Modus tollens |

For Wilson, this would be sufficient as a statement of the steps in *the sceptic's* reasoning and of the conclusion he reaches.

However, as already noted, Wilson makes an important distinction between the

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[5] I reserve 'RSC' for this general statement, rather than that which pertains to an individual speaker.

characters of KW and the sceptic in Kripke's dialectic. Kripke is adamant that KW does *not* accept the classical realist conception of meaning (see *WRPL*, 73), and Wilson uses this to show that KW is distinct from the sceptic (who does accept that conception). However, Wilson is more explicit than Kripke on the reason *why* KW rejects classical realism. As Wilson characterises him, KW is unlike the sceptic in the sense that he is unwilling to accept RSC (1994, 241-242; and 1998, 108). Rather, he depicts KW as departing from the sceptic at this point by rejecting RSC and concluding, by *reductio ad absurdum*, with the negation of the original classical realist assumption. The broader KW argument, then, can be stated as:

(1)	If P, then Q	(i.e. CR)	Assumption
(2)	not Q	(i.e. BSC)	Following the case-by-case analysis of the candidates for such facts

Therefore:

(3)	not P	(i.e. RSC)	Modus tollens
(4)	P	(i.e. not RSC)	New premise

Therefore:

(5)	not (if P, then Q)	(i.e. not CR)	Reductio

Wilson's characterisation of the distinction between KW and the sceptic thus comes down to the different conclusions that they each accept in light of the sceptical challenge. Whereas the sceptic's position is characterised by the radical sceptical conclusion that 'No one ever means anything by a term'[6], KW's position is characterised merely by the rejection of a particular assumption about meaning, viz. the classical realist assumption.

Although there are strong objections to Wilson's way of reading Kripke – some of

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[6] See Wilson (1994, 241) and (1998, 108).

which I will address in this chapter – I am sympathetic to it. I am in broad agreement with the above formulation of the sceptical argument, but I am opposed to certain implications that Wilson draws concerning KW's relation to the radical sceptic, and the nature of KW's sceptical solution. My objections pertain to a strand that runs through all of Wilson's writings on *WRPL*, but which is most explicit in his (forthcoming). This strand has to do with the fact that Wilson interprets KW as merely opposed to the classical realist conception of meaning-constitution, and accordingly he holds that KW is free to adopt an alternative notion of meaning-constitution and incorporate it into his solution to the sceptical paradox (see his forthcoming, section IV). My disagreement with Wilson comes down to our different interpretations of KW's ultimate target. I propose to go beyond Wilson and interpret KW as directed against the very notion of meaning-constitution (or the whole approach to accounting for meaning in terms of meaning-constituting facts of some kind). Hence, while I agree that KW and the radical sceptic are distinct, I will also characterise them differently to Wilson in accordance with my interpretation of KW. I will develop this point throughout the rest of this chapter. In the next two sections, I will argue that the scope of the sceptical argument employed by KW is wider than merely undermining the classical realist assumption about meaning-constitution.

1.3: Wilson and Miller on semantic factualism and the scope of the sceptical argument

Wilson's reading of Kripke's *WRPL* represents, along with a group of others (e.g. Byrne 1996 and Kusch 2006), what is often called a 'factualist' interpretation of KW. It is factualist because although the sceptic denies the existence of facts about meaning, KW is distinct from the sceptic in that he merely opposes a particular conception of such facts. Hence, it is a consequence of this reading that KW's positive conception of meaning is not necessarily semantic non-factualist; rather, it is consistent with semantic factualism, only not with the

classical realist kind. This way of reading KW has the advantage of making sense of Kripke's claim on KW's behalf that:

> We do not even wish to deny the propriety of an ordinary use of the phrase 'the fact that Jones meant addition by such-and-such a symbol', and indeed such expressions do have perfectly ordinary uses. We merely wish to deny the existence of the 'superlative fact' that philosophers misleadingly attach to such ordinary forms of words, not the propriety of the forms of words themselves. (*WRPL*, 69).

Alexander Miller (2010) develops a series of powerful criticisms of this Wilsonian way of reading KW as a semantic factualist. He argues that the non-classical realist semantic factualism that Wilson holds to be part of KW's sceptical solution can be shown to be *as susceptible* to the sceptical challenge as the classical realist factualism it replaces (2010, 173-176). Miller's argument begins by considering Wilson's claim that KW

> tries to explain the content of meaning ascriptions in terms of their role and utility in the relevant language games, and the normative conditionals about meaning [e.g. 'If Jones meaning addition by "+", his answer to "68 + 57 = ?" should be "125"], which the Classical Realist misconstrues as describing a super-rigid semantical determination, are explained in terms of the requirements that our use of standard criteria for meaning ascriptions engender and enforce. (Wilson 1994, 258)

Miller focuses on the notion of 'requirements' mentioned in this passage, which are 'engendered and enforced' by our 'use of standard criteria for meaning ascriptions'. He states that these are the requirements that, for Wilson, 'on the non-Classical Realist view constitute facts about meaning' (2010, 174). Miller then proceeds to construct an analogue of the original sceptical argument, with alternative formulations of its main propositions. These alternative formulations replace the talk of 'standards of correctness' in CR and BSC with

talk of the 'requirements' from Wilson's passage.

Miller presents this modified sceptical argument against Wilson's factualism as follows (see 2010, 175-176)[7]:

(1) NCR: If a speaker S means something by 'Φ', then there are facts about the speaker that constitute requirements – enforced and engendered by the use of standard criteria for ascriptions of meaning in S's speech community – that govern the correct application of 'Φ' for S.

(2) BSC*: There are no facts about the speaker S that constitute any requirements – enforced and engendered by the use of standard criteria for ascriptions of meaning in S's speech community – that govern the correct application of 'Φ' for S.

Therefore:

(3) RSC: The speaker S does not mean anything by 'Φ'.

The original assumption about meaning in this argument – NCR – is distinct from the classical realist assumption. Nevertheless, Miller argues that the requirements that it states are necessary for meaning something by a term can be challenged by the sceptic along the same lines as he challenges the view that the classical realist criteria can be satisfied. The challenge is to identify a fact about the speaker S (or his speech community) that 'constitutes the requirement' R_1, rather than some other requirement R_2, as the requirement that governs S's use of 'Φ' (see 2010, 175). Miller argues that KW must accept the conclusion – BSC* – that such a challenge cannot be met; or rather, that there is no greater possibility of answering the sceptic here than in the original classical realist case. The same radical sceptical conclusion –

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[7] I have modified Miller's presentation slightly so that it corresponds to the Wilsonian reconstruction of the sceptical argument as presented in the previous section. See footnote 4 in that section.

RSC – follows.[8]

Miller considers the possible objection that he 'misdescribes the position of Wilson's KW' because his (Miller's) formulations of the propositions in the modified sceptical argument are in terms of 'requirements governing the correct application' of the term in question, which 'is still very much in the spirit of Classical Realism' (2010, 176). As he writes:

> The objection is that on our construal KW is still thinking in terms of there being requirements governing the correct application of expressions for speakers, albeit requirements that are 'enforced and engendered by our use of standard criteria for ascriptions of meaning' (as opposed to requirements determined by the association of 'P' with some extra-linguistic item (such as a property)). (2010, 176-177)

Miller gives two responses to this. The first argues that this construal of the non-CR factualism is suggested by a number of passages from Wilson. But his second response is more interesting. He asks:

> Can Wilson simply remove the talk of requirements enforced and engendered by the use of standard criteria for ascriptions of meaning and replace it with talk of the use of the standard criteria themselves? (2010, 178)

That is, instead of speaking of 'requirements governing the correct application of a term', can we just talk about the 'standard criteria for ascribing meaning'? Miller answers that Wilson could do this, but that there would be no reason to call the resulting position 'a version of factualism about meaning' (Ibid.). Miller concludes that Wilson faces a dilemma: either hold on to the stronger sense of 'requirements' at the heart of his factualism, but then leave

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[8] Miller's argument is a variation of a similar argument proposed by Wright (2001, 105).

himself vulnerable to the sceptic; or replace these requirements with the weaker notion of social criteria for ascribing meaning, in which case the doctrine of factualism seems to be abandoned (Ibid.).

From the point of view of the present chapter, the most significant aspect of Miller's argument against Wilson's factualism is that it provides an excellent basis from which to consider the question of the proper *scope* of the sceptical argument. We saw in the previous section that Wilson holds that its scope is limited to undermining the classical realist conception of facts about meaning. Miller's criticism is essentially based on the conviction that the scope of the sceptical argument is wider than this, i.e. that it undermines not just classical realism but also all other conceptions of meaning that are of a similar 'strength' to classical realism. The suggestion is that there is a common core to both classical realism and Wilson's non-classical realist factualism, and that it is *this* that makes both of them vulnerable to the sceptical argument. However, although this suggestion is significant, Miller does not say a great deal about what this common core could be. He does make a brief remark on this point which we should consider. He states that the 'source of the problem for Wilson's interpretation' is that it takes KW to be attempting to 'explain the content of meaning ascriptions in terms of their role and utility in the relevant language games' (Wilson 2002, 258; see Miller 2010, 180). Miller argues that this feature of Wilson's interpretation is in direct conflict with an important passage from Kripke's *WRPL*, where Kripke discusses KW's positive conception of meaning:

It is important to realise that we are *not* looking for necessary and sufficient conditions (truth conditions), or an analysis of what such rule-following 'consists in'. Indeed such conditions would constitute a 'straight' solution to the sceptical problem, and have been rejected. (*WRPL*, 87)

Miller's main objection here is that

> Wilson's interpretation ultimately fails because his KW, even though he rejects Classical Realist truth-
> conditions, is still attempting to give a truth-conditional account of ascriptions of meaning: precisely the
> sort of account abjured by KW in the passage just quoted [at *WRPL*, 87]. (2010, 180)

In short, Miller's suggestion is that Wilson's factualism fails for the same reasons as classical realism, i.e. it attempts to state the necessary and sufficient conditions for meaning anything by a term. This is what the sceptical argument has shown to be impossible and this is the common feature shared by Wilson's factualism and classical realism that makes them vulnerable to the sceptic.

Miller's article in which he states this objection to Wilson was published in 2010; and while its criticisms of Wilson's interpretation seem well-placed when it comes to all of Wilson's writings up to this point, Wilson's (forthcoming) seems to have a decisive response to it. Apparently independent of Miller's article, Wilson shows that he is aware of this potential objection to this factualist reading of KW by acknowledging that his non-classical realist factualism cannot provide the necessary and sufficient conditions of meaning (and he even quotes the same passage in support from *WRPL*, 87). But this raises a question about how we are to view Wilson's factualism if it does not have these aspirations. As Miller asks in a different context regarding the possibility of 'weakening' the factualism so that it is no longer vulnerable to the sceptical challenge (2010, 178): what reason is there to call the resulting picture a *factualism* about meaning? In the remainder of this section, I will consider some of the details of Wilson's most recent elaboration of his reading, consider its status as a factualist reading, and conclude with a final assessment of what all of this tells us about the

scope of KW's sceptical argument.[9]

Wilson presents his non-classical realist factualism as the proper characterisation of the conception of meaning in KW's sceptical solution. In his (forthcoming) he argues that this factualism should be viewed as a modest type of 'dispositional' account of meaning:

> There is a perfectly natural sense in which, given the outlook of the Skeptical Solution, S's meaning 'addition' by "+" at a time t is constituted by S's dispositions to use "+". But there is also another equally natural sense – a stronger sense – in which what S means by "+" at t cannot be determined or constituted by those dispositions. It is only the stronger version of the dispositionalist account that is attacked at the relevant stage of the Skeptical Argument. (forthcoming, 25-26)[10]

As I discussed in section 1.1, Kripke devotes a large part of his discussion of the sceptical challenge to the refutation of the dispositionalist claim that facts about my dispositions to use words in particular ways constitute my meaning something by those words. Wilson holds that the sceptic's challenge is successful only against a 'strong' version of that account. The main way that Wilson characterises the distinction between the 'weak' and 'strong' senses of dispositionalism is in terms of the issue of whether having the dispositions to use terms are necessary and sufficient conditions for meaning something by those terms; the stronger version makes this claim about dispositions, while Wilson's favoured modest version does not (forthcoming, 27-28). I will leave the discussion of the details of his modest dispositionalism until the next section. But without considering these details, a similar conviction can be found in Wilson's (forthcoming) to that which is in Miller's (2010). They

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[9] There is, though, a feature that I will postpone the treatment of until the final chapter. Miller makes a distinction between two types of semantic factualism that are suggested by Wilson and other factualist readers (especially Davies): the first is based on a deflationary account of facts and truth-aptitude, while the second is based on the notions of the role and utility of meaning ascriptions in our lives (see 2010, 172-173). I address the first type in sections 4.2 and 4.3.

[10] All page numbers for Wilson's (forthcoming) are to the online version at: http://www-bcf.usc.edu/~gmwilson/Wilson-berger.doc

both tend to view the sceptical argument as a powerful tool against *any* account of meaning that attempts to provide the necessary and sufficient conditions for meaning.[11] Even for Wilson, the problem with classical realism is that this is what it attempts to do; and so Wilson would have to agree with Miller that his non-classical realist factualist interpretation of KW fails if it makes a similar attempt. Hence, they both agree that when it comes to characterising KW's positive picture of meaning, it must be different from classical realism in this regard. This, then, is how they both view the proper scope of the sceptical argument. Despite this shared view, though, they each develop competing interpretations of KW's positive picture of meaning. Whereas Wilson develops a 'modest dispositionalist' *factualist* interpretation, Miller develops a type of *non-factualist* interpretation (see Miller 2010, 180-188). I will address this separate disagreement in section 4.2 of the final chapter, but I will also touch on it in the next section.

1.4: Accounts of meaning-constitution: Their form, strength, and role in the sceptical challenge

The concept of meaning-constitution is of central importance in the discussion of Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein. This is reflected both in Kripke's text and in the responses to Kripke in the literature over the last thirty years. In the previous two sections I made a start on arguing for my view that its place in Kripke's study is that the sceptical argument that KW develops is opposed to a large class of accounts of meaning-constitution. In this section I will continue my defence of this view by bringing the concept of meaning-constitution into greater focus. I will do so in two ways. Firstly, I will take up the issue from the previous section concerning the common feature shared by different accounts of meaning-constitution,

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[11] I will argue later in this thesis (especially Chapters 3 and 4) that the sceptical challenge can only be used against a large class of accounts that attempt to state the necessary and sufficient conditions for meaning. There are exceptional cases of usually very extreme or radical accounts that cannot be undermined in this way. This is a further aspect to the scope issue that I have not considered in this section.

and attempt to articulate the general form that such accounts must take. Secondly, I will attempt to make the role of this concept in the sceptical challenge more explicit and thus elucidate the sense in which KW uses this challenge to oppose the concept.

Part of the *genuine* disagreement between Wilson and Miller can be articulated by considering the distinction between the scope of the sceptical argument, on the one hand, and the nature of meaning-constituting facts, on the other. While they seem to agree on the first issue, they disagree on the second. More precisely, while they agree that the sceptical argument can be used against any account that attempts to state the necessary and sufficient conditions for meaning, they disagree over whether or not this entails that there are no meaning-constituting facts. Wilson is able to assert that there can be such facts because he holds that there is a weak notion of meaning-constitution which does not involve stating the necessary and sufficient conditions for meaning. I will begin by evaluating this aspect of his account which is crucial to his defence of a factualist reading of *WRPL*. Against Wilson (and more in line with Miller), I will argue that the common feature of all accounts of meaning-constitution is that they state the necessary and sufficient conditions for meaning, and hence that Wilson's weak sense of meaning-constitution is not legitimate.

Wilson identifies what he calls 'an ambiguity' in the notion of 'facts, events, states or processes' constituting a speaker's meaning something by a term (forthcoming, 26). To highlight this, he considers a number of examples that suggest a similar ambiguity in the constitution of phenomena other than meaning. For example, he considers what facts constitute 'murder' by focusing on the following statement:

Jones murdered Smith in the library at midnight.

Someone may assert this truly even though Smith did not in fact die until the next day in the

hospital. Assuming that Jones stabbed Smith, Wilson notes that in one sense the stabbing of Smith at midnight can be said to constitute the act of murdering Smith at midnight, even though he did not die until the next day. But, he continues,

in another sense, the fact that Jones stabbed Smith in the library at midnight is not sufficient to constitute the fact that 8) reports. Something more was needed to constitute the stabbing as a case of murder. For instance, it is required that the stabbing brought about Smith's demise in the 'right' way. (forthcoming, 26)

To make this distinction explicit, Wilson writes:

So, we can say that the murder was constituted in time (and location) by the stabbing, but the stabbing was constituted as a case of murder by further facts about the causal upshot of the stabbing. (Ibid.)

His point seems to be that there is a distinction to be made between a fact (or event, etc.) constituting a phenomenon 'in time', on the one hand, and a fact constituting the phenomenon 'as' the phenomenon it is, on the other. The latter sense is the strong sense of constitution in which considerations concerning the necessary and sufficient conditions for the phenomenon are in play. In this strong sense, the stabbing of Smith was not sufficient to constitute his murder; rather, 'further facts about the causal upshot of the stabbing' were also required. The weaker sense of constitution, as Wilson depicts it, is supposed to be appropriate irrespective of these considerations concerning the necessary and sufficient conditions for the phenomenon.

Wilson goes on to explain this weaker, temporal sense with the following statement:

Lucy already knew, at a certain time t, that Fred and Ethel would erect a duplex on this site in six months

time. (forthcoming, 27)

Wilson writes:

> On the one hand, we can ask, "What was it about Lucy that constituted her knowing about the prospective duplex at the earlier time t? (What made it the case, concerning Lucy at that time, that, she already knew then that her friends were going to build a duplex on the site?)"

In response, he implies that there is a weak sense in which her 'belief' at that time constituted her knowing. It constituted it 'in time':

> And the answer to this question--a question, so to speak, about the constitution in time of her prior knowledge--is answered, at least to a first approximation, by pointing out that, already at t, Lucy believed that Fred and Ethel would erect a duplex on that site in six months. (Ibid.)

Again, we could not say that Lucy's belief at this time is sufficient for her knowing that Fred and Ethel would erect a duplex in six months. Nevertheless, Wilson wishes to argue that there is a legitimate sense in which her belief at this time is constitutive of her knowing it. If we were concerned with the stronger sense of constitution, we would have to take into account the fact that Fred and Ethel did erect the duplex at that later time, as well as the fact that Lucy's reasons for her belief were related in the appropriate way to the duplex eventually getting built, etc.

Wilson summarises his reasoning by saying:

> Therefore, if we ask, "What constituted Lucy's knowing, already at t, that Fred and Ethel would erect a duplex there and then?" we can either be asking a more ambitious question: roughly, "What are the

necessary and sufficient conditions for the truth of proposition 8)?" Or, we can be asking the more modest question, "What was the state of Lucy at t that constituted (given the realization of appropriate further conditions) her having prior knowledge of an ensuing duplex?" Thus, these examples illustrate that an action or state or process x can constitute an instance of Θ as something that takes place at or during a certain time (x constitutes in time that instance of Θ) although the facts about x that constitute it as (are sufficient for its being) an instance of Θ are not all realized prior to or at the time that x occurs. (forthcoming, 27-28)

The last sentence sums up his view of the weak concept of constitution quite well. He uses this concept to argue that there is a weak sense in which there are facts about the person that are constitutive of their meaning something by a term. For Wilson, a person's dispositions can be said to constitute an instance of meaning such-and-such by a term, even though the facts about these dispositions 'that constitute it as (are sufficient for its being) an instance of [meaning] are not all realized at the time that [the dispositional states] occur' (forthcoming, 28).

It is significant here that Wilson characterises the weaker sense of constitution by explicit reference to the stronger sense. The relation is such that the weaker sense counts as a genuine sense of constitution provided that the total set of facts that are constitutive of the phenomenon in the *strong* sense are realised at the later time. It thus seems rather that if this weaker sense is a genuine sense of constitution, it is a derivative or subordinate sense of it. That is, the primary sense of constitution would undoubtedly be the strong sense that he identifies; and we would only have an alternative sense of it insofar as the stronger sense is (eventually) realised. This is the case with all of Wilson's examples. The stabbing is not constitutive of murder unless the stronger conditions that result in the victim's death are realised. And Lucy's belief is not constitutive of knowing unless the stronger conditions that result in her knowing are realised.

However, we encounter a problem when we attempt to distinguish the different senses of constitution in the specific case of meaning. We could perhaps allow some version of the strong/weak senses for the cases that Wilson considers of murder and knowing because there may be a legitimate sense in which there are facts that are constitutive of them in the strong sense; and so the weak sense could be characterised in relation to it. But in the case of meaning, there are no facts that could be realised at some later time – no matter how wide the range of facts we are willing to consider – that would constitute meaning in the strong sense. That is just the result of the sceptical argument which Wilson accepts. Hence, if there is no genuine realisation of the strong sense of meaning-constitution, there can be no genuine realisation of the weaker or derivative sense. For as I observed, the weaker sense only counts as a case of constitution if it comes to pass that the stronger sense is realised. Therefore, the sceptical considerations, which undermine strong accounts of meaning-constitution, also undercut the weaker sense because it is dependent on the stronger sense being realised. Wilson's weak notion, then, cannot be cited as a notion of meaning-constitution that survives KW's sceptical challenge.

The other issue that I wish to look at in this section is the role that this concept – or some specific version of it (e.g. the classical realist concept) – plays in the sceptical challenge. To see this, it is necessary to articulate the general form that accounts of meaning-constitution must take. Following the discussion in this and the previous section, I hold that such accounts are characterised by the attempt to state the necessary and sufficient conditions for meaning. They thus take the form:

A speaker means something by 'Φ' if and only if …

A concrete example that we have already encountered would be the classical realist

conception[12]:

> (CR) A speaker means something by 'Φ' if and only if there are facts about the speaker that establish a non-linguistic item – out of an indefinite range of alternatives – as the standard of correctness for his use of 'Φ', *and* which determines what he must do in each instance of applying 'Φ' in such a way that at a time t it is determined in advance what is the correct use of 'Φ' at any future time, *and* etc.

Each of the conditions stated on the right hand side of the biconditional are individually necessary for meaning. The *complete* set of necessary conditions is jointly sufficient for meaning. As will become apparent when I discuss Kusch and others in the later sections of the chapter, accounts of meaning-constitution can differ in the conditions they identify as necessary and sufficient for meaning. But they all take this form.[13] Given this point, it would perhaps be more helpful to state that they all make the following deeper assumption:

> A speaker means something by a term if and only if there are facts that are constitutive of this meaning.

This is the assumption that is shared by all conceptions of meaning-constitution. They merely differ over what kinds of facts are held to be constitutive of meaning.

From the fact that there can be different accounts of meaning-constitution, it follows that there can be different instantiations of the sceptical argument depending on which account it presupposes. That the sceptic must presuppose *some* particular account is plain. When mounting his challenge, the sceptic demands that I identify a class of facts that shows

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[12] In the previous sections, I followed Wilson in merely focusing on one necessary condition for meaning. But a complete statement of the classical realist conception would state the necessary and sufficient conditions for meaning.

[13] The sceptic does not, of course, defend his sceptical conclusion by arguing that we are incapable of stating the necessary and sufficient conditions for meaning. This is a difficult task for any phenomenon and could not be used to defend scepticism about the notion. Rather, the sceptic takes the more direct route of taking one of the conditions that are apparently necessary for meaning, and then showing that it cannot be met.

that I mean such-and-such by a term. As Kripke makes clear (*WRPL*, 11), there are certain conditions that the sceptic presupposes concerning what would count as a successful response to his challenge; and these conditions are shaped by whatever conception of meaning-constitution the sceptic assumes. Hence, any fully explicit statement of the sceptical argument should make the sceptic's assumption about meaning-constitution explicit. This is the major virtue of Wilson's analysis of the argument – that he identifies and states the sceptic's classical realist assumption about meaning-constitution and shows how it figures in his derivation of the radical sceptical conclusion.

There is one final point worth mentioning. Although all assumptions about meaning-constitution would take the above biconditional form, when it comes to the statement of the sceptical argument itself (or any specific instance of it) which employs a particular assumption, it is enough to merely state one or other of the necessary conditions for meaning that are stated in the assumption. That is, for the sake of the sceptical argument, it is easier to operate with a conditional statement that states one of these necessary conditions in the consequent. We have already encountered how this would work in sections 1.2 and 1.3. For example, the sceptical argument would begin with an assumption such as the following:

(CR) If a speaker means something by a term 'Φ', then there are facts about the speaker that establish a non-linguistic item – out of an indefinite range of alternatives – as the standard of correctness for his use of 'Φ'.

The sceptic will then attempt to show that this particular necessary condition cannot be met. This allows him to deny the consequent and conclude by modus tollens that the speaker does not mean anything by the term. This is the form that the sceptic's argument will always take. The conclusion (when generalised to all speakers and terms) is always the same, although the

particular assumption about meaning used to derive it can be different.

Finally, as argued in section 1.2, there is a distinction to be made between the sceptical argument and the extended KW (or Wittgensteinian) argument. The sceptical argument ends with the statement of the radical sceptical conclusion, while KW negates this conclusion and argues by reductio for the negation of the assumption of meaning-constitution that leads to it. In the above example, the entire classical realist account would be rejected by negating the above statement of one of its necessary conditions for meaning; for if one of its necessary conditions has been shown to fail, the whole account is undermined.[14] In order to give a truly complete argument that KW is opposed to the notion of meaning-constitution, each such account would have to be considered on a case-by-case basis; and it would have to be shown that KW can adopt a similar strategy of rejecting them to the one he adopts in rejecting the classical realist account. In the subsequent chapters, I will argue that this strategy works against a large class of constitutive accounts, but *not all*. Nevertheless, I will argue that KW is opposed to all such accounts and that the use of this sceptical argument provides a strong (but not complete) motivation for this view. My goal in the present section, though, has merely been to articulate the form that all accounts of meaning-constitution take and to clarify the role they play in the sceptical challenge.

1.5: Kusch's reading of *WRPL*

I have attempted to show that there are significant benefits in adopting aspects of the factualist reading of *WRPL*, most notably that it provides one very compelling way of eliminating the main ambiguities in Kripke's text and elucidates the relation between KW and the sceptic about meaning, as well as all of the steps involved in the sceptic's reasoning

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[14] We could attempt to modify rather than completely reject the particular account. See Kusch on the responses to the sceptical challenge that involve 'reforming' the particular conception of meaning-constitution by rejecting one or more, but not all, features of it (2006, 66-74).

to his radical sceptical conclusion. I have chosen to focus on Wilson's version of this reading because it is one of the most detailed and well-developed. In this section, I will consider Martin Kusch's factualist reading, which builds on Wilson's and develops it even further. Kusch's reading is also quite unique in its goal of trying to defend *WRPL* as an interpretation of Wittgenstein. However, since this is not my concern in this chapter, I will postpone the analysis of this particular aspect of his reading.

There are very strong parallels between Kusch's (2006) and Wilson's writings on Kripke. These can be grouped in relation to three main issues: (1) the structure of KW's sceptical argument; (2) the relation between KW and the sceptic about meaning; and (3) the alternative picture of meaning in KW's sceptical solution. I will devote most of the discussion of this section to the first two. Regarding the first, there is a distinction to be made between the sceptical argument, on the one hand, and the extended KW argument of which this sceptical argument is a part, on the other. Kusch approves of this distinction in Wilson, and correspondingly of the distinction between KW and the radical sceptic; but he attempts to improve on Wilson's formulation of the arguments (see 2006, 162-163). In particular, whereas Wilson holds that the sceptic presupposes the classical realist conception of meaning, Kusch calls the sceptic's principal assumption 'meaning determinism':

> Meaning determinism ... holds that sentences of the form "person x means Y by 'z'" (e.g. Jones means addition by "+") are true if, and only if, x has a certain mental state. This mental state *constitutes* x's meaning Y by "z", or, put differently, this mental state is the necessary and sufficient condition for x's meaning Y by "z". Meaning determinism makes several assumptions about this mental state (2006, 4).

The central notion here is clearly that of a 'meaning-constituting mental state', and meaning determinism is, for Kusch, characterised by the various 'assumptions' it makes about this mental state. It is perhaps best to state these assumptions in terms of the properties that this

type of mental state is held to possess. These properties are supposed to elucidate what it is that makes such a mental state 'meaning-constituting' or 'meaning-determining'. Note that they can be stated for the different cases of predicates, functional expressions, sentences, etc. For convenience, I will focus on the case of predicates. Most notable among the properties of the meaning-constituting mental states underlying the use of predicates, then, are the following (see, especially, 2006, 11-12):

> *being known immediately and with fair certainty by the agent;*
>
> *being an intrinsic state of the agent;*
>
> *being an act of grasping the property that governs the use of the predicate;*
>
> *and as an act of grasping the governing property:*
>
>> *being the cause of applying the predicate in correct ways;*
>>
>> *being tantamount to forming intentions regarding the possibly infinite number of applications of the predicate in the future;*
>>
>> *extrapolating from a finite learning set;*
>>
>> *being an explanation of the agreement between different speakers' uses of the predicate;*
>
> *being the source of semantic normativity:*
>
>> *guiding the agent's applications of the predicate;*
>>
>> *justifying the agent's applications of the predicate;*
>>
>> *containing and determining ('in a queer way') all future, potentially infinite, correct applications of the predicate;*
>>
>> *being an act of knowing that the predicate expresses a certain property P, and of knowing that the predicate correctly applies to an object o iff o is P; thus, being an act of grasping the application-conditions of the predicate.*

I will refer to the above set of meaning-determining or meaning-constituting properties of mental states as 'P_{MD}', and based on this the doctrine of meaning-determinism can be stated as follows:

MD: A speaker means something by a term 'Φ' if and only if he has a certain mental state (or a certain non-mental state, e.g. disposition, to which this mental state is reducible) with a unique set of meaning-constituting properties, P$_{MD}$ (e.g. *being an act of grasping property denoted by 'Φ', being the justification of the speaker's applications of 'Φ'*, etc.).

Based on this characterisation of the sceptic's main assumption, the Kuschian reconstruction of the sceptical argument can be stated in a way that directly parallels the Wilsonian reconstruction.

(1) If a speaker means something by 'Φ', then he has a certain mental state with a unique set of meaning-constituting properties, P$_{MD}$.	Meaning Determinist Assumption
(2) The speaker does not have a mental state with a unique set of meaning-constituting properties, P$_{MD}$.	Basic Sceptical Conclusion (Following a case-by-case analysis of candidates of meaning-constituting facts)
(3) The speaker does not mean anything by 'Φ'.	Radical Sceptical Conclusion (Modus tollens)

This corresponds with the form of the sceptical argument as laid out in general form in the previous section. And just as there is a different assumption about meaning-constitution at the outset, there is a different formulation of the basic sceptical conclusion at line 2 (because BSC is just the denial that there are meaning-constituting facts of the kind corresponding to

the assumption). The conclusion – RSC – is the same because all assumptions about meaning-constitution have the same antecedent; and RSC is merely the negation of the antecedent of the assumption (or rather that negation generalised to all language users and terms). Furthermore, as in the Wilsonian presentation, the KW response is to proceed by denying RSC and conclude by reductio with the negation of the meaning determinist assumption.

There are a number of advantages to Kusch's formulation of the sceptic's key assumption about meaning. Firstly, it is formulated in such a way that its general scope is more apparent than in Wilson's classical realist assumption. And secondly, it is much more firmly rooted in Kripke's text than Wilson's formulation. I will focus on these advantages, but there are many others. When assessing its generality, it is helpful to compare it with the primitive assumption about meaning-constitution that I identified in the previous section:

A speaker means something by a term if and only if there are facts that are constitutive of this meaning.

Should the meaning-determinist assumption – like the classical realist assumption in Wilson – be viewed as a particular instance of this general assumption? Answering this is not as straightforward as in Wilson's case. Kusch evidently intends meaning-determinism to capture a very general conception of what it is to be a meaning-constituting state. For example, when introducing meaning determinism he states that it is a 'rough picture' of meaning that is quite 'vague' and 'only in part explicitly formulated', and that is 'amenable to different ways of developing it and making it more precise' (2006, 4). He contrasts this notion of a picture with a 'theory', which would be one way (among many) of making it more precise. The formulation quoted above is of the meaning determinist picture, rather than any specific theory that presupposes and develops it. This whole way of putting it suggests that the

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sceptical challenge, which KW uses to target this meaning determinist picture, has quite a wide scope. Furthermore, the intended wide scope is apparent in the formulation in which the notion of meaning-constitution is explicitly correlated with the necessary and sufficient conditions for meaning (see 2006, 4).[15]

However, Kusch adds that 'Meaning determinism makes several assumptions about this [meaning-constituting] mental state' (Ibid.); and it turns out that these assumptions are quite specific in the sense of having a realist character. Furthermore, later in the book Kusch states that although KW's sceptical solution involves the rejection of meaning determinism, there is still room for it to accept meaning-constituting facts of a less inflationary or non-meaning determinist kind (see 2006, 219). Kusch has in mind the kinds of meaning-constituting facts that McDowell and Wright posit.[16] This claim entails that for all its intended generality, Kusch holds that meaning determinism is only supposed to capture a certain (inflationary) class of meaning-constitutive facts. It is thus less general than the primitive assumption that 'A speaker means something by a term if and only if there are facts that are constitutive of this meaning'. This latter assumption is shared by meaning determinism, Wilson's classical realism, and McDowell's and Wright's less inflationary conceptions alike.

With regard to this issue of the general scope of the sceptical argument, Kusch criticises Wilson's formulation of the sceptic's assumption in terms of identifying a 'non-linguistic' standard of correctness for the use of a term. Kusch objects that

I cannot find this emphasis on the non-linguistic in the sceptical argument; I do not think that this

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[15] Kusch states that 'classical realism' is a part of meaning determinism (2006, 10-12). Even though it is not obvious whether he has the same conception of classical realism as Wilson, this shows that he intends meaning determinism to be much broader.

[16] For example, this is evident from his claim that Wright's non-classical realist conception of meaning-constituting facts can be 'read as complementary to, or part of, the sceptical solution' (2006, 219).

condition is central in the argument. The sceptic challenges the meaning determinist to explain how he could have singled out any standard at all – but there is no suggestion that the singling out must have been non-linguistic. (2006, 163)

However, when we look closely at how Kusch characterises the meaning-constituting states (e.g., at 2006, 11-12), we can observe that they essentially involving 'grasping' something (such as an arithmetical function or property) that governs and justifies the person's use of the term. Arguably, in Kripke's discussion there is the suggestion that this 'something' that is grasped is non-linguistic. This would seem to be the case in his discussion of the '+' example anyhow. But this is not a very unusual assumption to make, especially when we consider what role this 'something' must play if the act of grasping it is to succeed in being meaning-constituting. Being charitable to Wilson, we could say that we do not have to build any more into the notion of a non-linguistic standard of correctness for the use of a term than is in the meaning determinist's mental state of grasping 'something' that governs and justifies the use of a term. Wilson's and Kusch's characterisations of the sceptic's meaning-constitutive assumption are not very different on this specific point. They have a similar conception of the general scope of the sceptic's challenge, but admittedly this scope is far more transparent in Kusch's formulation.

The other major way in which Kusch's factualist reading improves upon Wilson's is in connecting the reconstructed sceptical challenge (including the formulation of its target assumption about meaning) with Kripke's discussion in *WRPL*. Kusch connects every single feature of meaning determinism with a passage or set of passages from *WRPL*. For example, the notion of a meaning-constituting mental state as a 'private' and 'intrinsic' state of the person is connected with such remarks as '[A] person following a given rule is to be analysed simply in terms of facts about the rule follower and the rule follower alone, without reference

to his membership in a wider community' (*WRPL*, 109; see Kusch, 2006, 5). And the notion of such a state as 'guiding' us in a potential infinity of particular instances is based on remarks such as 'Normally, when we consider a mathematical rule such as addition, we think of ourselves as *guided* in our application of it to each new instance' (*WRPL*, 17; see Kusch, 2006, 8).[17] In the next section, I will directly address this issue of the relation between the factualist readings I have explored in this chapter and their basis in Kripke's *WRPL*.

1.6: Interpreting Kripke's *WRPL*

In the first section of this chapter, I presented the general outline of the sceptical challenge to meaning that Kripke reconstructs from Wittgenstein's later writings. Through the discussion of a number of commentators on *WRPL* in the intervening sections, though, it has become apparent that there are some deep ambiguities and even inconsistencies in Kripke's text. Wilson, Miller, Kusch and others attempt to address and resolve these ambiguities, either by defending a particular interpretation of the crucial passages from *WRPL* or elaborating on Kripke's discussion. Not only, then, is there considerable difficulty in interpreting Wittgenstein's remarks on meaning and rule-following; there is also the difficulty of interpreting Kripke's reconstruction of them. Since my main goal in this thesis is to defend Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein, before I proceed to an examination of Wittgenstein's writings in the next three chapters, I must first conclude by addressing the main ambiguities in Kripke's *WRPL*. It is vital that we get a clear picture of Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein before dealing with the question of its accuracy.

The main ambiguities in Kripke's *WRPL* can be categorised in relation to the following issues:

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[17] Regarding the textual basis of all of the other features of meaning determinism, see Kusch 2006, 4-11.

(1) The relation between KW and the sceptic about meaning.

(2) The formulation of the sceptical conclusion.

(3) KW's attitude to the existence of facts about meaning.

(4) KW's acceptance of a sceptical solution to the sceptical paradox.

These issues are very closely intertwined. For example, the question of how to correctly formulate the sceptical conclusion will influence our response to the question of whether KW is a sceptic about meaning, which in turn affects our response to whether he rejected the existence of facts about meaning, etc. I will begin with the issue of the formulation of the sceptical conclusion. Kripke gives a fairly straightforward statement of it at the beginning of Chapter 3 of *WRPL*:

There can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word. (*WRPL*, 55)

As an explicit denial that any word has meaning, this is the most radical formulation of the sceptical conclusion that can be given. Kripke goes on to attribute it to KW in the same passage, which seems to give us an equally unambiguous answer to the question of KW's relation to the sceptic about meaning. This is reinforced by a couple of other remarks that address the issue of KW's attitude to facts about meaning:

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. (*WRPL*, 70-71)

Recall Wittgenstein's sceptical conclusion: no facts, no truth conditions, correspond to statements such as "Jones means addition by '+'." (*WRPL*, 77)

The problem, though, is that this simple assessment does not fit with most of what Kripke states elsewhere.

For example, Kripke states that for KW there is nothing wrong with the notion of facts about meaning as such, but only with a certain inflated or 'superlative' conception of them:

> Admittedly, I am expressing Wittgenstein's view more straightforwardly than he would ordinarily allow himself to do. For in denying that there is any such fact, might we not be expressing a philosophical thesis that doubts or denies that when people speak of themselves and others as meaning something by their words, as following rules, they do so with perfect right. We do not even wish to deny the propriety of an ordinary use of the phrase 'the fact that Jones meant addition by such-and-such a symbol', and indeed such expressions do have perfectly ordinary uses. We merely wish to deny the existence of the 'superlative fact' that philosophers misleadingly attach to such forms of words, not the propriety of the forms of words themselves. (*WRPL*, 69; see also *WRPL*, 86)

Passages such as these contradict the view that KW rejects outright the notion that words can have meaning. Rather, throughout Chapter 3 of *WRPL* Kripke emphasises that KW's main target is the inflationary conception of meaning, rather than the notion of meaning itself. As noted in section 1.2, Kripke refers to this flawed conception as the 'classical realist' conception (*WRPL*, 73), and also as 'the *Tractatus*' or 'realistic' or 'representational' picture of language (*WRPL*, 85); and as the 'picture of correspondence-to-facts' (*WRPL*, 79). Yet another way in which he characterises this conception is as the 'truth-conditional conception' of meaning, which Kripke argues KW rejects in favour of an alternative conception. For now I am more concerned with the conflict between these different remarks concerning facts about meaning, not with the exact characterisation of this conception of meaning that KW rejects.

We have, then, what appears to be a fundamental inconsistency in Kripke's discussion, which gets in the way of a proper understanding of the central issues mentioned at the beginning. However, I believe there is a way of reconciling these contradictory remarks. The key is in the following passage, where Kripke qualifies his statement of the sceptical conclusion:

> The sceptical paradox is the fundamental problem of *Philosophical Investigations*. If Wittgenstein is right, we cannot begin to solve it if we remain in the grip of the natural presupposition that meaningful declarative sentences must purport to correspond to facts; if this is our framework, we can only conclude that sentences attributing meaning and intention are themselves meaningless... The picture of correspondence-to-facts must be cleared away before we can begin with the sceptical problem. (*WRPL*, 78-79)

Kripke states here that KW's response to the sceptical paradox is to reject the flawed conception of meaning. And a page earlier he states that if we adopt in its place the correct conception of meaning (the one in terms of assertability-conditions at the centre of the sceptical solution), then 'no such conclusion follows', i.e. that the radical sceptical conclusion does not follow (*WRPL*, 77).[18] This suggests that the derivation of the sceptical conclusion actually depends on the flawed picture of meaning that KW rejects. But this entails that if, as Kripke repeatedly states, KW rejects this picture of meaning, then he also rejects the radical sceptical conclusion. This way of reading Kripke provides a way of resolving the tensions in the text because there is no contradiction in KW being committed to the following two claims:

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[18] In the text, Kripke first states that 'if we apply to these assertions the tests suggested in *Philosophical Investigations*, no such conclusion follows'. But in the next sentence he clarifies that this means taking the approach of viewing the legitimacy of meaning ascriptions as based on them having the relevant assertability-conditions.

(i) That the classical realist (or representational, etc.) picture entails the radical sceptical conclusion that 'there can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word'.

(ii) That the classical realist picture is flawed.

Hence, in order to resolve the inconsistencies in Kripke's discussion, we must read his claims at *WRPL*, 55, 71, and 77 that KW accepts the radical sceptical conclusion as in need of qualification; and that the situation is rather that KW accepts that this conclusion follows when we presuppose the flawed classical realist picture of meaning. These remarks, then, are strictly speaking incorrect if taken out of this wider context.

This way of reading *WRPL* corresponds to the way that Wilson and Kusch read it. The reconstruction of KW's sceptical argument in section 1.2 elucidates the exact sense in which the radical sceptical conclusion follows from the classical realist picture. This way of reading Kripke also enables us to address the other central issues identified at the beginning of the section. For example, the relation between KW and the sceptic about meaning becomes much clearer and corresponds to the Wilsonian interpretation. In short, the sceptical challenge presupposes a particular conception of meaning, which Kripke calls the classical realist conception, and this determines what will count as a satisfactory straight response to the challenge. When no fact about meaning corresponding to this conception can be identified, the radical sceptical conclusion that the person does not mean anything by his words (and generalised to all language users) is drawn. Hence, the sceptic accepts the classical realist picture and the radical conclusion that it entails. But on this reading, KW must be taken to be distinct from the radical sceptic because, as Kripke states, KW rejects the classical realist conception. And since he rejects this conception, he must reject the sceptic's radical conclusion concerning meaning. Therefore, KW can agree with the sceptic that the classical

realist picture entails the sceptical conclusion, but he does not follow the sceptic in embracing this conclusion because he rejects this picture.

This is how I propose to interpret Kripke's *WRPL* regarding the issues of KW's attitude to the radical sceptical conclusion and to scepticism about meaning. There are two other major issues, though, that I am not yet in a position to adequately address. They concern KW's attitude to semantic factualism, and the even trickier issue of the sense in which KW is supposed to adopt a 'sceptical solution' to his own sceptical problem. The latter issue is particularly difficult to deal with because I have argued that KW and the sceptic are distinct in Kripke's dialectic, making it unclear how KW could nevertheless adopt a sceptical solution. Regarding the issue of the sceptical solution, the view I will argue for in this thesis is that there are two types of scepticism about meaning in play in *WRPL*: on the one hand, a scepticism that rejects the very notion of meaning; and on the other hand, a scepticism that rejects the existence of facts that are constitutive of meaning. My view is that KW adopts a scepticism of the latter kind only; and that, in contrast to the more radical first kind, it is characterised by the rejection of the classical realist conception (and all other conceptions) of meaning in terms of meaning-constituting facts. There is also considerable difficulty in dealing with the question of KW's attitude to semantic factualism because there may be a deflationary version of it that does not posit the existence of meaning-constituting facts, which might be acceptable to him. But I will postpone any further treatment of these issues in *WRPL* until I consider KW's positive picture of meaning in the final chapter. In Chapters 2-4, I will consider these issues in relation to Wittgenstein.

1.7: Conclusion: Straight and sceptical solutions

In this chapter, I provided an analysis of Kripke's *WRPL* by addressing some of the deepest issues that arise concerning meaning, rule-following, and scepticism about these notions.

There is certainly a question about whether Wilson, Kusch and others should be viewed as attempting to elucidate the claims that are already present but imperfectly expressed in *WRPL*, or whether they go beyond Kripke. For the most part, though, I have discussed their writings as a means to understanding *WRPL* and the issues that are fundamental to Kripke's representation of Wittgenstein. However, there are important responses to *WRPL* that explicitly go beyond Kripke's discussion by engaging with the sceptical challenge and advocating a different response to the one favoured by KW. The responses I have in mind are those of McDowell and Wright in particular, and considering them can help to throw further light on the issue of the existence of meaning-constituting facts and of what is involved in KW's rejection of them. I will, though, only briefly discuss them here in order to make a point about the distinction between straight and sceptical solutions (and what I believe to be the inability of factualist readings to adequately characterise it).

As noted in the first section, Kripke characterises straight solutions as showing 'that on closer examination the scepticism proves to be unwarranted' (*WRPL*, 66). The most direct way of doing this is by identifying a particular class of meaning-constituting facts that will satisfy the sceptic. But McDowell and Wright each adopt the alternative strategy of showing that the scepticism is 'unwarranted' by objecting to the terms or presuppositions of KW's sceptical challenge. Furthermore, they each identify meaning-constituting facts of some kind, but which could only be deemed to be acceptable given their respective objections to the original sceptical challenge. In this sense, they can both be interpreted as providing straight solutions to the sceptical challenge, but with the added complication that the original challenge is significantly modified.

For example, Wright objects to the restrictions that the sceptic places on the kinds of response that can be given to the challenge; in particular, that I must be capable of demonstrating what I mean by appealing exclusively to non-intentional facts about myself

(2001, 83). Wright, though, goes on to propose a positive characterisation of meaning-constituting facts (as 'judgement dependent' (see 2001, 139-142)). The significant thing about this response is that it is different to the various candidates of meaning-constituting facts that Kripke considers and rejects because these candidates are all considered without questioning the terms of the sceptical challenge. A similar point could be made about McDowell's response, although the conception of facts about meaning that he adopts has a more realist character in the sense that he takes it to be imperative that we preserve the 'objectivity' or 'investigation-independence' of meaning (see 1998, 222). This highlights the diversity of different possible responses that could be classified as 'straight', and that they can potentially far exceed the facts that Kripke considers in *WRPL*. This also helps to characterise what is unique about a genuinely sceptical solution.

However, one complication that arises when we consider these types of straight solutions is that they can be seen to have a close affinity to the factualist readings that I have discussed. They all involve rejecting some key assumption that is fundamental to the sceptical challenge and identifying a class of meaning-constituting facts that is shown to be acceptable when this assumption is abandoned. There are, of course, differences too, most notably in the particular assumptions they object to, the grounds on which they object to them, and the kinds of meaning-constituting facts they posit.[19] But they are structurally similar and this has the rather confusing effect of blurring the line between straight and

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[19] One important difference is that the factualist readers take the rejection of the particular assumption as warranted on the grounds of a reductio procedure, while, e.g., Wright rejects the assumption he finds problematic based on independent considerations. It is more difficult to characterise McDowell in this context because he takes the fundamental Wittgensteinian argument to be a regress argument (see 2008, 106-108). But he sees the point of this argument to be that there is a mistaken assumption about what meaning or rule-following consists in (i.e. that it involves an act of interpretation), and that this assumption must be abandoned if we are to get a better understanding of these notions. His rejection of this assumption could be compared to a reductio procedure in the sense that it is rejected as a result of generating the regress.

sceptical solutions.[20] Why, on the factualist readings, should KW not be characterised as proposing a straight solution? After all, they depict his ultimate response to the challenge as involving the identification of meaning-constituting facts of a certain kind. This, I hold, highlights a major shortcoming of the factualist reading specifically as an attempt to accurately interpret *WRPL*.

There is a way of overcoming this confusion, viz. to adopt my conception of KW's sceptical solution as strictly rejecting the existence of meaning-constituting facts of *all* kinds. Hence, KW could be interpreted as being in agreement with McDowell, Wright, and the factualist readers in rejecting the sceptic's classical realist (or some closely related) conception of meaning; but he would differ from all of them by not positing the existence of meaning-constituting facts of any other kind. This is what a properly sceptical solution comes down to in this context, as distinct from the varieties of possible straight solutions.

Regarding the discussion of the present chapter, I must emphasise one final point of clarification that is directly relevant to this issue. In section 1.4, I argued against Wilson that the common feature of all accounts of meaning-constitution is that they purport to state the necessary and sufficient conditions for meaning. However, I also stated that the scope of the sceptical argument is not wide enough to be used to undermine all accounts of meaning-constitution, only a large class of such accounts. I made this qualification because – although I have not considered this point yet – I believe there are some particularly extreme or radical accounts of meaning-constitution that cannot be undermined in the same manner. These may be implausible on independent grounds, but they nevertheless fall outside the scope of the sceptical argument.[21] I will return to this issue in the third and fourth chapters. But the

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[20] Miller makes the complaint against Wilson's factualist reading that it blurs the distinction between straight and sceptical solutions (2002, 14). My response here seeks to overcome this objection which I think all factualist readings are vulnerable to.

[21] This point is very relevant to the parallel discussion in Wittgenstein's philosophy. I argue in Chapter 3 that the 'full-blooded conventionalist' account is beyond the scope of the argument in Wittgenstein that Kripke

implication is that although I hold that KW's standpoint in the sceptical solution involves the rejection of all accounts of meaning-constitution, this is only given partial support from the sceptical argument he employs because it can only undermine a large amount of such accounts.

I will further develop and defend this interpretation of KW in the final chapter. In the next chapter, I will begin the defence of my claim that Wittgenstein is a sceptic in the same sense as KW, i.e. as rejecting the existence of meaning-constituting facts of all kinds.

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reconstructs as the sceptical argument. And hence, the rejection of the radical conventionalist interpretation must be on grounds other than that it falls victim to this Wittgensteinian argument.

Chapter Two: *Wittgenstein on Meaning and Rule-Following*

2.0: Introduction

In this chapter, I will make a first attempt at developing a detailed interpretation of Wittgenstein's later views on meaning and rule-following. Throughout the chapter, I will move between analysing Wittgenstein's views and relating them back to Kripke's reconstruction of them. In section 2.1 and 2.7, I will directly address some of the most central points to do with *WRPL*, specifically as an interpretation of Wittgenstein. In sections 2.2-2.6, I will consider the main lines of argument in Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations with a view to comparing them to the sceptical challenge to rule-following and meaning that Kripke identifies there. In general, my concern in this chapter is with the negative side of the KW dialectic, i.e. with the sceptical challenge and Kripke's view that it is rooted in Wittgenstein's later writings. I will address the positive side of that dialectic – the so-called sceptical solution – in the fourth chapter.

My goal here is the relatively modest one of defending the following two claims: firstly, that the later Wittgenstein develops a particular argument leading to a statement of a sceptical paradoxical conclusion, or a conclusion that denies the legitimacy of the notions of meaning and rule-following; and secondly, that Wittgenstein responds in a similar way to Kripke's Wittgenstein's response to his radical sceptical conclusion, viz. by rejecting this conclusion and rejecting the assumption about meaning and rule-following that leads to it. This prepares the way for a more thorough defence of Kripke's interpretation in the subsequent chapters.

Throughout this chapter, the most important issue is that of Wittgenstein's attitude to the notion of meaning-constitution (and the constitution of rule-following). I use this notion as the key to interpreting his later views on meaning and rule-following. In the context of my

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defence of the above two claims, I want to argue that Wittgenstein's later period is characterised above all by a more consistent *opposition* to the approach to meaning and rule-following that attempts to clarify or explain these notions by identifying certain facts that are constitutive of them. In other words, I want to argue that this is a genuine issue and that how we interpret Wittgenstein's later work is shaped in large part by how we interpret his attitude to it. There are other issues that I consider, such as Baker and Hacker's and other Wittgensteinian scholars' misreading of Kripke's *WRPL*, especially regarding Kripke's claim that Wittgenstein is a sceptic. But in the present chapter, these issues are secondary to the more fundamental issue of Wittgenstein's attitude to meaning-constitution. This is because I believe that an appreciation of the latter issue can ultimately lead to a better appreciation of the sense in which Wittgenstein is a sceptic, which is a more direct concern of the subsequent chapters.

2.1: A preliminary note on Baker and Hacker's criticisms of Kripke's interpretation

Ever since the publication of *WRPL*, Baker and Hacker have been two of the most outspoken and influential critics of Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein. When Kripke's book first appeared in its complete version in 1982, they were in the process of writing their four volume analysis and commentary on Wittgenstein's *PI*. In 1984 (between the publication of volumes 1 and 2 of their commentary), they published a book-length critical response to *WRPL*. They attacked Kripke's study on two accounts: firstly, as an interpretation of Wittgenstein; and secondly, concerning the common perception that it succeeds in highlighting an issue that is of 'profound' philosophical importance in its own right. In this section, I will only make a start on addressing these criticisms. I will focus above all on their objection to calling Wittgenstein a sceptic about meaning. I will address many of the other

objections at different points of the thesis (see especially sections 2.7 of this chapter and sections 4.4-4.7 of the final chapter).

Before considering some of their objections to Kripke's interpretation, it is worth mentioning a point they make about the separate issue of the independent philosophical significance of the problem discussed by Kripke. In the Preface to their (1984), they question its independent importance by arguing that it only appears important on the basis of certain fundamental assumptions about language and understanding. However, these assumptions, they maintain, are widespread in contemporary philosophy of language, semantics and linguistics. They identify these assumptions as 'conceiv[ing] of a language as a highly complex calculus of rules' and 'of understanding as a hidden process of operating this calculus or depth-grammar' (1984, viii-ix). They continue:

> The postulates of cognitive psychology, theoretical linguistics and (on some versions) philosophical semantics seem to be called into doubt. So even though proponents of "Wittgenstein's rule-scepticism" would not dream of presenting their arguments as attacks on modern linguistic theories, nor consider them as a *reductio ad absurdum* of such theories, they manifestly cast a shadow over the proceedings which are taking place centre-stage. This makes sense of the appeal (or threat!) of a form of philosophical reasoning that would otherwise seem unmotivated and devoid of interest (save as a mistaken interpretation of Wittgenstein). (1984, x)

This shows that Baker and Hacker believe that the considerations raised by Kripke *do* have a direct bearing on certain key assumptions in contemporary theorising about language, and they even suggest that the rule-sceptical considerations may act as a '*reductio ad absurdum*' of such theories.

Interestingly, though, they make this point only with regard to the issue of whether Kripke's discussion is of independent interest, and not with regard to his interpretation of

Wittgenstein. Contrary to their separation of these issues, I wish to argue in favour of two points: (1) that Kripke's discussion is indeed best read as developing a sort of reductio argument against certain fundamental assumptions about language or meaning; but (2) that this corresponds to a basic strategy in Wittgenstein's later work. I have already argued at some length for the first point in the opening chapter. I will argue for the second point throughout the present chapter. A defence of these two claims has the potential to defuse many of Baker and Hacker's criticisms of Kripke's reading of Wittgenstein, and by extension a lot of the other criticisms that have become common since they published their study. If Baker and Hacker take Kripke to be interpreting Wittgenstein as endorsing a form of scepticism about the very notion of meaning – rather than about certain theoretical assumptions about meaning – then a lot of their criticisms will miss their intended target.

Baker and Hacker's most forceful objection is to Kripke assigning the label 'sceptic' to Wittgenstein, as well as the attribution to him of the development of a sceptical paradox about meaning and a sceptical solution to this paradox. This objection has been echoed by the vast majority of commentators ever since. Baker and Hacker quote from Wittgenstein's *Notebooks 1914-16* and his last writings, published as *OC*, and state that

> [i]t would be very surprising to discover that someone who throughout his life found philosophical scepticism *nonsensical*, a subtle violation of the bounds of sense, should actually make a sceptical problem the pivotal point of his work. (1984, 5)

Although there is certainly something to this objection, my discussion of the relation between the figures of Kripke's Wittgenstein and the sceptic about meaning in the previous chapter casts the objection in a different light. I admitted that there is considerable ambiguity in Kripke's *WRPL* concerning whether or not these figures are supposed to be identical. There

are two issues here, and Baker and Hacker object to both of them. The first concerns whether Wittgenstein can be said to develop a sceptical challenge, culminating in the sceptical paradox and the development of a sceptical solution to it. Kripke undoubtedly takes Wittgenstein to develop this sceptical challenge. However, the second issue has to do with whether Wittgenstein accepted the sceptical conclusion that there is no such thing as meaning anything by a word (or following a rule); and it is to this that the ambiguity attaches. While admitting that Kripke is unclear on this, I argued that we should interpret Kripke as holding that Wittgenstein did not accept this radical sceptical conclusion; and rather that Wittgenstein took it as evidence that the particular 'classical realist' assumption about meaning that is used to derive this radical conclusion is flawed.

Baker and Hacker's objection, though, is not answered so easily. For there is still the question of whether Kripke takes Wittgenstein to be a sceptic in any sense, and the fact that he attributes a sceptical solution to him strongly suggests that he does. An alternative way of formulating this question is to ask what Kripke takes Wittgenstein's main negative conclusion to be and which he carries over into the sceptical solution; and particularly, whether that conclusion is sceptical in some sense. One response here is to follow Wilson and state that Kripke's Wittgenstein accepts the 'Basic Sceptical Conclusion', or the conclusion that specifically rejects the existence of *classical realist* facts about meaning. The so-called sceptical solution would thus merely be an attempt to present an alternative to the classical realist picture of meaning. This response is on the right lines but it does not go far enough. I have argued that Kripke takes Wittgenstein to be opposed to *all* conceptions of meaning-constituting facts, not just the classical realist conception;[22] and that the sceptical solution is, therefore, sceptical in the sense that it denies the existence of meaning-constituting facts of any kind.

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[22] However, my defence of this is not complete until I consider the sceptical solution itself in the final chapter.

My response to Baker and Hacker's objection, then, involves arguing that there is a genuine sense in which Kripke's Wittgenstein is a sceptic. But throughout this and the next chapter I will argue that *Wittgenstein*, in his later period, is a sceptic in exactly the same sense. I will argue that there is an analogue of the sceptical challenge in the 'master arguments' of his later rule-following considerations and that, although he did not accept the sceptical paradoxical conclusion that meaning and rule-following are impossible, he does reject the notion of facts (of any kind, mental, non-mental, social, etc.) that are constitutive of meaning or rule-following. Hence, my response to this particular objection by Baker and Hacker (and numerous other commentators) will not be fully developed until I defend my interpretation of the later Wittgenstein.

Another important criticism that Baker and Hacker develop is that Kripke's reconstruction of Wittgenstein's argument does not in fact correspond to Wittgenstein's argument properly understood. They summarise Kripke's reconstruction as follows:

The core problem is, according to Kripke, a *normative* version of Goodman's 'new riddle of induction'. No past fact about my mind or behaviour constituted my meaning W by 'W', so nothing in my present use of 'W' can constitute accord (or conflict) with what I meant by 'W' (the meaning I assigned to 'W'). So I cannot know that in my current use I am still using 'W' with the same meaning. But not even God, were He to peer into my mind, could know this. So there is no such thing as using a word in accord with a rule (with the meaning one gave it), no such thing as meaning something by a word, and hence no such thing as a meaningful language. This is the 'paradox'. (1984, 10-11)

Baker and Hacker state that Wittgenstein's main concern is with 'what is involved in a speaker's understanding an expression, knowing what it means, using it in accord with a correct explanation of its meaning', whereas Kripke maintains that the problem is with 'what a speaker means by an expression, of whether he is now using an expression in accord with

what he previously meant by it' (1984, 42). The defect in Kripke's reconstruction, according to them, is that he states the problem in essentially *temporal* terms, as the problem about how my present use of a term could accord or conflict with how I previously meant it.

> Kripke in effect shifts Wittgenstein's problem of how, in what sense, a rule determines its application, to
> a problem of the relation between my past and present intentions, my meaning addition by 'plus' (and not
> a different arithmetical operation christened 'quaddition'). (1984, 27)

This criticism, though, suffers from the same error as Colin McGinn's (1984) in failing to appreciate the full generality of the problem discussed by Kripke. It is correct that in some instances Kripke presents the problem in temporal terms as a problem between 'the nexus between past "intention" or "meanings" and present practice' (*WRPL*, 62), but it generalises beyond this context to the relation between the meaning of a term and its correct use. Boghossian (1989) highlights this point when criticising McGinn's reading of Kripke. McGinn characterises the sceptic as challenging us to show that what we mean by a word now is 'the *same*' as what we meant or how we intended it to be used at some previous time, such as when we were taught it (1984, 146). Boghossian argues that if this were a correct characterisation of the challenge, then it could be easily met by practically '*Any* theory of meaning' (1989, 147). For example, the dispositionalist account that Kripke rejects would meet it because 'there are perfectly determinate facts about what dispositions are associated with a given expression at a given time' and 'it is always possible to ask whether an expression has the same or a different meaning' on this account (Ibid.). Boghossian holds that this is strong evidence that this temporal characterisation does not adequately capture the nature of the sceptical challenge. Rather, the challenge arises from the fact that 'meaningful expressions possess conditions of *correct use*'; and further (this is where the classical realist

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constraint comes in) that any candidate of meaning-constituting fact must show 'what is the correct use of that word' (1989, 148). This explains how the dispositionalist account runs into difficulties, i.e. it must show what the 'correct' use of a word is as opposed to merely what we 'will' do with the word. The important point here, though, is that this kind of objection raised by Baker and Hacker and McGinn fails because it misrepresents the sceptical challenge.

The preceding criticism is presented by Baker and Hacker as the first of three 'substantial misunderstandings or distortions' in Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein (1984, 42). The remaining two distortions they discuss are: Kripke's misunderstanding of the role of agreement in Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following (1984, 44-46); and his misunderstanding of Wittgenstein's transition from the early to the later period as involving the rejection of a realist, truth-conditional theory of meaning in favour of an anti-realist, assertability-conditional theory of meaning (1984, 46-49). Both of these are important objections, but I will not be able to address them properly until I have discussed the details of Wittgenstein's later views on meaning and rule-following. This is the task of the remainder of this chapter, the whole of Chapter 3, and sections 4.5-4.7 of the final chapter. I will address these objections directly in the final chapter (see sections 4.4 and 4.5). Throughout the current chapter, I will present the initial case for my interpretation of the later Wittgenstein as being opposed to the notion of meaning-constituting facts. I will return to Baker and Hacker's interpretation at different stages because there is strong evidence that they favour a contrasting, 'constitutive' interpretation.

2.2: Wittgenstein's middle period conception of meaning

It is customary to distinguish three main phases in Wittgenstein's philosophical development: the early period (culminating in *TLP*); the middle period (his writings from 1929-1935); and

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his later period (his writings after 1936, most notably his *PI* and *RFM*). Although these divisions are imperfect for a number of reasons – for example, there is considerable overlap between the middle and later periods – they are helpful in charting Wittgenstein's constant struggle with certain philosophical illusions, as well as the changes in his responses to them. As we shall see, Wittgenstein was occupied by roughly the same problems concerning meaning and rule-following in both his middle and later periods, but he offered a more consistent and satisfactory response to them in his later period. Regarding Wittgenstein's middle period texts, in what follows I will focus mainly on his Cambridge lectures from 1930-1935, as well as his *PR* (written between 1929 and 1930), *BT* (written between 1929 and 1933)[23], *PG* (the first half of which contains revisions made in 1933/1934 of selected parts of *BT*), and *BB* (dictated between 1933 and 1935).

The philosophical problems that Wittgenstein grapples with from his middle period onwards first arise in the context of his attempt to replace his Augustinian or referential conception of meaning from *TLP* with an alternative conception.[24] I shall refer to his non-Augustinian, middle period conception as his 'rule-based' conception of meaning because it accounts for the meanings of terms, not on the basis of corresponding entities denoted by those terms, but by appealing to grammatical rules or rules for the use of those terms. He states repeatedly in this transitional period that 'It is grammatical rules that determine meaning (constitute it)' (*PG*, §184) and that 'The meaning of a word is its place in the symbolism' (*LCL*, 28), where the symbolism is essentially a network of grammatical rules. For example, he states:

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[23] This date refers to the typescript itself. The 2005 'Scholars' Edition' of *BT* also contains Wittgenstein's handwritten notes and corrections from 1933-1937.

[24] The claim that the early Wittgenstein held a referential conception of meaning-constitution overlooks certain crucial features of his conception in that period. Most notably, he famously held that logical terms do not denote objects. Nevertheless, it is a basic commitment of his view in this period that any meaningful language must contain names, the meanings of which consist in the objects they stand for. The qualification is that this model does not extend to every single sign in the language.

What justifies us in using any particular word? Suppose I say "This gown is black". The word "black" is arbitrary in one sense; another sound or scratch would serve. And the correlation of the word "gown" to a particular object is in itself arbitrary and has no consequence. But if a proposition is to have sense we must commit ourselves to the use of the words in it. It is not a matter of association; that would not make language work at all. What is essential is that in using the word I commit myself to a rule of use. A word only has meaning in a grammatical system, and what characterises it is the way in which it is used. (*LCL*, 36)

The general picture of meaning that emerges from these middle period writings is of the meanings of words determined by rules for the use of those words, and with those rules belonging to a larger symbolism or calculus of rules. A word, then, is meaningless (a mere 'sound or scratch') unless it belongs to such a symbolism with rules governing its use. Moreover, merely correlating the word with some entity in the world is held to be wholly ineffective at giving it meaning unless it succeeds in establishing a rule for its use.

However, even as Wittgenstein proposed this alternative conception of meaning he recognised that it generates its own problems, and it is the different responses to these problems that distinguish his middle and later views. The deepest problems of all have to do with the particular issue of what it is to grasp and follow a rule. As Wittgenstein states, to understand a word and to use it requires me to 'commit myself to a rule of use'. But what are such rules? How do they determine meaning? How do we grasp them? How do we follow just these rules when using words? And how are these rules related to their applications? These are the sorts of questions that Wittgenstein struggled with, but did not ultimately resolve until his later period. The main difference between Wittgenstein's middle and later periods is that in his middle period he proposed various mentalistic responses in an attempt to save his rule-based conception, while in his later period he rejected these responses and this

particular conception of meaning. Before offering a defence of my interpretation of this difference between the middle and later periods concerning this issue, I will first look at the central problems concerning meaning and rule-following that occupy him.

Throughout most of his middle period, we find Wittgenstein attempting to provide support for his rule-based conception by underpinning it with one or other account of what it is to follow a rule and to mean something by a word. The natural conviction that holds sway is that there must be something that following a rule consists in, or some fact in virtue of which I follow a rule. Most of the proposals that he makes are that some type of mental state is decisive in our ability to follow rules. For example, in his *PR*, he appeals to an 'act of insight' to account for rule-following:

> Something of the following sort: Supposing there to be a certain general rule (therefore one containing a variable), I must recognize each time afresh that this rule may be applied *here*. No act of foresight can absolve me from this act of *insight*. Since the form to which the rule is applied is in fact different at every step. (*PR*, §149)

The problem that this passage alludes to is of how we are capable of correctly applying a general rule in particular cases given that these cases (which are potentially infinite) are not written into the rule itself. The response that Wittgenstein considers is that an act of intuition or insight is what enables us to grasp how the general rule is correctly applied in these particular instances. However, this response did not satisfy him for very long and within the same period we find him abandoning it. For example, at *PG*, 301 the above passage is re-stated, but with the following line added at the end: 'But it is not a matter of an act of *insight*, but of an act of *decision*.' Baker and Hacker state that there is still a 'residue' of the appeal to

insight in *PG* (see, e.g., *PG*, 347), but that it is eliminated in favour of the notion of decision (Baker and Hacker 1985, 72). In a lecture from 1935 Wittgenstein states:

> If any mental process is involved, it is one of decision, not of intuition. We do as a matter of fact all make the same decision, but we need not suppose we all have the same "fundamental intuition". (*ACL*, 134).

Wittgenstein thus entertains the suggestion that following a rule consists in some sort of decision, before rejecting this too (see, e.g., *BB*, 143.)

The other main candidates that he considers in this period are the mental states of intention and interpretation. To appreciate his motivation for appealing to these types of mental state, we need to look at another specific problem about rule-following that troubled him in this period and which is best expressed by considering the distinction between following a rule and merely conforming to a rule. To take one of Wittgenstein's favourite examples (see *BT*, §§62 and 64; *LCL*, 37; and *PG*, §57), when I follow a rule of copying, the result – e.g. a drawing – will be compatible with an indefinite number of different rules. The task is to explain that I was guided by one rule in particular, even though the result would have been the same if I had been guided by any of the other rules. Wittgenstein considers the particular example of copying a line by drawing another line parallel to it:

> I order someone to draw a line parallel to a, starting at A. He tries (intends) to do this, but with the result that the line turns out parallel to b.
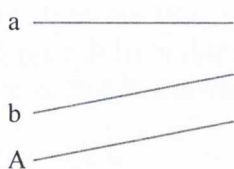
Now was the process of copying the same as if he had intended to draw a line parallel to b and had carried out his intention? I think: obviously not. He let himself be guided by the line a.

[…] Now the question is: If I have (now) copied a drawing in this way, is it possible to correctly describe the process of copying, as it took place, in accordance with another general rule as well? Or can I reject such a description, saying: "No, I really only let myself be guided by *this* (general) rule (and not by that other one which, to be sure, would also have had the same result here)". (*BT*, §62)

The task is to account for this distinction between according with a rule and following or being guided by a rule. Since the result of drawing the line A is compatible with having been guided by a rule of copying line a or a rule of copying line b, the drawing itself or the act of drawing it cannot help us to account for this distinction. Wittgenstein's response is that 'intention' is what distinguishes them. This is why he states that the process of copying line b is different to what is depicted in the passage; the difference is that I was in fact guided by the rule of copying line a, or that my intention was to copy line a. Intention, for Wittgenstein, is thus *constitutive* of following a rule or being guided by a rule. It is what distinguishes it from merely being in accord with the rule. He sums this up by stating:

Then one can say: Even if my pencil doesn't capture the original, my intention always does. Only intention can measure up to the original. (*BT*, §62)

Although Wittgenstein views intention to be crucial in charactering rule-following, he struggles to adequately characterise it. Even in *BT*, he seems to be uncomfortable with characterising it as a mental process accompanying an action or behaviour or manipulation of signs because it suggests the false picture of something happening at a particular time inside me while I use or utter words or follow rules (see *BT*, §65; see also §§62 and 64).

Wittgenstein thus struggles with assigning the constitutive role to intention without thinking of intention as a mental process, or at least not as a mysterious mental process of the above kind that can somehow accomplish 'more than written signs on paper' (*BT*, §64). See, e.g., where he writes:

> So choosing the lines when portraying a model is a different process, to be sure, from simply drawing these lines when I am "not being guided by the model", but this difference is an external, describable one, like the difference between [a] group of signs... and it is on a level with this difference. (*BT*, §64)

In this period, though, Wittgenstein does also characterise intention in terms of interpretation, which suggests that it is a kind of mental state after all. But while he discusses this characterisation, he identifies problems with it too.

He writes that an intention must contain 'an extremely faithful picture of what it intends' (*PG*, §100). And he continues:

> a picture, whatever it may be, can be variously interpreted; hence this picture too in its turn stands isolated. When one has the picture in view by itself it is suddenly dead, and it is as if something had been taken away from it, which had given it life before. (Ibid.)

His characterisation of intention in terms of an act of interpretation could be summarised as follows: an intention contains a picture of what it intends; considered in itself, though, the picture does not represent and needs to be interpreted; but each interpretation could itself be further interpreted. The problem that Wittgenstein articulates regarding the notion of intention here in the middle period prefigures his discussion of the regress of interpretations in *PI*. Importantly, though, Wittgenstein seems to respond to the regress differently in the middle and later periods, and so we get a good glimpse of the difference in his approach in

these two periods. In *PI*, Wittgenstein is explicit that what the regress shows is that 'Interpretations by themselves do not determine meaning' (§198) and that 'there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation*' (§201). By contrast, there are points in his middle period when he appears to be willing to countenance the idea of a 'final interpretation', or an act of interpretation that puts an end to the regress:

> The intention seems to interpret, to give the final interpretation; which is not a further sign or picture, but something else, the thing that cannot be further interpreted. (*PG*, §98)

This strategy preserves the view that meaning something by a term or following a rule consists in an act of intention or interpretation, albeit at the expense of positing a rather obscure type of mental state (a special act of interpretation). We should, however, acknowledge that this does not represent a settled view of Wittgenstein's in this period. For example, later in the middle period when he discusses this notion of the final interpretation, he puts the reference to it in the interlocutor's voice, thus distancing himself from it (see *BB*, 34).

Finally, I will mention one further variant in this period of the suggestion that intention is constitutive of rule-following. One of the claims he frequently makes in this period is that the intention 'contains a general rule', i.e. contains the rule that one follows as opposed to the rules that are compatible with what one does (see, e.g., *BT*, §62; and *LCL*, 40). I already discussed how Wittgenstein in *BT* sought to appeal to intention without characterising it as a mysterious mental process. In *BB*, he suggests that for the rule to be '*involved* in' what I do is simply for 'the symbol of the rule' to be involved in it (*BB*, 13). Although this succeeds in not positing a mysterious type of constitutive mental state to account for rule-following, it is not very compelling in its own right and it does not survive

the critical remarks he develops in his later period (which I shall consider in the next few sections).

The main point I wish to make in this section is that Wittgenstein was far more sympathetic to the notion of a state underlying rule-following (and hence meaning) in the middle period than in the later period. This is evident from the fact that in this period he proposes numerous candidates of states to fill this role. In most cases these are mental states, or states that it is difficult to characterise in any way other than as mental. Even though it is debatable whether he was satisfied for very long with any of these proposals, the mere fact that he continued to propose such candidates is remarkable and is distinctive of this period. Throughout the rest of this chapter I will develop an interpretation of the later Wittgenstein in which there is a sharp contrast between his approaches to meaning and rule-following in the middle and later periods. I will argue that Wittgenstein's later period is not merely characterised by his consistent opposition to meaning-constituting *mental states*, but more generally by his opposition to meaning-constituting facts of any kind (mental or otherwise). This shapes how we interpret his later appeal to the positive role of the notions of practices, customs of regular use, and the community of rule-followers. And it also provides the basis from which to defend Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein.

2.3: Wittgenstein's transition to the later period

In the previous section I discussed how at one point in his middle period Wittgenstein proposed the view that when we use a word or apply a rule, what we do is more like making a decision than having an insight into what to do. But towards the end of the middle period he acknowledges that 'this too is misleading, for nothing like an act of decision must take place, but possibly just an act of writing or speaking' (*BB*, 143). This is reiterated in his later period, as is his emphasis on practice or an act of doing as something that is more appropriate. A

good example of this is in his 1939 *Cambridge Lectures*:

(But to say "It's a decision" won't help as: "We all do it the same way.") (*LFM*, 30-31)

We might as well say that we need, not an intuition at each step, but a *decision*. – Actually there is
neither. You don't make a decision: you simply do a certain thing. It is a question of a certain practice.
(*LFM*, 237)

Generally speaking, a fundamental feature of Wittgenstein's transition from his middle to his later period is the central place he assigns the notions of practice, customs, regularities, and agreement in the use of words and rules. This much is fairly uncontroversial. The debate has to do with what these notions are doing there. The question that I hold to be of greatest significance takes up from the discussion of the previous section: Does Wittgenstein employ these notions in an alternative, non-mentalistic account of meaning-constitution? In this section I will address this question by considering the views of some of the most influential Wittgenstein scholars concerning it.

One of the main contexts in which Baker and Hacker discuss Wittgenstein's transition from the middle period to the later period is in terms of the distinction between following and merely being in accord with a rule (1985, 158-161). They state that his error in the middle period was to think that following a rule must be 'something *more*' than merely according with it, and that this led him to 'a misguided detour into a mythology of psychological processes' in an attempt to account for it (1985, 159). They argue that in the later period, rather than trying to account for the difference in terms of what is 'intrinsic to the act', Wittgenstein came to hold that 'it turns on the *circumstances* that surround the act' (Ibid.). They continue:

> It is only against a certain complex background that acting in accord with a rule counts as following a rule. So if we were still to say that there is something *more* to following the rule than merely acting in accord with it, then this would be the circumstances of someone's actions that entitle us to say that he has followed the rule. (Ibid.)

Baker and Hacker, though, appear to ignore their own warning by invoking 'the possession of *abilities*' as the thing that distinguishes following a rule from merely according with it (1985, 159). In support of this they state that it makes sense to hold that the behaviour of 'a planet, an ant, a dog or a calculating machine' can conform with a rule, but not that they follow rules; and the reason for this is that we cannot ascribe to them the necessary abilities that human beings have that make them rule-followers (1985, 159-160). With a suitably wide notion of ability, they thus seem to attribute to Wittgenstein an alternative, non-mentalistic answer to the same question of what constitutes my meaning something by a term or following a particular rule:

> Human *abilities* are the key to a correct analysis of the concept of following a rule, not actual calculations in the medium of the mind let alone electrical operations in the brain or in a computer. [...]There is no such thing as someone's following a rule who lacks all of the abilities bound up with understanding or intending to conform with this rule (Ibid.).

Although they are not always very explicit on this point, when we look closely at their writings on Wittgenstein it is fairly clear that they believe that there is still a place for the notion of meaning-constitution in his later work. In contrast to the way of interpreting Wittgenstein's development from the middle to the later period that I want to defend in this thesis, they seem to hold that this development is characterised by the rejection of one type of conception of meaning-constitution in favour of another. This feature of Baker and Hacker's

interpretation of the later Wittgenstein is also evident in their discussion of his appeal to practices or regular customs of use in his later work. For now I merely want to point out that Baker and Hacker seem sympathetic to a constitutional reading of the later Wittgenstein. But I will not attempt to give a more adequate defence of this claim until Chapters 3 and 4, where I will consider all of the major aspects of their reading as they relate to the issue of meaning-constitution.

Similar considerations apply to David Pears's reading of Wittgenstein. Pears interprets the early Wittgenstein as advocating a type of platonism or realism which, according to his understanding of these doctrines, holds that language at its deepest level is determined by the independent structure or intrinsic nature of objects in the world (see, e.g., 1988, 206). He interprets his later work as a struggle with rejecting this kind of platonist view of language, but without lapsing into the opposite extreme of a radical conventionalism or idealism (1987, 189). For Pears, then, we can best comprehend Wittgenstein's later work by considering how he sought to present a positive picture of language that avoids these extremes. Without getting into the details of his interpretation of Wittgenstein's positive picture, there is the obvious question concerning whether it is an alternative conception of meaning-constitution. Similarly to Baker and Hacker's reading, there is conflicting evidence in Pears's text. On the one hand, he is adamant that the later Wittgenstein should not be viewed as adopting an account or theory of any kind (see, e.g., 1988, 224); while, on the other hand, the mere suggestion that Wittgenstein's positive picture of meaning is located between the extremes of platonism and conventionalism suggests that that it is an account of meaning-constitution because both of these extremes are accounts of this kind and it is located on the same continuum. This suggestion is reinforced by many passages from his (1988), such as the following where he discusses an aspect of Wittgenstein's negative argument in *PI*:

The first step is to point out that the indefinitely prolonged sequence of correct applications of a word cannot be fixed unequivocally by any example or set of examples. It will always be possible to continue the sequence in more than one way. Nor can we eliminate this latitude by falling back on something in our minds, like a picture or a rule or a mental act. For a picture too can always be applied in more than one way, and the same is true of any words that may be used in the formulation of a rule, and a mental act may have more than one sequel. The correct continuation of a series can be determined only by what we, who continue it, find it natural to do. So if our contribution is ignored, it will not be possible to pick out the right continuation from the others. Anything will pass as correct, and the distinction between obeying the rule and disobeying it will collapse. This distinction must be based on our practice, which cannot be completely anticipated by any self-contained thing. (1988, 208)

This passage is illuminating because it contains Pears's explicit claim that Wittgenstein was opposed to the notion that meaning is constituted by some strange mental entity, such as a mental picture or rule. These proposals, though, are all variants of a platonist conception of meaning and, according to Pears, they are flawed for the reason that they do not acknowledge a role for what we find 'natural to do' when applying a rule or word. This passage suggests that Wittgenstein advocates a conception of meaning-constitution after all, albeit one that improves on the platonist account by incorporating the appeal to what is natural to us.

By contrast, David Stern offers a reading of the later Wittgenstein that seems to be closer to the one that I want to defend. Regarding Wittgenstein's later approach to questions concerning meaning, he writes that Wittgenstein holds that 'we need to look at how we make use of the term if we are to understand its significance and avoid the temptation of thinking that there is something that it consists in' (1995, 108). This apparently non-constitutive reading is also reflected in the following passage:

One of [Wittgenstein's] principal aims is to discredit the idea of *a hidden fact that somehow underlies what our words mean* and gives them a fully determinate sense, whether the "fact" is conceived of as a subjective mental process or an objective rule. (1995, 121; my emphasis)

It may be responded that Pears and Baker and Hacker would agree with these remarks. This may very well be so, but my brief reflection on their readings shows that it is at least ambiguous whether they take Wittgenstein's transition to the later period to be marked primarily by the development of an alternative and improved account of meaning-constitution, or by the rejection of all such accounts. There are points in their writings where they make similar sounding claims to Stern, and the only difference may be that his reading does not suffer from the same kind of ambiguity as theirs. My goal in this section is not to settle this issue, but merely to highlight the issue as a genuine one that has primarily to do with the interpretation of Wittgenstein's transition to the later period.

In the remainder of this section, I will approach the issue of Wittgenstein's philosophical development from a different perspective. In a recent article, Kathrin Glüer and Åsa Wikforss argue for an interpretation of Wittgenstein's later conception of language that is explicitly opposed to what they believe to be the dominant (or even exclusive) way of interpreting it. They call it 'the received view' and characterise it as the view that the *later* Wittgenstein subscribed to the following thesis (2010, 148):

(RG) Speaking a language is a rule-guided activity.

They agree that Wittgenstein certainly did subscribe to this thesis in his middle period, but they view themselves as departing from practically every interpreter by arguing that his transition from the middle to the later period was characterised by abandoning it. Glüer and

Wikforss thus develop one quite interesting interpretation of Wittgenstein's transition to the later period, viz. that he completely abandoned his middle period, rule-based conception of the meaning of terms. It is also significant that they view this as a new way of interpreting Wittgenstein's development, as if the assumption has always been in place that Wittgenstein did not reject his middle period conception. Presumably they take the standard or 'received' view to be that Wittgenstein merely modified the details of this conception but that he retained the central claim that meaning is determined by rules for use. Reflecting on their article is a good way of bringing these issues to the fore and engaging with the question of Wittgenstein's mature views on meaning and rule-following.

Glüer and Wikforss offer a couple of strategies for arguing for their interpretation, but the most compelling one focuses on §219 of *PI*:

> When I obey a rule, I do not choose.
>
> I obey the rule *blindly*.

They interpret this remark as meaning that there is no distinctive mental state (e.g. of intention or interpretation) underlying instances of grasping or following a rule. They argue that Wittgenstein appealed to such a mental state in the middle period in order to support the distinction between following a rule and merely being in accord with a rule. For Glüer and Wikforss, the loss of a solid and definite basis on which to draw this distinction eliminates the motivation for calling these genuine cases of rule-following at all (2010, 161). They also believe that Wittgenstein recognised this in his later work and therefore that he came to reject the seemingly natural view that our use of words involves following rules for their use. The characterisation of rule-following as blind is thus taken as undermining the rule-based conception of the meaning of words.

Wright (2007) considers these problematic cases of blind rule-following in some detail, but he arrives at the opposite view that Wittgenstein maintained the conception of language use as rule-governed (even though it is 'blind'). He presents what he calls 'the *modus ponens* model of rule-following' in which the rule is in the form of a conditional asserting that if a certain set of conditions obtain, then a certain action is permitted (2007, 491). This is called the *modus ponens* model because in order to follow a rule we must both apprehend the rule in question (in the form of a conditional) *and* be aware that the relevant conditions happen to obtain if they in fact do (the conditions as specified in the antecedent of the conditional). Based on this we can proceed to act correctly, i.e. in accordance with the rule.

Wright, though, states that despite the apparent plausibility of this model, it is not applicable to the basic or blind cases of rule-following. In the case of the rule for the use of the word 'red', the *modus ponens* model would be as follows (see Wright 2007, 495):

Rule: If ...x..., it is correct to predicate 'red' of x.

Premise: ...x...

Conclusion: It is correct to apply 'red' to x.

The conditions in the antecedent of the expression of the rule would include, e.g., that x looks red, that the lighting conditions are good, etc. The problem with this model, according to Wright, is that it presupposes that in order to grasp the rule for the use of 'red' we must have a prior grasp of the 'anterior concept, "...x...'''. But this concept actually presupposes the concept of red since the conditions include such things as the object in question looking red. As Wright states, 'the problem with extending the modus ponens model to cover all rule-following, including that involved in basic cases, is that it calls for a conceptual repertoire

anterior to an understanding of any particular rule' (2007, 495). The upshot, according to Wright, is that calling a particular object that one encounters 'red' is not 'rationalised by the *modus ponens* model' (2007, 497), and is in this sense a case of rule-following 'without reasons' (2007, 496). This, for Wright, is what is meant by calling these instances of rule-following 'blind'.

But it is precisely considerations such as these that lead Glüer and Wikforss to question why we should think of them as instances of rule-following at all. Their reason for holding this is understandable. When Wright states that basic rule-following is not rationalised by the *modus ponens* model, this means that a person's correct application of, say, the word 'red' cannot be explained in terms of their grasp of the rule for the use of that word; 'we do not really *follow* – are not really guided by – anything' (Wright, 2007, 497). Wright nevertheless maintains that it is still appropriate to say that the person knows the rule for the use of 'red' and knows 'what such a rule requires', but that such knowledge does not 'rationally underlie' our 'competence' with the word (2007, 498). We might naturally be led to wonder why we should speak of rules and knowledge of rules at all here in that case, given that the rules or the knowledge of the rules seem to play no decisive role in the person's behaviour with words. Wright tries to counteract this impression by stating rather cryptically that 'the knowledge *is* the competence'. This suggestion, though, is not explored in much detail; and so the motivation for the opposite view that our use of words is not rule-governed remains strong.

Glüer and Wikforss's objections are compelling and lend considerable support for the interpretation that Wittgenstein, in his later work, abandoned (and not merely modified) his middle period conception of the meanings of words as constituted by rules for the use of those words. I am sympathetic to their interpretation, but I think that it can very easily lead to confusion. Wittgenstein's later recognition of the blindness of rule-following does seem to

entail that there is nothing that we can plausibly appeal to as constitutive of rule-following and thus that could serve as the basis for distinguishing it from merely being in accord with a rule. This is exactly the issue that Baker and Hacker highlight as problematic for the later Wittgenstein, and I suggested that – unlike Stern – it leads them to identify 'something' (e.g. 'abilities' of a certain kind) as the crucial thing that Wittgenstein uses to preserve this distinction. I also argued that in the process, this ends up attributing a type of account of the constitution of rule-following (and meaning) to the later Wittgenstein.

These reflections reveal a dilemma that the later Wittgenstein *seems* to be faced with: either to identify 'something' in which rule-following consists and thus advocate an alternative account of facts that are constitutive of rule-following; or to reject that there is any such thing distinguishing it from merely being in accord with a rule, which seems to entail that there is no such thing as rule-following at all because there is nothing for it to consist in. Pears, Baker and Hacker (if I am right about them) and other constitutive readers interpret the later Wittgenstein as adopting the first horn. There are points where Glüer and Wikforss seem to be suggesting that the later Wittgenstein adopts the second horn, but this is unclear from their article. For example, they state that Wittgenstein's main target is the specific view that meaning something by a word involves rule-following (2010, 164); but they also recognise that the same considerations are applicable beyond this specific case to any type of rule-following (2010, 156-157), which suggests that the whole notion of rule-following is threatened. The main point that I want to argue for is that the later Wittgenstein adopted *neither* horn of the dilemma. In particular, my rejection of the first or constitutive type of reading should not be viewed as an acceptance of the second, Glüer and Wikforss reading. My eventual goal is to argue that the key to understanding Wittgenstein's later conception of rule-following and meaning is to appreciate how he could reject that there are facts that are constitutive of these phenomena without eliminating these phenomena themselves. Hence, I

think that it is going too far to claim that there is no such thing as rule-following or that the use of words is not rule-governed. There is still a place for the distinction between following and merely being in accord with rules in Wittgenstein's later philosophy. However, I cannot give a proper defence of this claim until I consider his positive remarks concerning meaning and rule-following in the final chapter (see especially sections 4.4 and 4.5).

2.4: The master arguments in Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations

One of the criticisms that could justifiably be made against Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein is that it is overly simplified, or too abstracted from the richness of detail in Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following and meaning. This feature of Kripke's reading is a result of his goal to present a more formal rendering of Wittgenstein's main line of argument in that part of *PI*. In this section, though, I will go beyond Kripke by looking at some of the deeper complexities of argumentation in Wittgenstein's discussion. It will become evident that there are significant points of his discussion in which Kripke's reconstruction is firmly rooted, but also numerous others that are ignored by Kripke. Nevertheless, despite Kripke's approach which for the most part involves abstracting from these textual details, I will argue that even when we take these details into account we can see that his interpretation represents the correct strategy for dealing with Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations. In the previous two sections, I sought to give a sense of the importance of the notion of the constitution of meaning and rule-following in the interpretation of Wittgenstein's later philosophy. But whether his later philosophy involves a rejection of this notion has not yet been decided. In this section, I will attempt to provide support for my view that he did reject it by presenting an interpretation of his main arguments as directed against particular assumptions concerning the constitution of meaning and rule-following.

Following many commentators (e.g. Brandom and Williams), I identify two main 'master arguments' in Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following and meaning in *PI*. However, there is considerable difficulty in extracting them from Wittgenstein's text and distinguishing them from one another. I hold that both of these arguments culminate in the statement of some version of the sceptical 'paradox' that Wittgenstein tends to formulate in terms of the seemingly inescapable fact that when applying a rule, whatever I do can be made out to accord with the rule, which effectively eliminates the notions of according or conflicting with the rule (*PI*, §§ 198 and 201). This, in any case, is the interpretation I will present here, before considering competing interpretations and defending my reading against them in the next section.

I shall begin with Wittgenstein's 'regress' argument because its form is slightly easier to discern than that of the second argument in this part of *PI*. The following two pivotal passages articulate the main steps:

"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?" (*PI*, §198)

This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here.

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)

One of the most striking features of these passages is that they both contain a denial that 'interpretation' is involved in rule-following or meaning. §198 states that interpretation is not sufficient for meaning: 'Interpretations by themselves do not determine meaning'. §201 states that there is 'a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation*', which entails that interpretation is not necessary for rule-following. Wittgenstein is led to conclude with these negative claims on the basis of similar considerations in both passages. He writes that 'any interpretation still hangs in the air along with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support'; and that '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'. The problem that Wittgenstein is addressing is that a word or expression of a rule is, as McDowell states, 'normatively inert' (2009, 100). When considered in itself, it is a mere sign or scratch or sound; and in order for there to be a correct and an incorrect way of applying it, it seems that we must do something like interpret it so that it can 'shew me what I have to do at *this* point'. But when we reflect on this, we realise that an interpretation of a word merely provides us with an alternative formulation or expression and cannot bring us any closer to grasping what the correct thing to do is.

However, there seems to be two related difficulties regarding this that Wittgenstein is highlighting in these passages. On the one hand, there is the difficulty that this gap between an expression and the correct way of applying it cannot be bridged by an interpretation – an interpretation 'still hangs in the air along with what it interprets'. On the other hand, there is the difficulty that 'every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule' because 'on some interpretation' the *action* can be construed as according with the rule; and thus that

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in this case the gap is bridged, but in an arbitrary way. The first relates to the interpretation of *the word or expression* of the rule and fact that the gap between it and the action that would amount to correctly applying it cannot be bridged, while the second relates to the interpretation of *the action* and the fact that it or any other action can be made out to accord with a given rule. My interest is not so much with the details of Wittgenstein's regress argument as with the form it takes. Whichever way we view these passages from *PI*, the conclusion is the same: that interpretation is not constitutive of rule-following or meaning. Wittgenstein's argument has a kind of *reductio* structure. The assumption that interpretation is constitutive of rule-following or meaning leads to the 'paradox' that no course of action can be determined as according or conflicting with a rule or the meaning of a word. The result is thus to reject this assumption on the grounds that it leads to this paradox.

My concern is with the light that this potentially throws on the second of Wittgenstein's master arguments concerning rule-following and meaning. It is this second argument that Kripke reconstructs as the sceptical argument. I will argue that it has a similar structure to the regress argument in the specific sense that it uses a reductio procedure to undermine a particular assumption about the constitution of meaning and rule-following. The assumption is distinct from that which is attacked in the regress argument and it is more difficult to adequately articulate it. For convenience, I will borrow Brandom's label and refer to this second argument as the 'gerrymandering argument' (although I do not share his specific characterisation of it). In the rest of this section I will attempt to outline this argument, with particular emphasis on identifying the key assumption that – I hold – ends up generating the same paradox as in the regress argument.

The core of the gerrymandering argument is in *PI* §§185-197. The best place to begin is thus with Wittgenstein's description in §185 of a child who is being taught how to follow the rule of *Add 2*:

Now we get the pupil to continue a series (say + 2) beyond 1000--and he writes 1000, 1004, 1008, 1012.

We say to him: "Look what you've done!"--He doesn't understand. We say: "You were meant to add *two*: look how you began the series!"--He answers: "Yes, isn't it right? I thought that was how I was *meant* to do it."--Or suppose he pointed to the series and said: "But I went on in the same way."--It would now be no use to say: "But can't you see....?"--and repeat the old examples and explanations.--In such a case we might say, perhaps: It comes natural to this person to understand our order with our explanations as we should understand the order: "Add 2 up to 1000, 4 up to 2000, 6 up to 3000 and so on."

(PI, §185)

The child who is being taught how to add 2 extends the series as we do up to '1000', but then diverges from us by writing '1004', '1008', etc. Furthermore, the child takes himself to be following the rule he was taught, to be continuing on in the same way. What is Wittgenstein's main point concerning this? For the sake of clarity, in what follows I will adopt the convention of referring to the rule itself in italics and the expression of the rule in single quotation marks. There is some ambiguity in the above passage about whether or not the child has succeeded in grasping the rule of *Add 2*; and, as a result, I take there to be two main points that Wittgenstein could be making. Firstly, that the child does *not* grasp the rule of *Add 2* and thus does not associate it with the expression 'Add 2' or '+ 2'. Rather, what he does instead is grasp a deviant rule, such as *Add 2 up to 1000, 4 up to 2000, 6 up to 3000 and so on*, and associates it with the expression 'Add 2'. This is what makes him write '1004' after '1000'. The point would thus be that the child's applications up to '1000' are compatible with him following the rule of *Add 2*, but also with him following any number of different rules such as this deviant rule. This is exactly the point made by Kripke's *quus* example.

This reading is based closely on the text, but there is also a second way of reading it that becomes apparent when we consider some of the points that Wittgenstein considers elsewhere (including in his middle period). On this second reading, it is held that the child *does* grasp the rule of *Add 2*, i.e. that he genuinely grasps the intended rule and associates the same rule that the teacher does with the expression 'Add 2'. The point would be that even though the child grasps this rule, there is still the further question of how to apply it in the potential infinity of particular cases. It seems that a new rule is required in each case – a rule for applying the rule in just these cases. Hence, one rule for applying the general rule of *Add 2* at '1000' would yield '1002'; but another would yield '1004'; and yet another '2780', and so on. There are times when Wittgenstein makes it seem as if this is his main point, e.g., when he states that the rule itself does not compel us to apply it in such-and-such a way, and that the rule does not anticipate or contain all its applications (see, e.g., *RFM*, 79; and *PI*, §§197 and 218-219). This second characterisation derives from what could be called the gap between the rule and its applications (which is a major theme in his middle period especially; see e.g., *PR*, §§149, 164 and *ACL*, 131-134).

It is not hugely important to choose between the two different ways of reading §185 because they both relate to the same point that the child may have grasped the deviant rule of *Add 2 up to 1000, 4 up to 2000, 6 up to 3000 and so on*, and so his writing '1004' after '1000' can be seen as rational or going on in the same way even though it contradicts how we tend to extend the series beyond '1000'. The two readings merely differ over whether the deviant rule is grasped in the first instance, or whether it figures as the rule for applying the original rule. Of course, Wittgenstein's point that leads to the gerrymandering argument goes beyond this particular case. The possibility of inconsistent applications of the same rule-formulation, '+ 2', can be generalised to the point that *anything* I write after, say, '1000' can be considered to be rational or going on in the same way. For there is always a deviant rule

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we can appeal to that would yield the same set of applications as if we had grasped the rule of *Add 2*, but which would justify us in writing '3409', '108903', or anything else after '1000'. The conclusion of the gerrymandering argument, then, is the statement of Wittgenstein's sceptical paradox that 'no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule' (*PI*, §201). However, as with the regress argument, this is only an interim conclusion, not the ultimate conclusion of the argument. I will defend my reading by examining the intervening sections, *PI* §§186-197, and identifying the crucial assumption about the constitution of meaning and rule-following in play in the gerrymandering considerations.

Consider first the following remarks:

> In our failure to understand the use of a word we take it as the expression of a queer *process*. (As we think of time as a queer medium, of the mind as a queer kind of being.)
>
> (*PI*, §196)

> 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*, §192)

Throughout this part of *PI*, Wittgenstein considers how the notion of meaning can appear mysterious or 'queer' when viewed a certain way. He states that there is nothing wrong with saying that, e.g., when you gave the order of 'Add 2', you meant that the pupil should write '1002' after '1000' (see *PI*, §§187, 195, and 197). The mistake is to misconstrue this in terms of a distinctive state or process that anticipates the entire pattern of correct application or that determines the correct response in a potential infinity of cases. This is the common theme in the following passages:

"But I already knew, at the time when I gave the order, that he ought to write 1002 after 1000."-- Certainly; and you can also say you *meant* it then; only you should not let yourself be misled by the grammar of the words "know" and "mean". For you don't want to say that you thought of the step from 1000 to 1002 at that time--and even if you did think of this step, still you did not think of other ones.

(*PI*, §187)

Here I should first of all like to say: your idea was that that act of meaning the order had in its own way already traversed all those steps: that when you meant it your mind as it were flew ahead and took all the steps before you physically arrived at this or that one.

Thus you were inclined to use such expressions as: "The steps are *really* already taken, even before I take them in writing or orally or in thought." And it seemed as if they were in some *unique* way predetermined, anticipated--as only the act of meaning can anticipate reality.   (*PI*, §188)

"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)

This notion of a state or process that anticipates or determines the pattern of correct application of a word is different to the notion of an act of interpretation, which was the focus in the regress argument. This other notion pertains to a separate assumption about what it is that constitutes meaning or rule-following.

Using Wittgenstein's example of the correct application of '+ 2', and based on what he states in the sections leading up to the statement of the paradox in §201, I offer the following formulation of the assumption:

If I am able to correctly apply the rule-formulation '+ 2', then I must have grasped the rule R that determines the correct application of '+ 2' in a potential infinity of particular instances.[25]

This, I argue, is the main assumption in Wittgenstein's gerrymandering argument. This argument presents a separate path (to the one in the regress argument) to the same paradoxical conclusion along the following lines:

(1) If I am able to correctly apply the rule-formulation '+ 2', then I must have grasped the rule R that determines the correct application of '+ 2' in a potential infinity of particular instances.

(2) But, for any finite set of applications of '+ 2' (e.g. up to '1000'), there is an indefinite number of rules that are consistent with this set, but which are inconsistent with one another because they each call for different particular applications of '+ 2' beyond this finite set (e.g. beyond '1000').

Therefore,

(3) I must grasp the *right* rule, i.e. the rule that demands that I write '1002' after '1000', '1004' after '1002', etc.

(4) But there is nothing about me (e.g. my past applications of '+ 2', my mental states involving '+ 2', etc.) to distinguish following a rule R_1 (which would demand that I write '1004' after '1000') from following a rule R_2 (which would demand that I write '1002' after '1000').

Therefore,

(5) Anything I write after '1000' could be construed as a correct application of '+ 2'.

Therefore,

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[25] Notice that in the formulation of this assumption I do not state that the rule-follower has to grasp the rule of *Add 2*, but merely that they have to grasp the rule R. This is because (in accordance with my earlier remarks on *PI* §185) I want to leave it open as to whether the rule-follower begins by grasping the deviant rule, or whether they begin by grasping the 'right' rule and then subsequently adopt a deviant rule for applying this rule.

(6) The whole notion of accord and conflict with a rule is empty.

This, to reiterate, is only a fragment of the full gerrymandering argument. Wittgenstein's response is to reject the paradox and moreover the assumption at line 1 that leads to it. Hence, if we generalise beyond the particular rule of *Add 2*, the ultimate conclusion of the argument is:

> It is not the case that: If I am able to correctly apply a rule-formulation 'R', then I must have grasped the
>
> rule R that determines the correct application of 'R' in a potential infinity of particular instances.

The conclusion from these gerrymandering considerations is that rule-following and meaning cannot be held to consist in such acts of grasping rules or standards of these types. In the next section, I will defend this reading of Wittgenstein's master arguments against some prominent competing readings. Although I have for convenience treated these two arguments as separate, there is the question of whether they are actually interdependent.[26] I will also consider this point in the next section.

2.5: Alternative formulations of Wittgenstein's master arguments

Although it is quite common to identify two main arguments in Wittgenstein's later discussion of rule-following and meaning, there are many different formulations of each of them. This is not surprising given the diversity of the issues that Wittgenstein raises, some of which I discussed in the previous section. There is, e.g., disagreement over what the premises and conclusions are of each and over how the arguments are related to one another, or specifically whether one of them is more primary. I will consider a few of the most

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[26] My main motivation for considering them separately is that there are two main assumptions concerning the constitution of meaning or rule-following in this part of *PI*; and these two arguments can quite naturally be viewed as targeting one of these assumptions each.

interesting alternative formulations in this section and defend my own formulations against them.

I will begin with Meredith Williams's reading in her (2007). She interprets Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations as being directed against what she calls 'the Classical View', according to which 'a rule serves both as a guide to the individual in determining what he does or says, and as a basis for justifying or assessing what he does or says' (2007, 62). There is, then, a practical or causal and an epistemic or justificatory dimension to the conception under attack. Williams goes on to argue that Wittgenstein proposes two main arguments, and that they each undermine one of these dimensions. As background for the discussion of the Wittgensteinian arguments, she summarises the Classical View of a rule:

> We are looking for something that (1) can come before the mind and be grasped "in a flash", in other words, something isolable, but which (2) can serve as a guide for certain future actions, and also (3) can set a standard for the correctness of those actions. (2007, 63)

She labels Wittgenstein's two master arguments as 'the Infinite Regress Argument' and 'the Paradox of Interpretation', and states that the first shows that nothing could meet (1) and (2); and that the second argument shows that nothing could meet (1) and (3) (Ibid.). The Regress argument, then, is directed against the Classical View's account of the practical dimension of rule-following, while the Paradox argument is directed against its account of the epistemic dimension. My interest in Williams's interpretation of these arguments has to do with what she takes the conclusions of each to be and how she views their relation to one another.

She states that the conclusion of the Regress argument is that 'meaning must be something other than an act of interpretation or that which requires interpretation' (Ibid.), and

cites *PI*, §§141 and 198 as evidence for this. However, she then states that while the Regress argument shows that meaning cannot be an act of interpretation, what she calls the Paradox argument

> builds on this to establish a more radical conclusion, namely, that the very distinction between correct and incorrect collapses from within the Classical View: We have no standard for correctness at all. (Ibid.)

This second argument goes beyond the Regress argument because, according to Williams, 'even if the interpretation of the rule itself were transparent', it 'carries no constraint on *what* action is performed, as any action can be characterised to accord with that rule or not' (2007, 64). That is: 'Given the fact of multiple interpretations, for any action, that action can be characterised both in a way that accords with a given rule and conflicts with it' (Ibid.). The idea seems to be that if we think of the objectified meaning of an expression as something graspable or isolable before the mind, we can imagine alternative interpretations of it, i.e. alternative courses of action that would accord with it. But then, even though the meaning of the expression is fixed (this may or may not be thought of in terms of giving the adequate interpretation of it), the question of what actions accord with it or count as correct applications of it is not determined. Williams's interpretation is quite unique in holding that the gerrymandering or 'Paradox' argument *builds* on the regress argument and that whereas the latter is concerned exclusively with the proposal that rule-following requires an act of interpretation, the former is concerned with the more general issue of 'the action itself and the fact that *it* can be multiply interpreted' (2007, 87). Accordingly, she argues that the sceptical paradox which states that any action can be made out to accord or conflict with my rule is only formulated in the Paradox argument.

This interpretation differs from my own because I hold that the sceptical paradox is derived in both arguments and that they are based on separate considerations (and thus that neither argument is more primary or dependent on the other).[27] There is a perfectly real sense in which even the regress argument derives the paradox. If it is assumed that following a rule requires an act of interpretation, then the regress arises because any interpretation of the rule will itself need interpretation, and so on; and so there will be neither accord nor conflict between the rule and the actions that are supposed be applications of it. When Williams states that the regress argument concludes with the negation of the interpretationist assumption and the gerrymandering argument concludes with the sceptical paradox, I think she overlooks the fact that there is a sceptical fragment in *each* of these arguments; i.e., in both cases the sceptical paradox is derived and the difference between the two arguments on this point merely consists in how it is derived. Furthermore, this is the same paradox in both cases. But in each case, the sceptical fragment is part of a broader argument that concludes with the negation of the original assumption that leads to the regress. In the case of the regress argument, the assumption is that rule-following requires an act of interpretation; and in the case of the gerrymandering argument, the assumption is that rule-following requires an act of grasping something that determines the correct application of 'R' in a potential infinity of particular instances. Williams's formulations of Wittgenstein's arguments, then, are not so much flawed as incomplete. They overlook this important feature that is shared by both of them.

Brandom is another prominent example of an interpreter who holds that there are two master arguments in Wittgenstein's discussion. However, he offers a characterisation of these arguments that is different from both Williams's and my own. Brandom discusses

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[27] As my discussion of McDowell in this section suggests, though, it may turn out that the regress argument is dependent on the gerrymandering argument.

Wittgenstein in the context of his philosophical programme of giving a positive account of our norm-governed practices. He views Wittgenstein as relevant to this programme because he holds that each of the two master arguments attack a particular misconception of normativity or norm-governed practices (1994, 20-23 and 26-30). My concern is not with the details of Brandom's interpretation of these Wittgensteinian arguments because that would require us to consider the wider context of Brandom's philosophical programme. He does defend the interesting and controversial point that Wittgenstein's arguments raise genuine philosophical problems about meaning and rule-following that point in the direction of a positive programme like the one he develops in *Making It Explicit*. I will return to this point in section 4.7 of the final chapter in relation to Wittgenstein's quietism. My present concern is with McDowell's response to Brandom's interpretation of these arguments, which raises some very significant issues regarding the nature of the arguments and how they are related to one another. I agree with most of McDowell's criticisms that Brandom has misconstrued the targets of Wittgenstein's arguments (see McDowell, 2009, 99-100 and 107-108). Hence, while I borrow the labels of 'regress' and 'gerrymandering' argument from Brandom, I do not agree with how he formulates them. From the point of view of this chapter, the more significant claim that McDowell makes is that Brandom is wrong to suppose that there are two master arguments in Wittgenstein's discussion. McDowell argues that 'There is only one master argument' (2009, 108), viz. the regress argument, and that the function of the gerrymandering considerations is merely to make the point made in the regress argument more 'vivid' (2009, 107). This is potentially damaging for Kripke's interpretation because it (implicitly)[28] takes the opposite view that the gerrymandering argument is fundamental and Kripke uses it to reconstruct the central features of Wittgenstein's rule-following

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[28] This is only implicit in Kripke because he focuses on the gerrymandering considerations without ever considering that there may be a separate regress argument. He takes it for granted that the gerrymandering considerations are fundamental; and in the very few instances in which he mentions the regress considerations, it is merely supplementary to the gerrymandering or sceptical argument (see, e.g., *WRPL*, 17).

considerations. If McDowell is right, Kripke has misunderstood the relation between the regress and gerrymandering considerations, and has thus reconstructed Wittgenstein's philosophy on a mistaken premise.

In order to evaluate McDowell's claim, we need to look more closely at how he interprets Wittgenstein's regress argument. The difficulties that are identified in the argument begin when we consider an expression or sign-post abstracted from the established practice of using it. When we view it this way, it 'stands aloof' and is 'normatively inert' in the sense that it is merely a 'dead sign' that does not help us to distinguish between the correct and incorrect ways of using it (2009, 100). We then suppose that the expression or sign-post can instruct us only '*under an interpretation*' (Ibid.). But, as already discussed, this does not help because it ends up generating a regress of interpretations. McDowell, though, states that this regress is 'one horn of a dilemma' that is generated by the assumption that understanding or rule-following requires interpretation (1998, 230). The second horn of the dilemma follows from the claim that '[u]nderstanding an expression, then, must be possessing an interpretation that cannot be interpreted' (1998, 230). That is, in the desperate attempt to stop the regress of interpretations in the first horn, we posit a type of interpretation that cannot be interpreted. Wittgenstein also refers to this as 'the last interpretation' (*BB*, 34). McDowell argues, though, that we do not have to accept either horn because the whole dilemma only exists because of the assumption that understanding or rule-following requires an act of interpretation. He holds that the Wittgensteinian response is to take this third option of rejecting this interpretationist assumption.

This presentation of the regress argument enables us to see how McDowell thinks it is related to the (in his view) derivative gerrymandering considerations. The point at which they are connected is at the second horn of the dilemma, i.e. in relation to the notion of meaning or rule-following as 'the last interpretation'. McDowell writes:

This picture of meaning as the last interpretation is the germ of the imagery – a familiar target in Wittgenstein's later work – in which understanding a meaning is gearing oneself up to a super-rigid mechanism that keeps one's meaning-involving behaviour in line. (2009, 106; see also 1998, 230).

This is the conception of meaning that I agreed in the previous section is targeted by Wittgenstein's gerrymandering argument. The 'super-rigid mechanism' is the notion of a potentially infinite pattern of correct application that one has to grasp or anticipate or 'gear oneself up to' in order to succeed in understanding the word. However, McDowell seems to be suggesting that this assumption about meaning is actually derivative from a more fundamental assumption, viz. that meaning involves an act of interpretation. The implication is thus that if we reject the interpretationist assumption at the root of the dilemma, there is no need for a separate argument to undermine this other assumption; i.e. there is no need for a gerrymandering argument. McDowell does believe there is a place for the gerrymandering considerations. They are useful in showing that the gap between an expression and what counts as its correct applications cannot be bridged by interpretation. Gerrymandered interpretations 'would bridge the gap otherwise than as we intended', and this merely reinforces the point that 'the gap cannot be bridged at all' (2009, 107). Even though they may have this place, McDowell also sees this as internal to the regress argument and not as constituting a separate master argument (2009, 107-108).

I will argue that there is a different way of viewing the relation between the regress and gerrymandering considerations, and moreover a way that is based on how McDowell presents the regress argument. According to McDowell, then, at the core of the regress argument is the dilemma sketched above and he proposes that it can be avoided by rejecting the assumption that meaning requires an act of interpretation. But surely there must be

grounds for rejecting this root assumption? In particular, the rejection of this assumption must proceed along the lines of a reductio. The assumption must generate an absurdity or contradiction, thus warranting the rejection of the assumption. The question I am asking is whether McDowell has genuinely identified an absurdity that would warrant this move. *Both* horns of the dilemma would have to be shown to be intolerable in order to justify the rejection of the root assumption. But has McDowell done so? It is obvious why the first horn is absurd; the infinite regress of interpretations makes meaning practically impossible. However, what reason do we have for rejecting the proposal that meaning involves a special act of grasping a super-rigid mechanism or potentially infinite pattern of correct application? Strange though it might be, there is nothing immediately paradoxical or absurd about it. An argument is needed to show why it is flawed or unacceptable, but McDowell does not provide one. This, I hold, is where the gerrymandering argument could come in because it is an argument that directly targets this conception of meaning and shows that it leads to the paradoxical conclusion that there is nothing to distinguish correct and incorrect applications of a term or rule. Far from being superfluous, then, the gerrymandering considerations are of vital importance and so much so that the regress argument (as McDowell characterises it) is incomplete without it. This suggests that, if anything, the gerrymandering argument is the more fundamental of the two master arguments because its plausibility does not depend on the other argument.

There is more that could be said about the relation between these arguments, but I take it that McDowell's attempt to downplay the significance of the gerrymandering argument has been shown to be flawed. Hence, the threat that this poses to Kripke's interpretation, which makes the gerrymandering argument fundamental to Wittgenstein's later philosophy, is dissolved.

2.6: Wittgenstein's later philosophical method and the rejection of constitutional questions

Before proceeding, it would be helpful to review where my interpretation of the later Wittgenstein currently stands. In section 2.3, I discussed the disagreement that exists concerning Wittgenstein's later approach to meaning and rule-following, in particular concerning whether it is committed to identifying facts that are constitutive of these notions. I argued that Pears and Baker and Hacker end up adopting a constitutive reading, partly in order to account for the distinction between following and merely being in accord with a rule; while Glüer and Wikforss interpret the later Wittgenstein as rejecting that there is anything to distinguish these, which seems to threaten the whole notion of rule-following. My interpretation of Wittgenstein aims to establish two claims: firstly, that the later Wittgenstein rejected the whole approach to meaning and rule-following that seeks to identify facts that are constitutive of these notions; but secondly, that this does not necessarily lead to the extreme that Glüer and Wikforss depict, according to which the whole notion of rule-following is shown to be unstable and is rejected. In sections 2.4 and 2.5, I took the rather long and circuitous route to arguing for the first claim that the later Wittgenstein is opposed to notion of meaning-constitution, i.e. by considering the arguments that he developed against particular examples of accounts of meaning-constitution. There is, though, a shorter and more direct route to arguing for the same claim. It argues simply that Wittgenstein's later philosophical method is such that he must reject all such accounts. I will devote this section to considering this shorter route.

Paul Horwich (2004) makes the interesting claim that Wittgenstein's metaphilosophy does not substantially change from *TLP* to *PI*. He identifies the following core features that he believes are common to Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy throughout his career (see 2004, 102-103):

(i) The conception of philosophical questions as 'provoked by confusion' rather than by ignorance.

(ii) The implication that philosophical questions are pseudo-questions, which cannot be solved but at best 'eliminated'.

(iii) The implication that there can be 'no philosophical explanations, theories, or discoveries'.

(iv) That philosophical confusions 'originate in misunderstandings about language'.

According to Horwich, the only major difference concerns the question of the 'specific' way in which philosophical confusion is to be diagnosed (Ibid.). He holds that in *TLP* it is diagnosed on the basis of philosophical doctrines (primarily about meaning) that show the philosophical questions and answers to be nonsense; while in *PI* it is diagnosed on the basis of observations concerning our 'tendency to over-stretch analogies in the uses of words', to be 'unnecessarily perplexed by the conceptual tensions that result', and 'to wrongly feel that an *a priori* theory of the phenomenon in question is needed to demystify it' (2004, 103). This change from the early to later period, then, is a change in the *method* by which philosophical confusion is exposed. Horwich argues that this change is motivated by an 'incoherence' in the *TLP* method (2004, 102). This is essentially a conflict inherent in Wittgenstein's practice in *TLP* of developing semantic and metaphysical doctrines with the aim of demonstrating ('showing') that philosophical questions and answers are nonsense. This is incoherent because Wittgenstein believed that philosophical theorising is confused, but he had to engage in philosophical theorising himself in order to show why it is confused (viz. because the questions and answers it poses are actually nonsense). As Horwich says, 'Wittgenstein prohibits philosophical theorizing on the basis of a philosophical theory' (2004, 102).

Wittgenstein's later philosophical method, on the other hand, manages to avoid this kind of internal conflict because it does not presuppose a particular doctrine or theory of meaning in order to demonstrate the confusion at the source of philosophical theorising. Instead, it acknowledges similarities between different areas of discourse, e.g. between numerals and names of material objects; but it highlights how certain phenomena (e.g. arithmetical truth) can appear perplexing if the *differences* between these discourses are overlooked. And so Wittgenstein's later method is to merely describe our use of the terms in question, highlight their differences as well as their similarities to other areas of discourse, and try to show that the philosophical puzzles arise merely through a failure to pay sufficient attention to these aspects of the discourse in question.

There is a great deal that is controversial in Horwich's interpretation. For example, the question of whether Wittgenstein did presuppose a particular theory of meaning in *TLP* is still strongly debated. The so-called 'traditional' readers such as Hacker and Pears hold that he did, while some of the 'new' or 'resolute' readers (especially the 'strongly resolute' readers such as Juliet Floyd and Rupert Read) hold that he did not. Nevertheless, Horwich highlights the very important point that Wittgenstein must avoid incoherence by not engaging in philosophical theorising himself in his attempts to expose the confusions at the source of all philosophical theorising. It is less controversial to hold that Wittgenstein had a similar conception of philosophy throughout his career, i.e. that philosophy ought not to seek to emulate the natural sciences by advancing theses, but merely to remove the confusion that arises as a result of misunderstanding the structure or function of our language. Bringing this back to the specific issue of meaning, if we focus on just this issue concerning his conception of philosophy we see that there is a fairly simple argument that rules out the possibility that he defended an account of the constitution of meaning.

(1) Philosophical questions are pseudo-questions and ultimately confused.

(2) The typical response to a philosophical question is to give a philosophical account of some phenomenon.

(3) The typical response to the philosophical questions *about meaning* is to give an account of the constitution of meaning (e.g., to identify a particular type of mental state as underlying meaning, or as that in which meaning consists).

(4) But if philosophical questions are not genuine, then the attempts to answer them are misplaced or badly motivated.

(5) Therefore, the attempt to give an account of the constitution of meaning is misplaced and suffers from the same confusion as the formulation of philosophical questions about meaning.

(6) Therefore, we should not seek to develop an account of meaning-constitution.

Stated in even simpler terms, Wittgenstein's opposition to 'explanations' in philosophy (*PI*, §109) implies that he must have been opposed to giving an account of meaning in terms of the facts that make it the case that a word means such-and-such (or that a person means such-and-such by a word). This is what the argument comes down to.

However, if it is correct that Wittgenstein did hold a similar conception of the proper goal of philosophy throughout all periods, then this argument can apply to any of these periods. But I have already acknowledged that Wittgenstein did entertain various accounts of meaning-constitution in the middle period; and according to one prominent way of reading *TLP*, he also adopted such an account in his early period. The above argument, therefore, does not settle the issue of whether the later Wittgenstein actually did abandon all accounts of

meaning-constitution. At most, it merely establishes that he sought to abandon the approach to meaning that provides such an account. We need further evidence to convince us that he did not fall into a similar trap in his later period of opposing philosophical theorising, on the one hand, and perhaps unwittingly committing himself to a philosophical account, on the other. It is remarkable how frequently the charge that he did commit this error has been made against the later Wittgenstein, either implicitly or explicitly. For example, Wittgenstein has very often been viewed as an opponent of realism or platonism, with the implication that he adopted a version of anti-realism (e.g. Dummett) or idealism (e.g. B. Williams). This has been the case despite the widespread recognition that he is explicitly opposed to developing philosophical accounts in order to explain certain phenomena or address philosophical problems. It seems that the only way of viewing these readings is as interpreting Wittgenstein as explicitly opposed to philosophical theorising, but as unwittingly adopting some type of philosophical doctrine nonetheless. In this sense, they resemble some of the 'traditional' readings, and even some of the 'weakly resolute' readings (see Diamond and Conant, 2004, 82-83), of *TLP*. The important question in the present context, then, concerns not merely Wittgenstein's later attitude to philosophical theorising, but whether he succeeded in refraining from indulging in it.

In the next chapter, I will explore how this charge does have a strong basis in Wittgenstein's later writings, particularly in his writings on necessity and mathematics. As such I will be forced to address not only his views on meaning and rule-following, but also his views on necessity. These turn out to be very closely related in his philosophy. However, I will argue that Wittgenstein's remarks on meaning and necessity do not after all demonstrate that he adopted an explanatory account of either meaning or necessity, i.e. that he opposed all accounts (including anti-realist accounts) of the constitution of meaning and

necessity *and* that he succeeded in abandoning this constitutive-explanatory approach to these notions.

2.7: Conclusion: Wittgenstein, Kripke's Wittgenstein, and meaning-constitution

In section 2.1 of this chapter, I considered Baker and Hacker's objection to Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein as a type of sceptic about meaning. This is the most common type of objection made against *WRPL* and it does appear to have substantial foundation in Wittgenstein's frequent statements to the effect that scepticism is nonsensical or incoherent. Of course, it depends on what kind of scepticism is involved. Very often it is the epistemological kind, or scepticism about some branch of knowledge. Kripke, though, emphasises that he does not take Wittgenstein to be a sceptic about our knowledge of what we mean, but a sceptic about the *existence* of facts about meaning or of facts that are constitutive of meaning. The scepticism is thus metaphysical or constitutive, not epistemological (see *WRPL*, 21). My attempt to address this objection in section 2.1 consisted merely of a sketch of how to go about it. I merely stated that the task of answering the above objection involves demonstrating that Wittgenstein is a sceptic in a similar sense to Kripke's Wittgenstein, viz. in rejecting the existence of meaning-constituting facts of all kinds. I am now in a better position to address this issue.

I will begin with the so-called sceptical challenge to meaning and rule-following, and the question of whether it has any basis in Wittgenstein's writings. This question must be addressed by considering one of Wittgenstein's main arguments – the gerrymandering argument – from *PI*, which Kripke focuses on and reconstructs as the sceptical argument leading to the radical sceptical conclusion. If we compare Wittgenstein's argument with Kripke's reconstruction, we will be able to evaluate whether the former can be employed

without distortion in the kind of sceptical challenge that Kripke depicts. In section 2.4, I formulated Wittgenstein's argument as follows:

(1) If I am able to correctly apply the rule-formulation '+ 2', then I must have grasped the rule R that determines the correct application of '+ 2' in a potential infinity of particular instances.

(2) But, for any finite set of applications of '+ 2' (e.g. up to '1000'), there is an indefinite number of rules that are consistent with this set, but which are inconsistent with one another because they each call for different particular applications of '+ 2' beyond this finite set (e.g. beyond '1000').

Therefore,

(3) I must grasp the right rule, i.e. the rule that demands that I write '1002' after '1000', '1004' after '1002', etc.

(4) But there is nothing about me (e.g. my past applications of '+ 2', my mental states involving '+ 2', etc.) to distinguish following a rule R_1 (which would demand that I write '1004' after '1000') from following a rule R_2 (which would demand that I write '1002' after '1000').

Therefore,

(5) Anything I write after '1000' could be construed as a correct application of '+ 2'.

Therefore,

(6) The whole notion of accord and conflict with a rule is empty.

In the first chapter, I proposed the following formulation of Kripke's reconstruction of this argument:

(1) If a speaker means *addition* by '+', then there are facts about the   Classical Realist

speaker that establish the *addition* function – out of an indefinite range   Assumption

of alternatives (e.g. *quaddition*) – as the standard of correctness for his

  use of '+'.

(2) There are no facts about the speaker that establish the *addition*   Basic Sceptical Conclusion

function – out of an indefinite range of alternatives – as the standard   (Following a case-by-case

of correctness for his use of '+'.   analysis of candidates of

     meaning-constituting facts)

(3) The speaker does not mean *addition* by '+'.   (Modus tollens)

(4) The speaker does not mean anything by '+'.

(5) Nobody means anything by any term.   Radical Sceptical

     Conclusion

When the arguments are presented in this way, the correspondence between them is clear. The core issue in both arguments is whether there are facts about the language user or rule-follower that determine that they have grasped the relevant rule or standard of correctness for the application of the term. That this is what is required in order to establish that the person in question follows the rule or means something by the term is stated in the respective assumptions at the beginning of each argument. Further, that this condition is not met is stated at line 4 of the Wittgensteinian argument and at line 2 of the Kripkean argument. Finally, following from this, the radical sceptical conclusion is drawn in each case that the person does not follow the rule or mean anything by the term in question. The arguments can then be generalised to undermine the very notions of following a rule or meaning something by a term. Wittgenstein's gerrymandering argument can thus be quite naturally understood as

a chain of reasoning leading to the radical sceptical conclusion. In sections 2.4 and 2.5, I argued that his regress argument should also be interpreted as leading to this conclusion. It is merely an alternative path to it, employing alternative assumptions about meaning or rule-following.

There is, though, the separate important question of whether Wittgenstein accepts the radical sceptical conclusion. As discussed throughout this chapter, there are numerous passages in *PI* that make it clear that Wittgenstein responds to these arguments by rejecting this conclusion (see especially *PI*, §201). In this sense, his response is similar to Kripke's Wittgenstein's as I have interpreted it. The implications of making this move are also similar. That is, Wittgenstein is led to conclude by reductio with the negation of the original assumption about meaning or rule-following that is used to derive the radical sceptical conclusion. His ultimate conclusion, then, is not to accept this radical conclusion, but to reject the particular assumption that leads to it. In the case of the gerrymandering argument, it is the assumption that meaning requires an act of grasping the pattern of correct application of the word in a potential infinity of cases; while in the case of the regress argument, it is the assumption that meaning requires an act of interpretation. Wittgenstein's response is to reject particular conceptions of what constitutes meaning, and thus also the existence of meaning-constituting facts corresponding to these conceptions. In terms of the broader aim of this thesis, I want to argue that his response should be interpreted in the overall context of his opposition to the approach to meaning that seeks to identify meaning-constituting facts.

However, I must emphasise that I have not yet provided sufficient evidence for my view that Wittgenstein is a sceptic in the specific sense of rejecting the existence of meaning-constituting facts of all kinds. In the first chapter, I argued that Kripke's Wittgenstein's argument can be generalised in such a way as to be employed against a large class of conceptions that attempt to state the necessary and sufficient conditions for meaning. When it

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comes to Wittgenstein himself, I must show that his master arguments (or at least the gerrymandering argument) can be generalised in a similar way. Only then can he be viewed as developing an argument against a large class of assumptions about meaning-constitution; and only then can I make a stronger case for the claim that he is a sceptic in the same sense as Kripke's Wittgenstein. Furthermore, if this can be established, then this will also support Kripke's characterisation of Wittgenstein's positive picture of meaning as a sceptical solution. It will be shown to be a sceptical solution in the specific sense of being based on the conclusion that there are no meaning-constituting facts. I will explore this in detail in the final chapter.

Chapter Three: *Wittgenstein, Necessity, and the Conception of Meaning as Constituted by Grammatical Conventions*

3.0: Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued that Wittgenstein's master arguments can be called sceptical in the sense that they both establish a sceptical paradoxical conclusion, but that Wittgenstein's response in each case is ultimately to reject the particular assumption about meaning-constitution that leads to the paradox. One of my goals in this chapter is to argue that Wittgenstein's gerrymandering argument can be generalised in such a way as to apply to a large class of different assumptions about meaning-constitution. This in turn will provide further support for my claim that Wittgenstein is a sceptic in the specific sense that he rejects the existence of meaning-constitution facts of any kind because his opposition to the notion of meaning-constitution will be shown to be more wide-ranging than it may have seemed in the previous chapter.

My strategy is to extend the discussion of the previous chapter by considering Wittgenstein's later views on necessity. The reason for doing so becomes clear when we reflect on his peculiar conception of necessary propositions as disguised grammatical rules, or rules that constitute the meanings of certain of the terms occurring in the propositions. In his middle period at least, Wittgenstein's conception of necessity is thus a clear-cut instance of a conception of the constitution of the meanings of certain terms. And since the later Wittgenstein continues to speak of necessary propositions as grammatical rules (see section 3.1), there is the question of whether he accepted a class of meaning-constituting facts. His remarks on necessity thus amount to a significant potential counterexample to my non-constitutive reading.

A large part of this chapter is devoted to Dummett's radical conventionalist reading of Wittgenstein on necessity, as well as some of the most important responses to it. One of the advantages of doing this is that it raises most of the deepest issues concerning Wittgenstein's later views on necessity, rule-following, and meaning. However, it also allows me to consider a much wider variety of different constitutive accounts of these notions (see section 3.4). Dummett makes a distinction between realist, moderate constructivist, and radical constructivist (including 'full-blooded conventionalist') accounts. I will argue that Wittgenstein's gerrymandering argument has a wider scope than merely undermining realist or platonist conceptions, and that it also applies to moderate constructivist conceptions. I argue that many prominent readings – including those of Stroud, and Baker and Hacker – interpret Wittgenstein as a moderate constructivist. But since Wittgenstein's own argument can be applied to this type of account of rule-following and meaning, it is implausible to attribute it to him. This leaves the question of whether Wittgenstein defended a radical conventionalist account, as Dummett maintains. I also consider the strict finitist (section 3.5) and transcendental idealist readings (section 3.6) of the later Wittgenstein. These three readings are very closely related because they all directly concern the relation between Wittgenstein's views on the contingencies that underlie our practices, on the one hand, and his views on the correctness of using a word or following a rule, and the necessity of propositions, on the other. I object to all three readings by arguing that they misinterpret this relation in his later work. I therefore argue against all of these prominent constitutive readings of the later Wittgenstein and provide further support for the claim that he rejected the existence of meaning-constituting facts of all kinds.

3.1: Wittgenstein on necessary propositions and the constitution of meaning

In both his middle and later period, Wittgenstein defends the unique conception of necessary

propositions as (disguised) expressions of rules of grammar. These rules are rules for the use of certain of the constituent terms of the propositions in question. In the middle period, Wittgenstein explicitly states that these rules constitute the meanings of these constituent terms. The fact that Wittgenstein continues to speak of necessary propositions as rules of grammar in the later period, then, forces us to confront the question of whether he also continued to hold that these rules constitute the meaning of terms. If he did, this would be sufficient to undermine my non-constitutive reading. In this section I will address this issue by first considering Wittgenstein's account of necessity in the middle period, and secondly comparing this with his similar account in the later period. Wittgenstein's reflections on necessity take in the necessary propositions of logic, mathematics and metaphysics, but he pays far more attention to the necessity of mathematical propositions. In *PR*, he writes:

Arithmetic is the grammar of numbers. Kinds of number can only be distinguished by the arithmetical rules relating to them. (*PR*, §108)

An equation is a rule of syntax. (*PR*, §121)

[...] This is tied up with the fact that the axioms of mathematics are not seen for what they are, namely, propositions of syntax. [...]
    A postulate is only the postulation of a form of expression. The 'axioms' are postulates of the form of expression. (*PR*, §160)

The geometry of visual space is the syntax of the propositions about objects in visual space.
    The axioms--e.g.--of Euclidean geometry are the disguised rules of a syntax. [...] That is to say, Euclidean geometry is the syntax of assertions about objects in Euclidean space.
    [...] Whatever is arranged in visual space stands in this *sort* of order *a priori*, i.e. in virtue of its logical nature, and geometry here is simply grammar. (*PR*, §178)

These quotations are representative of a major theme running through Wittgenstein's middle period, according to which the meaning of mathematical terms are determined by the so-called necessarily true mathematical propositions that they occur in. In other words, mathematical propositions express rules of grammar or syntax, rules for the use of certain mathematical terms; and as such, they determine what counts as a legitimate or illegitimate application of the terms in both mathematical and non-mathematical contexts. For example, the arithmetical proposition '5 – 3 = 2' rules out as *nonsense* the empirical utterance that 'John had five apples, gave three of them away and was left with three apples'.

Wittgenstein articulates this same view elsewhere in the middle period:

> Geometry isn't the science (natural science) of geometric planes, lines and points, as opposed to some other science of gross physical lines, stripes and surfaces and *their* properties. The relation between geometry and propositions of practical life, about stripes, colour boundaries, edges and corners, etc. isn't that the things geometry speaks of, though *ideal* edges and corners, resemble those spoken of in practical propositions; it is the relation between those propositions and their grammar. [...]
>
> The proposition "corresponding angles are equal" means that if they don't appear equal when they are measured I will treat the measurement as incorrect; and "the sum of the angles of a triangle is 180 degrees" means that if it doesn't appear to be 180 degrees when they are measured I will assume there has been a mistake in the measurement. So the proposition is a postulate about the method of describing facts, and therefore a proposition of syntax. (*PG*, 319-320)

He also gives a similar analysis of metaphysical propositions:

> What we did in these discussions was what we always do when we meet the word "can" in a metaphysical proposition. We show that this proposition hides a grammatical rule. (BB, 55)

In the later period, Wittgenstein seems to defend the same view of necessary propositions. However, he is far less explicit about their true character as disguised expressions of grammatical rules. Instead, he changes how he speaks about their special status somewhat. It is far more typical of this period for Wittgenstein to speak of logic and mathematics as 'normative' (see, e.g., *RFM*, 425 and 430) and of necessary propositions as 'concept forming' (see, e.g., *RFM*, 237-238 and 430).

For example, he writes:

The limit of the empirical--is *concept-formation*.

What is the transition that I make from "It will be like this" to "it *must* be like this"? I form a different concept. (*RFM*, 237)

The mathematical Must is only another expression of the fact that mathematics forms concepts. (*RFM*, 430)

The question is whether this slightly different way of characterising necessity marks a departure from his earlier view. The following remarks suggest an underlying continuity with his middle period view:

I go through the proof and say: "Yes, this is how it *has* to be; I must fix the use of my language in *this* way".

I want to say that the *must* corresponds to a track which I lay down in language. (RFM, 165-166)

The proof is a proof of a necessary proposition. Wittgenstein speaks here of 'fix[ing] the use of my language' by means of necessary propositions, which strongly suggests his conception of necessary propositions as rules for use or rules of grammar. Furthermore, immediately

after this remark, Wittgenstein makes a (rare compared to the middle period) direct reference to grammar in relation to necessary propositions, or rather to the result of a proof:

> When I said that a proof introduces a new concept, I meant something like: the proof puts a new paradigm among the paradigms of the language…
>
> One would like to say: the proof changes the grammar of our language, changes our concepts. It makes new connexions, and it creates the concept of these connexions. (It does not establish that they are there; they do not exist until it makes them.) (*RFM*, 166)

The overall picture in the later work is of necessary propositions as 'forming' concepts or comprising the grammar of our language. I take it that there is a basic continuity here with his middle period. The important question is whether this reflects a more substantial continuity in which this conception of necessity is connected, in both the middle and later period, with the notion of meaning-constitution.

This questions mirrors that which I considered at some length in the previous chapter concerning Wittgenstein's changing conception of rule-following and meaning from the middle to the later period. Let us assume that Wittgenstein, in both periods, held that necessary propositions are disguised rules of grammar or rules for the use of words. Even if there is this common thread, there is the possibility that it is conceived differently in both periods corresponding to his evolving views on rule-following and meaning. His middle period is dominated by a calculus- or rule-based conception of meaning, which is a particular constitutive account of meaning (which is usually underpinned with a particular mentalistic conception of what it is to follow a rule and hence mean something by a term). Within this context, it should be acknowledged that his conception of necessary propositions as rules of grammar is merely an instance of this rule-based conception, specifically applied to, e.g., mathematical or logical terms. As such, it should be viewed as an instance of an account of

meaning-constitution. But as his attitude to the notion of words being rule-governed changes or matures in his later period, so also must his attitude to the notion of, e.g., mathematical terms being governed by the rules disguised as mathematical propositions. In response to Glüer and Wikforss in the previous chapter, I argued that the later Wittgenstein does not have to be interpreted as rejecting the entire notion of words being rule-governed. I argued that it can be retained in a non-constitutional context, although I have not yet explored what this context would be. The main point that I want to make in this section is merely that the continuity between his middle and later periods regarding the conception of necessary propositions does not force us to attribute a particular conception of meaning-constitution to his later period views.

However, this does not settle the issue of the relation between Wittgenstein's conception of necessity and his attitude to accounts of meaning-constitution. There is still the question of whether the later Wittgenstein in some sense committed himself to a particular account of meaning-constitution by virtue of what he states regarding necessity. In particular, his later remarks on mathematical proof and logical inference, which often suggest that the necessity or compulsion we associate with them are actually based on an act of 'decision' of some sort, have led many interpreters to attribute to him a type of radical constructivist or anti-realist conception of the constitution of the necessity of necessary propositions. If correct, this would also commit him to an anti-realist constitutive account of the meanings of the relevant terms (those that occur in the necessary propositions). I will explore this issue in the next section by considering the evidence in favour of it in his later writings. In the subsequent sections of the chapter, I will take up this question by considering Dummett's interpretation of Wittgenstein along these lines.

3.2: Mathematical proof and logical compulsion

Against my non-constitutive reading, there is the rather widespread impression that Wittgenstein embraced some version of what could be called an 'anti-realist' account of meaning and rule-following in his later period, such was the extent of his relentless opposition to platonism and classical realism. This is how Wittgenstein has usually been interpreted. The anti-realism attributed to him has been given many labels, including 'constructivism', 'full-blooded conventionalism' (Dummett 1959 and 1993), 'strict finitism' (Dummett 1959, Kreisel 1958, and Bernays 1986), 'anthropologism' (Wang 1958), 'irrealism' (Blackburn 1990), and 'transcendental idealism' (Williams 1981). These interpreters also recognise that Wittgenstein described himself in quietist terms. But his strong emphasis on the role of communal agreement, decision, customs, and social practices have led them to argue that his standpoint has anti-realist implications, i.e. that through the implicit decisions, judgments or attitudes underlying our practices, we somehow determine what it is to apply a word or a rule correctly. The sense in which each of these anti-realist readings can be called constitutive accounts of rule-following and meaning will be explored when I discuss a selection of them in sections 3.3-3.6 of this chapter. In this section, I shall prepare the way for that discussion by reflecting on some of the remarks from his later period that lend themselves quite naturally to some form of anti-realist or constructivist reading. My approach in this section will be to focus mainly on exploring his conception of necessity by considering his remarks on mathematical proof and logical compulsion; but my concern will also be with the implications this has for his conception of meaning and rule-following.

A natural place to begin is with Wittgenstein's distinction between 'experiment' and 'proof'. He writes:

Proof, one might say, must originally be a kind of experiment--but is then taken simply as a picture.

If I pour two lots of 200 apples together and count them, and the result is 400, that is not a proof that $200 + 200 = 400$. That is to say, we should not want to take this fact as a paradigm for judging all similar situations.

To say: "these 200 apples and these 200 apples come to 400"--means: when one puts them together, none are lost or added, they behave *normally*. (*RFM*, 160)

To elaborate, let us say that we are dealing with the application of a familiar rule, addition, to a new or previously unencountered case, $200 + 200$. As a familiar rule, there is an established practice for applying it. But given that we are dealing with a new case, there is no established practice concerning the correct application of the rule in just this case.[29] Wittgenstein uses the term 'experiment' to describe what we do in such a case. It is characterised by the fact that we do not know in advance what the result will be, and so we follow the general procedure we have learned to see what result we get. Insofar as we are applying a rule, we should say that there is a correct and an incorrect way of applying it, and so a right and a wrong result. But the point is that at this stage we do not know what this result is; we do not yet know what we *should* get. This operation can be repeated, but in all cases we should call what we are doing 'experiment' because no norm or rule has yet been established that determines what counts as a correct or incorrect application. Wittgenstein reserves the term 'proof' for when we set up one such application of the rule in this particular case as a 'paradigm' (viz. the calculation of '$200 + 200$' whose result is '400'), against which we judge all future

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[29] See *RFM*, 79: 'How is it established which pattern is the multiplication 13 x 13?--Isn't it *defined* by the rules of multiplication?--But what if, using these rules, you get different results today from what all the arithmetic books say? Isn't that possible?--"Not if you apply the rules as *they* do!" Of course not! But that is a mere pleonasm. And where does it say how they are to be applied--and if it does say somewhere, where does it say how *that* is to be applied? And that does not mean only: in what book does it say, but also: in what *head?*--What then is the multiplication 13 x 13--or what am I to take as a guide in multiplying--the rules, or the multiplication that comes in the arithmetic books--if, that is, these two do not agree?--Well, it never in fact happens that somebody who has learnt to calculate goes on obstinately getting different results, when he does a given multiplication, from what comes in the arithmetic books. But if it should happen, then we should declare him abnormal, and take no further account of his calculation.'

applications as correct or incorrect.[30]

The proof of the proposition, for Wittgenstein, is thus a matter of determining a particular application of the multiplication rule (the one that yields '400') as the paradigm or normative standard against which to judge all calculations in this particular case. There are, then, two crucial components of Wittgenstein's account of proof that should be distinguished: firstly, the application of the rule in the new case, at the level of 'experiment'; and secondly, the move from experiment to proof by treating a particular result of the application of the rule as a paradigm or normative standard. The way we interpret Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following obviously have major implications for how we view his notion of experiment. But it is the second component – the transition from experiment to proof – that is of greater significance in the present discussion.

Wittgenstein characterises this transition as one of taking a different view of, or attitude to, the result of the experiment. Rather than viewing it merely as what we got when we carried out the procedure, or what most people get when they do it, we view it as the 'correct' result or the result we *should* get.

> "This is the model for the addition of 200 and 200"--not: "this is the model of the fact that 200 and 200 added together yield 400". The process of adding *did* indeed yield 400, but now we take this result as the criterion for the correct addition--or simply: for the addition--of these numbers.
>
> The proof must be our model, our picture, of how these operations have *a result*.
>
> The 'proved proposition' expresses what is to be read off from the proof-picture.
>
> The proof is now our model of correctly counting 200 apples and 200 apples together: that is to say, it defines a new concept: 'the counting of 200 and 200 objects together'. Or, as we could also say: "a new criterion for nothing's having been lost or added".

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[30] It is also possible to carry out an experiment even if one knows what result one should get. One carries out the procedure to see what result one gets and to see if it accords with the established result. In this case, though, one would be immediately aware that one has gone 'wrong' if the results do not agree. For the sake of introducing the distinction, I focus on the simpler case.

> The proof *defines* 'correctly counting together'.
>
> The proof is our model for a particular *result's being yielded*, which serves as an object of comparison (yardstick) for real changes. (*RFM*, 160-161)

Wittgenstein states that we use the result as 'an object of comparison' in the sense that we judge all other attempts at calculating the sum of these numbers in terms of whether or not they agree with this result. But the important question concerns the grounds we have for setting up a particular result as a 'paradigm', 'model', or 'object of comparison'. He makes a number of claims in response to this question, most of which grapple with the difficulty surrounding the notion of being 'compelled' to accept a proof. I will consider some of these now, highlight this difficulty and how Wittgenstein tries to deal with it; and attempt to provide initial support for the reading that his response does not entail a conception of how we constitute the necessity of proofs in the sense of enforcing a *decision* or arbitrary judgment on the matter.

Wittgenstein acknowledges that in moving from merely calculating a sum to proving that such-and-such is the correct result, the notion of 'compulsion' or being compelled to accept the proof appears to be essential:

> A proof shews us what OUGHT to come out.--And since every reproduction of the proof must demonstrate the same thing, while on the one hand it must reproduce the result automatically, on the other hand it must also reproduce the *compulsion* to get it. (*RFM*, 187)

However, whenever he reflects on the notion of compulsion, he almost always argues that it does not have the kind of solid basis we tend to associate with it. For example, he writes:

> And how does it come out that the proof *compels* me? Well, in the fact that once I have got it I go ahead

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in such-and-such a way, and refuse any other path. All I should further say as a final argument against someone who did not want to go that way, would be: "Why, don't you see...!"--and that is no *argument*. (*RFM*, 50)

But am I not compelled, then, to go the way I do in a chain of inferences?"--Compelled? After all I can presumably go as I choose!—"But if you want to remain in accord with the rules you *must* go this way."—Not at all, I call *this* 'accord'.—"Then you have changed the meaning of the word 'accord', or the meaning of the rule."—No;--who says what 'change' and 'remaining the same' mean here?

However many rules you give me--I give a rule which justifies *my* employment of your rules.

(*RFM*, 79)

These passages seem to be deliberate attempts to undermine the notion of being compelled to accept an inference or proof. The second passage invokes the familiar objection from this period that the rule itself (in this case the rule of inference) does not compel me to accept a particular application as correct, i.e. that something like a rule for the application of the rule is needed to guide me, and I can in principle adopt different rules for the application of the same general rule. Does that mean I am never compelled to accept any particular inference? That I can always 'go as I choose'? The issue with inference is the same as with proof. We can apply a rule of inference, or we can carry out an experiment; but it is a separate question as to what compels us to accept a result as the result we *must* get in either case. And there are numerous passages in which Wittgenstein does seem to be arguing that the notion of compulsion here is empty (see, e.g., *RFM*, 80-81, 238-239, and 429-430).

Furthermore, there are also passages where Wittgenstein adopts a sort of anti-realist tone by implying that being compelled to accept a proof is *down to us* in some sense.

Now we talk of the 'inexorability' of logic; and think of the laws of logic as inexorable, still more inexorable than the laws of nature. We now draw attention to the fact that the word "inexorable" is used

in a variety of ways. There correspond to our laws of logic very general facts of daily experience. They are the ones that make it possible for us to keep on demonstrating those laws in a very simple way (with ink on paper for example). They are to be compared with the facts that make measurement with a yardstick easy and useful. This suggests the use of precisely these laws of inference, and now it is *we* that are inexorable in applying these laws. Because we '*measure*'; and it is part of measuring for everybody to have the same measures. (*RFM*, 82)

It is however the expression of an attitude towards the technique of calculation, which comes out everywhere in our life. The emphasis of the *must* corresponds only to the inexorableness of this attitude both to the technique of calculating and to a host of related techniques. (*RFM*, 430)

Wittgenstein states here that the 'must' of logical compulsion corresponds to the inexorability of 'our' attitude to the techniques or rules in question; and that it is '*we* that are inexorable in applying these laws'. This suggests that, although in principle we can apply rules in different ways and accept different results of calculations, it is a fact about us that we accept only certain results and not others. It thus suggests that this inexorability on our part is all that logical compulsion consists in.

This anti-realist tone is at its most pronounced when he speaks of 'decision' as being involved in proof.

Why should I not say: in the proof I have won through to a *decision*?

The proof places this decision in a system of decisions. (*RFM*, 163)

But he does not say: I realised that *this* happens. Rather: that it must be like that. This "must" shews what kind of lesson he has drawn from the scene.

The "must" shews that he has gone in a circle.

I decide to see things like *this*. And so, to act in such-and-such a way. (*RFM*, 309)

But in saying that decision is involved in proof, Wittgenstein is merely making the same point discussed above that the rule itself is not something that compels us to apply it in a certain way, or to convince us that only such-and-such a result of applying it is correct; for we can in principle adopt different rules for applying this general rule. He is explicit at other points that he does *not* want this reference to decision to be misinterpreted as meaning that we consider a number of different ways of applying the rule and opt for one.

> But why do I say "I *must*", if it is my decision? Well, may it not be that I must decide?
>
> Doesn't its being a spontaneous decision merely mean: that's how I act; ask for no reason! [...]
>
> When I say "I decide spontaneously", naturally that does not mean: I consider which number would really be the best one here and then plump for... (*RFM*, 326)

Unlike some of the other passages on compulsion and 'the hardness of the logical *must*' (*RFM*, 84), this passage pulls in the opposite direction, away from a wildly extreme and implausible anti-realism. There are, though, numerous other examples of this, notably the following remarks from his 1939 Cambridge Lectures:

> We might as well say that we need, not an intuition at each step, but a *decision*. – Actually there is neither. You don't make a decision: you simply do a certain thing. It is a question of a certain practice. (*LFM*, 237; see also *LFM*, 30-31)

A similar warning against misinterpreting his remarks on being compelled to accept a proof is given in the following important passage:

> We say that a proof is a picture. But this picture stands in need of ratification, and that we give it when we work over it.--

True enough; but if it got ratification from one person, but not from another, and they could not *come to any understanding*--would what we had here be calculation?

So it is not the ratification by itself that makes it calculation but the agreement of ratifications.

For another game could quite well be imagined, in which people were prompted by expressions (similar perhaps to general rules) to let sequences of signs come to them for particular practical purposes, i.e. *ad hoc*; and that this even proved to pay. And here the 'calculations' if we choose to call them that, do not have to agree with one another. (Here we might speak of 'intuition'.)

The agreement of ratifications is the pre-condition of our language-game, it is not affirmed in it. (*RFM*, 365-366)

I read these remarks as an attempt on Wittgenstein's part to distance himself from the absurd model whereby individuals or groups 'decide' what should count as an adequate proof, and on that basis 'ratify' the proposition that is now taken as proved. He seems to introduce the notion of decision as a way of undermining the quite natural view that intuition is needed when applying a rule, only then to argue that decision is not what is needed either.

Wittgenstein's main point in the above passage is that if there were no agreement on what counts as a proof, then the whole practice of proving would dissolve. I think the most charitable way to read this is that it is meant as a sort of platitude; that it merely serves to remind us that proving things is a practice, and like all practices a certain amount of agreement is a 'pre-condition' of the practice. The alternative is to interpret his remarks as claiming that agreement of ratifications is constitutive of proof. This is the way of interpreting Wittgenstein that turns him into a sort of anti-realist (against his will or an unwitting advocate of it). The agreement of ratifications can be viewed as a *necessary* condition of proof. But that is not sufficient to constitute a proof, or to make it the case that a particular sign-configuration is a proof and that the conclusion is a necessary truth. The agreement of ratifications is necessary in the same way as agreement, regularities of use,

customs, etc., are necessary for anyone meaning *anything* by a term, but not sufficient for a person to mean *something in particular* by a particular term.

Throughout the rest of this chapter, I will consider these same issues from the perspective of Dummett's influential radical conventionalist reading of Wittgenstein and the responses to it. My goal will be to provide further support for the claim that Wittgenstein's later conception of necessity does not entail a conception of meaning-constitution of any kind (including a moderate or radical anti-realist kind).

3.3: Dummett's radical conventionalist reading of Wittgenstein

As the discussion in the previous sections has shown, many of Wittgenstein's remarks on necessity, logical compulsion, mathematical proof, etc., have a very radical tone. It is not surprising, then, that they have led many interpreters to attribute to him an extreme and often highly implausible position regarding these notions. The most important and influential example is Dummett's interpretation of the later Wittgenstein as a radical conventionalist. In this section, I will analyse this interpretation in detail, as well as Stroud's objections and Dummett's response to these objections. Dummett's reading engages with the deepest issues pertaining to Wittgenstein's conception of necessity, and I shall use it as a focal point for the discussion of Wittgenstein's views in all of the subsequent sections in this chapter.

Dummett characterises Wittgenstein's radical or 'full-blooded conventionalism' by distinguishing it from 'modified conventionalism', which is the more traditional version usually associated with logical positivism. Generally speaking, the modified or traditional version holds that

> although all necessity derives from linguistic conventions that we have adopted, the derivation is not
> always direct. Some necessary statements are straightforwardly registers of conventions we have laid

down; others are more or less remote *consequences* of conventions. (1959, 328)

Dummett points out that the problem with this type of conventionalism is that it leaves a whole class of necessary statements unexplained, viz. the statements that such-and-such statements are consequences of the conventions we have adopted. Hence, it cannot genuinely account for necessity because it actually presupposes an important instance of it. This is where full-blooded conventionalism is at least in principle more coherent. It seeks to account for 'the source' of all instances of necessity. Dummett characterises it as holding that

the logical necessity of any statement is always the *direct* expression of a linguistic convention. That a given statement is necessary consists always in our having expressly decided to treat that very statement as unassailable; it cannot rest on our having adopted certain other conventions which are found to involve our treating it so. This account is applied alike to deep theorems and to elementary computations. (1959, 329).

Dummett thus attributes to Wittgenstein the extreme view that the necessity of a proposition is always based on our having 'decided' to treat it as necessary or 'unassailable'. Hence, on this view, all that is required to count a proposition as necessary is to decide to treat it as such. Despite the fact that Dummett holds that Wittgenstein's radical conventionalism is implausible, he emphasises that 'one could not after reflecting on it remain content with the standard view which I have called modified conventionalism' (1959, 341).

Speaking more generally, Dummett makes a threefold categorisation of all possible philosophical views on necessity as follows (see his 1959, 328-329, 335-336 and 1993, 446): (1) realist, (2) moderate constructivist, and (3) radical constructivist. This turns out to be quite helpful in characterising the different possible types of accounts of the constitution of necessity (and rule-following and meaning), and I shall use it for this purpose. Dummett

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places moderate or traditional conventionalism in the second category, but he also places other prominent positions there such as intuitionism. Wittgenstein's radical conventionalism is situated in the third category, and is thus characterised in opposition to both realism and more moderate constructivist positions. I shall briefly consider Dummett's analysis of the relation between Wittgenstein's view and intuitionism because it helps to give a more adequate picture of the second category. The relation of Wittgenstein's view to this second category will turn out to be very important when it comes to considering Stroud's objections and the various constitutive readings of Wittgenstein on necessity and rule-following in the next section.

Dummett holds that the one thing that Wittgenstein and intuitionism have in common is their opposition to platonism, but he believes Wittgenstein's break with platonism is far more extreme and, ultimately, to the point of being untenable. He elaborates on the characterisation of Wittgenstein's standpoint as opposed to intuitionism by considering their respective views of 'the objectivity of mathematical proof'. To uphold the objectivity of proof is, for Dummett, to maintain that we are logically compelled to follow the particular steps in a proof, given the axioms and/or inference rules. He argues that while the platonist accepts both the objectivity of mathematical proof and mathematical truth, the intuitionist only rejects the latter. Wittgenstein, though, rejects both:

> If one does not believe in the objectivity of mathematical truth, one cannot accept the Platonist picture. Wittgenstein's main reason for denying the objectivity of mathematical truth is his denial of the objectivity of proof in mathematics, his idea that a proof does not compel acceptance; and what fits this conception is obviously the picture of our constructing mathematics as we go along. ... [But alternatively, someone] can accept the objectivity of mathematical proof without having to believe also in the objectivity of mathematical truth. The intuitionists, for example, usually speak as though they believed in the former without believing in the latter. (1959, 346)

This last claim is very significant. For Dummett, the intuitionist *accepts* the objectivity of proof, which he explicitly states means that he accepts that a proof *'compel[s]* acceptance'. The same could presumably be said about other moderate constructivist positions, such as moderate conventionalism.[31] This gives a greater sense of how Dummett believes Wittgenstein's radical conventionalism is removed from both realism and moderate constructivism.

A few years after Dummett's interpretation appeared, Stroud proposed an influential reply that criticises it and proposes an alternative interpretation. He begins his discussion of Wittgenstein by stating that the important aspect of the problem of necessity is 'to explain what makes the denial of a necessary truth "impossible" or "unintelligible"' (1965, 2). He replies that it cannot be simply that it is logically impossible 'since an explanation of logical necessity is just what is in question' (Ibid.). Stroud focuses on Wittgenstein's example in *PI* of a person being instructed to 'Add 2', who after '1000' writes down '1004'. The problem, as Stroud articulates it, is to explain in what sense the person could be said to be acting 'rationally' or 'going on in the same way', rather than merely acting perversely or stupidly (1965, 4). Stroud states that neither the platonist nor the moderate conventionalist would allow that there is any sense in which writing down '1004' after '1000' could be the rational thing to do (1965, 3). For even though the moderate conventionalist holds that there are different conventions or rules we can adopt that govern our behaviour, as soon as some set of conventions are adopted the applications are fixed (and in this case the response of '1004' is ruled out). Against this, Wittgenstein believes there is an important sense in which writing '1004' could be considered to be going on in the same way. Stroud sees the task to be that of

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[31] This creates a difficulty for intuitionism that Dummett does not discuss. If, as Dummett admits, Wittgenstein's attack on moderate conventionalism is successful, surely this attack is also successful against other moderate views such as intuitionism.

clarifying this sense without adopting the extreme, full-blooded conventionalist view that we simply decide that '1004' is the correct way of applying the rule (1965, 8).

His response is to focus on Wittgenstein's suggestion that someone could 'find it natural' to go on in this deviant way. This leads Stroud to consider 'facts of our natural history', facts about us which are 'contingent' and which, e.g., 'make it possible for calculating to occur at all' (1965, 11; see *RFM*, 92). Among these facts he includes:

> our memories are generally good enough for us not to take numbers twice in counting up to 12, and not to leave any out (*RFM*, V, 2); in correlating two groups of five strokes we practically always can do so without remainder (*RFM*, I, 64); somebody who has learned to calculate never goes on getting different results, in a given multiplication, from what is in the arithmetic books (*RFM*, I, I 12); and so on. (1965, 12)

Human beings might have lacked 'these and other simple abilities' (Ibid.), making calculation and rule-following as we know it impossible: 'In that way the possibility of calculating depends on such contingent facts' (Ibid.). These contingent facts of our natural history are 'physical', 'psychological', and 'physiological' and they make these phenomena possible. Further, Stroud believes that they are responsible for the fact that 'we find it natural' to go on in such-and-such ways, e.g., by writing '1002' after '1000' when instructed to 'Add 2'.

The implication of this is that, as contingent, these facts could have been different, and hence so also would what we call 'calculating', 'rule-following', 'inferring' etc. This, for Stroud, is the key to appreciating the sense in which someone could be said to be rational – and not merely deliberately perverse – by writing down '1004' after '1000'. The person would have to have different natural inclinations. There would have to be a different set of contingent facts about their natural history. This also provides the basis for Stroud's response to Dummett's full-blooded conventionalist interpretation of Wittgenstein. As Stroud writes,

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although there are these alternative possibilities to what we call going on in the same way, inferring, calculating, etc., this does not imply that we are 'free' to choose what do to at any given point. In a qualified sense, according to Stroud, we *are* compelled to apply a rule in such-and-such a way (see 1965, 16). We cannot simply decide to write whatever we want and declare that it is the correct way of applying it at this step (1965, 11). Doing something different to what we now do would require changing our natural inclinations, which we cannot do. Hence, there are no genuine alternatives open to us when applying the rule, and this is the case even though it is conceivable that doing something different could have been natural to us.

Dummett responds to Stroud by arguing that the alternative position he attributes to Wittgenstein 'is really a version of moderate conventionalism, in that it acknowledges something – namely human nature or our form of life – that *determines* the consequences of the basic necessary truths, or of the conventions that directly confer necessity upon them' (1993, 448). Dummett characterises it further as holding that when the 'basic necessary truths' or 'linguistic conventions' are in place, our 'human nature, or our form of life, determines what we shall take as their consequences: granted what we are like, we cannot but draw from our basic conventions the consequences we in fact draw' (1993, 448-449). Dummett's point is correct because it fits with what Stroud says. For example, Stroud sets out to clarify 'the sense in which [Wittgenstein] can be called a "conventionalist"' (1965, 11) and proceeds to attack any conventionalist interpretation (moderate or radical) that construes Wittgenstein as holding that we choose either what basic rules to adopt or how such rules should be applied in particular instances. What Dummett's response implies is that there are different possible kinds of moderate conventionalist accounts. One kind would be the traditional logical positivist one that holds that we choose which conventions to lay down; but another kind is the one that Stroud attributes to Wittgenstein, according to which no such

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choice is involved but that the 'conventions' concern the contingent facts of our human nature. The common feature of these different accounts is that they hold that once the conventions are in place, their logical consequences are determined. The term 'convention' is perhaps being used illicitly here in too wide a sense; we do not after all choose what these facts about our nature are. The point remains, though, that the traditional conventionalism and Stroudian account have this feature in common and this is why they both fall into the category of moderate constructivism. This, I believe, is how we should view Dummett's point. Although it may be correct, Dummett acknowledges that it does not necessarily amount to a criticism because Stroud intended to interpret Wittgenstein in a less radical way (1993, 449). Rather, Dummett's objection requires him to show that Stroud has misrepresented Wittgenstein as a moderate conventionalist or constructivist.

However, leaving aside for the moment the question of which interpretation has the most textual evidence, Dummett's response illuminates more exactly the nature of the radical conventionalist position he attributes to Wittgenstein. The remarkable thing is that, superficially, he insists on interpreting Wittgenstein in what could be called a Kripkean way (as I have interpreted Kripke), i.e. as being opposed to all attempts to give an explanatory account of the constitution of necessity (see, e.g., 1993, 449). Dummett's reaction to Stroud suggests that the radical conventionalist interpretation amounts to the claim that nothing can constitute the necessity of propositions – '*nothing* determines it in advance' (Ibid.) – not even something 'internal' such as our human nature (Ibid.). However, while these remarks suggest that he is proposing a non-constitutive reading of Wittgenstein, this is not in fact the case. I will elaborate on this in the next section. These considerations will also help to clarify what is involved in genuinely adopting a non-constitutive reading along Kripkean lines.

3.4: The varieties of constitutive readings of Wittgenstein

At various points of his (1993), then, Dummett is adamant that we should not interpret the later Wittgenstein as proposing an explanatory account of what constitutes or determines necessity. However, on deeper reflection, it becomes apparent that Dummett is merely opposed to a particular type of constitutive account being attributed to Wittgenstein. He does, after all, interpret Wittgenstein as holding that necessity is constituted by our acts of decision, or 'that for a statement to be necessarily true is simply for it to be *treated* as being necessarily true' (1993, 446). From this perspective, his objection to Stroud is to his situating Wittgenstein's view in the wrong category of constitutive account, i.e. in the category of *moderate* constructivism.

The discussion of Dummett's interpretation takes us a significant step further regarding the central concern of this thesis. Specifically, it allows us to get a clearer view of the wide variety of different possible conceptions of the constitution of necessity, and ultimately of rule-following and meaning. Thus far in the thesis, the concern has primarily been with realist conceptions because they capture the target (or rather, part of the target) of Wittgenstein's and Kripke's Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following and meaning. But by considering Dummett's interpretation, and particularly his distinction between moderate and extreme constructivist accounts, the debate is opened up as to what conception – if any – Wittgenstein ended up adopting. The vast majority of interpretations of the later Wittgenstein can be categorised as either moderate or extreme constructivist in Dummett's sense. However, in some instances, this has to be shown to be the case (for example, with regard to the interpretations proposed by Stroud or Baker and Hacker). My goal in what follows is to consider these different constitutive readings and argue against all of them, and thus to argue that Wittgenstein's remarks on necessity, logical compulsion, rule-following, meaning, etc., do not amount to a constitutive account of any kind. The main way of arguing for this is on a

case-by-case basis and so this is how I will proceed (of course, while being selective concerning the particular readings I consider).

In his (1993), Dummett elaborates on his interpretation of Wittgenstein by calling it 'internalist'. This should be approached in terms of the distinction he makes between 'how things are in themselves' and 'what we treat ourselves as having reason to say' (1993, 452). He writes:

> It is vain and presumptuous to attempt to see reality through God's eyes: all we can do is to describe our own practices as we can view them through our own eyes. Considered as a constituent of those practices, what a mathematical proof does is to induce us to accept a new criterion as being justified by the criteria we already had. That, therefore, is the sole and sufficient account of mathematical proof and of the necessity of mathematical theorems. We are not to ask whether the new criterion is *really* so justified: justification is whatever we *count* as justification. (1993, 452)

Dummett thus interprets Wittgenstein's radical conventionalist thesis that necessity is to be equated with what we take to be necessary as following on from the recognition that 'all we can do is to describe our own practices as we can view them through our own eyes'. As discussed in section 3.2, Wittgenstein states that when accepting a mathematical proof, we adopt a 'new criterion' for applying a concept. The error in Dummett's reading is that our *taking* or *counting* (or *deciding* to take or count) a new criterion as justified is still conceived as making it the case that the corresponding proposition is necessary, or as constituting its necessity. He writes that this radical view holds that 'it is our practice of applying proofs of this kind that *constitutes* the truth of the statement we infer' (1993, 457). This amounts to claiming that whatever in practice we take to be necessarily true *is* necessarily true. And although this will most likely make us uneasy and lead us to wonder if there is anything to necessity beyond what we take it to be, Dummett states that the radical conventionalist

replies by opting to 'eradicate' this distinction between what strikes us as necessary and what is necessary (1993, 457). This, though, is a distortion of Wittgenstein's views. Wittgenstein does not begin by thinking of the necessity of our inferences and proofs as constituted by our decisions or inexorable attitude towards them. He begins with the mere description of our inexorable attitude towards them or what we take to be necessary, not with the character of these attitudes as constitutive of necessity. As Dummett depicts it, it is as if his Wittgenstein holds that our decision and inexorable attitude constitute the necessity, and since there is no way of knowing whether this matches up with what is really the case or really necessary (since all we can do is describe our practice of taking certain inferences to be necessary), we might as well abandon the distinction between what we take to be necessary and what is genuinely necessary. In other words, he interprets Wittgenstein as holding that since we cannot adopt the 'God's eye', external standpoint on the relation between what in practice we take to be necessary, on the one hand, and what is necessary in reality, on the other, we might as well abandon the notion of what is necessary in reality and simply describe what we in fact take to be necessary (and hold that this is all there is to necessity). Dummett refers to this at different points as 'internalism with a vengeance' (1993, 452), 'full-blown internalism' (1993, 457), and 'grossly internalist' (1993, 461).

Dummett concludes that Wittgenstein's attempt to overcome both realism and moderate constructivism leads to 'incoherence':

> Thus full-blown internalism can make our linguistic practices the whole source of necessity and truth only by discrediting those practices, and, indeed, the concepts of necessity and truth themselves: this is *its* incoherence. (1993, 457)

My view is that Wittgenstein should be defended by arguing that he did not make this decisive step – which leads to the incoherence – of holding that necessity is whatever we take to be necessity; but that this should be established by showing that he did not seek to develop any account whatsoever of the constitution of necessity. My defence of this interpretation will begin by considering some of the philosophers who have responded to Dummett differently to the way I propose, viz. by interpreting Wittgenstein as developing what could be categorised as some form of moderate constructivism.

Stroud, as we saw, appeals to 'facts of our natural history' which – even though they could have been different – are actually fixed or relatively constant and determine how we follow a particular rule. For example, by virtue of our natural and/or cultural make-up, we are compelled to apply the rule of *Add 2* in such-and-such a way; and it is thus mistaken to hold that we are free to apply it any way we want or that we can simply decide what is correct. Stroud elaborates by characterising the relevant facts about us as 'simple abilities', such as being able to count up to 12 without taking any of the numbers twice (1965, 12). A similar reading of Wittgenstein is proposed and developed in more detail by Baker and Hacker, as when they state that 'To understand a rule is to be master of the technique of its application, i.e. to possess a certain array of abilities' (1985, 161). There may of course be differences in their interpretation (some of which I allude to below) but, owing to the greater detail in their interpretation, I will focus on Baker and Hacker as an example of the view that rule-following is to be accounted for in terms of the possession of certain distinctive abilities.[32]

Baker and Hacker state that we cannot speak of abilities and techniques with regard to following rules without there being 'criteria of correctness' for the application of those rules (1985, 163). They state that such criteria are 'intrinsic parts of techniques' and that

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[32] Colin McGinn also presents a reading that emphasises the role of abilities. See his 1984, 173.

Before criteria of correctness are fixed within a technique, there are no right or wrong results (*LFM* 95)

and hence there is no such thing as a technique to be mastered. (1985, 163)

However, despite emphasising the importance of criteria of correctness in relation to the

abilities and techniques that underlie rule-following, Baker and Hacker do not address the

more fundamental issue of the basis for laying down particular criteria as opposed to others.

To explain why this is significant, we should consider the appeal to abilities and techniques in

more detail. The important point is that the abilities and techniques are invoked to clarify or

explain what is involved in rule-following. But it is a feature of any particular rule that it can

be applied in a potential infinity of particular cases. Therefore, in order for a particular ability

to be connected with the relevant rule – i.e. for the ability to be the ability to follow just this

rule and not some other rule – it must be connected to the relevant pattern of potentially

infinite applications. Baker and Hacker's insistence that a particular criterion of correctness

must be 'fixed within' an ability or technique can, it seems, only mean that the ability or

technique is connected with the pattern of correct application of the relevant rule.

There are, though, a couple of different ways that one could interpret this. One way

would be to take the modified constructivist perspective that holds that the possession of

these abilities 'compel' us to apply the particular rule in such-and-such ways. According to

this view, then, the fixing of the criterion of correctness within an ability or technique would

involve determining in advance the correct way of applying the rule in the potential infinity

of cases, and compelling us to apply it in just these ways. But this faces the same problems as

any candidate of a fact that is constitutive of rule-following. To see this, begin with Baker

and Hacker's claim that 'a change in criteria of correctness produces a different technique' or

ability (1985, 163); and observe that we can distinguish an ability to apply 'Add 2', whose

criterion of correctness is to write '1002' after '1000', from an ability to apply the same

expression but whose criterion of correctness is to write '1004' after '1000'. Would there be any way of distinguishing these abilities from one another prior to it showing up after extending the series beyond '1000'? The moderate constructivist could perhaps reply that there is no way of distinguishing them *before* this point, but that this does not matter because there is a simple way of distinguishing them *after* reaching '1000'. That is, I will be compelled to apply 'Add 2' by writing '1002' after '1000' and *this* shows that I have the first ability. And the moderate constructivist could insist that as a matter of fact, we all share the ability that compels each of us to write '1002' after '1000', '1004' after '1002', etc.

But this would not get him very far. For it is one thing to feel compelled to write '1002' after '1000' and quite another for it to be the *correct* thing to write, or more specifically for it to be required by the particular criterion of correctness fixed within the ability one possesses. An analogue of Wittgenstein's gerrymandering argument can be developed against this view along the following lines:

(1) If I am able to correctly apply the rule-formulation '+ 2', then I must have the ability that determines the correct way of applying '+ 2' in a potential infinity of particular cases, and that compels me to apply it in just these ways.

(2) But, for any finite set of applications of '+ 2' (e.g. up to '1000'), there is an indefinite number of different criteria of correctness that could be fixed within my ability that are consistent with this set, but which are inconsistent with one another because they each call for different particular applications of '+ 2' beyond this finite set (e.g. beyond '1000').

Therefore,

(3) I must have the *right* ability, i.e. the one with the criterion of correctness that determines that I write '1002' after '1000', '1004' after '1002', etc.

(4) But there is nothing to distinguish having an ability Ab_1 (which determines that I write '1004' after '1000') from an ability Ab_2 (which determines that I write '1002' after '1000').

Therefore,

(5) Anything I write after '1000' could be construed as a correct application of '+ 2'.

Therefore,

(6) The whole notion of accord and conflict with a rule is empty.

Reflecting on this argument illustrates how futile the appeal to the feeling of being compelled is. The genuine issue is whether the criterion of correctness that makes my ability what it is is the *right* criterion, i.e. the one that determines that I should write '1002' after '1000'. The fact that I may feel compelled to write '1002' after '1000' does not necessarily tell me that I have the right criterion and hence the right ability. There are two aspects here: the determination of what is the correct way of applying the rule, on the one hand, and being compelled to apply the rule in such-and-such ways, on the other. These, though, can conceivably come apart. The requirement that there be a criterion of correctness fixed within an ability is, on the interpretation I am considering, the requirement that the correct way of applying the rule is determined. There are three relevant possibilities concerning the relation between this and being compelled: firstly, that the correct way of applying the rule is determined *and* that I am compelled to apply it in just this way; secondly, that the correct way of applying the rule is determined *but* that I am compelled to apply it in a different way; and thirdly, that the correct way of applying the rule is not determined *but* I am compelled to apply it in a particular way nonetheless (which would be neither correct nor incorrect because it is not determined). This is what supports the crucial premise at line 4, which states that nothing can distinguish having an ability whose criterion of correctness is to write '1002' from an ability whose criterion of

correctness is to write '1004'. Nothing – not even the feeling of being compelled to do one or the other – can distinguish them. Hence, the appeal to what we are compelled to do is not sufficient to respond to the gerrymandering considerations. An account would be required of the connection between psychological compulsion and the determination of the correct applications of a rule. Alternatively, it could be held that the talk of the determination of correct applications is out of place and that the only relevant point is that of how we are psychologically compelled to act. But in that case there would be nothing to separate this view from the radical constructivist view because it would effectively be claiming that whatever way one feels compelled to apply a rule *is* the correct way of applying it.

This version of the moderate constructivist way of reading the claim that abilities underlie rule-following is thus vulnerable to Wittgenstein's gerrymandering considerations. It is vulnerable because it can be shown to lead to the paradox at line 6, which are grounds for rejecting it. Given that it can be undermined by one of Wittgenstein's own arguments, it would be implausible to attribute it to him. It is, however, not obvious whether Baker and Hacker take this view of abilities and the criteria of correctness associated with them. This is ambiguous because they do not say very much about these criteria of correctness, or specifically about what adopting one criteria over another is ultimately based on. For example, they write:

> Metaphorically, it is the practice itself which is the arbiter of what is doing the same thing. (1985, 165)

> What counts as doing the same within a practice is determined from the perspective of the practice itself and is not responsible to an external reality. (1985, 166)

It is striking that claims such as these could actually be accepted without alteration by the *radical* constructivist, particularly when we consider Dummett's characterisation of it in terms of 'internalism' and the elimination of the notion of what in reality is necessary or the correct way of applying a rule.

Aside from the question of how to view Baker and Hacker's interpretation of Wittgenstein on this issue, the more significant point that is revealed from the above discussion is that there are at least two ways of construing the claim that natural abilities underlie rule-following. On the one hand, there is the modified constructivist way (that Stroud arguably adopts), but which is vulnerable to Wittgenstein's own gerrymandering considerations. On the other hand, the claim can be viewed in the context of radical constructivism, according to which whatever is taken to be the correct way of applying a rule within an ability or technique *is* the correct way of applying it. But this is highly implausible in its own right. This reveals a rather curious feature of the relation between Wittgenstein's master arguments in *PI* and the three different categories of constitutive accounts distinguished by Dummett. The discussion in this section reveals that Wittgenstein's reasoning can be used against both realist *and* modified constructivist constitutive accounts. The only category of constitutive account it does not reach to is the radical constructivist one because it is not committed to a variation of the basic assumption according to which the pattern of correct application of a rule is determined or anticipated in advance; instead, it determines the correct application to be whatever in each instance it is taken to be. This does not mean that the radical constructivist reading is correct, only that it does not suffer from the same defect as modified constitutive readings.

In the next section, I will consider another example of a radical constructivist reading of Wittgenstein, i.e. the strict finitist reading. It should be noted that although strict finitism seems to belong in the radical constructivist category, it does not necessarily coincide with

radical *conventionalism* (despite the fact that Dummett interprets Wittgenstein as both a strict finitist and a radical conventionalist). The relation between these doctrines is quite complex, and I will attempt to characterise it in the next few sections. For now, it is best to consider them as two examples of radical constructivist accounts, just as intuitionism, traditional conventionalism and the Stroudian account are examples of moderate constructivist accounts. I will argue against the strict finitist reading in the next section and thus take another step towards establishing that Wittgenstein did not adopt a constitutive account of any kind.

3.5: Wittgenstein as a strict finitist

One of the first responses to Wittgenstein's philosophy of mathematics – and one that has endured – was to characterise it as a type of 'strict finitism'. For example, Wang (1958), Kreisel (1958), and Bernays (1959) all interpret Wittgenstein in this way. Dummett (1959), as we shall see, also approves of this label, which highlights its connection with radical constructivism. It will be helpful to begin with a brief characterisation of strict finitism before moving on to a consideration of the textual support for this way of interpreting Wittgenstein.

Strict finitism is characterised above all by the introduction of the notion of 'feasible number'. Bernays (1983 [1935]) gives a classic formulation of the position in relation to intuitionism. Intuitionism, like classical mathematics, allows, e.g., numbers as large as 67^{257729}. Strict finitism, for Bernays, emerges as a result of

press[ing] further the criticism which intuitionism makes of existential assertions and rais[ing] the question: What does it mean to claim the existence of an Arabic numeral for the foregoing number, since in practice we are not in a position to obtain it? (1983 [1935], 265).

As Marion states, although it is recognised that it is 'practically impossible' to calculate and write down the number that results from calculating such numbers, it is assumed that the task is 'feasible in principle' (1998, 214). Strict finitism is characterised by the rejection of this kind of assumption and upholding a distinction between 'possibility *in practice*' (what is 'feasible') and 'possibility *in principle*'. From the point of view of strict finitism, the numeral for 67^{257729} does not have a 'concrete meaning' because it is practically impossible to obtain the number. It is not a 'feasible number'. The intuitionist, on the other hand, recognises no such distinction and merely emphasises the notion of possibility in principle; and so numbers such as these do have legitimacy even though the corresponding numeral in the decimal system could never be written down. Furthermore, strict finitists reject all mathematical results which 'depend on possibility in principle alone' (Marion 1998, 215).

The notion of a feasible number is defined along the following lines. Let 10^{12} be the upper bound to the series of feasible numbers and F stand for feasible[33]:

(α) F(0)	(The number 0 is feasible)
(β) F(n) $\rightarrow$ $n < 10^{12}$	(If n is feasible, then $n < 10^{12}$)
(γ) F(n) $\rightarrow$ F(Sn)	(If n is feasible, then Sn is also feasible.)

Call this series **F**. This series is distinct from the natural number series, **N**. Whereas **N** does contain 10^{12}, **F** does not. We thus have two natural number series. Strict finitism advocates a more profound revision of classical mathematics than intuitionism. It considers the only legitimate practice of, e.g., arithmetic to be the one that operates with this (or a similar) definition of number and of the number series. From this brief outline, we can thus already get a good sense of how strict finitism is more radical than moderate constructivist positions

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[33] My presentation of strict finitism follows Marion's closely (see his 1994, 218-219).

such as intuitionism. But its relation to other radical positions like full-blooded conventionalism is difficult to assess and I will attempt to clarify it in what follows.

It is not necessary to go into much more detail on the characterisation of strict finitism or the evaluation of its implications. The important question is why Wittgenstein would be considered by so many to be an advocate of it. It should be noted that strict finitism has had very few advocates and remains very unpopular, perhaps owing to the fact that it challenges very basic principles of mathematics (such as the induction schema of Peano Arithmetic). Hence, to argue that Wittgenstein defended a version of it is effectively to argue that his conception of mathematics is highly implausible. The crucial issue has to do with that of practical human limitations, and the extent to which (if at all) they place constraints on what is to count as legitimate mathematical practice. The limitation that is implicit in the above characterisation is that of the amount of time and energy we have for carrying out a calculation or proof. This is, e.g., what prevents us from writing down the numeral for 67^{257729} in practice. In his later writings on mathematics, Wittgenstein makes frequent reference to the fact that a proof must be 'surveyable'. For example, he writes:

> Perspicuity is part of proof. If the process by means of which I get a result were not surveyable, I might indeed make a note that this number is what comes out--but what fact is this supposed to confirm for me? I don't know 'what is *supposed* to come out'. (*RFM*, 95)

> I should like to say that where surveyability is not present, i.e. where there is room for a doubt whether what we have really is the result of this substitution, the *proof* is destroyed. And not in some silly and unimportant way that has nothing to do with the *nature* of proof. (*RFM*, 174)

There are limits to the size of sign-configurations that we can survey. This is something to which everyone will agree. But Wittgenstein seems to make this fact mathematically

significant by apparently using it to limit the scope of mathematics to what is surveyable. This, in any case, is the very broad pattern of reading Wittgenstein as a strict finitist.

Consider the following passage from Wittgenstein's 1939 lectures in which he is responding to questions posed by Turing:

> Suppose that we make enormous multiplications – numerals with a thousand digits. Suppose that after a certain point, the results people get deviate from each other. There is no way of preventing this deviation; even when we check their results, the results deviate. [...] What would be the right result? Would anyone have found it? Would there be a right result? (*LFM*, 101)

This example of carrying out enormous multiplications is directly comparable to Dummett's example of the application of the sieve of Eratosthenes (a method for determining whether or not a number is prime) to a number that is so large that the application is unsurveyable (1959, 341). In both cases, the situation is that a number of people apply the rule or method but keep getting different answers to one another. There is no agreement concerning what the correct result is. As Dummett describes it, for the moderate constructivist it is sufficient that we have a general method for determining whether the number is prime; i.e. the arithmetical predicate is defined for these large numbers even though we cannot provide a surveyable proof that they are prime or composite (1959, 341). For the strict finitist, though, the predicate 'prime' is not defined for these very large or 'unfeasible' numbers. Hence, the considerations concerning surveyability lead the strict finitist to *deny* that every natural number is either prime or composite. It only allows this kind of statement to be made of every feasible number, or every number for which we have a surveyable proof as to their primality. This, in general, is how considerations concerning surveyability of proofs lead to the kind of

restrictions of mathematical practice characteristic of strict finitism. But do Wittgenstein's remarks on surveyability function in this way? Do they entail strict finitism?

The difficult question in the above two examples is whether there is a correct result even though it is practically unattainable. Is there a correct answer to the enormous multiplications or to the question of whether a very large number is prime, even though there is no agreement concerning them because the attempts to establish them are unsurveyable? Marion states that Dummett would be inclined to interpret Wittgenstein as answering 'no' because (in Dummett's example) Wittgenstein believes that the predicate 'is prime' is not determined for such numbers. Marion points out, though, that in his exchange with Turing, Wittgenstein goes on to argue: 'I should say, "This has ceased to be a calculation"' (*LFM*, 101). Marion interprets Wittgenstein as holding that if a procedure is unsurveyable, 'it loses its character of being a proof and becomes an experiment' (1998, 223). Therefore, the unsurveyable application of, e.g., the sieve method would not even be a calculation for Wittgenstein. He argues against Dummett that this does not mean

> that there are cases where there is no correct application of the predicate "prime number". [...] It amounts only to saying that one should not conceive of such cases as counterexamples to the proposition: every integer is either prime or composite. (Ibid.)

Marion acknowledges that Dummett would object that the question remains open as to whether there is a 'pre-existing right answer' where we cannot calculate the answer, but responds by stating that Wittgenstein was merely highlighting 'a rather undeniable fact about our mathematical practice' (viz. that 'very large calculations lose their character of certainty'), and that intuitionists would agree with this, i.e. that we can hold this without committing ourselves to the more extreme position of strict finitism. He states that it does not

amount to 'a denial that a correct answer is *in principle* obtainable' (Ibid.). Nevertheless, Marion recognises that more needs to be said in order to respond effectively to the strict finitist reading.

It is one of the main claims of Marion's book on Wittgenstein's philosophy of mathematics that the strict finitist reading is wrong, and so I shall consider this further. He gives a somewhat more convincing defence earlier in his book when he discusses the importance of Wittgenstein's distinction between 'empirical' and 'grammatical' possibility (see 1998, 187-192). He states that Wittgenstein acknowledged practical limitations, but placed them in the category of empirical or inessential limitations. He quotes this passage from *PR* (§141):

The rules for a number-system--say, the decimal system-- contain everything that is infinite about the numbers. That, e.g. *these rules* set no limits on the left or right hand to the numerals; *this* is what contains the expression of infinity. Someone might perhaps say: True, but the numerals are still limited by their use and by writing materials and other factors. That is so, but that isn't expressed in the *rules* for their use, and it is only in these that their real essence is expressed.

Although this passage is from Wittgenstein's middle period, it does help when responding to the strict finitist charge. In the sieve of Eratosthenes method, there is no reference made to the practical limitations that exist concerning its application. We can grasp this general method without needing to consider these limitations. However, Wittgenstein's later work puts much greater emphasis on the importance of the practice of applying rules in the sense that the rules themselves do not instruct or compel us with regard to how they ought to be applied, and that it is only in the context of being trained in a community of rule-followers that apply the rules in such-and-such ways that we can talk about grasping what a rule requires. The mistake, I

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think, is to interpret Wittgenstein's emphasis on the importance of practice as an attempt to introduce the strict finitist notion of feasibility.

His later emphasis on practice does not alter the basic point made in the above passage. In fact, Wittgenstein's response here is similar to his response to the question of whether the agreement that is a pre-condition for language determines the content of logical propositions. That response is characteristically deflationary: that a logical proposition does not state that human beings agree with each other in such-and-such ways, and so we must distinguish the content of the logical proposition from the content of the empirical proposition that states that there is such agreement; and therefore, the content of the logical proposition is not determined by this agreement (see *RFM*, 352-353). In the present context, his claim is that human limitations of such-and-such kind (e.g. concerning the time available to us or the limits of surveyability) are not 'expressed in the *rules* for their [numeral's] use', i.e. that whatever human limitations that happen to play a part in our actual practice of mathematics are 'inessential'. This seems to mean that we can comprehend 'the rules for a number system' without ever considering the human limitations and empirical considerations that make the practice of developing and extending that system possible.

In conclusion, the question of whether Wittgenstein's remarks on the surveyability of proof entail a commitment to strict finitism comes down to the philosophical weight that he gives – or rather that he does *not* give – to certain contingent factors about us. In this group of contingent factors he includes such things as our agreement in how we use words and the custom of using words in certain ways. These are factors that underlie our practices, but without determining the content of words and sentences that are used in these practices. This relation between the content of our words and the contingent factors that underlie our practices of using them is central to Wittgenstein's later work, and his view on it is quite subtle and difficult to interpret. For now I wish to emphasise that the facts concerning the

limits to the size of sign-configurations that we can survey are of the same kind as, e.g., the fact that we agree in applying a word in a particular way. They are facts that underlie and shape our practices of applying rules and carrying out proofs, etc., but without determining the content of the rule or what counts as a correct application or what counts as a proof. The problem, then, with the strict finitist interpretation is ultimately that it misconstrues this relation in Wittgenstein's later philosophy.

This response to the strict finitist interpretation, though, is incomplete. One of the major obstacles to rejecting this reading is that it is closely related to but nevertheless distinct from a couple of other readings, and its relation to them is difficult to characterise. On the one hand, it is closely related to the radical conventionalist reading. Dummett very briefly discusses the strict finitist reading, but it is unclear whether he thinks it is correct. At one point he seems to approve of it, but when he mentions Bernays's characterisation of it he states that it does not apply to Wittgenstein (see 1959, 343-344). The main point that is unclear about the relation between strict finitism and radical conventionalism concerns their respective conceptions of proof. Whereas radical conventionalism states that decision is necessarily involved in proving anything, this is not the case with strict finitism. We could certainly conceive of a particular type of strict finitist position that coincides with radical conventionalism in the sense that it holds that proofs, which must be surveyable, necessarily involve decision. This is perhaps what Dummett has in mind in his discussion of Wittgenstein and strict finitism, i.e. that the label is appropriate only when connected with radical conventionalism. This relation, though, needs to be made explicit. On the other hand, strict finitism is also closely related to the so-called transcendental idealist reading of Wittgenstein. Both types of reading are directly concerned with interpreting the philosophical significance, for Wittgenstein, of the human limitations that shape our practices of rule-following and proving necessary propositions. In the next section, I will consider this transcendental idealist

reading. In section 3.7, I will consider all of these radical constructivist readings together and attempt to determine whether any of them are appropriate.

3.6: Wittgenstein as a transcendental idealist

Stephen Mulhall notes that the transcendental idealist reading of Wittgenstein is at least as old as Stanley Cavell's 1962 review of David Pole's reading, where Cavell makes a connection between central ideas in the later Wittgenstein and Kant's transcendental philosophy (see Mulhall 2009, 386).[34] One of the first sustained treatments of this topic is in Hacker's (1972). But it is Bernard Williams's 1974 paper, 'Wittgenstein and Idealism' (republished in his (1981)), that has been most influential in proposing a transcendental idealist interpretation of the later Wittgenstein. Most of the papers on this topic since then (e.g., Lear's (1984) and Moore's (1985)) have been direct responses to Williams. In this section I will narrow my focus to Williams's interpretation and A.W. Moore's (2007), which is sympathetic to Williams while resisting a transcendental idealist reading. It will become apparent that engaging with this issue enables us to address the appropriateness of the radical constructivist readings from a fresh perspective, and hopefully to finally determine whether this or some other closely related reading succeeds in capturing Wittgenstein's later views on necessity, rule-following, and meaning.

Williams ends his (1981) by making the following claim regarding Wittgenstein's later philosophy:

> The new theory of meaning, like the old, points in the direction of a transcendental idealism, and shares also the problem of our being driven to state it in forms which are required to be understood, if at all, in the wrong way. (1981, 163)

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[34] This is not to say that Cavell defended a transcendental idealist reading, only that he alluded to a connection between Kant and Wittgenstein that might lead to such a reading.

This idea, he writes, echoes Wittgenstein's claim in *TLP* that 'what the solipsist *means* is quite correct; only it cannot be *said* but makes itself manifest' (*TLP*, 5.62). Regardless of the question of how to interpret this remark, it is Williams's contention that in both the early and later periods Wittgenstein grapples with some version of the problem of 'how to put a supposed philosophical truth which, if it is uttered, must be taken to mean an empirical falsehood, or worse' (1981, 163). From the perspective of the present chapter, the interesting point is that when Williams gives a concrete example of such a problematic philosophical truth, he mentions the radical conventionalist notion that decision is involved calculating:

> For of course, if our talk about the numbers has been determined by our decisions, then one result of our decisions is that it must be nonsense to say that anything about a number has been determined by our decisions. The dependence of mathematics on our decisions, in the only sense in which it obtains – for clearly there cannot be meant an empirical dependence on historical decisions – is something which shows itself in what we are and are not prepared to regard as sense and is not to be stated in remarks about decisions; and similarly in other cases. (1981, 163)

This connects with transcendental idealism (and the problem of stating it without uttering a falsehood or nonsense) by the fact that the necessity, e.g., of mathematics is conceived to be dependent on 'us' in some sense. In Kant, the reference to 'us' is to our forms of intuition, but Williams clearly has in mind a wider notion of transcendental idealism in which the contingent features of 'our' nature can be formulated in other ways than this. For example, necessity could be conceived to be dependent on the contingent features of our shared nature or form of life, thus resulting in what Williams calls a 'pluralised idealism' or 'a transcendental idealism of the first-person plural' (1981, 161). This is what he believes we find in the later Wittgenstein, but which cannot be expressed without facing the difficulties

mentioned above. Admittedly, this notion of a transcendental idealist reading is still quite vague. I shall consider Moore's elaboration of these themes in his (2007) in an attempt to make it more precise and to address the implications it has for Wittgenstein's attitude to radical constructivism.

Moore begins by stating the following rather obscure formulation of idealism, and of its empirical and transcendental variants:

> Idealism, as I understand it, is the view that the limits of that to which our representations answer, are set, in part, by some feature of the representations themselves. *Empirical* idealism includes the rider that the setting of these limits lies within them; it is itself an aspect of that to which our representations answer. *Transcendental* idealism includes the rider that the setting of these limits lies beyond them; it is not itself an aspect of that to which our representations answer, and the limits are, relative to it, limitations. (2007, 187)

The central idea behind idealism on this formulation is of the limits of reality (or 'that to which our representations answer') being set by some feature of our representations. I will focus first of all on this idea and return later to the far more obscure notion of these limits being drawn 'within' or 'beyond' these representations. What is meant by 'our representations' here? Moore characterises a representation simply as 'anything with a content that makes it true or false' (2007, footnote 49), but he emphasises that the importance of representations in this discussion is that they belong to an 'outlook', 'point of view', or 'way of seeing the world' (2007, 189). We use words, follow rules, etc., 'in accord with' such an outlook or set of outlooks. Moore speaks in a similar way to Stroud of 'various facts of nature, including facts of human nature' that underlie our outlooks, which had they 'been different from how they are, then all sorts of behaviour might have constituted carrying on in the same way' (Ibid.). He continues that:

The contingencies of language use include all such facts. In particular, and centrally, they include our shared sensibilities, our shared senses of the natural and the salient: our shared outlooks. Without these, communication would break down. (Ibid.)

Moore is here attempting to characterise Wittgenstein's notion of our shared 'form of life', which is constituted by such 'contingencies'. The characterisation of idealism in the Wittgensteinian context should take this into account. Idealism would be characterised as the view that the limits of reality are set, in part, by some feature of our shared outlook or form of life.

As in the case of Kant's idealism, this can be explored by considering the dependence of, e.g., mathematical or metaphysical necessities on these contingent features. Take Moore's example of the necessary statement that 'Aunts are female'. An idealist position would, on Moore's formulation, characterise its necessity as grounded in some contingent feature of our outlook. However, there are different kinds of contingent features that we could appeal to here and the kind of idealism we end up with will depend on the features we take to be decisive. For example, an empirical idealism would construe these contingent features very narrowly and would very implausibly make the necessity of 'Aunts are female' dependent on 'certain historical accidents' or features inherent in a particular language, such as the fact that we use the word 'aunt' rather than some other word to refer to aunts (2007, 191). If Wittgenstein's emphasis on the contingencies of our form of life as underlying necessities entails a form of idealism, it would certainly have to be shown to be distinct from this kind. The response, of course, would be to broaden the notion of 'we' or 'our' in our shared outlook, language, or form of life. But this, according to Moore, is precisely where the slide into transcendental idealism threatens to occur. He envisages two possibilities: either that the

contingency is eliminated because all alternatives to our language are rejected; or that the contingency is retained but that the alternatives are not 'real' or genuine (see 2007, 193). The latter possibility is the only one that preserves Wittgenstein's view that necessity is grounded on contingency without entailing a highly implausible empirical idealism. However, it is tantamount to embracing transcendental idealism.

To see how, we must return to Moore's characterisation of transcendental idealism as the view that although the limits of reality are set by our contingent form of life, the setting of these limits lies 'beyond' this form of life. The only way in which this is intelligible is if 'reality' here is interpreted narrowly as 'reality qua representable'. The central feature of transcendental idealism, then, is that the limits of reality in this narrow sense are set by something beyond these limits, i.e. by an unrepresentable reality. This, I take it, is why Moore states that the limits are in this sense 'limitations' relative to this reality, for the limits fence us off from an unrepresentable reality beyond them (2007, 187).This is also the reason why Moore states that the alternatives to our language are not 'real'. It is impossible for us to conceive of them as alternatives at all because they must involve representing something that is inherently unrepresentable to us.

There are a number of different issues we can pursue in relation to these suggestive remarks. We could, for example, reflect more on this generalised notion of transcendental idealism and consider its legitimacy and coherence. However, in line with the discussion in the previous sections, I will use this issue to evaluate Wittgenstein's relation to radical constructivism. In the next section, I will consider whether it is appropriate to attribute to the later Wittgenstein a commitment to transcendental idealism.

The fundamental feature of Wittgenstein's later philosophy that connects this transcendental idealism issue with Dummett's attempt to situate Wittgenstein in relation to the positions of moderate and radical constructivism is his emphasis on our shared form of

life. Dummett, as we saw, also called radical constructivism a 'full-blown internalism' (1993, 457), which is supposed to convey Wittgenstein's apparent conviction that we only have access to what we take to be necessary and not to what (from an external or 'God's eye' perspective) is in reality necessary. Dummett's radical constructivist interpretation amounts to the claim that Wittgenstein identified necessity with what we take (or decide to take) to be necessary because of this predicament we are in of being unable to transcend the internal standpoint of our contingent form of life. This issue of how to interpret Wittgenstein's emphasis on our form of life is also at the centre of the transcendental idealist reading. Both Williams and Moore state that Wittgenstein holds that 'philosophy can never be completely *detached*' (Moore 2007, 190), and that the proper philosophical method is to make our outlook or perspective 'clearer to ourselves, by reflecting on it, as it were self-consciously exercising it' and 'moving around reflectively inside our view of things' (Williams 1981, 153). The goal is thus to 'become conscious of, in so reflecting, […] something like: *how we go on*' (Ibid.).

However, the commitment to transcendental idealism – just like the commitment to radical constructivism – does not follow immediately from reflecting on our shared outlook or form of life, but on how this outlook relates to 'reality' beyond that outlook. As Moore explains, transcendental idealism seems to inevitably follow when we try to acknowledge the contingency of our standpoint in the widest possible sense (so that it is not the kind of contingency involved in, e.g., being speakers of the English language). It follows because we acknowledge the contingency of our standpoint and the possibility of alternatives (even though we cannot make sense of these alternatives), and so acknowledge that the limits of what is representable from our standpoint are 'limitations' relative to a reality that is unrepresentable to us. In short, by holding that our standpoint is contingent in this way, we end up being committed to a distinction between what is representable within this

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perspective, on the one hand, and what is not representable within this perspective but would be accessible from an external or God's eye perspective (or a perspective without these limitations), on the other. The resulting transcendental idealist position is different from radical constructivism because it retains – albeit in an attenuated sense – a distinction between what we take to be necessary and what is necessary in reality.

Nevertheless, as Williams points out, evaluating the question of Wittgenstein's commitment to either is similar in both cases. Wittgenstein would surely object to being labelled either a transcendental idealist or a radical constructivist. For example, as discussed in section 3.2, there are numerous remarks that directly contradict a radical constructivist reading. However, this does not settle the matter because the most important question is not necessarily that of which doctrine Wittgenstein expressed his allegiance to, but rather of which doctrine (if any) his remarks commit him to, even if unwittingly. For it may be, as Williams states, that Wittgenstein was committed to one of these doctrines even though he recognised that expressing his commitment would result in uttering either an obvious falsehood or nonsense. This makes the assessment of Wittgenstein's doctrinal commitments an extremely complicated matter. In the next section, I shall conclude by proposing a way of resolving these disputes.

3.7: Conclusion: Resolving these disputes

One of the major obstacles to properly evaluating the different constitutive readings of Wittgenstein that I have considered in this chapter is that it is difficult to categorise them in relation to one another. Dummett's distinction between moderate and radical constructivism is helpful up to a point. In sections 3.3 and 3.4, I followed him in characterising this distinction in terms of their respective attitudes to compulsion (see Dummett 1959, 346). However, in section 3.4 I argued that the issue of whether the correct application of a rule is

'determined' is also important in this context. The distinction between moderate and radical constructivism comes down to the issues of whether the correct applications of a given rule are determined *and* whether we are compelled to apply it in just these ways. The moderate constructivist (in common with the realist) affirms these, while the radical constructivist denies them. However, it must be kept in mind that there are different accounts that can be categorised as either moderate or radical. Dummett's full-blooded conventionalism obviously belongs in the radical category. The strict finitist and transcendental idealist accounts are rather more difficult to situate. For example, it appears that a strict finitist could restrict the domain of mathematics to what is 'feasible', while holding either a moderate or radical constructivist conception of proofs carried out within these restrictions. Transcendental idealism, though, does not fit neatly with either because the notion of correctness (of what is *really* the correct thing to do) is separated from our shared sense of what is correct.

The starting-point of all of these different readings is Wittgenstein's emphasis on our shared form of life, or on what he calls the 'given'. Williams and Moore quite rightly state that Wittgenstein's conception of correct philosophical method is one in which our goal should be to reflect on our shared perspective or outlook, and to put this outlook itself 'in focus' (Moore 2007, 191) and become conscious of 'how we go on'. It is from this relatively neutral territory that the different readings begin and eventually diverge. The best way of charting these divergent readings from this common starting-point is to analyse each in terms of the distinction between what we take to be necessary (or what we take to be the correct way of applying a rule or using a word, etc.) and what in reality is necessary (or what in reality is the correct way of applying the rule or using the word, etc.). Moreover, when we follow Wittgenstein and reflect on and describe our practices of taking certain propositions to be necessary and certain applications of a rule to be correct, we are led to enquire further into exactly what it is we become aware of. That is, in becoming conscious of our outlook and of

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how we go on, what are we really conscious of? Are we merely conscious of what seems to us to be necessary or the correct way of applying a rule, and is this distinct from what is necessary and what is the correct way of applying the rule? This is where the divergences begin, and the stance one takes on this will determine what kind of constructivist account we end up with. For example, we could assert that there is no genuine distinction between how we go on and what the correct way to go on is (and thus embrace a type of radical constructivism), or maintain that there is such a distinction but that we can never know what in reality the correct way to go on is (and thus embrace transcendental idealism).

My view is that the later Wittgenstein does not adopt any of these constructivist accounts because he does not take a stand on this further philosophical question concerning the relation between our shared outlook and what is really the case beyond this outlook. There are three main ways of defending this view. The first is to show that Wittgenstein's own master arguments can be used to undermine these different types of constructivist accounts. This is the strategy I adopted in relation to moderate constructivism. I argued that such accounts are as vulnerable as realist accounts to his gerrymandering argument. If this is correct, it undermines both Stroud's reading and any moderate variant of the strict finitist reading. The second strategy is to consider the particular constitutive account in question and argue that it does not accurately represent Wittgenstein's views. This is how I approached the strict finitist reading considered more generally (irrespective of whether it is moderate or radical). The third strategy is indicated by Moore when he discusses the particular example of transcendental idealism and how Wittgenstein resists it:

So—how can Wittgenstein resist such transcendental idealism? By disallowing the questions that led to it. ... Somehow we have to see these questions themselves as pseudo-questions, symptoms of an illness awaiting Wittgensteinian therapy. (2007, 194)

Putting this in the broader context of the present discussion, the point is that while it might seem inevitable that Wittgenstein must embrace one or other of these constructivist accounts mentioned above, he ultimately resists them by 'disallowing the questions' that lead to them. The relevant questions are those I identified concerning whether 'how we go on' is in reality the correct way to go on, and whether what we take to be necessary is really necessary, etc.

This third strategy can appear to some to be implausible or unmotivated. It can seem as though Wittgenstein is taking the easy way out by rejecting the philosophical questions rather than doing the hard work of taking them seriously and decided what the best account is. However, my discussion of the various constructivist readings in this chapter hopefully helps to show how Wittgenstein's response could be well-motivated. If I am right about Wittgenstein's gerrymandering argument as potentially undermining all realist and moderately constructivist accounts of the constitution of necessity, rule-following, etc., then he has good grounds for rejecting them. This leaves the radical constructivist accounts, such as full-blooded conventionalism and the radical versions of strict finitism, which are highly implausible. Wittgenstein's rejection of these could hardly be said to be unmotivated.

We are encountering here the bigger question of Wittgenstein's motivation for adopting a quietist standpoint in his later philosophy, or for rejecting the approach of proposing philosophical theses and explanations. This is a major issue that I will not be able to address until the next chapter (see section 4.7). However, I do believe that it points in the direction of the correct reading of the later Wittgenstein on these issues. Whatever we may feel about the plausibility of his quietist standpoint, I hold that it is correct that he resisted adopting a radical constructivist or transcendental idealist account; and that the *only* way in which he could do so comprehensively was to reject the questions that would inevitably lead us to adopt one of these philosophical positions. The correct reading, in my view, could be

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called non-constitutive in the sense that it adopts neither of these readings and takes Wittgenstein's quietism seriously. We could still raise the Williams-style question of whether Wittgenstein was nevertheless committed to a constitutive account as some sort of inexpressible truth. Moore seems to believe that this question is also eliminated if we 'disallow the questions' (2007, 194). While I agree with this, this issue is too big to resolve here and I will not consider it further.

In the final chapter, I will develop and defend this non-constitutive interpretation in opposition to the kinds of constitutive readings I have considered in this chapter. Most importantly for the aims of this thesis, I will also argue that it corresponds to Kripke's reading of Wittgenstein as adopting a 'sceptical solution'.

Chapter Four: *Wittgenstein and the Sceptical Solution: Meaning Without Meaning-Constitution*

4.0: Introduction

In this final chapter, I will bring together my analyses from the previous chapters and attempt to extend them into a defence of Kripke's reading of Wittgenstein. I have already given a partial defence of this reading, but my focus has thus far been primarily on Wittgenstein's negative arguments in *PI* and the constraints they place on any positive picture of meaning and rule-following that may be proposed. To summarise, so far I have argued for the following parallel claims regarding Wittgenstein and Kripke's Wittgenstein:

Wittgenstein:

(1a) Wittgenstein's gerrymandering argument is an argument leading to the statement of a sceptical paradoxical conclusion.

(2a) Wittgenstein responds to the sceptical paradoxical conclusion by rejecting it and rejecting the assumption about meaning-constitution that leads to it.

(3a) Wittgenstein's gerrymandering argument has a wide scope in the sense that it can be used in a similar way as a reductio to undermine a large class of assumptions about meaning-constitution (in particular, both realist and moderate constructivist assumptions of various kinds).

Kripke's Wittgenstein:

(1b) Kripke's Wittgenstein's sceptical argument is an argument leading to the statement of the radical

sceptical conclusion that there is no such thing as meaning anything by any word.

(2b) Kripke's Wittgenstein responds to this radical conclusion by rejecting it and concluding with the negation of the classical realist assumption about meaning-constitution that leads to it.

(3b) Kripke's Wittgenstein's sceptical argument has a wide scope in the sense that it can be used in a similar way as a reductio to undermine a large class of assumptions about meaning-constitution (not just the classical realist assumption).

There is a further parallel between them that is the subject of this chapter. In both cases, their respective argument can be used as a tool for undermining a large class of particular assumptions about meaning-constitution. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, there are assumptions about meaning-constitution that cannot be undermined in this way. There would thus be no inconsistency in accepting the results of these arguments while adopting one of these alternative conceptions. I will argue in this chapter, though, that the standpoints of both Wittgenstein and Kripke's Wittgenstein are characterised by the rejection of all constitutive conceptions, or of the whole approach to meaning that posits the existence of meaning-constituting facts of some kind. In sections 4.1-4.3 and 4.5 I will defend an interpretation of Kripke's Wittgenstein's sceptical solution along these lines. And in sections 4.4-4-7 I will defend Wittgenstein's remarks concerning practices and communal agreement in accordance with this non-constitutive approach.

In what follows, I will frequently speak of Wittgenstein and Kripke's Wittgenstein as proposing an alternative rough 'picture' of meaning and rule-following. This can appear to be at odds with certain of Wittgenstein's remarks, such as the following:

A *picture* held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language

seemed to repeat it to us inexorably. (*PI*, §115)

This way of speaking about a picture has clear negative connotations. Wittgenstein does not state that the *wrong* picture held us captive or that the solution is to adopt the *right* picture of meaning. It may thus be going too far to state that Wittgenstein proposes an alternative picture of meaning; and, in any case, it may be inconsistent with his quietism. My talk of Wittgenstein's positive picture is merely meant to capture his explicitly stated goal of understanding the workings of our language and commanding a 'clear view' or 'perspicuous representation' of the grammar of our language (see *PI*, §122). The positive side of Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy instructs us to reflect on our language as it is used and interwoven with a complex web of goals and activities. Implicit in this is the conviction that our language is something that is realised in practices of regular behaviour and presupposes a shared form of life (see, e.g. *PI*, §§19 and 23). It is, I hold, not misleading to call this an alternative picture of meaning provided we do not see it as giving rise to an alternative philosophical explanatory account of what meaning consists in. I will argue in section 4.7 that proposing an alternative rough picture of meaning is consistent with his quietism.

4.1: Kripke's Wittgenstein and the sceptical solution

In the first chapter, I characterised Kripke's Wittgenstein's (KW's) response to his sceptical challenge as consisting in the rejection of the following basic principle:

A speaker means something by a term if and only if there are facts that are constitutive of this meaning.

This principle underpins all particular conceptions of meaning-constitution; they merely

differ concerning what it takes for something to be meaning-constituting. One major reason for interpreting KW as rejecting this principle is that the sceptical challenge can be generalised and used to undermine a large class of assumptions about meaning-constitution. This is a point that, e.g., Miller convincingly argues for. However, the discussion in the previous chapter revealed that although the sceptical argument does indeed have a wide scope, it cannot be used as a tool for undermining all conceptions of meaning-constitution.

I argued for this in connection with Wittgenstein's gerrymandering argument, which is the argument that Kripke reconstructs as the sceptical argument. I argued that Wittgenstein's argument can be used against realist assumptions and also against what Dummett calls 'moderate constructivist' assumptions about meaning-constitution. I also acknowledged, though, that there are certain extreme conceptions of meaning-constitution – 'radical constructivist' conceptions – that cannot be undermined in this way. The same could be said about KW's sceptical argument, which I have shown to closely mirror Wittgenstein's gerrymandering argument (see sections 2.4 and 2.5). The implication is thus that the sceptical argument cannot, on its own, establish the negation of the above basic principle concerning meaning-constitution. Certain other considerations are required. One quite compelling consideration is that all of the conceptions of meaning-constitution that survive the sceptical argument are too radical or extreme to be plausible; and so there are strong reasons to reject this whole approach to meaning. This, though, would need to be substantiated by considering various candidates of such 'radical' conceptions and showing that they are flawed. In some cases, this will be obvious, e.g., with conceptions that merely identify the meaning of a word with whatever the community agrees to be the meaning. But there may be more subtle accounts that fall into this category. Wright's judgment-dependent conception of meaning-constitution could be one such example.

Despite these considerations, my claim is that from an interpretive point of view at

least, KW's sceptical solution should be viewed as rejecting the basic principle concerning meaning-constitution. I will argue in this chapter that when we look at the details of Kripke's discussion of this solution, it can be seen that KW's standpoint consists of the attempt to elucidate the notion of meaning and defend the legitimacy of semantic discourse without appealing to the existence of meaning-constituting facts of *any* kind.[35] I will directly address the question of whether adopting such a non-constitutive approach is properly motivated in the final section. The rejection of the basic principle concerning meaning-constitution is a stronger conclusion than, e.g., Wilson's 'Basic Sceptical Conclusion' and it does warrant being called a type of sceptical conclusion. However, although it is a radical claim, it is still distinct from the 'Radical Sceptical Conclusion' that there is no such thing as meaning anything by a term, which defines the radical sceptic's position. I take the latter claim to involve the rejection of the notion of meaning itself, and this is something that is not accepted by KW and that is not entailed by the rejection of meaning-constituting facts.

I shall conclude this section by considering the appropriateness of the label 'sceptical solution' when attached to KW's response to his sceptical challenge, and compare it with Hume's sense of this expression. Given the vast literature and long-standing disputes over how to interpret Hume's discussion of causation, it may be justifiably questioned whether there is any advantage in considering his notion of a sceptical solution. Nevertheless, since Hume is one of the few (or only) examples of a philosopher that explicitly endorses a sceptical solution to a particular philosophical problem, there may be some value in even briefly considering his view. In section IV of the *Enquiry*, Hume formulates 'sceptical

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[35] See, e.g., where he writes: 'A *sceptical* solution of a sceptical philosophical problem begins on the contrary by conceding that the sceptic's negative assertions are unanswerable. Nevertheless our ordinary practice or belief is justified because – contrary appearances notwithstanding – it need not require the justification the sceptic has shown to be untenable. And much of the value of the sceptical argument consists precisely in the fact that he has shown that an ordinary practice, if it is to be defended at all, cannot be defended in a certain way. A sceptical solution may also involve – in the manner suggested above – a sceptical analysis or account of ordinary beliefs to rebut their *prima facie* reference to a metaphysical absurdity' (*WRPL*, 66-67).

doubts' concerning the possibility of giving a rational justification of our judgments about causation and inductive inferences. In section V, he proposes a 'sceptical solution of these doubts' that involves accepting that such judgments and inferences cannot be based on reason. His 'solution' is to state that their legitimacy derives from some other 'principle of human nature', which he calls 'habit' or 'custom' (1975, 42-43). Blackburn, though, states that this is not the part of Hume that matters most for *WRPL*. He states that:

> What matters is [Hume's] reinterpretation of the concept of causation – the topic of section VII of the *Enquiry*. It is here that Hume has a (fairly) pure example of the process I described: a sceptical argument forcing us to revise our conception of a kind of fact. It is here that he parallels KW. But the reinterpretation does not deserve to be called a 'sceptical solution' to anything, nor did Hume so call it. It is at most a proposal prompted by sceptical problems. But in principle it might have been prompted by other considerations altogether. And in fact Hume's reinterpretation of causation is only partly motivated by scepticism. (2002, 30)

This, however, is debatable and it could also be maintained regarding section VII that 'in it a sceptical problem and its solution are compressed into one section' (Buckle, 2001, 191). For example, Buckle interprets the second part of section VII as providing

> a sceptical solution to those doubts [concerning the origin of the idea of necessary connection], by tracing the origin of the idea to an internal impression of a very special kind, which arises independently of singular perceptions, and indeed of any operation of the understanding. (Ibid.)

Viewed along these lines, Hume's sceptical solution consists of providing an alternative account or 'definition' of cause in terms of the origin of the idea from the internal impression or feeling that arises when one is compelled by habit to expect an event that in the past has

always occurred with another.

Aside from the issue of how to correctly interpret Hume's sceptical solution, this brief presentation shares some features with KW's sceptical solution. Most notably, it is not opposed to the concept in question itself, but to a particular dominant conception of the source of its legitimacy. Hume argues that its legitimacy cannot consist in reason and his solution is to account for it in terms of a non-rational but equally fundamental principle of human nature. It is an open question whether Hume's sceptical solution amounts to an alternative explanatory account of causation, or merely a description of our actual custom or habit of making certain causal judgments on the basis of certain internal feelings arising from habit. I will not address this question here. The point I want to emphasise is that there is a specific sense in which KW's response to his sceptical challenge is a sceptical solution, viz. it is based on accepting a particular sceptical conclusion and proposing an alternative conception of the legitimacy of semantic discourse or assertions that a person means something by a term. This can be stipulated and defended by considering *WRPL* and Wittgenstein's writings, independently of the question of whether Hume adopted a sceptical solution in a similar sense. There is, though, a parallel issue in relation to KW's sceptical solution concerning whether its appeal to practices, customs, communal agreement, etc., amounts to an alternative explanatory account. In section 4.5 I will directly address this question as it relates to KW and argue against this suggestion.

4.2: Wilson and Miller on the semantic non-factualism in the sceptical solution

Although I have defended – with some qualifications – Wilson's interpretation of KW's sceptical *argument*, this is separate to the issue of his interpretation of the sceptical *solution*. My interpretation of KW's sceptical solution differs from Wilson's and other factualist readings because they hold that this solution can be viewed as incorporating meaning-

constituting facts of some kind (see Wilson forthcoming, section IV; and Kusch 2006, 219).

In the first chapter, I argued that there is substantial agreement between Wilson and Miller concerning the proper scope of KW's sceptical argument. The main disagreement between them concerns the question of the existence of facts about meaning in light of the sceptical challenge, or more specifically in light of their shared conception of this challenge. Miller differs from Wilson in holding that a semantic non-factualism is the only real option left to KW. In this section, I will address this particular disagreement and thereby address the broader question of where KW stands – in the solution he proposes – with respect to the issue of the existence of facts about meaning.

Wilson interprets the sceptical solution as proposing a type of 'modest' semantic factualism, in which the semantic facts are facts about our dispositions to uses terms. In his (forthcoming), he argues that there is a legitimate sense in which these dispositions can be said to be 'constitutive' of my meaning something by a term (forthcoming, 25-26). In section 1.4, I considered some of the details of this aspect of his view and argued against it. Although my reading is closer to Miller's non-factualist reading when it comes to the issue of the sceptical *solution*, there are significant points of disagreement that I wish to highlight in this section.

There is, though, an ambiguity in this discussion of semantic factualism that needs to be addressed before we can make a proper assessment of this issue. On the one hand, there are remarks in *WRPL* that suggest that KW is committed to a factualist conception of semantic *discourse* in the sense that he holds that sentences of this discourse can be true or false, and that we can even legitimately assert that 'it is a fact that' a person means such-and-such by a term (see *WRPL*, 69 and 86). This is the main inspiration for the factualist readings. On the other hand, there is the separate issue of whether KW denies the *existence* of meaning-constituting facts; and this is where my disagreement with the factualist readings

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arises. Whereas Wilson explicitly characterises the factuality of semantic discourse in terms of its depiction of meaning-constituting facts[36], I hold that its factual character should be construed in deflationary terms. The issue thus comes down to the distinction between deflationary and inflationary kinds of semantic factualism. My view is that KW's sceptical solution involves a commitment to a deflationary semantic factualism that – unlike the inflationary kinds – does not construe the truth or falsity of meaning-ascriptions to consist in the existence or non-existence of corresponding meaning-constituting facts of some sort; and that this is how we should read the passages at *WRPL*, 69 and 86. I will elaborate on this distinction in the next section. For now I want to highlight the importance of separating the question of the factuality of semantic discourse from the question of the existence of meaning-constituting facts, and to emphasise that the former need not be based on the latter.

With this distinction in mind we can consider Miller's non-factualist reading of KW. Miller sees the enduring value of Wilson's interpretation to consist in his distinction between the 'Basic' and 'Radical' sceptical conclusions. In place of Wilson's factualist interpretation, Miller proposes a non-factualist interpretation of the sceptical solution that respects this distinction (2010, 181). The best way of outlining this non-factualist reading is to consider Miller's reconstruction of KW's sceptical argument (see Ibid.):[37]

(1) If ascriptions of meaning to predicates have truth-conditions, then

(if predicates do not have meaning, then the ascriptions of meaning to

predicates are systematically false).   Premise

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[36] See his (1998, 114) where he characterises KW as a semantic factualist in the sense of holding that meaning ascriptions are true 'in virtue of' 'facts about the speaker'. See also his characterisation of this factualism as 'realist' and his claim that this entails the rejection of a deflationary concept of truth.

[37] For the sake of greater clarity, I have modified Miller's presentation by focussing on the meanings of predicates rather than of sentences. I do this in order to avoid expressions such as 'ascriptions of truth-conditions have truth-conditions', which make the argument harder to follow when multiplied across various premises.

(2) Ascriptions of meaning to predicates have truth-conditions.　　　Assumption: that

ascriptions of meaning

are factual

Therefore,

(3) If predicates do not have meaning, then the ascriptions of meaning to

predicates are systematically false.　　　Modus ponens (1, 2)

(4) If predicates have meaning, then there is a property that governs its

correct use.　　　'Platitude'

(5) If there is a property that governs the correct use of a predicate for a

speaker, then there are facts about the speaker's psychological and/or

social history that constitute that property as the property that governs

the speaker's use of the predicate.　　　Grounding

(6) BSC: There are no facts about a speaker S that constitute any property

P as the property that governs $S's$ use of 'P'.　　　Case-by-case analysis

(7) Predicates do not have meaning.　　　Modus tollens (4,6)

Therefore,

(8) Ascriptions of meaning to predicates are systematically false.　　　Modus ponens (3, 7)

(9) RSC: No-one ever means anything by a predicate.

According to Miller's interpretation, 'KW's Sceptical Solution *concedes* BSC to the sceptic, but seeks a way to avoid RSC' (2010, 182). Miller's central claim is that KW does this by rejecting the assumption at line 2 that ascriptions of meaning are factual. This 'blocks the route to RSC by rejecting factualism about ascriptions of meaning' (2010, 182). Hence,

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whereas for Wilson, KW avoids RSC by rejecting the classical realist assumption, thus allowing him to retain a factualist conception of meaning ascriptions; for Miller, KW avoids RSC by rejecting the factualist assumption about meaning ascriptions, thus resulting in a non-factualist conception of meaning ascriptions. It is important to see that the classical realist assumption is at work in this argument, although Miller's presentation conceals it somewhat. He calls the proposition at line 4 a 'platitude' (2010, 181), when in fact it is an essential part of the classical realist conception. This proposition, in conjunction with the 'Grounding' proposition at line 5, captures the classical realist conception.[38] Together they amount to the classical realist view that a speaker's meaning something by, e.g., a predicate consists in there being 'facts about the speaker' that constitute a property 'that governs the speaker's correct use of the predicate'. Therefore, we could follow Wilson and avoid RSC by rejecting this conception; or we could take Miller's option of rejecting the more general factualist assumption.

How can we adjudicate between these? Both are possible ways of avoiding the sceptic's RSC. This issue enables me to articulate my points of agreement and disagreement with both Wilson and Miller in greater detail. Faced with this formulation of the sceptical argument, I think we should follow Wilson and reject the classical realist assumption about meaning, rather than the general factualist assumption. The factualist assumption is not itself contentious, but it may become so by being characterised in an inflationary way; and so faced with the option of rejecting it *or* the classical realist assumption, it is far more compelling to reject the classical realist assumption. This option is obscured in Miller's formulation of the argument by not clearly identifying the classical realist assumption and calling an aspect of it a platitude. However, I agree with a separate aspect of Miller's opposition to Wilson. It seems

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[38] Wilson's full characterisation of the classical realist conception involves this 'Grounding' claim. See footnote 4 in section 1.2.

that much of Miller's objections to Wilson's factualist reading are to his positing meaning-constituting facts of a non-classical realist kind. But by targeting the factualist assumption above, Miller seems to have misidentified the contentious feature of Wilson's factualist reading. As I indicated above regarding the ambiguity that surrounds the notion of semantic factualism, we can oppose the existence of meaning-constituting facts (and take KW to be opposed to them) while holding on deflationary grounds that semantic discourse is factual.[39] There is thus no commitment to meaning-constituting facts in the general factualist assumption, and as such this assumption cannot be undermined by the sceptical argument. Or to put it another way, it is not legitimate to characterise the sceptical argument as undermining the general factualist assumption because this assumption cannot on its own be used to derive the radical sceptical conclusion, RSC. Rather, the assumption must be 'inflated', i.e. by adding an inflationary assumption about meaning-constitution such as the classical realist one; but then it is always open to us (and always more plausible) to avoid this path to RSC by rejecting the inflationary assumption rather than the general factualist assumption.

In the next section, I will develop my analysis of KW's attitude to semantic factualism by considering it from the perspective of Wright's and Boghossian's objections to the coherence of KW's sceptical solution.

4.3: The coherence of the sceptical solution: Responding to Wright and Boghossian

Before turning to Wittgenstein's positive picture of meaning and rule-following in *PI* and the question of the accuracy of Kripke's representation of it, I will conclude my preliminary analysis of KW's sceptical solution by contrasting it with other characterisations and

[39] Miller does draw attention to a version of this distinction between the two types of semantic factualism, one of which is merely based on a deflationary conception of 'factual' (see 2010, 172-173). He argues against the deflationary kind on separate grounds; see footnote 44 below. My point against Miller in this section is to the way he characterises the sceptical argument as being capable of undermining the general factualist assumption.

responding to a couple of influential objections to it. Since the publication of *WRPL*, the sceptical solution has usually been characterised in terms of the acceptance of the following:[40]

(1) The classical realist (or similar) conception of meaning.

(2) The sceptical conclusion that there is no such thing as meaning anything by any word.

(3) A non-factualist conception of semantic discourse.

On my reading, it is misleading to attribute any of these three features to KW. So far, I have focussed mainly on establishing that he does not accept either of the first two. I have not yet said enough to show why the third is also mistakenly attributed. This is part of my task in the present section.

This question of the correct characterisation of KW's sceptical solution is not only important to understanding Kripke's *WRPL* and the correctness of his interpretation of Wittgenstein. It is also crucial to the question of the independent plausibility of KW's response to his own sceptical challenge. There have been many strong criticisms made against the sceptical solution, but I will focus on responding to two of the most influential and potentially devastating. Boghossian and Wright have proposed separate arguments for the claim that KW's sceptical solution is fundamentally 'incoherent'. Whereas Boghossian argues that its incoherence consists in being committed to two incompatible concepts of truth (one deflationary and the other robust (1989, 161-163)), Wright argues that it is committed to a *global* non-factualism which he maintains is incoherent (see his 2001, 104-105). To address these, I will identify the role that each of the above three points plays in them. It will turn out

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[40] The second and third tend to be more explicitly associated with the sceptical solution. However, I have argued with Wilson and Kusch that the radical sceptical conclusion can only be derived by assuming something like the classical realist conception. Hence, the view that KW is committed to the first conception may only be implicit or be a consequence of assuming that he is committed to the second point. However, there are also instances where this view of KW is made explicit, such as in Boghossian's interpretation which I discuss in this section.

that all three are crucial to Boghossian's objection, while only the third concerning non-factualism is crucial to Wright's. Hence, the fundamental point that both objections seize on is the apparent commitment of the sceptical solution to a non-factualist conception of semantic discourse. I will thus devote the latter part of the section to arguing that KW's sceptical solution is not actually committed to such a non-factualist conception.

I will only briefly discuss Wright's objection because it is clear from even a superficial glance that it interprets the sceptical solution as adopting a non-factualist conception of semantic discourse. Setting out from this view, Wright argues along the following lines that it leads to an incoherent global projectivism or non-factualism:

(1) 'If the truth value of S is determined by its meaning and the state of the world in relevant respects, then non-factuality in one of its determinants can be expected to induce non-factuality in the outcome.' (2001, 104)

(2) Therefore, a 'projectivist view of meaning' entails a 'projectivist view of what it is for a statement to be true'. (Ibid.)

(3) But if we have a projectivist view of '"p" is true', we must also have a projectivist view of 'p' because it is necessary to conceive both sides of the disquotational schema in the same way.

(4) Therefore, we are led to the view that '*all* statements are projective', i.e. to a global projectivism. (Ibid.)

(5) But global projectivism is incoherent because if it is correct, then it must be a fact that all discourse is non-fact-stating; but any assertion to this effect would itself have to be non-fact-stating. (2001, 105)

The argument is quite simple, but also compelling. There may be ways of attacking one or

more of its premises or inferences. However, my approach will be to attack its assumption that this has anything to do with KW's sceptical solution, i.e. that KW is committed to the kind of semantic non-factualism that leads to an incoherent global non-factualism or projectivism. I will return to this after I have highlighted the role of this and the other assumptions in Boghossian's separate incoherence argument.

Boghossian's slightly more complicated argument begins by stating that whether or not a discourse is truth-apt depends on the conditions that we adopt for truth-aptness, and that these conditions may be either deflationary or robust (1989, 162). They are deflationary if it is sufficient for truth-aptness that a sentence meets certain syntactic requirements, such as being 'apt for semantic ascent' (Ibid.). For example, Wright (1992) states these syntactic requirements in terms of the following criteria (I follow Miller's 2010 formulation):

Discipline: There must be acknowledged standards for the proper and improper use of sentences of the discourse: the discourse must be disciplined, in the sense that there must be standards in force with respect to which uses of the discourse's sentences are judged to be appropriate or inappropriate.

Syntax: The sentences of the discourse possess the right sort of syntactic features: for example, they must be capable of conditionalization, negation, embedding in propositional attitudes, etc.

The sentences of a discourse can be characterised as factual or truth-apt in this deflationary sense if they meet these criteria (or criteria similar to them). When Kripke writes that, for KW, sentences of semantic discourse such as 'Jones means *addition* by "+"' can be legitimately preceded with 'it is true that…' and 'it is a fact that…' (*WRPL*, 69 and 86), this suggests that KW's view is that semantic discourse satisfies the above deflationary criteria. Therefore, Boghossian's argument continues, when KW denies that semantic discourse is factual, he must be presupposing some more substantial or robust criteria for being factual or

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truth-apt (1989, 162). KW's sceptical solution, for Boghossian, thus presupposes a robust concept of truth (Ibid.). This is a major problem for KW because Boghossian argues that the sceptical solution can also be shown to entail a deflationary concept of truth. Once again, Boghossian's argument appeals to the characterisation of the sceptical solution as a type of semantic non-factualism. The argument can be simply stated as follows. As just discussed, Wright has argued that if one is a non-factualist about meaning, one must also be a non-factualist about truth (Boghossian 1989, 161-163). And to hold that truth is non-factual is to hold that it is not a robust or language-independent property. Hence, non-factualism about meaning is committed to a deflationary concept of truth.

Boghossian's objection clearly presupposes that KW's sceptical solution involves a non-factualist conception of semantic discourse. There are also other questionable premises in Boghossian's argument, such as his assumption that a robust conception of truth-aptitude entails a robust conception of truth. It also assumes that the sceptical solution presupposes the classical realist conception of meaning (or a similar conception). However, this is not as obvious and it is important to highlight because it is an assumption shared with many other interpreters of *WRPL*. Take the first part of Boghossian's argument that establishes that the sceptical solution entails robust criteria for truth-aptness. Even assuming that this is correct, this would not create a problem for KW as I have interpreted him because these robust criteria would be part of the conception of meaning that the sceptic presupposes and which KW ultimately rejects. The robust criteria would be those of classical realism, or some alternative conception of meaning-constitution; and although they would be employed by the sceptic in mounting his challenge, KW distances himself from the sceptic by rejecting these conceptions and the robust criteria of truth-aptitude that go along with them. The second part

of Boghossian's argument would (even if it were legitimate)[41] thus not be worrying because it would merely reinforce this rejection of the robust concept of truth and the commitment to the deflationary concept. Hence, the simultaneous commitment to incompatible concepts of truth does not exist on my reading of the sceptical solution. There would only be commitment to the deflationary concept.

In order to respond adequately to Wright's and Boghossian's objections, though, it must be shown that KW's sceptical solution is not committed to the kind of non-factualist conception that leads to incoherence. The first thing to note about this issue is that it concerns the proper characterisation of semantic *discourse*, i.e. discourse involving semantic terms such as 'means', as in meaning ascriptions such as 'Jones means *addition* by "+"'. It concerns the question of whether such meaning-ascriptions are truth-apt or fact-stating, not the separate question of the existence or non-existence of meaning-constituting facts. The crucial issue here is thus distinct from the issue that is most central to the sceptical challenge and the argument for the sceptical conclusion. Although they are distinct, Kripke does connect KW's acceptance of the sceptical conclusion with the positive programme of presenting a sceptical solution. Generally speaking, the transition is typically characterised as one in which KW accepts the sceptical conclusion that there are no facts about meaning and proceeds to present a positive picture of meaning in which the legitimacy of semantic discourse does not depend on successfully representing such facts (see *WRPL*, 66-67). It is in this sense that KW is held to adopt a non-factualist conception of semantic discourse; and it amounts to a 'solution' because it shows how such discourse has an important and legitimate function that is distinct from stating facts. Therefore, even though the issues of the existence of semantic facts and the nature of semantic discourse are distinct, the view is that KW's negative conclusion concerning the former shapes his positive conception of the latter.

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[41] It is, of course, not legitimate because it depends on the non-factualist assumption.

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However, these issues cannot be adequately addressed until we resolve the ambiguity in the talk of semantic factualism, which I alluded to in the previous section. What is semantic factualism committed to and how is this related to the issue of the existence of meaning-constituting facts? It is important to distinguish different kinds of semantic factualism, some of which are more inflationary than others. I propose to characterise *inflationary* semantic factualism in terms of the notion of meaning-constitution. Such factualisms posit the existence of meaning-constituting facts of some kind, and they may differ depending, e.g., on whether they are of a realist or anti-realist kind. But the common feature of such factualisms is that they attempt to give an *explanatory* account of what meaning consists in.[42] Therefore, inflationary semantic factualisms are committed to holding: (1) that meaning-ascriptions are truth-apt; (2) that there are meaning-constituting facts; and (3) that true meaning-ascriptions are true in virtue of the existence of the relevant meaning-constituting facts.[43] I hold that KW's sceptical solution should be characterised in terms of the rejection of all such inflationary semantic factualist accounts. This, though, is distinct from deflationary semantic factualism, which KW is committed to. The only feature that it shares with the inflationary kind is the claim that meaning-ascriptions are truth-apt. It holds this on the basis of certain syntactical considerations, such as that meaning-ascriptions satisfy

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[42] In connecting the notion of inflationary semantic factualism with explanation, I follow Soames (1998, 331-332).

[43] Wilson, for example, is committed to all three of these. See his (1998, 114) where he characterises 'non-factualism about meaning-ascriptions' as holding that 'There are no facts about a speaker in virtue of which ascriptions of meaning – even among those that are fully warranted by all our usual criteria – are correct.' (1998, 114). Wilson states that this 'should not be included as part of the position that Kripke's Wittgenstein defends' (Ibid.). See also his characterisation of 'realism about meaning ascriptions' as satisfying the following two conditions: 'She must hold that a) meaning ascriptions, when true, are true in virtue of facts about the speaker or speakers in question, and b) the basis of her acceptance of a) is not built upon a deflationary or minimalist account of truth or facts or both'. And he continues: 'The usual way of being such a "realist" is to be an advocate of classical realism about meaning, but, if Wittgenstein's skeptical argument is sound, then this is hopeless. What our recent discussion reveals is that there may be a different form of "semantic realism", a form that may turn out to be available to a proponent of the skeptical solution' (1998, 121-122). I would modify this by stating that this is a characterisation of inflationary semantic factualism because the facts in virtue of which meaning ascriptions are true do not have to be construed along realist lines.

the *Syntax* and *Discipline* criteria mentioned above. It does not presuppose a commitment to the existence of meaning-constituting facts of any kind; and hence neither is it committed to an explanatory approach to meaning.[44]

Interpreting KW as a kind of semantic factualist is the approach that factualist authors have adopted as the best way of responding to the incoherence objections.[45] I agree with this approach to answering these objections, but I differ from them in characterising this factualism in a strictly deflationary way. On separate grounds, these factualist readers also hold that KW's sceptical solution can be viewed as incorporating particular types of meaning-constituting facts. I maintain my opposition to this feature of their readings. The entire point of the transition to the sceptical solution as I interpret it is to distance oneself from the misguided tasks of attempting to explain how a word possesses meaning and to justify our use of semantic terms by appealing to the existence of meaning-constituting facts of some kind. To be fair to these readers, they would not necessarily express their interpretations of the sceptical solution as engaging in this explanatory project. But the fact that they allow for meaning-constituting facts in this solution shows that they do not sufficiently distance KW from this project. In conclusion, I emphasise that attributing a deflationary semantic factualism to KW is sufficient to answer the incoherence objections proposed by Boghossian and Wright, but that the further step taken by Wilson, Kusch and

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[44] Miller gives a separate argument for the claim that even deflationary semantic factualism is vulnerable to the sceptical challenge: 'It is arguable, though, that the view that KW adopts in the Sceptical Solution cannot be so formulated [as deflationary or merely minimal]. This is because the assertability conditions – standards of appropriateness [as stated in the *Discipline* condition] – that provide for merely minimal truth-aptitude are normative in a sense directly put under pressure by the conclusion of KW's sceptic's negative argument. Since they are standards that sort X's uses of T into the categories *correct* and *incorrect*, in adopting the minimalist conception of truth-aptitude we are in effect taking for granted the notion of correctness questioned by the sceptic's negative arguments.' (Miller 2007, 199). But all that is needed for this condition to be satisfied is for there to be actual standards of appropriateness obtaining in the community. The question of whether they are really correct or whether they determine the correct application of a term in a potential infinity of cases is eliminated. I disagree that there is a sense of normativity presupposed in such conditions that the sceptic would object to. I will attempt to reinforce this point in section 4.6.

[45] See Kusch 2006, 168-176.

other factualist readers (for their different reasons) of incorporating meaning-constituting facts into the sceptical solution should not be taken.

4.4: Wittgenstein and Kripke's Wittgenstein *1*: Practices, customs, and agreement

In the remaining sections of this chapter I will focus exclusively on evaluating Kripke's *WRPL* specifically as an interpretation of Wittgenstein. At different points throughout the thesis – notably, in Chapter 2 – I considered the question of the accuracy of Kripke's reading, but I now wish to give it much more sustained treatment. In Chapter 2, I developed an interpretation of Wittgenstein's transition from his middle to his later period concerning meaning and rule-following. Looking at his middle period writings and his later 'master arguments' in *PI*, I argued that Wittgenstein was opposed in both periods to the notion of facts about a speaker (e.g. concerning his mental states) as explaining how he or she follows a rule or applies a word correctly. But I also argued that Wittgenstein did not succeed in fully extricating himself from such flawed approaches to meaning and rule-following until his later period. I argued that his later period should thus be viewed in terms of his more thorough rejection of such explanatory accounts of meaning and rule-following. One major feature of Wittgenstein's transition to the later period which is often emphasised is the importance he came to place on practices or customs of use. This replaces his 'rule-based' or calculus model of meaning, according to which rules for the use of words determine the meanings of those words. The later Wittgenstein moves beyond this model by no longer conceiving of these rules as divorced from the communal practice of applying them regularly and in broad agreement with one another. From the point of view of this thesis, the important question is whether this appeal to practices in the later period should be viewed in the context of an alternative conception of meaning-constituting facts. This is a highly contentious issue that I will address in this section. I will attempt to argue that Wittgenstein did not appeal to

practices and customs in this explanatory context, and that in this important sense his appeal to practices is akin to KW's in his positive solution to the sceptical challenge.

What would it mean, though, to say that our practices of using words and applying rules are constitutive of meaning and rule-following? There are, I think, three primary ways of construing this and all of them should be addressed:

(1) That the *abilities* or *techniques* exemplified in the practice of applying rules are constitutive of rule-following.

(2) That the *set of actual instances* of applying the rules (perhaps taken as a totality comprising the entire past history of application) is constitutive of rule-following.

(3) That the *community* – whose practice it is – is constitutive of rule-following.

My discussion of abilities and techniques in Chapter 3 showed that if the first way of interpreting the claim is adopted, the constitutive reading can be easily undermined using Wittgenstein's own arguments. We can acknowledge that corresponding to the practice or activity of applying rules is the language user's capacity to grasp the rules in the first place. However, I argued in section 3.4 that Wittgenstein's gerrymandering considerations can be generalised in such a way as to undermine the claim that such capacities, abilities or techniques are constitutive of rule-following. I argued that a parallel gerrymandering argument can be developed to establish the claim that no matter what state, capacity, ability, or technique that one appealed to as exemplified in practice and constitutive of rule-following, it cannot fulfil the function any better than the mythological mental states that Wittgenstein explicitly identifies and attacks. A similar criticism could be levelled against the second way above of reading the claim that practices of use are constitutive of rule-following.

Wittgenstein's gerrymandering considerations highlight the fact that any finite set of instances of applying a rule are consistent with my having grasped an indefinite number of different rules; and thus the set of applications could not itself be constitutive of my following some particular rule. Therefore, if either of these first two ways of interpreting the claim is adopted, then the constitutive reading of Wittgenstein's appeal to practices and customs of use must be rejected. This is because the claim that practice is constitutive of rule-following can be undermined by Wittgenstein's own arguments stated elsewhere in *PI*, and so it would be implausible to attribute a conception of practice to him that would be undermined by these arguments.

This leaves us with the third way of interpreting the claim, which takes it to mean that the community in some sense is constitutive of rule-following. This in turn could be interpreted in many ways, since there are numerous ways in which the community could be appealed to. I will devote the rest of the section to considering some of the main senses in which the community could be said to play this role. One way is to focus on the notion of 'agreement', which Wittgenstein explicitly states is essential to elucidating the notion of a rule (see *PI*, §224; see also §§240-242). But what role is the notion of agreement supposed to play? The suggestion might be crudely put that whatever the community agrees is the correct way of applying a rule *is* the correct way of apply the rule. However, it is rather hard to believe that this is what this way of reading the constitutive claim comes down to. Baker and Hacker address this issue directly by making a distinction between 'constitutive' and 'framework' conditions for meaning and rule-following (see 1984, 45; and 1985, 229-238). In the following passage, they explain the distinction by arguing that communal agreement is not constitutive of understanding a word, but is a framework condition for understanding.

For Wittgenstein, agreement is a framework condition for the existence of language-games, but is *not*

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constitutive of any game. Hence it is not part of the criteria for whether A *understands* "plus" or "red". These are, rather, that A explains correctly what the expressions mean, and typically uses them correctly. That A understands what "red" means is shown by his giving a correct explanation (ostensive definition) of "red", as well as by saying of my red rose "That is red". That others would also characterize my rose as red is not part of the criteria for A's understanding, knowing the meaning of "red". But the *framework* for these concept-exercising activities *is* general agreement. (1984, 45)

They state that for something to be a constitutive condition of, say, understanding a word, it must be 'part of the criteria' for whether the person has understood it. This is important but I will postpone the analysis of this specific point until the next section where I will discuss the notion of criteria and its relation to assertability-conditions. For now, I will attempt to characterise what they mean by constitutive conditions by contrasting them with framework conditions. Baker and Hacker state that 'agreement is a framework condition' for rule-following or understanding, and they go on to explain this by considering the example of the role of agreement in mathematics. They quote Wittgenstein's statement that 'the agreement of ratifications [concerning a mathematical proof or theorem] is the precondition of our language-game, it is not affirmed in it' (*RFM*, 365). It seems that the only way to interpret this is that a framework condition such as agreement is a *necessary* condition for a language-game. In the case of mathematics, the point is that agreement in what counts as a proof is necessary for there to be a practice of proving anything at all; and the qualification that 'it is not affirmed in it' is supposed to mean that agreement, though, is *not* necessary and sufficient for a particular proof to count as a proof. That is, although agreement in what counts as a proof is a necessary condition for the practice of proving and thus for anything at all to be proved, agreement cannot make it the case that a particular sign-configuration is a proof; it is not constitutive of proof. Likewise in the case of understanding and rule-following: agreement in how a word is used is a necessary condition for understanding the word, but it

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cannot make it the case that I understand it or that I mean such-and-such by it. This is the only way I can make sense of the distinction between constitutive and framework conditions, and if it is drawn in this way I think it is legitimate. However, it has the implication of making Baker and Hacker's interpretation of the later Wittgenstein look incoherent.

To explain how, we need to consider the role of communal agreement in more detail. Wittgenstein states that:

> To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are *customs* (uses, institutions). (*PI*, §199)

However, based on this and some other references to customs and practices of use (e.g. *PI*, §198), it is not clear whether Wittgenstein is emphasising that rule-following is an activity of regular use, or whether he is (also) emphasising that rule-following is a social phenomenon. In other words, it is unclear whether or not we should read the reference to customs and practices as *social* customs and practices. This has given rise to the debate over whether Wittgenstein adopted a 'communitarian' view of rule-following, i.e. a view according to which rule-following depends on broad communal agreement in how a rule ought to be used. The point I want to make is that Baker and Hacker oppose this and offer an 'individualist' reading, claiming that Wittgenstein's view is that a socially isolated individual (a born Crusoe or an individual who belongs to no linguistic community) *could* conceivably follow rules. They thus hold that the emphasis is on the regular use or activity of applying the rule, which one can do on one's own. This is the kind of possibility that the individualist interpretation wants to leave open by insisting that Wittgenstein's reference to customs and practices can be read as the customs and practices of an isolated individual as much as those of a community. However, in that case communal agreement is not even a *framework* condition, for it is not

strictly speaking even a necessary condition for rule-following because there can be instances of rule-following in cases where there is no established communal agreement concerning the correct application of the rule. This shows that their treatment of the role of agreement and customs and practices of use is inadequate because it is actually incoherent. On the one hand, they explicitly state that agreement is a framework condition for rule-following, while, on the other hand, their defence of an individualist reading of Wittgenstein's remarks on practices and customs entails that agreement is not a framework condition.

Aside, though, from the question of the internal coherence of Baker and Hacker's particular version of the individualist or anti-communitarian reading, does this debate – considered more generally – throw any light on the manner in which Wittgenstein appeals to the community, and on the question of whether he held the community to be constitutive of rule-following and meaning? In order to get a foothold in this debate, I will use Baker and Hacker's distinction between framework and constitutive conditions to characterise two possible types of communitarian readings:

Weak communitarianism: That communal agreement is a framework condition, i.e. necessary for the practice of meaningfully using words or applying rules at all.

Strong communitarianism: That communal agreement is a constitutive condition, i.e. necessary and sufficient for any particular instance of meaningfully using a word or applying a rule to be correct.

The strong communitarian reading amounts to what Dummett calls a 'radical constructivism' by equating the correct way of applying a rule with what we take to be the correct way of applying it. I discussed this type of reading in detail in the third chapter and argued against it. I take it that the strong communitarian reading is flawed on the same grounds.

What about weak communitarianism? Does it capture what is involved in

Wittgenstein's emphasis on the importance of communal agreement in clarifying the notion of rule-following? I hold that it does (see especially, *PI*, §§224 and 240 where he states that agreement is 'part of the framework on which the working of our language is based'). But, as the above discussion of Baker and Hacker illustrated, this is exactly what is disputed in the communitarian debate. Canfield neatly characterises this debate in terms of the following two exegetical claims (see his 1996, 470):

(1) Language is essentially communal.

(2) It is conceptually possible that a Crusoe isolated from birth should speak or follow rules.

As Canfield states, communitarian readers such as Malcolm attribute (1) and the denial of (2) to Wittgenstein, while the individualist readers such as Baker and Hacker attribute (2) and the denial of (1) to him. In the terms I have adopted, the weak communitarian will defend (1) and deny (2), and so the task is to argue that Wittgenstein did not think it possible for a born Crusoe to follow rules. In section 4.6, I will argue for this in my discussion of his private language argument. However, it should be noted that even if this debate is decided against the weak communitarian reading, it would still not count against my non-constitutive reading of Wittgenstein's appeal to practice because it does not hold that the community is in any sense constitutive of rule-following and meaning as I have characterised this notion. Therefore, in conclusion, all three of the senses in which practice could be said to be constitutive of rule-following and meaning that I highlighted at the beginning have been shown to be flawed by the lights of Wittgenstein's later philosophy. In the next section, I will connect this with Kripke's characterisation of Wittgenstein's appeal to practice in the context of a sceptical solution.

What is at stake, though, is whether Kripke is right to interpret Wittgenstein's remarks

on practices, customs, and agreement in a communitarian way. If I am right about Kripke, then his Wittgenstein is opposed to all accounts of meaning-constitution. This rules out strong communitarianism, and thus implies that his communitarian reading must be of the weak kind. I will return to this issue in section 4.6.

4.5: Wittgenstein and Kripke's Wittgenstein *2*: Truth- and assertability-conditions

In the first section of this chapter, I highlighted the confusion that surrounds Kripke's characterisation of KW's sceptical solution. Much of this confusion stems from the fact that there are two sceptical conclusions in play in Kripke's discussion and that KW only accepts one of them, viz. that there are no meaning-constituting facts of any kind (and not the more radical conclusion that rejects the notion of meaning altogether). If we do not take proper heed of this, it is likely that we will interpret Kripke's claim that KW adopts a sceptical solution as entailing that he thereby accepts the radical sceptical conclusion that nobody ever means anything by a term. That is, it is likely that we will make the mistake of identifying KW with the radical sceptic about meaning. In this section, I will argue that my characterisation of the specific sense of 'sceptical' in KW's sceptical solution fits with what Kripke states regarding it in Chapter 3 of his *WRPL*. I will also argue that his characterisation of KW's sceptical solution as presenting an assertability-conditional conception of meaning in place of a truth-conditional conception should be interpreted merely in terms of rejecting the approach to meaning and of justifying semantic discourse that posits some class of meaning-constituting facts. Finally, since this is how I interpret the fundamental shift in Wittgenstein's later approach to meaning and rule-following, I will argue that attributing an assertability-conditional conception to Wittgenstein is legitimate and captures his later approach.

At the deepest level, the defence of Kripke's reading on these matters should

demonstrate that his depiction of the sceptical solution captures what is essential to the later Wittgenstein's standpoint concerning meaning and rule-following. In Chapter 3, I tried to characterise this standpoint by contrasting it with moderate constructivism, radical constructivism (e.g. Dummett's reading), and transcendental idealism (e.g. Williams's reading). I argued that all three are constitutive accounts and moreover that they can all be viewed as beginning from the same starting-point. Williams and Moore characterise this starting-point quite well as the reflection on and description of our shared practices or form of life, or of our shared 'outlook' or 'point of view'. This form of life, or in very broad terms the outlook that is implicit in it, is underpinned by various natural, biological, and cultural facts about us. It is manifest in 'how we go on', or in how we apply rules, extend arithmetical series, and in what we tend to regard as necessary. The common ground, in my view, between these different readings is that they rightly take Wittgenstein's later philosophical method to consist in close attention to and description of our shared form of life or outlook (or of 'how we go on'), with the aim of achieving a clear view of it. But where they diverge from one another is in the implications they draw from this, specifically with regard to how this shared outlook relates to what is 'really' the case concerning necessity and the correct way to apply a rule or use a word.

In Chapter 3, I analysed each of these readings in terms of this step that they each take and which ultimately divides them in terms of the answers they give. This, though, is also the crucial point at which they become constitutive readings. I have tried to argue that Wittgenstein adopted a non-constitutive standpoint in the specific sense that he believed that the correct philosophical method is exhausted by the kind of description of our shared form of life or outlook just mentioned. The further question of asking what meaning, rule-following, or necessity consists in, beyond what they are taken to be from our shared point of view, is rejected. If we adhere to this standpoint, what can we say? We can describe the

conditions under which we take someone to mean such-and-such by a term or to follow a rule. We *cannot* enquire into the further question of whether the person does *in reality* mean such-and-such or follow the rule, where this is conceived as a matter that goes beyond our standpoint. It is the shift of attention exclusively to this standpoint, I hold, that is fundamental to Kripke's Wittgenstein's orientation in the sceptical solution. Or so I shall argue.

The first thing we must recognise is that what Kripke calls the truth-conditional conception is another name for the 'classical realist' conception of meaning (see *WRPL*, 73). The notion of a truth-condition is appealed to by the classical realist to account for the meaning of sentences, just as he appeals to functions to account for the meaning of functional expressions, properties to account for the meaning of predicates, etc. For the classical realist, a person will be deemed to mean something by a sentential expression only if there is some fact about him that establishes the relevant truth-condition as the standard of correctness for the use of that expression. The sceptical challenge can be run against the conviction that I mean something by a given sentence, and the result will be the familiar one discussed throughout this thesis. Although this helps us understand Kripke's claim that KW rejects the truth-conditional conception, there are a number of facets to this conception that Kripke highlights and which he interprets Wittgenstein as undermining at different stages of his later work. I will now consider some of these particular features, the rejection of which motivates the acceptance of the assertability-conception in its place. In what follows, I will continue to speak of Wittgenstein rather than Kripke's Wittgenstein (or KW) because the accuracy of Kripke's reading is now directly in question.

Kripke holds that Wittgenstein's opposition to the classical realist or truth-conditional conception of meaning is evident from the beginning of *PI*, with the attack on the Augustinian picture of language. His rejection of 'the Augustinian conception of "object and name"' 'clearly suggests' his rejection of the truth-conditional picture (*WRPL*, 75).

According to Kripke, then, a central part of the classical realist picture is that it prioritises questions such as 'What entities ("numbers") are denoted by numerals?' and 'What relations among these entities ("facts") correspond to numerical statements?' (Ibid.). And that the point of examples such as Wittgenstein's discussion of the meaning of 'five red apples' (in *PI*, §1) is to encourage us to not be misled by these questions and to 'not look for "entities" or "facts" corresponding to' these expressions (*WRPL*, 77). In general, Kripke interprets Wittgenstein's rejection of these kinds of questions and his denial of 'any special primacy of assertion' as a dominant feature of all parts of *PI* and as playing 'an important role in his repudiation of the classical realist picture' (*WRPL*, 73).

In its place, according to Kripke, Wittgenstein focuses on questions concerning 'the circumstances under which [...] assertions are actually uttered, and at what roles such assertions play in our lives' (*WRPL*, 75). Or rather, since Wittgenstein is not merely concerned with assertions but with all instances of language use, his concern comes to be with 'the conditions when a move (a form of linguistic expression) is to be made in the "language game"'. (*WRPL*, 74). Concerning Wittgenstein's 'alternative rough general picture' of meaning, then, Kripke writes:

> 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?" (*WRPL*, 73)

The point I want to emphasise is that Kripke's claim that Wittgenstein adopted a conception of meaning in terms of assertion-conditions (or more generally, 'justification-conditions' for the use of a word) is merely supposed to convey the change in his focus from the existence of

facts and entities corresponding to linguistic expressions and governing their correct use, to the close attention to the conditions under which they may be legitimately used. The whole point of this alternative approach to meaning is that it is supposed to offer a 'solution' to the sceptical paradox by clarifying how our use of terms such as 'means', 'understands', etc., is legitimate. Regarding this, Kripke states that:

> All that is needed to legitimize assertions that someone means something is that there be roughly specifiable circumstances under which they are legitimately assertable, and that the game of asserting them under such conditions has a role in our lives. No supposition that "facts correspond" to those assertions is needed. (*WRPL*, 77-78)

The Wittgensteinian solution to the sceptical paradox is thus to show that there are conditions under which these terms can be justifiably used and that they play a role or have a utility in our lives. For many, this could hardly be called a 'solution' at all because it leaves the question of the nature of meaning and of what grounds our practice of ascribing meaning unanswered. This, though, is the same complaint that can be made against Wittgenstein's quietist standpoint that stops short of offering a constitutive account of meaning. My point is simply that this standpoint is captured in Kripke's depiction of the sceptical solution. Its plausibility and its motivation – and hence whether it amounts to a genuine solution – are separate issues, which I shall consider in the final section. In the remainder of this section, I will consider some of the details of this proposed solution.

The alternative picture of meaning in the sceptical solution, then, does not offer an account of meaning in terms of meaning-constituting facts, i.e. it does not attempt to state the necessary and sufficient conditions for meaning. The circumstances under which meaning ascriptions are legitimately assertable are 'roughly specified'. This is important because it is

precisely this feature of the alternative account that prevents it from being susceptible to a version of the sceptical challenge. As I argued in relation to Miller and Wilson in section 1.3 of the first chapter, the sceptical challenge can be deployed against a speaker's conviction that he means something by his words only if a certain conception of meaning-constitution is presupposed. And since the starting point of the sceptical solution is the rejection of all such conceptions (or so I have argued), there cannot be an analogue of the sceptical challenge run against the ascriptions of meaning to the speaker's (or others') use of words. Of course, it is still possible to doubt whether I or someone else mean something by a certain term or follow a certain rule. But, crucially, this doubt would be of a different kind to the sceptic's and this is borne out by the fact that these doubts can be eliminated in ways in which the sceptic's radical doubting cannot. This point is fundamental to understanding the shift in perspective involved in the sceptical solution. An elaboration of this point requires us to look more closely at the notion of assertability-conditions and the related notion of 'criteria' for meaning and rule-following.

Essentially, regarding any term such as '+' or 'green', there are criteria that actually obtain in the given linguistic community for taking someone to grasp the meaning of the terms. These are articulated in the assertability-conditions for the respective ascriptions of meaning and, roughly speaking, they state that if the speaker uses the term in ways that agree with the uses of others in the community over a large number of cases (particularly simple or non-borderline cases), then he will be taken to mean such-and-such by the term. The notion of agreement is thus central to Kripke's formulation of the assertability-conditions for both first-person and third-person meaning ascriptions:

> *Jones* is entitled, subject to correction by others, provisionally to say, "I mean addition by 'plus'", whenever he has the feeling of confidence – "now I can go on!" – that he can give "correct" responses in

new cases; and he can give "correct" responses in new cases; and *he* is entitled, again provisionally and subject to correction by others, to judge a new response to be "correct" simply because it is the response he is inclined to give. (*WRPL*, 90)

Smith will judge Jones to mean addition by 'plus' only if he judges that Jones's answers to particular addition problems agree with those *he* is inclined to give, or, if they occasionally disagree, he can interpret Jones as at least following the proper procedure. [...] If Jones consistently fails to give responses in agreement (in this broad sense) with Smith's, Smith will judge that he does not mean addition by 'plus'. (*WRPL*, 91)

One of the main reasons that Kripke gives for assigning this role to communal agreement is that it is the only way to give 'content' to the notion of meaning or rule-following, or specifically to the distinction between meaning something by a word and merely thinking one means something by a word (see *WRPL*, 88-89). He writes that

if one person is considered in isolation, the notion of a rule as guiding the person who adopts it [and equally the notion of meaning] can have *no* substantive content. There are, we have seen, no truth conditions or facts in virtue of which it can be the case that he accords with his past intentions or not. (*WRPL*, 89)

His claim seems to be that the negative result of the sceptical argument is that there are no constitutive facts that we can appeal to and use to underpin the notions of rule-following and meaning, including the distinction between meaning and thinking one is meaning something by a term. A child, for example, may be 'inclined' to use a word in a particular way, but unless his use is 'subject to correction by others' it will be impossible to give content to this basic distinction. This, for Kripke, is why the reference to the community is written into the statement of the assertability-conditions. The rough criteria for taking someone to mean such-

and-such by a word will therefore be that the person's use agrees for the most with how others in the community use it. This feature of Kripke's characterisation of the sceptical solution is crucial to his views concerning Wittgenstein's private language argument. I will consider this in the next section, along with this issue of the role of agreement in the statement of the assertability-conditions. For now, I will consider the question of how this assertability-conditional conception is opposed to the notion of meaning-constitution. I will then conclude by relating this back to Wittgenstein's positive picture of meaning in *PI*.

Baker and Hacker are explicitly opposed to charactering the criteria for meaning and rule-following in terms of communal agreement (see e.g., 1984, 45). This relates to their distinction between constitutive and framework conditions for meaning and rule-following. They argue that agreement is a framework condition, not a constitutive condition. In the previous section, I briefly noted that they characterise this distinction in terms of the notion of the criteria for meaning and rule-following. They state that for agreement to be constitutive of, e.g., understanding the word 'red', it must be 'part of the criteria' for whether the speaker in question understands 'red' (1984, 45). But, they continue, 'That others would also characterize my rose as red is not part of the criteria for A's understanding'. Presumably this just means that I can succeed in understanding 'red' without others agreeing that the things I call 'red' are indeed red. Baker and Hacker explain that, by contrast, being able to give a 'correct explanation' of 'red' *is* a criterion of understanding the word. Why, though, do they connect the criterion for understanding with the notion of being constitutive of such understanding? Confusion can easily arise here because there is equivocation in how they are using the term 'criteria', compared to how I have been discussing it in relation to Kripke. Whereas in the Kripkean context the talk of criteria is *exclusively* on the criteria that we actually accept, in abstraction from any question of what is really the case beyond what we accept, in the Baker and Hacker context there seems to be the less modest conviction that our

criteria connect with what is the case, viz. that we do in fact understand a word or follow a rule. This is how I have argued concerning their reading in the previous two chapters, especially in Chapter 3 where I characterised their reading as 'moderate constructivist'. This is perhaps why they insist that whatever is part of the criteria of, e.g., understanding is constitutive of understanding.

But if we construe criteria in this stronger way, we run up against the familiar sceptical considerations. For example, if we state that giving a correct explanation of the meaning of a word is constitutive of understanding it, we are forced to characterise what is meant by 'correct' here. In the case of the word 'red' we would probably explain its meaning through an ostensive definition. We would thus attempt to articulate its meaning as pertaining to the colour property that *this object* has in common with all other objects with a similar visual appearance (in such-and-such lighting conditions, etc.). But then there would be the question as to why this explanation should be considered correct when an indefinite number of other explanations – explanations that articulate some other rule for the use of the word – would also serve the same purpose of providing a rationale for why the speaker applies the word to these objects and not others. These sceptical considerations do not arise if we characterise the criteria for understanding a word more modestly in the Kripkean way, i.e. as pertaining to the criteria that actually obtain in our linguistic community for *taking* someone to mean such-and-such by a word. These criteria, as Kripke maintains, *will* make reference to the agreement in use among members of the linguistic community. A speaker will be taken to understand 'red' if there is broad agreement in how he and other members of the community use the word. Against Baker and Hacker, then, the criteria for understanding a word or following a rule should not be viewed as constitutive of understanding or rule-following. Or to put it in Kripke's terms, the assertability-conditions for ascriptions of meaning or understanding should not be construed within the context of a constitutive account.

These considerations can be used to illuminate Wittgenstein's later positive picture of meaning and rule-following. Early in *PI*, he writes that for 'a *large* class of cases' we can state that 'the meaning of a word is its use in the language' (§43). As his discussion progresses and the fundamental notions of 'language game' and 'form of life' are explored, he tends to speak of 'practices', 'institutions', and 'customs' of use. This is particularly evident late in his discussion of rule-following, after he has presented his negative reasoning against particular misconceptions about meaning and rule-following (see, e.g., *PI* §§198, 199, and 202). However, even though this is a very well-known feature of his later philosophy, there are many different ways of interpreting this proposal to characterise meaning in terms of use (or practices, customs, etc., of use). In the previous section, I identified two main claims (the first of which I argued for and the second of which I will address in the next section): firstly, that there is no way of interpreting Wittgenstein's appeal to practices of use in terms of an account of meaning-constitution; and secondly, that his conception of practices should be interpreted as *social* or *shared* practices. Both of these claims correspond to features of Kripke's Wittgenstein's assertability-conditional conception of meaning as I have presented it in this section.

Not only can Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein's appeal to practices of use be substantiated along these lines. It can also be maintained that Kripke's characterisation of Wittgenstein's positive conception as a sceptical solution can, if understood correctly, elucidate this conception. Most significantly, Kripke's interpretation makes it clear that when Wittgenstein discusses the notions of practice, regularity, agreement, etc., he is not engaged in the same kind of task as when he appealed to the notions of distinctive types of mental states in his middle period to account for meaning and rule-following. However, Kripke's interpretation is also illuminating on other specific remarks from *PI*. For example, he puts the following gloss on §§217 and 219 of *PI*:

The entire point of the sceptical argument is that ultimately we reach a level where we act without any reason in terms of which we can justify our action. We act unhesitatingly but *blindly*. (*WRPL*, 87)

Assuming that my interpretation of KW's sceptical argument as targeting all constitutive accounts of rule-following and meaning is correct, Kripke can here be read as associating the constitutive approach to rule-following with the attempt to provide a justification for what one does with a rule where no such justification can be given. Accordingly, Wittgenstein's claim that in following a rule we act blindly can be interpreted as an endorsement of the 'sceptical' conclusion that there are no facts that are constitutive of rule-following that one can appeal to in order to justify what one does with the rule.

In section 2.3, I discussed how Glüer and Wikforss interpret Wittgenstein's remark concerning the blindness of rule-following as implying that there is nothing (e.g. no distinctive mental state) to distinguish rule-following from merely according with a rule. This makes it seem that Wittgenstein is faced with the dilemma between either identifying something that rule-following consists in (adopt a constitutive account of some sort) or accepting that there is no such thing as following a rule. As I interpret Wittgenstein, though, he adopts neither horn of the dilemma. The Wittgensteinian solution, for example, attempts to provide a way of distinguishing following a rule from merely according with a rule, without relying on a distinctive state or fact to separate them. Instead, it attempts to take a more mundane or common sense approach by reflecting on the circumstances in which we take someone to follow a particular rule. If a person satisfies the conditions for asserting that he follows this rule, then we will state that he *follows* this rule. The fact that his practice also conforms to an indefinite number of other rules would not arise, either because there would be different assertability-conditions for taking him to follow one of these other rules or

because there would be no such assertability-conditions (since no-one has ever considered these other rules before). Glüer and Wikforss's response to the absence of any distinctive constitutive state is to conclude that there is no such thing as following a rule.[46] This is very close if not identical to the radical sceptical position that I have argued Kripke's Wittgenstein (and Wittgenstein himself) rejects. Wittgenstein gives a similar non-constitutive elucidation of other fundamental distinctions, such as the distinction between following a rule and merely thinking one is following a rule. Regarding all of these fundamental distinctions, Wittgenstein's positive response will only amount to a solution if his quietist standpoint can be shown to be well-motivated. The point, though, is that Wittgenstein and Kripke's Wittgenstein's face exactly the same objections and thus that Kripke's depiction in Chapter 3 of *WRPL* is on target.

4.6: Wittgenstein and Kripke's Wittgenstein *3*: Private language

One of the most controversial claims of Kripke's *WRPL* is that 'the real "private language argument" is to be found in the sections *preceding* §243' of *PI* (*WRPL*, 3). Traditionally, Wittgenstein's *PI* has been divided up in such a way that he is interpreted as dealing with issues concerning meaning and rule-following in general in §§139-242, and treating issues specifically to do with private meaning and rule-following, including sensation language, after §243. The so-called private language argument, or the argument against the possibility of private language, has therefore traditionally been located after §243. Against this, Kripke argues that the conclusion of that argument '*is already stated explicitly*' by Wittgenstein at §202 where he writes:

Hence it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately': otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be

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[46] Although, as I noted in section 2.3, there is some ambiguity concerning whether their interpretation has this implication.

the same thing as obeying it. (*PI* §202; see *WRPL*, 3)

Kripke defends this interpretive claim within the context of his reconstruction by arguing that the impossibility of private language follows as a 'corollary' from Wittgenstein's positive picture of meaning and rule-following in general. My primary concern in this thesis is not with Kripke's interpretation of the private language argument, but with his reconstruction of Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations. Nevertheless, since it is a crucial feature of his interpretation that this argument is already stated in Wittgenstein's positive conception of meaning and rule-following in general, I will devote this section to evaluating this controversial claim. I will, though, only touch on the wider issue of how to interpret the sections after §243 of *PI*. My approach will be to narrow my discussion to the interpretation of the sections preceding §243 and to consider whether the impossibility of private language follows from the non-constitutive picture of meaning presented there. I will briefly compare this Kripkean private language argument with the traditional one after §243, but I will merely suggest a way of interpreting the relation between these parts of *PI*.

There is further reason for considering this feature of Kripke's interpretation: it directly concerns the correct characterisation of the assertability-conditions that is central to his characterisation of KW's sceptical solution. The discussion of this issue is thus continuous with the discussion in the preceding sections. Roughly speaking, Kripke's main claim is that the statement of the assertability-conditions for meaning ascriptions involves 'reference to a community', which makes such ascriptions 'inapplicable to a single person considered in isolation' (*WRPL*, 79). It is in this sense that the impossibility of private language is deemed to follow as a corollary from the positive picture of meaning in KW's sceptical solution.

To begin we must consider Kripke's formulation of the assertability-conditions of

meaning ascriptions, which as discussed in the previous section make reference to the community (see *WRPL*, 90-91). There are a few issues that we need to distinguish here. The first is whether Kripke's formulations of these assertability-conditions are correct, or more importantly whether there are possible formulations of them that are equally legitimate and yet do not make reference to the community. The second issue is whether the impossibility of private language really does follow from this general picture of meaning even if these assertability-conditions are formulated in this way. And this is closely related to the third issue of the precise sense of privacy involved in the talk of private language. The objections to Kripke's treatment of the private language, both as an interpretation of Wittgenstein and as a cogent argument in its own right, have usually focussed on one or more of these issues. For example, McGinn and Goldfarb have questioned Kripke on the first issue, arguing that the assertability-conditions can be formulated without reference to the community. Boghossian has attacked Kripke on the second issue by arguing that the above formulations can at best capture the assertability-conditions that actually obtain in our community, but they cannot provide support for the impossibility claim that forms the conclusion of the private language argument. And finally, Kripke is potentially vulnerable when it comes to the third issue because it needs to be shown that there is the same sense of privacy involved in Wittgenstein's remarks both prior to and after §243 of *PI*. Kripke argues that the sections after §243 consider a 'counterexample' to Wittgenstein's communitarian view of meaning, but if there is a different sense of privacy in each of these two parts of *PI*, then they could not be related in this way. My response to these objections will begin by focussing on this third issue concerning the sense of privacy in play in this discussion. I will reflect on this sense in the relevant passages from both *WRPL* and *PI*, and thus briefly consider the traditional private language argument in *PI*. I will argue for a particular interpretation of these passages and attempt to show that this interpretation provides a way of answering the first two sets of

objections.

As I read both Kripke and Wittgenstein, there are indeed two distinct senses of privacy relevant to their analyses. The sense that is most apparent in Kripke's discussion concerns the behaviour of an isolated individual, or an individual who is not the member of any community. Kripke, like many commentators, characterises this sense of privacy by considering the thought experiment of a 'born Crusoe', i.e. a human being who has never had contact with any society or communal practices. He is radically *socially* isolated, not merely *physically* isolated (as in Defoe's original story). Kripke states that we *can* hold that such an individual follows rules, but that if we do so 'we are taking him into our community and applying our criteria for rule-following to him' (*WRPL*, 110). But that would be to consider Crusoe as merely physically isolated. Kripke clarifies that what is essential to 'the private model' – which he argues is eliminated by the sceptical solution – is that Crusoe could be held to follow rules even if he is socially isolated, i.e. even if no criteria of rule-following of any community is applied to him (Ibid.). It is this sense of private language that Kripke seems to be most concerned with, and which he believes is shown to be impossible by Wittgenstein's reflections on meaning and rule-following in general.

If we offer a communitarian reading of Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations preceding §243 of *PI*, then Wittgenstein may plausibly be held to be concerned with eliminating this sense of private language that Kripke considers. However, it is not at all obvious that this is the sense of privacy relevant to the traditional private language argument after §243. There are a few senses of privacy that Wittgenstein explicitly states he is not concerned with, e.g., privacy in the sense of being hidden (e.g. a secret or a diary). He also states that he is not concerned with privacy in the sense of the ordinary sensation language used to talk about sensations. Despite being about a 'private' domain, this language is not private in the stronger sense he is interested in because he does not question that we succeed

in making ourselves understood to others by means of it. He states as much at §256 and immediately moves on to what he takes to be the more interesting sense of a private language that no-one else can understand. Our ordinary sensation language (including words such as 'pain') is not private in this sense because it is 'tied up with my natural expressions of sensation'. He then goes on to consider a scenario in which 'I didn't have any natural expression for the sensation, but only had the sensation' (*PI*, §256). And he states, 'now I simply *associate* names with sensations and use these names in descriptions' (Ibid.). With this we are much closer to the sense of privacy relevant to the traditional private language argument, viz. the notion of a sign having a meaning that in principle could not be understood by others (see *PI*, §243). I will argue, though, that there is an important connection between this sense of privacy and the sense that is undermined by the communitarian's model of language. In what follows, I will present a way of reading Wittgenstein's traditional private language argument and argue for two claims that provide support for Kripke's interpretation: firstly, that the traditional private language argument (after *PI*, §243) can be viewed as addressing and undermining an important counterexample to Wittgenstein's general picture of meaning (presented prior to §243); and secondly, that the traditional private language argument is not actually valid on its own, but that one of its central premises requires support from Wittgenstein's arguments concerning meaning in general. I will then conclude by using these considerations to outline a way of addressing the other main objections to Kripke that I mentioned earlier.

For convenience, I will refer to the traditional private language argument, or the argument that is presented after *PI* §243, as 'PLA'. The crucial passage that is usually thought to contain the PLA is *PI* §258:

Let us imagine the following case. I want to keep a diary about the recurrence of a certain sensation. To

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this end I associate it with the sign "S" and write this sign in a calendar for every day on which I have the sensation.--I will remark first of all that a definition of the sign cannot be formulated.--But still I can give myself a kind of ostensive definition.--How? Can I point to the sensation? Not in the ordinary sense. But I speak, or write the sign down, and at the same time I concentrate my attention on the sensation--and so, as it were, point to it inwardly.--But what is this ceremony for? for that is all it seems to be! A definition surely serves to establish the meaning of a sign.--Well, that is done precisely by the concentrating of my attention; for in this way I impress on myself the connexion between the sign and the sensation.--But "I impress it on myself" can only mean: this process brings it about that I remember the connexion *right* in the future. But in the present case I have no criterion of correctness. One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'right'.

Wittgenstein thus describes a situation in which a private diarist attempts to give meaning to a sign by merely associating it with a particular recurring sensation. If successful, this is supposed to represent an example of a word that has a meaning that only the private diarist can understand. There is considerable dispute over the scenario that the private diarist is supposed to be in. For example, Candlish (2010) argues that Wittgenstein presents the PLA in such a way that the scenario we are asked to imagine is not one in which you or I – as embodied creatures with a sophisticated level of socialisation – attempt to determine the meaning of a sensation term, or to record the occurrence of a sensation in a diary. The scenario is abstracted from this relatively sophisticated context because the private meaning at issue does not pertain to that of sensation terms like 'pain' that we ordinarily use and which have an established, shared meaning. Rather, it pertains to the meaning of a newly introduced term, represented by 'S', for which there is no established usage (either in the person's private history or a community's social history), and whose meaning is to be fixed by correlating it the person's private sensations.

The exact sense in which Wittgenstein takes this scenario to be abstracted, though, is

controversial. For example, is the diarist abstracted merely 'bodily' in the sense that he has no outward manifestations of his sensations? And is he *also* abstracted from a community of language users? At §257, Wittgenstein suggests the former abstraction. When he asks us to imagine a 'genius' who 'invents a name for the sensation', the genius is abstracted in this sense. That is, he gives a meaning to this name without relying on the outward manifestations of the sensation (e.g. in ostensively defining it). But at §243, he characterises the private meaning of a term as different to the meaning of a sensation term with an established meaning in a community, and so this would suggest the abstraction of the subject from the community. However, in both cases, I would argue that the abstraction does not have to be radical. We do not necessarily need to think of a disembodied and socially isolated soul. Rather, it seems to be sufficient to think of a person who is a member of a community of language-users, who is linguistically competent, but who attempts (a) to give meaning to a term that has no established usage in his community and (b) to do so by correlating them with his private sensations, not with his outward behavioural manifestations. I cannot pursue this thorny interpretive issue any further, but will proceed to the more significant question of the reason why Wittgenstein thinks the attempt to give the sign a private meaning fails. I will, though, operate with the assumption that this is the scenario of the private linguist in Wittgenstein's passage.

Based on *PI* §258, the main steps of the PLA can be distinguished as follows:

Imagine that 'S' is a sign without any established use in my community. Then:

(1) I attempt to determine the meaning of 'S' by using it as the sign for a certain recurring sensation.

(2) I give the sign meaning by 'a kind of ostensive definition', but not by correlating it with my outward manifestations of the sensation; rather, by impressing on myself a connection between the sign and my private sensation.

(3) This sensation functions as a sample, and all other sensations to which 'S' is correctly applied must be similar in a relevant sense to it.

(4) However, in order for this procedure of ostensive definition to determine the meaning of 'S', there must be a 'criterion of correctness' for applying 'S' to other sensations.

(5) 'But in the present case I have no criterion of correctness' because ____.

(6) Therefore, whatever is going to seem right regarding the correct application of 'S' will be right, which 'means that we can't talk about "right"'.

(7) Therefore, the ostensive definition of 'S' by reference to my private sensation is not successful; i.e. it does not give 'S' a meaning.

(8) Therefore, 'S' is not genuinely meaningful.

(9) Therefore, generalising, it is not possible for a term to have a private meaning.

A few points of clarification need to be made regarding this formulation of the PLA. Based on Wittgenstein's reference to ostensive definition in the passage as the method of giving the sign meaning, I have added or expanded on the third and fourth premises by drawing on what he says about ostensive definition in the earlier sections of *PI*; and I have connected it with his statement that there must be a criterion of correctness for the use of the sign. Secondly, I have deliberately ignored the interpretations of the PLA argument that emphasise

Wittgenstein's apparent reliance on either a form of scepticism about memory or a version of the verificationist principle. Instead, I have focussed on the fact that, aside from these points, Wittgenstein provides no explicit grounds for asserting the crucial claim that 'in the present case I have no criterion of correctness' for the use of the sign. I have highlighted this by leaving the space blank in premise 5.

Why, then, does Wittgenstein believe that the private linguist's attempt to give meaning to 'S' does not succeed in specifying a criterion of correctness for its use? Whatever response we give to this, I think it has to be admitted that the reason is based on considerations beyond what is stated in this passage because Wittgenstein simply does not give a reason there. One response is that this crucial premise of the PLA depends on the critique of ostensive definition in the first part of *PI*, i.e. Wittgenstein denies that it is possible to ostensively define a term in the non-communal, private context in which the private linguist operates. This response is partially correct, but it is superficial and does not get to the heart of the matter. In his discussion of ostensive definition in general, Wittgenstein argues that for such a definition to succeed in giving meaning to a term, it must establish a technique for using it and further there must be a correct and incorrect way of using it. In other words, the ostensive definition must specify a rule for the use of the term. The rule would have the following form: 'Apply "t" only to objects that are similar to this object in such-and-such a respect'. There must, though, be a criterion for determining that a particular application of the term is correct. In the case of a colour term, we simply say, e.g., that 'blue' is correctly applied to this book because it is similar in visual appearance to this other object. But in the case of ostensively defining the term 'S' by connecting it with my private sensation, we cannot say that a rule for the use of 'S' has been specified. This is because there is no criterion for determining that a new sensation is similar in the relevant respect to the initial sensation used to define 'S'.

This highlights that the real issue has to do with rule-following in general, rather than with considerations specifically to do with ostensive definition. But what are these considerations concerning rule-following that are relevant to establishing this premise of the PLA? Wittgenstein's assertion that there is no criterion of correctness for the use of 'S' rests on his earlier treatment of the general issues concerning the criteria for taking someone to follow a rule, the distinction between following a rule and merely being in accord with it, etc. As I analysed these in the previous sections, Wittgenstein's positive solution to the problems concerning them does invoke a community of language users. This is precisely what is absent from the private linguist's attempt to give meaning to 'S'. The important thing to recognise, though, is that the reason for denying that this attempt fails is based on Wittgenstein's general considerations concerning rule-following and meaning. Without these, the PLA is not sound; one of its key premises requires this support.

However, there is another perspective we can take on the PLA, one that may seem to be less favourable to Wittgenstein. This perspective also takes us back to Kripke's interpretation. It could be argued that there is a sort of vicious circularity in the PLA. If my analysis of it is correct, then, it can be viewed, on the one hand, as addressing and undermining an important counterexample to Wittgenstein's general communitarian conception of meaning (by considering a case where someone means something by a term that has no possible established communal use); and, on the other hand, as relying on this very communitarian conception to establish the conclusion that will undermine this counterexample. To put it another way, what we seem to have is a conflict between Wittgenstein's communitarian conception of meaning in general and the particular case of a sign with a private (essentially non-communal) meaning. There needs to be a way of adjudicating between the acceptance of one or the other; and clearly if we rely on the communitarian conception to undermine the case of private meaning we do not make any

ground, but merely restate the opposition. Interestingly, though, there is a similar opposition in the case of private meaning that Kripke emphasises, i.e. the case of a born Crusoe or social isolate who follows rules. The examples of the private linguist and the born Crusoe are surely different, but they have one very important feature in common, viz. they are both examples of purported cases where an individual succeeds in meaning something by a term or following a rule in a context where there is no established communal use for the term or rule. As such, in both cases there is a similar opposition between the communitarian conception of meaning, on the one hand, and either the private linguist or born Crusoe meaning something by a term, on the other. This shows that even though Kripke and Wittgenstein may be concerned with conceptions of private language that differ in certain regards, they have this core feature in common. Hence, there is no problem of equivocation that would undermine Kripke's claim that the PLA merely considers a counterexample to Wittgenstein's conception of meaning in general. Furthermore, in both the private linguist and Crusoe examples, there is the same fundamental question of how to adjudicate between these and the communitarian conception that they are in conflict with.

Wittgenstein does have the resources to address this question and it is one of the virtues of Kripke's reading that it enables us to see how this could function as a response. The response is quite direct, but it does not rely on Wittgenstein's positive communitarian picture and so it avoids circularity. Rather, it relies on the *negative* arguments of Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following and meaning, i.e. the parts of *PI* that Kripke reconstructs as the sceptical challenge. To see how this is the case, we merely have to consider what is involved in either the private linguist or the born Crusoe meaning something by a sign. Wittgenstein's negative considerations forbid us to appeal to any set of meaning-constituting facts as underlying their purported success at meaning something. And yet this seems to be the only

possible way we could be warranted in holding that they succeed in meaning something.[47]

The response is thus that the conflict between the communitarian conception and the private linguist and/or Crusoe cases is decided in favour of the communitarian conception because the counterexamples rely on factors that have been ruled out by independent considerations (i.e. Wittgenstein's negative arguments against the existence of meaning-constituting facts).

This is the way I suggest defending Kripke's interpretive claims that the impossibility of private language follows as a corollary from Wittgenstein's discussion of meaning and rule-following prior to §243 and that the PLA after §243 concerns a particular counterexample to the general conception presented in that earlier part. In light of these reflections concerning the relation between these parts of *PI*, we must be more precise and state that the counterexample is to his positive communitarian conception of meaning; and that the counterexample is only genuinely eliminated by appealing to the negative ('master') arguments. But the main thrust of Kripke's interpretive claim is still intact. The other major merit of this way of reading *PI* and Kripke's reconstruction of it is that it also enables us to respond to the other objections that I mentioned at the beginning of the section. For example, we can agree with Boghossian that the assertability-conditions for meaning ascriptions can only capture what those conditions actually are in a community, and thus cannot support the stronger modal claim that private language is impossible. But we can reply that the impossibility claim also rests on the negative or sceptical arguments, which do not merely assert what is the case, but also what could not be the case, i.e. that it is not possible for there to be facts that are constitutive of meaning. Further, we can agree with McGinn and Goldfarb that these assertability-conditions can be formulated without necessarily referring to the community. But then the onus is on them to specify what following a rule that has no

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[47] I am here pursuing a point first made by Kusch: 'As ever the individualist begs the question against the sceptical argument. If the behaviour of Crusoe is to indicated rule-following how is that rule-following to be conceived? If the rule-following is to be conceived in terms of a mental state (perhaps reduced to dispositions) then we face all the familiar problems' (2006, 193).

established communal use amounts to; and they must do so without falling victim to Wittgenstein's negative arguments.

What I have argued in this section is not sufficient to silence all of Kripke's critics concerning his particular view of the place of the private language argument in *PI*. There are many other interpretive issues concerning this aspect of *PI*, as well as issues concerning the cogency of the Wittgensteinian private language argument, that I have not considered. However, these issues are not my primary concern in this thesis. Owing to the attention that they have received in the literature on *WRPL*, I merely wish to suggest a way in which they can be adequately addressed.

4.7: Wittgenstein's quietism and the sceptical solution

The final task that I wish to undertake in this thesis is to connect my interpretation of Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations with his remarks on the nature of philosophy. Wittgenstein's philosophical stance is usually called 'quietist' because he holds that the correct philosophical method (or collection of methods) does not advance philosophical 'theses' or 'explanations' (see *PI*, §§109 and 128), but instead makes philosophical problems '*completely* disappear', makes us 'capable of stopping doing philosophy', and gives philosophy 'peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* in question' (*PI*, §133). Wittgenstein is thus opposed to what he perceives as the dominant or traditional way of doing philosophy, which aims to address philosophical problems by constructing philosophical theories or explanatory accounts of the relevant phenomena (e.g. meaning). The term 'quietism' is supposed to capture the fact that he views these philosophical problems as arising out of confusions (particularly because we have failed to understand or reflect sufficiently on 'the workings of our language' (see *PI* §109)), and that he attempts to expose this and show that the only way to eliminate the problems is to reflect

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on our actual use of words rather than construct further philosophical theories.

There are, though, a couple of different facets to Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy. There is the negative aspect, which is the one most often emphasised, that is opposed to substantive philosophical theorising and that tries to convince us to stop doing this kind of philosophy. But there is also the positive aspect, which involves eliminating the confusion concerning the workings of our language and achieving a clearer understanding of it. Wittgenstein characterises his positive goal as to '*command a clear view* of the use of our words' or to arrive at a 'perspicuous representation' of the grammar of our language' (*PI* §122; see also §§123 and 125). This is somehow to be achieved by a descriptive method (*PI* §109), or by reflecting on and carefully describing our actual use of words, the diverse applications we make of them in different contexts, etc. These aspects complement each other. If we have a clear view of our language, we will not be misled by pseudo-philosophical problems to construct philosophical theories. In this final section, I will argue for an interpretation of these important features of Wittgenstein's later philosophy that fits with my non-constitutive reading of his discussion of rule-following and meaning. I will also clarify the sense in which I take Wittgenstein's quietist standpoint to be accurately captured in Kripke's characterisation of the sceptical solution.

McDowell argues that the label of 'quietism' is appropriate as long as it pertains to 'the aim of quieting the felt need for substantive philosophy' (2009b, 370). But he is against the label as, e.g., Wright and Brandom apply it because they hold that Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations raise genuine philosophical problems about meaning and rule-following that require substantive philosophical theorising in order to be properly addressed; but that Wittgenstein's antecedent commitment to 'official' quietism (Wright 2001, 169) or

'principled theoretical quietism' (Brandom 1994, 29) prevents him from addressing them.[48]
As McDowell writes elsewhere:

> In Brandom's reading, "quietism" is a pretext for not doing constructive work that Wittgenstein reveals
> as obligatory for others, not constrained by his scruples. Though Brandom calls it "principled",
> "quietism" so understood looks like an excuse for laziness. I think this is a paradigm of how not to read
> Wittgenstein. (2009a, 98)

These brief remarks indicate that the question of Wittgenstein's quietism takes us back to the issue of how to view his rule-following considerations. And they force us to address the question of the consistency of Wittgenstein's philosophy as a whole when these two major features of his work are considered together. McDowell holds that both Brandom and Wright take there to be a fundamental tension between the results of the rule-following considerations and Wittgenstein's explicit endorsement of quietism. If this is accurate, the implication is that the proper way of taking heed of the lessons of Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following and meaning is to part ways with Wittgenstein on the issue of quietism and instead engage in substantive philosophical theorising. I agree with McDowell that this is the wrong way to interpret the later Wittgenstein. However, I do not think he has convincingly shown why it is wrong, or what the correct alternative interpretation is in which these features of his work are consistent.

In section 2.5, I discussed McDowell's objections to Brandom's reading of Wittgenstein's master arguments in *PI*. However, I did not consider the fact that one of the main reasons why McDowell opposes Brandom's reading is that it distorts the connection

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[48] McDowell rightly states that this issue is more complicated in the case of Wright (see 2009b, 370, footnote 2). See Wright (2001, 433-443) and (2007), where he discusses Wittgenstein's quietism as fitting with his rule-following considerations. For example, Wright states regarding Wittgenstein's view that: 'A non-quietist response would be called for only if platonism had given a bad answer to a good question. Then one would have to try to give a better answer. But the question was bad too' (2007, 498).

between these master arguments and the quietism issue in the way alluded to above. In brief, according to Brandom's conception of these arguments, they are directed against particular misconceptions of norm-governed practices; and they generate the need for a positive philosophical account of such practices. In particular, Brandom argues that when we register the negative conclusions of Wittgenstein's master arguments, we are faced with the philosophical problem of giving an account of the norms that are implicit in practice. Therefore, Brandom's view seems to be that Wittgenstein's arguments generate the need for a positive philosophical account of practices and norm-governed activities, but that his 'principled theoretical quietism' prevents him from pursuing it (see Brandom 1994, 29). McDowell rejects this picture of Wittgenstein (2009a, 97-98), and proposes a characterisation of the Wittgensteinian master argument (he thinks there is only one such argument – see 2009a, 108) that is more consistent with Wittgenstein's quietism. In section 2.5, I also considered McDowell's interpretation of the regress argument, which he takes to be the main argument in Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following. But it is unclear how his preferred interpretation of the Wittgensteinian argument is supposed to elucidate why a substantive philosophical theory of rule-following is not called for. McDowell states simply that:

> On the reading I have outlined, it is easy to see how it can be simply right that the regress argument does not call for constructive philosophy. And this puts Wittgenstein's "quietism" (so called) in a different light... He is not trying to supply a theory of norm-governedness to replace regulism [Brandom's name for one of the flawed conceptions of norms that Wittgenstein rejects]. He uncovers a conception that can make acting in the light of a conception of correctness, acting on an understanding, seem mysterious, and he exposes it as a misconception. That dispels the appearance of mystery, and there is nothing further that philosophy needs to do in this connection. (2009a, 104)

However, when we compare McDowell's and Brandom's interpretations of the rule-

following considerations, there does not seem to be any substantial difference in the implications they are supposed to have for the quietism issue. On McDowell's reading, Wittgenstein's master argument demonstrates that the assumption that meaning and rule-following require an act of interpretation is flawed because it leads to the paradoxical conclusion that meaning and rule-following are impossible. But how is this different from Brandom's view that Wittgenstein's arguments are directed against particular misconceptions of our norm-governed practices? Or more to the point, if on both interpretations Wittgenstein's reasoning is directed against particular misconceptions of meaning and rule-following (and the normativity relevant to them), why does McDowell maintain that his interpretation shows that the results of Wittgenstein's reasoning are consistent with his quietism? McDowell seems to think that his reading is superior in this regard because when we realise that rule-following and meaning do not require an act of interpretation, they become less 'mysterious'. As he writes, after we reject the interpretationist assumption 'the appearance of mystery' is dispelled and 'there is nothing further that philosophy needs to do in this connection'. The problem, though, is that we can say the same about the assumptions about rule-following that Brandom identifies as the ones that Wittgenstein targets. We could say that when these misconceptions are eliminated, the notion of following a rule is less mysterious. It seems rather that the decision to go on enquiring and constructing substantive philosophical theories about meaning and rule-following is made independently of how they interpret the rule-following considerations.

This raises the general question of what kind of response is called for in relation to Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations. There is also the question of whether this kind of response is actually consistent with Wittgenstein's quietism, but this is strictly speaking separate from the first. I have maintained along with many others – including McDowell, Brandom, and Wright – that Wittgenstein targets particular assumptions about meaning and

rule-following in his later work. Much of the controversy arises over how to characterise these assumptions and the arguments leading to their negation. But even when these arguments and conclusions have been registered, there is still the difficult question of where this leaves us and this is what I am alluding to with the question of the correct response to Wittgenstein's discussion of these issues. Is it really so implausible to hold that these considerations call for substantive philosophical theorising, as Brandom and Wright maintain? After all, it seems perfectly natural to respond to the failure of certain theories of meaning and rule-following (e.g. platonist theories) by attempting to develop other, *better* philosophical theories. I think this much must be acknowledged. However, there is a way of incorporating it into Wittgenstein's quietist standpoint.

In general, it is helpful to distinguish two stages in Wittgenstein's response to his rule-following considerations. The first consists of raising and giving vivid expression to various philosophical problems concerning rule-following and meaning. These include, e.g., the familiar remarks concerning the relation between what we grasp ('in a flash') when we understand a word and the applications we go on to make of it (*PI*, §§138-139, §197); the impression that the pattern of application of a rule is already laid down and that our behaviour must be brought into accord with it (*PI*, §188), etc. A second stage can be distinguished, though, in which Wittgenstein shows that attempts to respond directly to these problems by providing philosophical explanations or theories fail. Wittgenstein can thus acknowledge that this kind of direct response is natural, but while showing that it is flawed by entertaining it and showing that it cannot succeed (because it leads to the sceptical paradox). This leads to his view that the appropriate response is ultimately to accept that these kinds of direct responses of philosophical theorising fail. It is helpful to model Wittgenstein's response on the structure of straight and sceptical solutions that Kripke depicts. Wittgenstein himself poses the philosophical problems concerning rule-following and meaning. The immediate

reaction is attempt to provide straight solutions to them by showing what rule-following and meaning consist in. But, through the use of his master arguments, Wittgenstein shows these kinds of responses to be flawed. His own response is to accept that they must fail, much as the advocate of a sceptical solution must do, and attempt defend the legitimacy of the notions of rule-following and meaning in a different way.

There are a number of questions raised by this way of interpreting Wittgenstein. One major issue is whether Wittgenstein provides sufficient motivation for rejecting all philosophical theorising in favour of a quietist response. If we consider the philosophical problems themselves concerning rule-following and meaning, there are a huge amount of ways that one could attempt to address them that would all fall into the category of engaging in substantive philosophical theorising. And since Wittgenstein does not, and could not possibly, consider all such responses, his motivation for rejecting all of them and turning quietist could hardly be said to be sufficient. I tried to address this issue in Chapter 3 by arguing that Wittgenstein's master arguments (particularly his gerrymandering argument) can be generalised to apply to a large class of philosophical assumptions about rule-following and meaning. In this sense, his arguments can be re-run against a large class of straight responses, or philosophical theories that attempt to directly address the philosophical problems. These include realist and moderate constructivist responses (e.g. Stroud's and Baker and Hacker's). I also observed, though, that there are accounts or theories that are beyond the scope of Wittgenstein's arguments. These are mainly of the very radical kind, such as radical constructivism, which are not very appealing anyway. However, there are conceivably accounts that are on the border between moderate and radical constructivism, which are beyond the scope Wittgenstein's negative arguments but not so extreme as to be straightforwardly implausible. The mere fact that there are such accounts, which would provide substantive philosophical responses to Wittgenstein's problems, may be viewed as

weakening Wittgenstein's conviction that a quietist response is ultimately called for.

However, I think it is mistaken to see this as undermining Wittgenstein's quietism. After all, providing *sufficient* grounds for quietism would technically require that we consider *all* possible substantive philosophical responses to a philosophical problem and to show that they all fail, which of course is impossible. Wittgenstein's method is much more piecemeal. He develops his master arguments, which can be used to evaluate particular philosophical accounts of meaning-constitution. If (as I have argued) it is found that the realist and moderate constructivist accounts are undermined by these considerations, and if the kinds of accounts that are immune are of a very extreme kind, there are strong grounds for rejecting these kinds of substantive philosophical accounts. It may yet turn out that there is an account of meaning-constitution that can survive his master arguments and avoid the wild extreme of crude constructivism. But this possibility does not render his quietist response implausible. My primary concern here is more with the question of the interpretation of his philosophy; and the correct thing to say concerning this is that he adopted this kind of quietist response (construed specifically in this way) to his own reflections on rule-following and meaning. Regarding the independent plausibility of this quietism, though, we can state that it receives strong – even if not conclusive – support from his master arguments. This, I believe, is sufficient to show at least that his quietist response is not artificial or unmotivated in the way that philosophers such as Brandom sometimes suggest.

Finally, there is the further question of what this quietest response actually involves. Throughout this thesis I have argued that Wittgenstein's positive response to his reflections on rule-following and meaning is to attempt to clarify these notions without appealing to the existence of facts that are constitutive of them. I thus use the notion of meaning-constitution to put a certain gloss on the key notions of 'substantive philosophy' and 'quietism'. That is, I construe substantive philosophical theorising regarding meaning as involving the attempt to

provide an explanatory account by identifying a class of meaning-constituting facts; and I construe quietism as involving the rejection of all such accounts. This also fits with how I have interpreted the non-constitutive standpoint of Kripke's Wittgenstein in his sceptical solution.

Conclusion

To conclude, I will summarise the main arguments in each of the chapters of the thesis. I began the thesis by devoting the entire first chapter to defending a particular reading of Kripke's *WRPL*. A major task consisted in identifying the deep ambiguities in Kripke's reconstruction of Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations, and resolving them in a coherent depiction of Kripke's Wittgenstein. These ambiguities pertained to a number of related issues: the structure of the sceptical argument against meaning and rule-following; the formulation of the sceptical conclusion; and the relation between Kripke's Wittgenstein and the sceptic. Drawing on certain crucial passages from *WRPL*, I argued that there are two separate claims that Kripke's Wittgenstein is committed to and that distinguishing them is necessary in order to dissolve the ambiguities in the text:

(i) That the classical realist (or representational, etc.) picture of meaning-constitution entails the radical sceptical conclusion that 'there can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word'.

(ii) That the classical realist picture is flawed.

The first claim captures Kripke's view that his Wittgenstein does not think that there can be a straight solution to the sceptical challenge. Rather, the sceptic's line of reasoning that leads to the radical sceptical conclusion must be accepted. However, as the discussion of Wilson's and Kusch's writings on *WRPL* clearly demonstrated, the radical sceptical conclusion cannot be derived unless the classical realist (or some similar) conception of meaning-constitution is assumed. And since Kripke's Wittgenstein ultimately rejects this conception – as Kripke states throughout Chapter 3 of *WRPL* – it follows that he also rejects the radical sceptical

conclusion. This provides the basis for eliminating other ambiguities in *WRPL*. For example, this entails that Kripke's Wittgenstein and the radical sceptic are distinct. On this point, I agree with the factualist readings proposed by Wilson and Kusch.

However, reflecting on the most recent articles by Wilson and Miller, and their disagreements with one another, I endorsed Miller's claim that the sceptical argument can be generalised in such a way that it not only undermines the classical realist assumption, but also a whole class of assumptions that propose in a similar way to state the necessary and sufficient conditions for meaning. I also stated that this is supported by certain passages from *WRPL*. I stopped short of claiming that the sceptical argument can be used to undermine *all* assumptions about meaning-constitution. My discussion in the second half of the thesis reveals that it can only undermine a large class of such assumptions. Nevertheless, I used these considerations to make a distinction between two types of scepticism about meaning: on the one hand, a scepticism that states that there can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word; and on the other hand, a scepticism that denies the existence of meaning-constituting facts of all kinds. At the end of the first chapter, I suggested that Kripke's Wittgenstein should be interpreted as rejecting the first type of scepticism but endorsing the second. I then proposed to defend this claim in the rest of the thesis by considering both *WRPL* and Wittgenstein's later writings, and arguing that this is the fundamental feature that connects Kripke's Wittgenstein and Wittgenstein himself.

In the second chapter, I began my defence of the claim that Wittgenstein is a sceptic about meaning and rule-following in the specific sense articulated in the first chapter. The steps I took in the second chapter were relatively small, but significant and preparatory for the further treatment in the third and fourth chapters. I argued for two main claims: firstly, that the later Wittgenstein can be interpreted as developing a line of argument leading to the statement of a sceptical 'paradox', or a radical sceptical conclusion about meaning and rule-

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following; and secondly, that Wittgenstein's response to this paradoxical conclusion involves rejecting this conclusion and the conception of meaning and rule-following that lead to it, and in this sense his response is similar to Kripke's Wittgenstein. In the process, though, I defended a particular interpretation of Wittgenstein's transition to his later period as distancing himself from the conceptions that he had adopted in his early and middle periods. I also defended a particular characterisation of the main lines of argument in Wittgenstein's later discussion of rule-following and meaning. I argued that there are two 'master arguments' presented there – a gerrymandering argument and a regress argument – that they should both be interpreted as undermining particular conceptions of meaning-constituting facts. I thus provided partial support for my claim that the later Wittgenstein is a sceptic in the sense of rejecting the existence of meaning-constituting facts of all kinds.

Although the most obvious characterisation of the target of Wittgenstein's gerrymandering argument is a certain realist or platonist conception of meaning and rule-following (e.g. that rule-following consists in grasping a potentially infinite pattern of correct applications), in the third chapter I argued that its scope can be shown to be wider than this and to take in what Dummett calls moderate constructivist conceptions also. This turns out to be significant because a lot of the most prominent readings of the later Wittgenstein depict him as a type of moderate constructivist (without, of course, using this expression). I took the examples of Stroud and Baker and Hacker, and argued that their readings characterise him as a moderate constructivist. Based on the rationale that it would be implausible to attribute to Wittgenstein a view that can be undermined by one of his own arguments, I rejected the moderate constructivist readings.

There are, though, certain readings of the later Wittgenstein that are neither realist nor moderate constructivist. Most notable among them are Dummett's radical conventionalist and Williams's transcendental idealist readings. Even though I acknowledged that these

constitutive doctrines are not vulnerable to Wittgenstein's master arguments, I argued that it is mistaken to attribute either of them to him. I argued that both radical constructivist and transcendental idealist (and also moderate constructivist) readings appeal to a particular conception of Wittgenstein's philosophical method as consisting of the reflection on and description of our shared linguistic practices or form of life. This is legitimate, but I argued that the readings diverge from one another in posing the further philosophical question of how the shared standpoint or perspective of our form of life relates to what is really the case beyond this standpoint. This is the case with radical constructivism even though it identifies what we take to be the case with what is really the case. Transcendental idealism (construed in the broad sense that Williams and Moore elucidate) offers an alternative answer to this same question. Following a discussion of Moore's view of how the transcendental idealist reading can be rejected, I argued that the correct reading of Wittgenstein is that he rejected this question and, correspondingly, the different answers to it. However, I stated that a separate argument is needed to *completely* motivate this Wittgensteinian view that the correct philosophical goal consists exclusively in arriving at a clear view of our shared standpoint or point of view, and disallowing any further question concerning how this might relate to reality beyond it. This relates to the issue of Wittgenstein's ultimate motivation for adopting a quietist stance, which I did not address until the very end of the final chapter.

In the final chapter I argued for a further parallel between Wittgenstein and Kripke's Wittgenstein. Following from the results of the third chapter, I argued that even though it is consistent with the results of their respective negative or sceptical arguments to propose an alternative account of meaning-constitution (i.e., one that is not vulnerable to these arguments), they both reject the constitutive approach altogether. Regarding Kripke's Wittgenstein, I argued for this by considering the details of Kripke's presentation of the sceptical solution and argued against factualist-constitutive interpretations of it. Regarding

Wittgenstein, I considered his remarks on practices, customs, and communal agreement and argued that there is no legitimate way of interpreting these as entailing an alternative account of meaning-constitution. I argued that any such account will either be vulnerable to Wittgenstein's gerrymandering considerations or suffer from the same defects as Dummett's radical constructivist reading. I concluded by connecting Wittgenstein's rejection of constitutive accounts of meaning and rule-following with his quietism, and arguing that his quietism can be viewed as well-motivated even though his master arguments cannot possibly undermine all substantive philosophical accounts of meaning-constitution. I also argued that Kripke's characterisation of the sceptical solution captures Wittgenstein's quietist standpoint.

The main reason why Kripke's *WRPL*, as an interpretation of Wittgenstein, has received such a hostile reaction since its publication is that the sceptical solution that Kripke argues Wittgenstein adopts has been poorly understood. The dominance of the non-factualist reading has contributed greatly to this circumstance because it entails that the advocate of the sceptical solution must be attacking our ordinary notions of meaning and rule-following. The factualist readings of *WRPL* have made a genuine advance in this regard because they explicitly characterise the sceptical solution as based on the rejection of a particular philosophical explanatory account of meaning and rule-following. In this sense, the target has been correctly identified as being the kind of constitutive facts that philosophers are inclined to posit. But this factualist approach has not gone far enough. I have argued that it should be pursued further and that the sceptical solution should be interpreted as being opposed to all such facts, whether of a classical realist or an anti-realist kind. This has the merit of according with Wittgenstein's anti-theoretical or anti-explanatory stance, and thus of showing the advocate of the sceptical solution to be closer to Wittgenstein himself.

However, there is a similar kind of tension that I have sought to highlight in relation

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to the interpretation of Wittgenstein's works. On the one hand, there has been the desire to take Wittgenstein's anti-explanatory stance seriously; but on the other hand, to incorporate his positive-sounding remarks on techniques and abilities, and the regular practices and customs of using words or applying rules. I have argued that the attempt to incorporate the latter feature has usually resulted in attributing to him a type of alternative constitutive account of meaning and rule-following. This account can be either moderate or radical (often depending on how sympathetic the particular interpreters are), but both misrepresent Wittgenstein. When my interpretation of Kripke's Wittgenstein is adopted, it can be seen that the sceptical solution is a depiction of the later Wittgenstein's quietist standpoint in which all such philosophical explanatory or constitutive accounts are rejected. Kripke's *WRPL* can thus be approached in a new light and, for a change, viewed as a genuine contender in the attempt to interpret Wittgenstein's later philosophy.

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