RULE-FOLLOWING: CONVENTIONALISM, SCEPTICISM AND RATIONALITY

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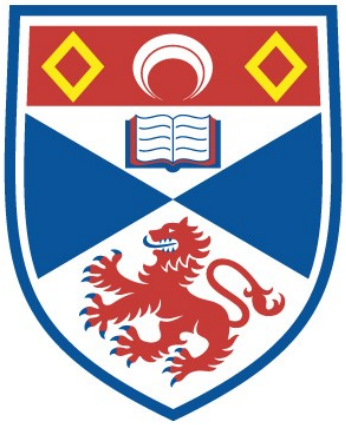

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RULE-FOLLOWING: CONVENTIONALISM, SCEPTICISM, AND RATIONALITY

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IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
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BY

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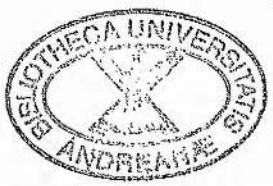

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DEDICATED TO:
A young undergraduate,
Who dreamed after truth,
And understanding.

Well, the truth is partial,
And the understanding less,
But the dream was not clear,
For something is established.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A Ph.D in philosophy may be a selfish affair, but there are many people who nonetheless have given me assistance, friendship, and love in the last few years without which my thesis, and myself, would be wanting and incomplete. The person with the most influence on this thesis, after myself and the late L.W., is my supervisor Professor Crispin Wright. Crispin has shown me, better than anyone, what it is to be a good philosopher – demanding, intense, creative and not least, sincere – and in particular, a good philosopher who works and draws on Wittgenstein (and this, sadly, is nothing common). It has been my great fortune to have worked with Crispin, and will continue to be my great fortune as I bear his influence in my future work. Thanks are also due to my previous supervisor, Professor William Harper, at the University of Western Ontario, where I began my Ph.D. He was always kind and generous with his attention and enthusiasm. Also at the UWO, Professor William Demopoulos, who impressed upon me the importance of rigour in philosophy, Professors John Bell and Wayne Myrvold, who gave me much attention and lively discussion, and Professor Kathleen Okruhlik, who placed much trust and confidence in a starting Ph.D. At the University of St. Andrews, I also want to thank Dr. Peter Clark, for his humour, good will and generosity, Professor Stewart Shapiro, for engaging discussion of parts of this thesis, and Professor Sarah Broadie and Dr. Peter Sullivan for their comments in review of this thesis. Quite importantly, I would like to recognise my post-graduate colleagues at the University of St. Andrews. We are a very close group and I fully expect us to remain so for our lives. I think especially of Philip Ebert, Iwao Hirose, Patrice Philie, Simon Robertson, Marcus "John" Rossberg, but there are others also. These friends made my time working on this thesis – in our common workplace, "the Hut" – fun, funny, and often wonderful. And there are those who left St. Andrews before myself: Jacob Busch, Stefanie Richter and Daniel Frankael, and those that I left to come to St. Andrews, in particular Jai Chetrum, who have remained close friends through these years and who will always carry my esteem. Also, a personal recognition is due to Amanda MacDonald, who also suffered, in a different way, for this thesis. I have lived and died with her, during this time, and it is only in thoughts of her that there has been some regret for having undertaken this work with this travelling. And finally, formal acknowledgement to my family for their informal encouragement and love: my dear mother, my three brothers, Munir, Abbas and Shakir, their families, and my late father.

ABSTRACT

The thesis argues, in the main, for both a negative and positive agenda to Wittgenstein's rule-following remarks in both his *Philosophical Investigations* and *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*. The negative agenda is a sceptical agenda, different than as conceived by Kripke, that is destructive of a realist account of rules and contends that the correct application of a rule is not fully determined in an understanding of the rule. In addition to these consequences, this negative agenda opens Wittgenstein to Dummett's charge of radical conventionalism (a charge that also, but differently, applies to certain mid-period views and this is addressed in the first chapter). These negative consequences are left unresolved by Kripke's sceptical solution and, notably, are wrongly assessed by those that dissent from a sceptical reading (e.g., McDowell). The positive agenda builds on these negative considerations arguing that although there is no determination in the understanding of a rule of what will count as a correct application in so far unconsidered situations, we are still able to follow a rule correctly. This seems to involve an epistemic leap, from an underdetermined understanding to a determinate application, and, in respect of this appearance, involves what Wittgenstein calls following a rule "blindly" in an epistemic sense. Developing this view, of following a rule blindly, involves developing an account of an alternative rational response to rule instruction, one that need not involve a role for interpreting or inferring, but all the same allows for correctness in rule application in virtue of enabling agreement in rule application.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis, in very broad terms, aims to provide an uncovering of the arguments and structure of Wittgenstein's thoughts on rule-following (although in the first chapter, which treats of Wittgenstein's middle period, the concern is largely not the rule-following considerations, which is a development of the later period, but with dominant and preceding views of the middle period). It is an over-arching objective to show that there is systematic thinking, structure and argument, to Wittgenstein's remarks despite an outward showing to the contrary. The considerations raised in the rule-following remarks are central to Wittgenstein's later philosophy, to his views on meaning, understanding and rationality, and the main contribution of this thesis, I believe, lies in its raising from the relief the structure and connections of Wittgenstein's thoughts. The later Wittgenstein is not an openly systematic philosopher in the presentation of his thoughts, but this is not to say that there is not method, rigour and arrangement to his thoughts. Wittgenstein may seem like he is just making observations, from one remark to the next, but he is also, in the course, to a large extent defending these observations.

However, this agenda meets an immediate concern. The later Wittgenstein is careful to say that philosophy should not be about advancing theses, and building theories (c.f., *PI* 128, 126).[1] It should be practised as a form of therapy for exactly this predilection to system-build. I do not reject this as a concern. But it is a concern that, to say up front, I will largely leave to the side. I do think that arguments are employed, theses advanced, throughout the *Philosophical Investigations* (and in other works), and that it is a disservice to

[1] In this thesis, I will use the established abbreviations for texts and citation methods when referring to passages from the works of Wittgenstein (e.g., referring by remark number rather than page number; an exception, although still remaining with convention, is that references to the *Philosophical Investigations* (*PI*) will refer simply to the remark number if from the first part (and this without explicit mention that they are from the first part) but, if from the second part, will refer to the second part explicitly with a page number). These abbreviations are provided in the Bibliography alongside the bibliographic details of the respective works. Also, references to Wittgenstein's works will be made in the body of the text while other references will be made in footnotes.

Wittgenstein's philosophy to deny him the strength of argument for his views. I admit that I may take things a bit far when setting down theses, and presenting arguments with stated premises and conclusions[2], but this is done with the stated intent of trying to achieve a greater clarity of the structure and character of Wittgenstein's thoughts. Theses are certainly presented throughout (I take this as obvious, in spite of protestations that philosophy is not about advancing theories). And they are not expressed without reasons. I endeavour to make these reasons clear to view, and principally as regards the rule-following considerations. There is a view of reading Wittgenstein that says that it is disingenuous to present him as an argumentative philosopher. However, I concur with the sentiment, expressed by Eike von Savigny[3], that if we refrain from reading Wittgenstein as propounding debatable theses, we remove him from contemporary philosophical debate. In which case the disservice is not only to him, but to ourselves.

A binding theme of this thesis is the issue (indeed, the accusation) of radical conventionalism. Radical conventionalism – first charged to Wittgenstein by Dummett – is the view that at any given step, the correct way to follow a rule is a matter of decision. Even for rules that we take as necessary that they be followed in a certain way, this necessity is a matter of decision (we decide to treat a rule as unassailable). A conclusion follows from a set of premises, in this view, as a matter of decision (and hence the accusation that, under such a view, proofs do not prove; they do not compel). This charge of radical conventionalism can be distinguished as drawing on two different sets of views of Wittgenstein's: his rule-following considerations of the later period and the concept modification thesis and strong verificationism of the middle period. And so, this charge finds itself being thrown at

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[2] And I refer the reader to a handy reference sheet of these attached at the end, after the Bibliography, which may be removed for convenience in reading.

[3] During a presentation at the 24th Annual Wittgenstein Symposium in Kirchberg am Wechsel, in Austria, 2001.

Wittgenstein in both his middle and later periods, and to different (and, as I will show) exclusive sets of views. The first chapter picks up the task of clearing Wittgenstein of this charge in his middle period. The charge of radical conventionalism, directed at rule-following considerations, is attended to from the second chapter on. It is not the main theme of the discussion of rule-following in these chapters, but it is always close to the surface. For instance, it is observed that a sceptical reading of the rule-following remarks – the preoccupation of the second and third chapters and, in virtue of its response, the fourth chapter – provides a basis for the charge of radical conventionalism.

Another theme binding this thesis – from the first chapter to the last – has to do with issues of determinacy (although the issues raised concerning determinacy are somewhat different in the middle period than in the later period). In his middle period, at least for mathematical propositions, Wittgenstein upheld that sense must be determinate. Indeed, this view carried to the extent that any modification to this sense constituted a different proposition. For instance, he upheld that a mathematical proof modifies the sense of a mathematical proposition, and in virtue of this modification, a proof, in effect, introduces a new proposition, a new rule (and hence does not prove the original proposition). In the later period, the point is made that the correct application of a rule is not fully determined in our grasp of the rule. This thought is described by Wittgenstein, among other ways, by saying that our mind does not "fly ahead" to the whole use of a word or rule, to all unconsidered steps, in our grasp. This lack of determination in our understanding of a rule is quite an important point for the later Wittgenstein, I contend, but one that is difficult to get a handle on. I will offer a firm grip by approaching the point through an account of how our understanding of any rule is underdetermined by underdetermining instructions and training in the rule. This will involve the line of argument that our understanding of a rule

does not transcend an understanding of instructions and training (itself a central rule-following consideration to be developed and explained), and thus, since these underdetermine the correct way to follow a rule, our understanding of any rule is thereby underdetermined.

Following a rule correctly from an underdetermined understanding would seem to involve an epistemic leap for we are able to grasp a unique way of proceeding from a set of instructions that can be consistently interpreted along indefinitely many lines. Following a rule in spite of this apparent gap in our understanding will involve what Wittgenstein calls following a rule "blindly" (indeed, the very locution of "following a rule blindly" is a concession to the point that, from a point of view, when we follow a rule in this way we proceed unjustified or arbitrarily). That is, it will be asserted that despite the fact that the understanding of any rule is underdetermined, this need not imply that we come to see a rule as indeterminate in what it proscribes. It is an interesting point that this issue – the underdetermination in our understanding of a rule – and the response it requires – in terms of blind rule-following – does not arise as a problematic in the middle period (and again, this has to do with a different view of the requirements of determinacy in our understanding of a word or concept in that period).

Turning now to a brief overview of the chapters, there are two basic reasons for the existence of Chapter 1 which deals with Wittgenstein's middle period while the rest focus on his later period. First, as noted, the charge of radical conventionalism bifurcates into two: one directed at middle period views, and the other at later period views. Attending to the charge of radical conventionalism, thus, requires attending to its manifestation as a charge against Wittgenstein's middle period views. Second, it allows us to gain some understanding of Wittgenstein's later views on rules by looking to his immediately preceding views of the

middle period on similar points. I would not say that what we find here are proto-rule following considerations. Indeed, much of what is said conflicts with the later thought. But this still offers elucidation: if we do not gain a view to the later period through a foreshadowing in the middle period, then we have available a view informed by contrast, i.e., an understanding of the later thought informed by an understanding of what was abandoned from the middle period.

In Chapter 2, I present and explain basic rule-following considerations and raise two sceptical arguments that are built on these considerations. These arguments share paradoxical conclusions – that there is no rule-following – and to some extent even premises, but are different in the tactics employed. We see one proceed inductively, arguing that an underdetermined understanding is open to interpretation along indefinitely many lines, and so if grasping the correct way to follow a rule requires interpreting, then we are left unable to follow a rule for reason of having no (non-arbitrary) basis for settling on a course of action. The other argues, along conceptual lines, that if instructions underdetermine our understanding of the most basic of rules, such that we can find these rules open to interpretation, then no course of action is determined by a rule or its instructions, and where there is no determination, it is argued, there is no rule or instruction in a rule. These are presented as separate arguments but there is a strong interdependence for part of one argument is in the service of supporting a premise of the other (and so, in this respect, we may see these as a single, more intricate argument, but I present these as two separate arguments to keep clear the different methods of arguing). These arguments are claimed to be Wittgenstein's own for reason that they are drawn closely from the text.

Furthermore, these arguments offer a case against a realist view of rules; I will present this case and describe and explain that it involves a version of the private language

argument (which will also be shown to follow on from rule-following considerations). In the Appendix to the chapter I offer a more general view of this argument against private language and make the point that this can be defended in a non-verificationist way. Also, in this chapter, I present Kripke's sceptical argument and compare this to Wittgenstein's argument(s). These are not the same – a perhaps obvious point – although certain building blocks are shared and these are discussed. And although Kripke's argument does not provide a faithful view of Wittgenstein's argument in the detail, I do sympathise, and this should be stressed, with Kripke's general view of Wittgenstein's rule-following remarks as embodying both a negative and positive agenda. This will be made apparent as we move from the second chapter, where I am occupied with the negative agenda, to the fourth, where I attend to the positive.

Chapter 3, to start, concerns itself with commentators on Wittgenstein who find disagreement with Kripke's argument. These commentators object to Kripke (or at least, this is the main objection that I focus on) arguing that the sceptical argument is correctly to be read as a reductio. I agree with this. However, I add that this does not absolve us from having to give an explanation of how it is that the culpable premise, which takes us to a sceptical conclusion, is rejected (while accepting that there is a premise to be rejected is a result of the argument being read as a reductio). Among objectors, I focus on McDowell and argue that the devices offered to account for the rejection of a premise – namely, an appeal to custom – does not serve this end. I also discuss McDowell's overall view of the general structure of arguments in the rule-following remarks and find this to be a false view. Accounting for this structure is a main objective of this thesis and so treating McDowell's view on this point, a subtle and, in some respects, a compelling view, allows me to further this objective through indirect means. And further, I add that although the argument is to

be treated as a reductio, it is not the case that this denies negative consequence to the rule-following remarks. That is, while it is admitted that there must be a way to grasp a rule that is not an interpretation in order to avoid the sceptical paradox, this does not deny that the understanding of any rule is underdetermined by training and instructions in the rule. At the end, this is left in need of account: how is it that we are able to follow a rule correctly despite an underdetermined understanding and this without coming to interpret the rule?

Chapter 4 picks up this problem and approaches it by first broadening the terms of the debate. That is, the question of underdetermination is linked to the question of how it is that we are able to follow a rule without reasons, or at least, reasons that run short of justifying or vindicating a unique (let alone the correct) course of action. An answer is fashioned on the basis that there is an alternative rational mode under which we can come to grasp instructions in a rule; that is, we need not interpret because we can come to grasp a rule under what I call the 'reactive' mode of rationality. This alternative rational mode or standard is that in virtue of which we are able to follow a rule "blindly". It is through a description and explanation of this rational mode that Wittgenstein's positive programme is developed and the sceptical or negative agenda answered. This positive programme, however, is less open to view in the rule-following remarks than the negative. There is just a greater scarcity of positive-minded pronouncements. And so, fashioning this account draws together apparently different lines of thought and argument. In the end, the view of the positive programme obtained is bit of a patchwork. Nevertheless, the framework for an account – as involving a distinction in our rational response to rules and instructions – is established and important steps in filling this out are taken.

CHAPTER 1

Radical Conventionalism and the Middle Period

I. Introduction

Dummett accuses Wittgenstein of being a radical conventionalist. He describes this as follows:

> Wittgenstein goes in for a full-blooded conventionalism; for him 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.[1]

Under this characterization, all necessity is decided. It is not the case that we accept certain statements and that others follow as necessary consequences. Rather, one statement follows another with necessity only if we decide so. Whether we accept that the last sentence in a mathematical proof, or that any sentence in a proof, follows from another is strictly a matter of decision. Let 'RC' stand for this position.

RC: The logical necessity of any statement is decided.

Under this view, there is no logical compulsion and so no logical necessity as we normally conceive of it. It is clear that this is a "radical" position. Note that Dummett indicates, not just that Wittgenstein's views (perhaps unwittingly) commit him to RC, but more damning, that Wittgenstein explicitly endorses RC.

The charge of radical conventionalism can be seen to follow from both what Crispin Wright calls Wittgenstein's 'Concept Modification Thesis' and from rule-following considerations.[2] This means that Wittgenstein in both his middle period, in which the

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[1] Dummett [1966], pp. 425-426.

[2] This division in sources of the charge of radical conventionalism is not clear in Dummett's initial expression, but becomes so with Wright's account of the issue and his elaboration of the relevant views of Wittgenstein. See especially Wright [1980], Ch. 3.

concept modification thesis is expressed and rule-following considerations begin to form, and his later period, when the rule-following considerations reach maturity, is allegedly a radical conventionalist.

In this chapter, I will focus on the charge of radical conventionalism as drawn from the concept modification thesis. I will defend that this thesis – read in a way to imply RC – is a product of related views of Wittgenstein's on the status of conjectures in mathematics and verificationism regarding mathematical propositions. It is my contention that once the concept modification thesis is read in terms of these other views, RC ceases to be a consequence and further, even if it were, these other views are works in progress of the middle period texts that are abandoned or sufficiently evolved by the later period so as to quell the charge of radical conventionalism as ultimately drawn from these views. As a result, the charge of radical conventionalism as drawn from the concept modification thesis is a non-starter in the later period. The charge is, at best, only appropriate if leveled against a work in progress and not then either as I will argue. This case is largely exegetical. As far as denying the charge of radical conventionalism as drawn from the rule-following considerations, this case cannot be similarly exegetical because these considerations do not express unsure thoughts to be later repudiated or dramatically reformed. Making this more difficult case will be an occupation of the coming chapters and will provide an entryway to the further discussions of rule-following in these later chapters.

II. The Concept Modification Thesis.

Let 'CM' stand for the concept modification thesis.

CM: A proof serves to modify the sense of a mathematical proposition.

According to the concept modification thesis, proofs are a source of new concepts; they create new concepts for us rather than enable the investigation and further development of existing concepts.[3] This thesis is drawn from remarks of Wittgenstein's (in his middle period) such as the following:

> Well, I could say: a mathematician is always inventing new forms of description. Some, stimulated by practical needs, others, from aesthetic needs, - and yet others in a variety of ways. And here imagine a landscape gardener designing paths for the layout of a garden; it may well be that he draws them on a drawing board merely as ornamental strips without the slightest thought of someone's sometime walking on them. (*RFM* I 167)

> The mathematician is an inventor, not a discoverer. (*RFM* I 168)

> a mathematical proof incorporates the mathematical proposition into a new calculus, and alters its position in mathematics. The proposition with its proof doesn't belong to the same category as the proposition without the proof. (*PG* 371)

> 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; like when someone mixes a special reddish-blue, somehow settles the special mixture of the colours and gives it a name. But even if we are inclined to regard a proof as such a new paradigm – what is the exact similarity of the proof to such a concept-model? One would like to say: the proof changes the grammar of our language, changes our concepts. It makes new connections and it creates the concepts of these connections. (It does not establish that they are there; they do not exist until it makes them.) (*RFM* III 31)

> The idea that proof creates a new concept might also be roughly put as follows. A proof is not its foundations plus the rules of inference, but a *new* building – although it is an example of such-and-such a style. A proof is a *new* paradigm. The concept which the proof creates may, for example, be a new

[3] Wright [1980], pp. 41-42.

> concept of inference, a new concept of inferring... The proof creates a new concept by creating or being a new sign. Or – by giving the proposition which is its result a new place. (*RFM* II. 41)[4]

Remarks such as these underlie the thought, expressed above, that proofs modify our understanding of concepts in virtue of introducing new concepts.[5] Based on the concept modification thesis, Wright observes that a proof does not prove what it sets out to prove. He states:

> if the sense of the conclusion is changed, then nothing in the way in which we understood it before can have *required* us to accept the proof; and similarly for our criteria for the correctness of the steps. To accept the proof is a new step in no way imposed on us by our prior understanding of the notion of correct proof or of the concepts in the conclusion. Hence the appropriateness of the picture of *decision*.[6]

However, as it is stated, the concept modification thesis does not imply radical conventionalism. It is possible that a proof can modify the sense of a proposition without the basis for the acceptance of the proposition thereby being a decision. This is because it remains possible to trace the change in sense from the original conjecture to the modified proposition such that we can recognize that it is the same proposition and thereupon maintain that the proof is a proof of the original conjecture. Wright realizes this but does not think that this possibility applies here. He contends that this would require that we be able to give an account of how the proof affected the sense of the original conjecture. He states, "It ought to be possible to give an account of how certain concepts have been modified."[7] Wright interprets Wittgenstein's concept modification thesis as not allowing for such an account. Let this be called 'CM*'

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[4] These remarks, and others, are presented by Wright as evidence for attributing to Wittgenstein a conventionalist view of mathematics, and more specifically, the view that proofs modify concepts. See Wright [1980], pp. 39-40.

[5] This distinction between modifying concepts and introducing new concepts is important and one to which I will shortly return.

[6] Wright [1980], pp. 41-42.

CM* A proof serves to modify the sense of a mathematical proposition and it is not possible to give an account of how this sense has been modified.

Since a proof changes the sense of a mathematical conjecture and we cannot trace this change, the basis for accepting the original conjecture would presumably be a decision. Thus, radical conventionalism is obtained from CM* because the proof does not prove the original conjecture (i.e., if we cannot account for the change in sense then we cannot assert that the original proposition is the same as that supported by the proof). Wright elaborates, "The idea of conceptual change is intelligible par excellence in the sort of case where we can trace the development of a concept through alterations in the conditions under which its application is considered to be justified, where, that is, we can compare the old and the new conditions."[8] The view here is that we cannot trace our understanding of a concept through its change. Consequently, we cannot compare our old and new understandings. Surely, we could accept that a proof may affect our understanding of the sense of a conjecture; we can admit that it draws new connections (and that "seeing" these connections is part of recognizing that the proof works). But this (which is so far to admit to only CM) is not what Wittgenstein is here taken to say, or at least not the all of it. According to CM*, there is no connection between our understanding of the proposition pre- and post-proof that would allow us to track the change, let alone recognize that it is the same proposition. Wright, understandably, finds this thought unconvincing:

> Now if with Wittgenstein we attempt to maintain that accepting a proof of a statement changes its meaning, then it ought to be possible, after we have accepted the proof, satisfactorily to convey what our understanding of the statement used to be. It ought to be possible to give an account of how certain concepts have been modified. Part of one's natural resistance to Wittgenstein's suggestion is, of course, that this does not seem to be possible. It seems to us that nothing changes as a result of the proof; indeed, that if we could discern an alteration in our concept of, for example, the pattern of

[7] Wright [1980], p. 42.
[8] Wright [1980], p. 42.

> application of a particular rule of inference, brought about by the application of it made in the proof, then the proof would fall short of complete cogency precisely at the point where the rule is applied.[9]

Wright adds the point that if a proof serves to change our understanding of inference rules, then proof acceptance should require new training or explanation (to go with the new way of understanding the concepts or expressions as they are now used). Since this is not part of our practice of proof acceptance, Wright again finds for the unacceptability of CM*.[10]

The unacceptability of CM* (as opposed to CM) is due to the point that proofs modify sense without our being able to trace (and thereby even recognize) the change in sense. But the reason why we cannot trace our understanding of a mathematical proposition from pre- to post-proof is that, according to Wittgenstein, there is no understanding of a mathematical proposition to be had pre-proof; that is, there are no mathematical conjectures. There is nothing to trace back to. This is what I will call Wittgenstein's 'no-conjecture thesis'. CM*, read a certain way (the right way I will claim), is a consequence of this thesis. Furthermore, the no-conjecture thesis, and so with it CM*, are consequences of Wittgenstein's strong verificationist views regarding mathematical propositions in his middle period (which will be the topic of the next section but one).

III. The No-Conjecture Thesis

According to the concept modification thesis, a proof changes the sense of a mathematical proposition. Strictly speaking then, the concept modification thesis requires it that there be mathematical conjectures with sense. That is, if a proof is to modify sense, then the

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[9] Wright [1980], p. 43.

[10] Although we would want to admit that the understanding of a proof does sometimes require training in new concepts – perhaps if serving as a paradigm shift in Kuhn's sense – and it is interesting to note that

proposition prior to proof (the conjecture) must possess sense to be modified. However, Wittgenstein, and this is still to focus on his middle period, is clear in denying this. He maintains that there are no mathematical conjectures. Consider, initially, the following remarks:

> How can there be conjectures in Mathematics? Or better, what sort of thing is it that looks like a conjecture in mathematics? (*PG* 359)

> Only the so-called proof establishes any connection between the hypothesis and the primes *as such*. And that is shown by the fact that – as I've said – until then the hypothesis can be construed as one belonging purely to physics. – On the other hand when we have supplied a proof, it doesn't prove what was conjectured at all, since I can't conjecture to infinity. I can only conjecture what can be confirmed, but experience can only confirm a finite number of conjectures, and you can't conjecture the proof until you've got it, and not then either. (*PG* 360)

We see here Wittgenstein uphold that there are no conjectures in mathematics.[11] There is a manifest conflict between the concept modification thesis and the no-conjecture thesis. The former presumes that there are conjectures with sense in mathematics (for a proof is to serve to modify that sense) while the latter thesis denies that there are conjectures in mathematics. However, this conflict is only apparent. Under a more careful and appropriate reading of the concept modification thesis (which I will soon elaborate), there is no conflict: a proof modifies sense in virtue of providing sense to the proposition (i.e., proofs introduce sense – they introduce a new rule to the calculus – and speaking of their "modifying" sense should not be read in a way that denies this point).

Wittgenstein does talk in terms of proofs as introducing new 'paradigms' – it is certainly not the norm that proofs require training in new rules and so Wright's point still holds.

[11] Part of the motivation here, when Wittgenstein says that we cannot conjecture to infinity, should sound intuitionistic. There is an interesting similarity but also a dissimilarity between Wittgenstein's view and traditional intuitionism and I will elaborate this in the section on the Law of Excluded Middle below. Here Wittgenstein is saying that we can only conjecture what we know we can confirm (i.e., what we know we can prove), but in mathematics, as opposed to the empirical sciences, this is already to have a proof; and so there are no conjectures in mathematics. I will elaborate this point further below. Also, further remarks upholding the no-conjecture thesis will follow.

Wittgenstein does uphold both theses in the same period as the remarks given testify. The pair of theses, as noted, are outwardly inconsistent. Nevertheless, there is grounds for reading them as espousing the same thought: a proof is the source of meaning for a mathematical proposition. Clearly though, Goldbach's conjecture has a meaning even though we do not possess a proof; there is something that we are understanding of the conjecture even though we do not know whether it is true.[12] And further, we want to say that our understanding of the conjecture directs us in looking for a proof (such that this proof be a proof of this conjecture). Indeed, we should say that understanding a conjecture should offer no guidance in finding a proof if the proof is not a proof of the conjecture. Wittgenstein does not seem to deny that there is something understood in a conjecture for he does admit that we can legitimately express the conjecture (see the remark below). Nevertheless, he asks: if we were to happen upon a proof, would we then be proving what we set out to – i.e., what we understood in the first place? His answer is "no". Consider the following remark.

> I am assuming that I conjectured the generalisation without conjecturing the proof. Does the proof now prove exactly the generalisation that I conjectured?!
>
> Suppose someone was investigating even numbers to see if they confirmed Goldbach's conjecture. Suppose he expressed the conjecture – and it can be expressed – that if he continued with this investigation, he would never meet a counterexample as long as he lived. If a proof of the theorem is then discovered, will it also be a proof of the man's conjecture? How is that possible? (*PG* 361)

Both the concept modification thesis and the no-conjecture thesis are at play here in the discussion of Goldbach's conjecture. According to the concept modification thesis, the proposition we understand post-proof is not the same as the proposition we understood pre-proof. Our understandings are different even if the expression of the proposition is unaltered. But this means that we never prove any mathematical conjectures (for once we

[12] Certainly we should say that we have an understanding of Goldbach's conjecture that is compositional, i.e.,

happen on a proof, it is not a proof of the original conjecture). And this means that, in effect, all conjectures are idle. It is in this sense that there are no legitimate conjectures in mathematics. The concept modification thesis and the no conjecture thesis, far from being at odds, are clearly connected.

To elaborate, if the prior meaning of a proposition is not available after having understood a proof, then, as Wright observes, we should not even be able to say that it has changed.[13] It is, in effect, for us a new proposition or introducing a new concept. That is, we cannot, *ex hypothesi* of the concept modification thesis (CM*), notice a change in proposition or concepts and so a proof, in effect, is a source of new concepts. Plainly, the understanding of a proposition post-proof is as good as new. That is, from a post-proof vantage, there was no original conjecture which we set out to prove (for we have no understanding of the original conjecture post-proof). Thus, the concept modification thesis, read as CM*, leads us to the no-conjecture thesis.[14] Indeed, we should say that the concept modification thesis is misnamed since the proof gives meaning and does not change it. To explain, it is part of CM* that we notice no change in our understanding of a proposition and its attendant concepts from pre- to post-proof. But this should not be if the proof is nevertheless affecting a change in our understanding; we should be able to mark, if not trace, this change. The no-conjecture thesis answers this difficulty by asserting that, prior to obtaining a proof, there was no mathematical proposition (i.e., there are no mathematical conjectures). The reason we notice no change in understanding is because there is no change; a proof is what introduces meaning and there is no meaning understood prior to possession of a proof. We need not find this acceptable – that there are no mathematical

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an understanding of the component concepts.

[13] Wright [1980], 43.

[14] And likewise, the no conjecture thesis supports the reading of the concept modification thesis as CM*.

conjectures – in order to realise that it makes sense of the concept modification thesis. Indeed, we can look again to some of the quotations given as evidence for the concept modification thesis provided earlier and can easily see that they seem to justify a reading in terms of the no-conjecture thesis. This is because Wittgenstein talks of proofs as introducing *new* concepts and *new* connections. Consider the following (again), but this time with an eye to the no-conjecture thesis.

> a mathematical proof incorporates the mathematical proposition into a new calculus, and alters its position in mathematics. The proposition with its proof doesn't belong to the same category as the proposition without the proof. (*PG* 371)

> 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; like when someone mixes a special reddish-blue, somehow settles the special mixture of the colours and gives it a name. But even if we are inclined to regard a proof as such a new paradigm – what is the exact similarity of the proof to such a concept-model? One would like to say: the proof changes the grammar of our language, changes our concepts. It makes new connections and it creates the concepts of these connections. (It does not establish that they are there; they do not exist until it makes them.) (*RFM* III 31)

> The idea that proof creates a new concept might also be roughly put as follows. A proof is not its foundations plus the rules of inference, but a *new* building – although it is an example of such-and-such a style. A proof is a *new* paradigm. The concept which the proof creates may, for example, be a new concept of inference, a new concept of inferring... The proof creates a new concept by creating or being a new sign. Or – by giving the proposition which is its result a new place. (*RFM* III 41)

CM*, if not to be read as a portrayal of the no-conjecture thesis, would require that proofs serve to enforce forgetfulness: once we have a proof of a proposition, our understanding of the proposition and its attendant concepts involved prior to proof is now forgotten (for that is why we cannot trace our concepts to our old understanding of them). This is indefensible (even by the radical standards of the issues being discussed). Further, it is a psychological matter which Wittgenstein is not likely to be after. Still further, there is reason for reading the concept modification thesis in light of the no-conjecture thesis because of Wittgenstein's espousal of both in the same period, in the same sections - indeed, as noted above - in many

of the same remarks (and so it would be too much for them to be read as conflicting). On the one hand, the two theses are at odds: the concept modification thesis says that a proof serves to modify our understanding of concepts in a mathematical conjecture (and hence presumes there are mathematical conjectures) whereas the no-conjecture thesis denies that there are mathematical conjectures. On the other hand, the two theses are closely identified if we read the concept modification thesis in terms such that a proof modifies sense in virtue of its being a source of sense. This latter reading is correct because, in addition to considerations raised above, it allows us to deal with the outward inconsistency between these two theses promoted by Wittgenstein.

The binding thought is that proofs are a source of meaning. This is why we can say that proofs modify concepts (for they modify sense in the way of introducing it) and also say there are no meaningful mathematical conjectures. Clearly, this does not sit well with our intuitive views about conjectures and proofs. But that concern need not be an obstacle because this chapter will argue that these theses are works in progress that do not survive intact into the later period (i.e., that they are consequences of a parent thesis – a strong verificationism concerning mathematical propositions – that does not survive into the later period). The next section will serve to further cement the view that the correct reading of the concept modification thesis (that is, of the remarks in which it arises) is in terms of the no-conjecture thesis by showing that they are both to be properly understood in terms of this strong verificationism (this verificationism, as will be seen, is a dominant theme in Wittgenstein's discussion of mathematics in the middle period).

Prior to that, a few further comments. Wright considers the case of a proof that utilizes mathematical induction, our understanding of which alters with the acceptance (and understanding) of the proof. Wright asks if we can then convey an understanding of the

prior meaning of mathematical induction. We should want to say "yes" but it is a peculiarity of the concept modification thesis (CM*) that we cannot draw on the previous understanding. But if we cannot draw on our previous understanding of mathematical induction, on what basis then are we accepting the conclusion? It would seem that with the concept modification thesis (CM*), a proof does not prove anything. Hence the appropriateness of the charge of radical conventionalism and with it the thought that if we accept a conclusion, it is not because we are compelled to do so by our understanding and acceptance of the proof, but by a decision (for this seems to be the only option for accepting a conclusion given CM*). Notice, we are not better off in fending off the charge of radical conventionalism if we read CM* in terms of the no-conjecture thesis. If there are no conjectures in mathematics, *a fortiori*, there are no proofs of conjectures, and again *a fortiori*, no proofs whose acceptance and understanding compel an acceptance of conjectures. Accordingly, the acceptance of a mathematical proposition is not compelled upon us by a proof and hence, it seems appropriate to say, its acceptance must be a matter of decision. That is, there is no mathematical proposition that we understand prior to a proof (i.e., no mathematical conjecture) and so no such proposition that we are compelled to accept by a proof; decision seems to be the next option for a basis of acceptance. At any rate, assimilating the concept modification thesis to the no-conjecture thesis does nothing, by itself, to withdraw the apparent applicability of the charge of radical conventionalism (and so this was not an implicit aim of doing so).

Wittgenstein's discussion of the no-conjecture thesis, and with it the concept modification thesis, is a work in progress, as is much else discussed in the texts of the middle period (which, unlike the first part of the *Investigations*, were not in a position even close to being ready for publication). Much of this discussion (of both the concept modification

thesis and the no-conjecture thesis) is in the *Philosophical Grammar* in the section having to do with the disanalogy between mathematical proof and scientific experiment. Unlike in the *Tractatus*, where mathematical propositions are termed 'pseudo-propositions', Wittgenstein, in his middle period, admits the locution of 'mathematical propositions' but insists on a disanalogy between these and their empirical counterparts. This disanalogy is brought out markedly in the distinction between empirical conjectures and would-be mathematical conjectures. That is to say, there is no mathematical counterpart for Wittgenstein to a scientific or empirical conjecture. One does not make predictions (at least not in the same sense) and thereupon carry out experiments in mathematics as one does in science. To further his point, he makes a contrast between a geographical expedition and a mathematical one (so to speak) and notes how odd it would be if we did not know what we were after, or how to get where we want to go, in a geographical expedition while this, he contends, is precisely the case in mathematics. He states, "How strange it would be if a geographical expedition were uncertain whether it had a goal, and so whether it had any route whatsoever. We can't imagine such a thing, it's nonsense. But this is precisely what it is like in a mathematical expedition. And so perhaps it is a good idea to drop the comparison altogether.""(*PG* 365)

For Wittgenstein, mathematical proofs are not experiments. We do not know what will constitute a proof in advance (at least in specific terms) in the mathematical case. This is because, in the mathematical case, to know how to get the result we want (again, in specific terms) is to already have a proof. Presumably, understanding a mathematical conjecture, if such were allowed, would require knowing how such a conjecture, in a sufficiently specific manner, would be satisfied. Since this would be to already possess a proof, there can be no mathematical conjectures. And so we may add that part of the motivation for the no-

conjecture thesis is to retain a strong distinction between the mathematical and empirical cases (i.e., the no-conjecture thesis is partly a product of working out this disanalogy). There is, for Wittgenstein, no understanding of a mathematical proposition without a proof (and so there are no mathematical propositions that are not known to be true; and of course, this again is to say that there are no mathematical conjectures). In contrast, we can understand an empirical proposition without knowing that it is true (and this is because we can have an understanding of a method of verification that is understood independently of an understanding that the empirical proposition is true). Thus, there is a verificationist viewpoint about the truth and meaning of mathematical propositions that underscores their disanalogy with empirical propositions: the truth of a mathematical proposition consists in its proof and further, there is no understanding of a mathematical proposition without an understanding of a proof (for proofs are the source of meaning of mathematical propositions).[15]

IV. Mathematical Verificationism

IV. i. Introduction

Wittgenstein, in his middle period, clearly upholds that the sense of a mathematical proposition is its method of verification, i.e., its proof. As a result, if a mathematical proposition has not been proven (i.e., if it is as yet undecided), then it is meaningless (and so, strictly speaking, it is not a proposition). Thus, what is called 'Goldbach's conjecture' is meaningless. A proof provides a mathematical proposition with a determinate sense.

[15] Note that intuitionists would generally agree with the former point but not this latter point. This comparison will be picked up in the next section.

Without a proof, a mathematical proposition is without a determinate sense (and for Wittgenstein in his middle period, a mathematical proposition must have a determinate sense – I will elaborate this later on). Hence, this strong verificationist view of mathematical propositions implies that there are no conjectures in mathematics. That is, the no-conjecture thesis (and so with it the concept modification thesis, for I have argued for their assimilation) is a consequence of this strong verificationist line on mathematical propositions (which I will henceforth call 'SV'). Consider the following remarks, all from works from the middle period, which give unambiguous evidence for SV.

> In mathematics there are not, first, propositions that have sense by themselves and, second, a method to determine the truth or falsity of propositions; there is only a method, and what is called a proposition is only an abbreviated name for the method.[16]

> A statement is relevant if it belongs to a *certain system*. It is in this sense that it has been maintained that every relevant question is decidable. What is not visibly relevant, is not relevant at all.[17]

> We may only put a question in mathematics (or make a conjecture), where the answer runs: 'I must work it out' (*PR* 151)

> We might also ask: what is it that goes on when, while we've as yet no idea how a certain proposition is to be proved, we still ask "Can it be proved or not?" and proceed to look for a proof? If we "try to prove it", what do we do? Is this a search which is essentially unsystematic, and therefore strictly speaking not a search at all, or can there be some plan involved? How we answer this question is a pointer as to whether the as yet unproved – or as yet unprovable – proposition is senseless or not. For, in a very important sense, every significant proposition must teach us through its sense how (wie) we are to convince ourselves whether it is true or false. "Every proposition says what is the case if it is true". (*PR* 148)

> [For a mathematical proposition, the proof] is part of the grammar of the proposition…belongs to the sense of the proved proposition, i.e. determines that sense. It isn't something that brings it about that we believe a particular proposition, but something that shows us what we believe. (*PG* II, Ch. V, §. 24, pp. 370, 375)

> if there is no method provided for deciding whether the proposition is true or false, then it is pointless, and that means senseless. (*PG* II, Ch. VII, §. 39, p. 452)

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[16] From conversations between Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle recorded by F. Waismann in his [1979], p. 33.

[17] Waismann [1979], p. 37.

> What is hidden must be capable of being found... Also, what is hidden must be completely describable before it is found, no less than if it had already been found. It makes good sense to say that an object is so well hidden that it is impossible to find it; but of course the impossibility here is not a logical one; i.e., it makes sense to speak of finding an object, to describe the finding; we are merely denying that it will happen. (*PG* II, Ch. V, §. 22, p. 363)

> Does your calculus have proofs? And what proofs? It is only from them that we will be able to gather the sense of these propositions and questions. (*PG* 370)

> The ... conception, the one I want to hold, says, 'No, if I can never verify the sense of a proposition completely, then I cannot have meant anything by the proposition either. Then the proposition signifies nothing whatsoever.'[18]

> In order to determine the sense of a proposition, I should have to know a very specific procedure for when to count the proposition as verified.[19]

As an example of a proof *being* the sense of a (mathematical) proposition, Frascolla offers the following remark from Wittgenstein:

> To say that 6 permutations of 3 elements are possible cannot say less, i.e., anything more general, than is shown by the schema:
> ABC
> ACB
> BAC
> BCA
> CAB
> CBA
> ...The proposition that there are 6 permutations of 3 elements is identical with the permutation schema ..." (*PG* II, Ch. 4, §. 20, pp. 348-349).

Frascolla relates: "But the construction of this schema can be considered as nothing but the construction of a proof of the statement that there are six permutations of a three element set; thus, we have here a case in which the proof determines the sense of the proven proposition." (Frascolla 66)

Let us convey the view expressed by SV as follows:

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[18] Waismann [1979], p. 47.
[19] Waismann [1979], p. 47.

SV: The sense of a mathematical proposition is its proof.[20]

IV. ii. Proofs Vs. Checks and Calculations

While it is clear, in the above remarks, that Wittgenstein identifies the proof of a proposition with its sense, the sense of 'proof' is ambiguous with what Wittgenstein elsewhere calls 'checking' and which he means to distinguish from proofs. In these remarks, Wittgenstein identifies the sense of a mathematical proposition with the method of "checking". Consider the following remarks (also from a middle period work and specifically, as are some of the remarks above, from the *Philosophical Grammar*, Part II, Chapter 5 entitled "Mathematical Proof"):

> So if I want to raise a question which won't depend on the truth of the proposition, I have to speak of *checking* its truth, not of proving or disproving it. The method of checking the truth corresponds to what one may call the sense of the mathematical proposition. The description of this method is a general one and brings in a system of propositions, for instance of propositions of the form a x b x c. ...If it's impossible to speak of such a check, then the analogy between "mathematical proposition" and other things we call proposition collapses. (*PG* II, Ch. V, §. 23, p. 366)

> Tell me how you seek and I will tell you what you are seeking...Where you can ask you can look for an answer, and where you cannot look for an answer you cannot ask either. Nor can you find an answer... "the equation yields S" means: if I transform the equation in accordance with certain rules, I get S. Just as the equation 25 x 25 = 625 says that I get 625 if I apply the rules for multiplication to 25 x 25. But in this case these rules must already be given to me before the word "yields" has a meaning, and before the question whether the equation yields S has a sense. (*PG* II, Ch. V, §. 24, p. 370; §. 25, pp. 377-8)

Wittgenstein distinguishes between proofs and calculations: they both present problems but in different senses of the word. Locutions such as 'problem', 'question', 'answer', 'search', etc., are for Wittgenstein internal to a calculus; that is, they presume that a determinate set of

[20] Although it is verificationism regarding mathematics that is at issue here, Wittgenstein certainly did extend it to scientific discourse, and as Michael Wrigley points out, to evaluative discourse. He provides the following

rules are in place by which one can pose a problem (read conjecture here), carry out a search, ask and then answer a question. These locutions do not apply, in the relevant sense, to proofs. Let us amend SV so as to account for the distinction between proof and checking:

SV*: The sense of a proposition is the method of checking it.

With proofs, for Wittgenstein, we do not carry out a search in the same sense in which we carry out a search when the rules are given (mind you, we would not ordinarily call a calculation, such as calculating 135 + 349, a 'search'). Again, that is why we cannot have conjectures because for Wittgenstein there is no ready means of "searching" for an answer; i.e., there are not definite rules in place with which we may determine the answer. Goldbach's conjecture would presume a search (in the sense in which we can carry out a calculation, or, carry out an experiment – these are analogous for Wittgenstein) when a search is not what is called for. Wittgenstein, continuing on the topic of searches, elsewhere notes:

> And 'search' must always mean; search systematically. Meandering about in infinite space on the look-out for a gold ring is no kind of research. You can only search within a system: And so there is necessarily something you can't search for. (*PR* 150)

> In mathematics, we cannot talk of systems in general, but only within systems. They are just what we can't talk about. And so, too, what we can't search for (*PR* 152)

Where Wittgenstein says 'search', we can read 'calculation'. Where he says 'system' we can read system of rules or calculus. A search can only take place within a system (a calculation within a calculus), and hence, we cannot search for a system. Proofs, in the sense that

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quotation from Wittgenstein's 1930/32 Cambridge Lectures (p. 66): "ethical and aesthetic judgements are not propositions because they cannot be verified," in Wrigley [1989], p. 267.

Wittgenstein is speaking of, serve to modify the system in which searches can take place. That is why, strictly speaking, one cannot "search" for a proof; by similar reasoning, there cannot be mathematical conjectures that require a proof for that would require an *extra* system search.[21] When Wittgenstein says, in intuitionistic fashion (and this will be developed below), that we cannot conjecture to infinity, he means that we cannot legitimately search (and so cannot legitimately conjecture) beyond the set of rules of our calculus. This is not to say that such a system cannot change for proofs are what effect that change; they modify sense by introducing new rules to the calculus. However, we cannot search, in the relevant sense of 'search', for proofs. A proof would be an *extra*-system search (as opposed to *intra*-system) which is not possible according to Wittgenstein. But then, we may ask, how does one go about "finding" a proof. Wittgenstein answers:

> It is a stroke of luck, as it were, that I come to see the new system. To be sure, I can go over the new system; but I cannot look for it, I cannot reach it by means of transformation, and I cannot come to see its possibility by means of a proof.[22]

Frascolla explains this as follows: "Genuine novelties in mathematics cannot be expected as results of a rational activity of solving problems, since this is carried out, by definition, *within* a given system. When a new system is recognized, what really happens is a sort of revelation."[23] But this should seem inadequate. Certainly, it is admitted that the "discovery" of a proof is often occasioned by a feeling of revelation.[24] However, we would refrain from admitting that the "discovery" of mathematical proofs is a matter of luck; that it is not a rational activity. Wittgenstein is sensitive to this difficulty when he notes his views

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[21] The distinction bears much affinity to Carnap's distinction between external and internal questions; external questions to proofs, internal questions to searches/calculations.
[22] In Waismann [1979], p. 146.
[23] Frascolla [1994], p. 71.
[24] Such as, famously, Archimedes who exclaimed "Eureka!" upon discovering how to measure the volume of a gold figure while in his bathtub (the answer being via water displacement).

would have it that there are no difficult problems in mathematics (since all "problems" are simply searches or calculations within a given system of rules); he says:

> One could lay down: "whatever one can tackle [anfassen] is a problem – Only where there can be a problem, can something be asserted". Wouldn't all this lead to the paradox that there are no difficult problems in mathematics, since if anything is difficult it isn't a problem? What follows is, that the "difficult mathematical problems", i.e., the problems for mathematical research, aren't in the same relationship to the problem "25 x 25 = ?" as a feat of acrobatics is to a simple somersault. They aren't related, that is, just as very easy to very difficult; they are "problems" in different meanings of the word. (*PG* II, Ch. V, §. 25, pp. 379-80)

It is informative that this last remark is partly repeated in the *Philosophical Remarks* (an *earlier* middle-period work):

> Wouldn't all this lead to the paradox that there are no difficult problems in mathematics, since, if anything is difficult, it isn't a problem?
>
> But it isn't like that: The difficult mathematical problems are those for whose solution we don't yet possess a *written* system. The mathematician who is looking for a solution then has a system in some sort of psychic symbolism, in images, 'in his head', and endeavours to get it down on paper. Once that's done, the rest is easy. But if he has *no kind* of system, either in written or unwritten symbols, then he can't *search* for a solution either, but at best can only grope around. - Now, of course you may find something even by random groping. But in that case you haven't searched for it, and, from a logical point of view, the process was synthetic; whereas searching is a process of analysis. (*PR* 151)

In the former remark (from the *Philosophical Grammar*), Wittgenstein notes that proofs and searches pose problems in different senses of the word. A proof does not involve a systematic search, or at least not simply so (certainly, for otherwise Goldbach's conjecture would be easily proven). As to what it does involve, the remark is not elucidating. However, it is interesting that the latter remark, which is from an earlier work, does pick up this issue. The endeavour of contriving a proof is described psychologically (in terms of trying to convey mental images onto paper – thought experiments perhaps). Arriving at a proof is a creative enterprise whereas performing a calculation within a system is not; this seems to be the substance of the reference to the analytic-synthetic distinction at the end.[25]

[25] It may be a reason why Wittgenstein does not have more to say about the process of arriving at proofs that it is a psychological matter and that he is continuing on his view in the *Tractatus*, itself adopted from Frege, that the proper study of philosophy should refrain from the psychologistic and stay with the logistic (logical).

This psychological account of proof "discovery" is left out of the similar remark from the later work perhaps because it was speculative only or not philosophical.

At any rate, this issue (regarding the "discovery" of proofs) must be left unresolved (and not just for the reason that Wittgenstein's position here is difficult to expound). What I wish to highlight in the distinction between proofs and calculations is that, in this middle period, the sense of a mathematical proposition *is* its method of calculation. And so, the sense of a mathematical proposition is given in a set of determinate rules of a system of calculation (i.e., a calculus). Proofs serve to modify sense in that they introduce a new rule (or rules) to the calculus (this is what Wittgenstein conveys in saying that proofs draw "new connections"). They thereby expand the calculus for they expand the potential calculations or searches that can be performed in the calculus. Furthermore, the remarks given above wherein Wittgenstein describes the sense of a mathematical proposition in terms of its proof and others in terms of its method of checking are not in conflict despite the noted difference between proofs or proving and checking. Proofs bear on sense in virtue of introducing new rules which are then available for use in checking. Once a proposition is proven, the calculus is effectively altered such that there is now a method for checking it. It now has a sense. And so, it is legitimate to speak of a proof as giving sense to a proposition and of its sense as lying in the method of checking while maintaining an important difference between proofs and checks. In sum, an acceptance of both SV and SV* (and Wittgenstein does seem to accept both formulations as the given remarks testify) is not to accept conflicting positions despite the noted difference between proofs and checks. This difference is nevertheless, for reasons noted, important for Wittgenstein (e.g., it underscores the no-conjecture thesis because one cannot conjecture where one cannot legitimately "search" – this is why one cannot search for proofs and hence make conjectures).

Determinacy of sense is very much at issue here in the discussion of proofs and calculations and with Wittgenstein's mathematical verificationism in general. Goldbach's conjecture lacks sense in the way of lacking a determinate sense. There are no specific rules in place with which we may determine its truth value.[26] And the same is the case for all other would-be mathematical conjectures. Sense is given by the rules of the calculus (and is identified with a calculation or decision procedure in that calculus). And so, a proposition has a determinate sense prior to the carrying out of a calculation; e.g., "11,003 is prime", an example given by Frascolla, has a determinate sense; there is a method of checking it given the rules of the calculus – as opposed to Goldbach's conjecture. That is, "11,003 is prime" has a determinate sense prior to our having conducted the calculation because there is a definite method of determining its truth value given the rules of the calculus at our disposal.[27] Proofs introduce new rules to the calculus (or change the rules of the calculus – they draw "new connections" as Wittgenstein says it), and thereby they can serve to modify the sense of mathematical propositions (for with a difference in rules, there is a difference in what can be checked, or how checks can be carried out, in the calculus). The calculus is not the same post-proof as it is pre-proof.[28]

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[26] Although we may claim some understanding of Goldbach's conjecture, say, in terms of an understanding of its component concepts, (which then offers at least some guidance as to what a sufficient proof must convey) our understanding of the "conjecture" is not of it as determinate, i.e., with a determinate sense (which requires that we know of a means of checking it). Thus, again, given this requirement of determinacy of sense – as given by a proof/calculation – "Goldbach's conjecture" does not count as a mathematical proposition. This is SV!

[27] We will see that this view, viz., that a mathematical proposition has a determinate sense that consists in its method of verification by the rules of a calculus, and that it has this determinate sense in advance of our carrying out a check, is addressed (and to an important extent contested) in the rule-following remarks.

[28] Hence, by the same reasoning we should say that chess with a changed rule is no longer chess for the calculus is altered. Such a view would not stand in the later period for chess with a changed rule may still be "chess" for reason of bearing a family resemblance (and the history of chess, with its changes in rules, surely bears this out).

IV. iii. The Law of Excluded Middle

Wittgenstein's mathematical verificationism, as explained, underlies the no-conjecture thesis (and with it, the concept modification thesis). It underlies his position that one cannot search for a proof (which leaves us with an unsatisfied curiosity concerning how proofs are then found – the answers given, including "luck", are surely unsatisfactory). Furthermore, it also underlies his peculiar stance on the law of excluded middle; peculiar because it offers both affinities and differences with both mathematical realists/Platonists and (traditional) intuitionists which I will soon explain.[29] Prior to that, consider the following remarks (again, all from middle-period works):

> The supposition of undecidability presupposes that there is, so to speak, an underground connection between the two sides of an equation; that though the bridge cannot be built in symbols, it does exist because otherwise the equation would lack sense. – But the connection only exists if we have made it by symbols; the transition isn't produced by some dark speculation different in kind from what it connects (like a dark passage between two sunlit places). (*PG* II, Ch. V, §. 25, p. 377)

> The word "proposition", if it is to have any meaning at all here, is equivalent to a calculus: to a calculus in which p v ¬p is a tautology (in which the "law of excluded middle" holds). When it is supposed not to hold, we have altered the concept of proposition. (*PG* 368)

> I need hardly say that where the law of excluded middle doesn't apply, no other law of logic applies either, because in that case we are not dealing with propositions of mathematics. (*PR* 151).

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[29] We may add Wittgenstein's unique views on consistency and contradiction (which have largely been taken to be incorrect and uninformed) to this list for these are also, at least to some extent, underlined by his commitment to SV. Frascolla explains this as follows, "from the verificationist point of view, the attempt to prove the consistency of arithmetic cannot be legitimately described as true mathematical research. According to Wittgenstein, one can search only within a system, namely within a space of acknowledged possibilities, and with the knowledge of a method for finding the object looked for…The situation of the proof of consistency of arithmetic is quite similar to that of the search for a proof of Goldbach's conjecture." (Frascolla [1994], p. 102) That is to say, the search for a proof of consistency would be an *extra*-system search and so, as with Goldbach's conjecture, it is not something we can legitimately search for. Once we have a proof of consistency though (or a proof of inconsistency, as Russell provided for Frege's system), we have altered the calculus (introduced a new rule), and so have not actually proven the consistency (or inconsistency as the case may be) of the original system; that is, we now have a new calculus (Russell's contradiction introduced a new calculus – c.f., Frascolla [1994], p. 102). SV helps to explain why Wittgenstein affirms views such as that proofs of consistency or

> If the law of excluded middle doesn't hold, that can only mean that our expression isn't comparable to a proposition. (*PG* II, §. 31, p. 400)

Wittgenstein accepts the law of excluded middle. However, his acceptance that a proposition must have only one of two values is an acceptance that a proposition must either be provable or refutable to be meaningful. In other words, his acceptance of the law of excluded middle, contrary to what one might presume, is a consequence of his strong verificationism. To explain, Wittgenstein, in assent with the intuitionists, found difficulty with quantification over infinite domains, specifically when this yielded undecided propositions. He did not agree, however, that such cases required forfeiting the law of excluded middle. According to Wittgenstein, cases in which quantification over infinite domains yield undecided propositions do not display the invalidity of the law of excluded middle; instead, they show that the proposition is without sense. That is, the inapplicability of the law of excluded middle to a proposition does not demonstrate the invalidity of the law of excluded middle, but rather, it tells us that the proposition is meaningless. This is because, for Wittgenstein, the law of excluded middle is *criterial* for what is to count as a proposition (see the last three remarks quoted above). A mathematical proposition that is undecided, that is, for which there is no effective rule or decision procedure is senseless. This is an outcome of Wittgenstein's strong verificationism concerning mathematical propositions according to which we must have knowledge of an effective and finite decision procedure or proof; the sense of a mathematical proposition, as explained earlier, *is* its method of verification (checking/proof). Undecidedness is simply not an option given SV (for an undecided proposition is a meaningless one). And so, Wittgenstein's commitment to the law of excluded middle is an outcome of his SV.

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inconsistency are not important or relevant to the system in question (for once we have such a proof, it is not a

This is certainly contrary to an intuitionist account, according to which we need not possess an actual proof for a mathematical proposition to be meaningful, but rather, we need only know what form the (potential) proof or construction would take. And so, for the intuitionist, undecided propositions can be meaningful. Wittgenstein agrees with the intuitionists to a point, but opts for a different end. Whereas the intuitionists accept undecided mathematical propositions as meaningful with the consequence of denying the validity of the law of excluded middle, Wittgenstein admits the law of excluded middle as a result of his denying meaningfulness to undecided propositions (i.e., due to a verificationism stronger than that upheld by intuitionists). As Frascolla puts it, "If the range of meaningful mathematical propositions is determined by the requirements of the strong verificationist view expounded...the universal validity of the LEM is guaranteed by definition."[30] And so, Wittgenstein agrees with the intuitionist, against the realist, in denying the admissibility of verification-transcendent truth; he agrees with the realist, against the intuitionist, in admitting the validity of the law of excluded middle. Wittgenstein, at least in attempt, tries to steer a course clear of the Scylla of intuitionism and the Charibdis of realism.[31]

Consider the example again of Goldbach's conjecture. A realist would uphold that it is true or false, despite our not having "discovered" a proof as yet. An intuitionist would uphold that the law of excluded middle does not hold in this case; that the proposition is undecided but nevertheless meaningful (indeed, its meaningfulness is part of the case against the law of excluded middle – i.e., it must be accepted as meaningful so as to show that there can be meaningful propositions which are undecided; to which the law of excluded middle does not apply). Wittgenstein's verificationism, however, leads him to a different response.

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proof of the same system).

[30] Frascolla [1994], p. 107.

Goldbach's conjecture, it is true, is undecided. However, this does not show that the law of excluded middle is inapplicable to all propositions, but rather, that the proposition is meaningless. But to say that it is meaningless is just to affirm, in alternative words, the no-conjecture thesis. Goldbach's conjecture, strictly speaking, is not a conjecture. Wittgenstein's verificationism is stronger than that of intuitionists and this difference is displayed in his treatment of conjectures/undecided mathematical propositions. Further, his adoption of the law of excluded middle is not a commitment to realism (indeed, it is a consequence of a very strong verificationism regarding mathematical propositions).

V. Wittgenstein is not a Radical Conventionalist in the Middle Period

V. i. Strong Verificationism and Radical Conventionalism: A Conflict (of the Middle Years)

There is compelling grounds in Wittgenstein's remarks, in the middle period, for reading him as denying the charge of radical conventionalism. To explain, in the view of Dummett, understanding a mathematical proof requires that one accept it; the two cannot be divorced. Contrarily, to understand a proof but not accept it is to uphold a distinction between understanding a proof and feeling its force; i.e., "seeing" it as proving what it claims to prove. This distinction is the entryway for a decision of acceptance, and with it, the charge of radical conventionalism. Dummett's charge, then, may be restated as follows: the radical conventionalist upholds a distinction between understanding a proof and accepting it; he can do the former without doing the latter. Alternatively worded, this is a distinction between knowing how to verify a mathematical statement and knowing that it is true. However, this

[31] This would then be a counter-example, if legitimate, to Dummett's contention that an acceptance of the law

is a distinction that Wittgenstein explicitly denies. With this distinction in mind, Wittgenstein observes that there is a disanalogy between an empirical investigation and a mathematical proof. The former is properly characterized by this distinction: knowing how to carry out the investigation or experiment and knowing whether or not it will succeed. The latter is not. (c.f., *LFM* 64) Experiments are not conducted in mathematics: to know how to carry out a proof of a statement in mathematics (in specific terms) is to know that it is true. "Nothing is more fatal to philosophical understanding than the notion of proof and experience as two different but comparable methods of verification" says Wittgenstein. (*PG* 361)

Indeed, we can further say that this distinction, between knowing how to verify a mathematical proposition and knowing that it is true, is unavailable to Wittgenstein given his strong verificationism (SV). According to SV, the meaning of a mathematical proposition *is* its method of verification. There are no unproven mathematical propositions (i.e., conjectures) because they would be meaningless. Thus, there is a very strong connection between a proof and the proposition proven for the former gives content to the latter. In contrast, Dummett's above distinction denies a strong connection between a proposition and its proof (this is why, given Dummett's distinction, decision has room to be the basis of acceptance for the proposition). And so, to understand a mathematical proposition is to understand it as proven. There is no space available, given SV, to understand a proof but not accept the statement of which it is a proof (the two are connected, as it were, analytically: the one is the *meaning* of the other).

Thus, the radical conventionalist picture is inapplicable under Wittgenstein's SV. Wright characterizes this conflict in the following terms:

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of excluded middle (or of bivalence) demands an acceptance of realism for the class of statements in question –

> two foundational aspects of Wittgenstein's thought about mathematics are in flat collision: the 'constructivist' idea that it is by reference to the notions of proof and disproof, rather than truth and falsity, that the sense of mathematical statements is to be thought of as grasped, and the radical conventionalist thesis that there are no constraints on what we accept as a proof of a particular statement - in particular, therefore, none imposed by the general character of our understanding of such statements.[32]

The radical conventionalist charge has it that, given a proposition and a proof, despite an understanding of the proof, we are not compelled to accept the original proposition; hence, our acceptance of the original proposition would seem to be on the basis of a decision. This is the radical conventionalist charge as applied to the concept modification thesis (i.e., the proof modifies the concepts in the original proposition to the extent that the proof does not prove it – hence, our acceptance of the original proposition must be based on decision). But we see that this does not fit SV.[33] SV, as noted, implies the no-conjecture thesis; there is no original proposition pre-proof. It is not the case that we can decide to accept a mathematical proposition in disregard of its proof because without a proof, there is no original proposition to accept (there are no mathematical conjectures under SV). The proposition comes into being only when the proof is understood (this understanding constitutes an understanding of the meaning of the proposition). The concept modification thesis, from which the original charge of radical conventionalism is developed, has no home in SV if it is not read in terms of the no-conjecture thesis. But once it is so read, the charge of radical conventionalism no longer applies (i.e., radical conventionalism is lost in the assimilation of the concept modification thesis to the no-conjecture thesis). As Wright characterizes it above, according to the 'constructivist idea' there is a connection between a proposition and its proof: an understanding of the former is gained through a grasp of the latter. However, according to

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c.f. Dummett [1991], p. 9.

[32] Wright [1980], p. 229.

[33] Or for that matter, SV*; the difference is immaterial here.

the radical conventionalist view again, this connection is denied (we may understand and accept a proposition in disregard of its proof). SV may have difficulties, we can surely admit, but the consequence of radical conventionalism is not among them.

Nevertheless, the radical conventionalist charge still seems to lurk for, under SV and the no-conjecture thesis, proofs do not prove. They are misnamed. What they do is give sense. But then it may seem that the radical conventionalist charge still has force: if proofs do not prove, then it should be that we are not compelled to accept a mathematical proposition by a proof and hence, it is open to decide to accept a mathematical proposition. The thought here is that while a proof may give sense to a mathematical proposition, it does not compel the acceptance of the proposition as true (for it is not doing the work of "proving" it to us). Hence, it is still open to accept the proposition as true or not on the basis of a decision. Still, this characterisation does not fit with SV. Under SV, a proof gives sense to a mathematical proposition *as true*. That is, the proposition cannot be thought of as false, or even as undecided, once the proof has been understood (there is no scope for understanding a proof but not accepting the proposition as true). This is the substance of the disanalogy between the mathematical case and the empirical case. In the empirical case, we can understand a method for verifying an empirical proposition independent of knowing the truth value of the proposition (for the former is not constitutive of the latter). In contrast, in the mathematical case we cannot understand the method of verifying (in specific terms, again) without knowing that the proposition is true. Thus, while it is admitted that Wittgenstein does offend against our intuitive understanding of proofs and conjectures[34], he does not do so by upholding radical conventionalism. Radical conventionalism would deny what is a key element of his strong verificationism (which is the dominant motif in his

writings on mathematics in the middle period): the connection between the acceptance of the truth of a mathematical proposition and an understanding of its proof; when we understand a proof, we understand a mathematical proposition as true.

I take it as sufficiently defended that Wittgenstein's middle period views (curious as they may be) do not imply a commitment to radical conventionalism. Hence, I take it as sufficiently defended that Wittgenstein is not a radical conventionalist in his middle period. However, even if this point cannot be made, that is, even if his middle period views do imply radical conventionalism, it still stands that these middle period views do not survive much intact into the later period. Hence, even if Wittgenstein is a radical conventionalist as derived from the concept modification thesis in the middle period, he is still not so in the later period due to a change in views. There is no indication that the concept modification thesis or the no-conjecture thesis are held in place into the later period; they are preoccupations of the middle period. There is indication that SV – which has been defended as the parent of both these theses and is a dominant theme of the middle period – is not held in the later period. It is to this case that I now turn.

V. ii. Strong Verificationism and Rule-Following: A Conflict (between Middle and Later Years)

Wright observes a conflict between the concept modification thesis and a prime rule-following consideration:

> Unless one's understanding of an expression may be thought to have a determinate character, it seems to make no sense to speak of a modification in it; but if it may be allowed to have a determinate character, it would seem that it would at least have to make sense that certain linguistic moves made with it should accord with that character. How, then, are we to reconcile Wittgenstein's sloganising

[34] For instance, Wittgenstein's strong verificationism does have the outcome that there are no mathematical propositions that are not known to be true (this is his no-conjecture thesis).

about concept modification with his repudiation of the idea that our understanding of expressions reaches ahead of us to so far unconsidered situations in a predeterminate way.[35]

Wright is drawing attention to a conflict between a sceptical (but not putative, although I will explain and defend it in the next chapter) rule-following consideration, viz., that there is in our understanding of a concept or expression no advanced determination of a unique application in unconsidered situations, and the thought that if the concept modification thesis is to be taken at face value an expression must already have a determinate sense if we are to legitimately accept that that sense has undergone a change (as a result of acquiring a proof). *This* conflict, at least, is resolved if we read the concept modification thesis in terms of the no-conjecture thesis according to which there is no sense to a mathematical expression prior to proof, *a fortiori*, no determinate sense. However, the conflict rears its head again since, according to Wittgenstein's SV, post-proof a proposition does have a determinate sense. The sense of a mathematical proposition is given in the rules of a calculus with which it is checked. And so, there is a similar conflict between the above noted rule following consideration and Wittgenstein's SV in the middle period. Frascolla echoes this thought: "There is no doubt that Wittgenstein's considerations on rule-following destroy the very premises of that conception [mathematical verificationism]."[36] Two similar points may be made here. First, this conflict is grounds for saying that SV, dominant as it is in the middle period, is not a feature of Wittgenstein's later thought for it is in conflict with a key consideration of the later thought; and consequently, the concept modification thesis (which, as argued, is to be read in terms of SV and the no-conjecture thesis) is also not a feature of Wittgenstein's later thought. Second, arguing similarly, if the concept modification thesis is not to be assimilated to the no-conjecture thesis (such that we cannot

[35] Wright [1980], p. 48.

draw on the first point in saying that the concept modification thesis is abandoned by the later period), we can still draw on Wright's point above that the concept modification thesis taken by itself (i.e., in its unassimilated reading) is in conflict with the noted rule-following consideration and therefore still employ this conflict as grounds for maintaining that the concept modification thesis is abandoned by the later period. Either way, the concept modification thesis, as promoted in the middle period, does not survive into the later period due to a change in view concerning the determination, or lack thereof, in our understanding of a concept or expression.[37]

V. iii. Strong Verificationism and Language Games: A Change in Approach

More can be said in favour of Wittgenstein dropping SV. According to SV, as noted, the method of verification (be this a proof or check) constitutes the meaning of a mathematical proposition. This meaning is determined in a calculus of rules (whose rules are used to carry out a check). If the rules used to verify a proposition change, then the sense of the proposition alters (i.e., we now have a new proposition). Proofs serve to introduce new rules to the calculus and it is in virtue of this introduction that they change what can be checked or verified with that calculus. This change in what can be checked, brought upon by a new proof, is the substance of the concept modification thesis: since the sense of a mathematical proposition is the method of checking it, a change in what can be checked (due to a change in rules) leads to a change in sense (hence, propositions with different

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[36] Frascolla [1994], p. 125.

[37] This, of course, does not deny that radical conventionalism cannot be charged against the later view in which rule-following considerations are dominant (and this is something to be addressed in later chapters). But it is to say that this charge cannot be leveled in the same way as against the views of the middle period Wittgenstein.

methods of checking have different senses).[38] Wittgenstein states (again, in middle period works): "The system of rules determining a calculus determines the 'meaning' (Bedeutung) of its signs too. Put more strictly: The form and the rules of syntax are equivalent. So if I change the rules – seemingly supplement them, say – then I change the form, the meaning." (*PR* 152). He further says, "only the group of rules defines the sense [Sinn] of our signs, and any alteration (e.g. supplementation) of the rules means an alteration of the sense" (*PR* 154) In effect, a calculus with a new rule is not the same calculus (and we may say that this is why we cannot compare old and new senses, i.e., old and new methods of checking, for they are not internal to the same calculus; comparing old and new senses would involve an extra-system view). That is, a proof, by introducing a new rule or connection, changes what can be checked or verified in a calculus. But for Wittgenstein, this means that the calculus is not the same pre-proof and post-proof (we now have different calculi and any comparison would be an extra-system, and so illegitimate, comparison); and this further explains why the concept modification is read as CM*, i.e., as saying that the sense of a proposition post-proof cannot be compared to that pre-proof. Let us apply this view outside the domain of mathematics to chess and its rules for illustration.[39] According to SV, the rules constitute the game (such that to understand the game is to understand its rules). This is fair but the implications of SV extend further. Any alteration of the rules of chess constitute a change in the game of chess; that is, the sense of the game has changed; chess with a changed rule is a different game. But surely this *need* not be the case, as the history of chess testifies.[40] An

[38] We may say that if proofs do not introduce new rules, but use existing rules with ingenuity, then this still serves to introduce a new use or establish a new connection (and thereby a new method for checking). Hence, the position of the proposition in the calculus still changes (i.e., its sense still changes as new connections are established).

[39] It is fair to do this because the objective here is to compare (and contrast) SV to Wittgenstein's later view of rules in mathematics which is part of a general account of rule-following and language that accommodates, but is not restricted to, an account of rules and rule-following in mathematics.

[40] Gerrard discusses this example in the same context in Gerrard [1996], p. 176.

added rule may alter the game of chess (such that our understanding is now different) but we need not admit that it is consequently a different game (a different calculus).

This view of language as a calculus changes by the later period where the notion of a language game is introduced. The later Wittgenstein would not uphold that chess with a changed rule *need* be a different game. The two "versions" may bear enough of a *family resemblance* to not constitute different games or calculi. Wittgenstein speaks of language games and the notion of family resemblances in the later period in discussing language in general and different spheres of linguistic activity in particular; but the view is certainly not exclusive of mathematics. Wittgenstein notes, for example, "Would it be any wonder if the technique of calculating had a family of applications?" (*RFM*, V, 8), and "Why should I not say that what we call mathematics is a family of activities with a family of purposes?" (*RFM*, V, 15).[41] Indeed, Wittgenstein is clear to include as a family resemblance concept the concept of number (c.f., *PI* 67,68). The point here is that SV sets up a view of the meaning of a mathematical proposition as rigid and determinate. As noted in the previous section, this determinacy is in conflict with the later Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following. As noted here, this rigidity and determinacy is in conflict with the later Wittgenstein's discussion of language games and family resemblances (which extend a dynamic and flexible view of meaning to mathematical concepts and propositions). This is not to deny any element of verificationism in the later period (which I will say more about in connection to rule-following and private language beginning in the next chapter), but it is to deny that this mathematical verificationism survives in its strong middle-period form. That is, this strong

[41] Gerrard interestingly characterizes this shift from a calculus view of mathematics to the language game view in terms of a shift in the use of Frege's context principle: "We can see this change as enlarging the scope of Frege's context principle: "never to ask for the meaning of a word in isolation, but in the context of a proposition." From the *Tractatus*' "An expression has meaning only in a proposition" (3.314), to the middle Wittgenstein's "The meaning is the role of a word in the calculus" (*PG* 63), we arrive at the later Wittgenstein's "Words have meaning only in the stream of life" (*LWI* 913).

verificationism (that implies the no-conjecture thesis, the concept modification thesis and promotes a view of the sense of mathematical propositions as possessing a determinate character as given by a proof, and is so understood in an understanding of the proof) does not survive to the later period.

VI. Concluding Remarks

To conclude, I will recapitulate some of the main points and then present comments to link the foregoing discussion to the forthcoming chapters on rule-following. First, the charge of radical conventionalism applies to the concept modification thesis only if the latter is construed as CM*.[42] However, if it is so read then, as argued, the concept modification thesis (CM*) is to be assimilated to the no-conjecture thesis. Further, the no-conjecture thesis is a facet of Wittgenstein's strong verificationism regarding mathematical propositions (SV). This verificationism is a dominant motif in Wittgenstein's writings on mathematics in the middle period and it is within this motif that we make sense of the concept modification thesis and the no-conjecture thesis (along with Wittgenstein's unique positions on the law of excluded middle and consistency proofs, as outlined above). This reading provides an account of the relatedness of these views (views that are espoused in connected passages, and sometimes in the same passages, of the middle period texts) and explains these views,

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[42] Hence, we may admit that Wittgenstein retains something of the concept modification thesis into the later period without thereby committing to radical conventionalism as long as it is not an admission that takes the form of CM*. However, there is a notable dearth of remarks from the later works that speak to the concept modification thesis. The following is an exception from a later section of the *RFM*: "Now how about this – ought I to say…that when a proof is found the sense alters? Of course some people would oppose this and say: "Then the proof of a proposition cannot ever be found, for, if it has been found, it is no longer the proof of *this* proposition". But to say this is so far to say nothing at all." (*RFM* VII, 10) Notice that the remark begins by asking after the truth of CM. The interlocutor's interjection is in effect an expression of CM* (for it says that the proof bears no connection to the original proposition). Wittgenstein's response is that CM* says "nothing at all", perhaps because it is a misreading of his intention (in asking after CM) or because it is a

which might individually seem unfathomable, in terms of a strongly observed verificationist position concerning mathematics. The no-conjecture thesis, as others, may be no more acceptable for drawing out its basis in SV, but at least we have a better understanding of why Wittgenstein is led to promote such a thesis.

A case is also made that this strong verificationism (SV) is in conflict with radical conventionalism, and so cannot imply radical conventionalism. Indeed, it is argued along similar lines that the charge of radical conventionalism does not even survive the assimilation of the concept modification thesis to the no-conjecture thesis. Hence, once we read the remarks that promote the concept modification thesis under the bearing of SV (and the no-conjecture thesis), we find that the charge of radical conventionalism does not stick. SV may be incredible, but not for reason of a consequence of radical conventionalism. Hence, Wittgenstein is not a radical conventionalist in his middle period. It is further argued that SV, along with the concept modification and no-conjecture theses, are in conflict with dominant views of Wittgenstein's later thought (i.e., views on rule-following, family resemblances and language games). Accordingly, SV, and these attendant views, are better looked upon as works in progress; the concept modification thesis and the no-conjecture thesis are consequences of Wittgenstein's working through a verificationist understanding of mathematics, and this, as argued, does not survive into the later period (at least not in a form recognizable as having the same strength and consequences).

As noted, much of this argument has been exegetical in nature. I want to, briefly, travel further down this exegetical train and note that Wittgenstein in his later period explicitly denied the charge of radical conventionalism as drawn against rule-following considerations. Consider the following oft-quoted rule-following remark:

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ridiculous view. In any case, Wittgenstein in this later period remark is clear to dismiss CM* and not CM. See

> What you are saying, then, comes to this: a new insight - intuition - is needed at every step to carry out the order '+n' correctly...It would almost be more correct to say, not that an intuition was needed at every stage, but that a new decision was needed at every stage.(*PI* 186).

The latter part of this remark, which concerns the role of decision in rule-following, is certainly in line with the charge of radical conventionalism. However, note that Wittgenstein is careful to say that "it would *almost* be more correct to say...a new decision was needed at every stage..." [italics are mine]. It would "almost" be more correct to say implies that it would not be more correct to say. In other words, Wittgenstein claims to skirt radical conventionalism but not to fall to it. He elaborates this thought in a passage in the *Brown Book*:

> It is no act of insight, intuition, which makes us use the rule as we do at the particular point in the series. It would be less confusing to call it an act of decision, though this too is misleading, for nothing like an act of decision must take place, but possibly just an act of writing or speaking. (*BB*, p. 143)

Thus, although it may be more correct to speak of our proceeding along the stages of a proof as a matter of decision than of intuition, this picture is also not correct for, as Wittgenstein claims, "nothing like a decision must take place" (and whatever an "act of writing or speaking" is to amount to, which I will address in Chapter 4, Wittgenstein is clear that he means for it not to be construed as a decision). Wittgenstein herein denies being a radical conventionalist as, and this is important to note, drawn from rule-following considerations. Wittgenstein explicitly cautions against an understanding of the rule-following remarks as involving a decision, and thereby, radical conventionalism. However, the making of this case, in contrast to much of the case made in this chapter, will not be mainly exegetical. The case made in this chapter was basically two-fold: the middle period views neither espouse nor commit Wittgenstein to radical conventionalism (no matter if they

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the next footnote for examples that offer an apparent commitment to a watered down version of SV.

are still incredible on other grounds) and that even if they did, they do not survive into the later period (and so we may at least say that Wittgenstein, at the end of the day, is not a radical conventionalist as the charge is drawn from these mid-period views). This latter line of defense, however, is not available against the charge of radical conventionalism as applied to the rule-following considerations for these considerations are not ones that Wittgenstein abandons or significantly amends. Further, it is not sufficient to show that the rule-following considerations do not imply radical conventionalism to convey that Wittgenstein explicitly cautions against such a reading (as he does in the above two remarks). These remarks may offer us a guide for interpreting Wittgenstein but an argument must nevertheless be given showing why the rule-following considerations do not imply radical conventionalism (for, as will be shown in the next chapter, they surely seem to). Hence, the task of the following chapters then, unlike the first, will require more in the way of argumentation than exegesis.

In closing this chapter, I wish to briefly raise some points of analogy between aspects of SV, so dominant in the middle period, and the rule-following considerations, so dominant in the later period. These points may be points of foreshadowing: the ideas of the middle period, more so than earlier and later, are fairly characterized as works in progress and so points raised (which bear commonality to later views) may be points in development which reach maturity in the later period (and so may constitute *proto*-views of the later lines of thought); in contrast, views that are abandoned in their development can show us how not to read the later Wittgenstein. The first point, concerning verificationism, seems to lean both ways. The verificationism of SV is evident (and discussed). There are (at least) two main respects in which the rule-following considerations are, in appearances at least, verificationist. The first is the thought that the understanding of a rule does not transcend

an understanding of explanations of the rule (although we should not want to equate the denial of an explanation-transcendent understanding with the denial of a verification-transcendent understanding, the semblance is at least cause for a suspicion of a form of verificationism here). The second is the thought that one cannot follow a rule privately because, in this case, one cannot know that one is following it correctly rather than it just seeming to be so (that is, one must be able to know that this distinction obtains in order to be able to follow a rule). The verificationism of these considerations, and in particular the first, may not be obvious, especially on so cursory of an account. But these are leading and important rule-following considerations for which we will see that the charge of verificationism, at least somewhat apparent here, must be faced. It is interesting to note the similarity of employment between these considerations from the later period, which are both in play in Wittgenstein's argument against Platonism regarding rules (as I will show in the next chapter), and SV which provides an obvious constructivist denial of Platonism in the middle period (for the truth or falsity of mathematical statements is solely a matter of provability and refutability). Hence, in both periods we seem to have a sympathy for verificationism that is at work in an anti-Platonist view of mathematics (which manifests as an anti-Platonist view of rules in general in the later period). However, despite initial appearances, I will argue that the two rule-following considerations just briefed are without verificationist presumption. I believe that this makes for a stronger anti-Platonist argument in the rule-following remarks (for it does not beg any constructivist or verificationist questions which a Platonist would deny). Hence, not only is the anti-Platonist argument concerning rules (including mathematical rules) of the later period made without the strong verificationism of the middle period, it is made without verificationist presumption at all. At

any rate, we may note that whatever verificationism we can attribute to the later Wittgenstein concerning rules, it is certainly not as strong as that admitted under SV.[43]

Secondly, we may say that "proofs" are misnamed under SV. This is because proofs do not seem to prove. This should be obvious, in a sense at least, if we accept the no-conjecture thesis: there are no conjectures to be proven. Proofs gives sense. And so the basis of acceptance of a proposition, as it has been charged, is not a proof but a matter of decision. But this is phenomenologically incongruous: proofs seem to us to prove; they seem to us to compel; and any account of proofs that is incongruous with this experience would be, *prima facie*, unacceptable.[44] What I wish to draw out here is a point of

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[43] Remarks from the later works (specifically, the *PI* and the later parts of the *RFM*) do not offer much discussion of verificationism in the same vein as the middle works, i.e., in terms of SV (and so this change of attention should indicate a change in approach). Here is an apparent exception: "One can often say in mathematics: let the *proof* teach you *what* was being proved." (*PI* II, p. 220) Notice that this seems to say that a proof can convey the sense of a mathematical proposition that we may not be privy to without an understanding of the proof. But also notice that it is much less strong than SV (for to say "one can often say" indicates that "one cannot always say" or that "one need not say"). Hence, although there is a basis for reading this passage as conveying a verificationist sympathy that is to some extent in line with SV (for it says that proofs can often convey the meaning of a mathematical proposition), it is still a far cry from SV; it does not assert that if we are without an understanding of a proof that the proposition must then be meaningless to us. Also, the above passage indicates that there is something that is being proved and so is, strictly speaking, in conflict with the no-conjecture thesis.

Here is another exception to the noted dearth of discussion (this time from a later section of the *RFM*): "I once said: 'If you want to know what a mathematical proposition says, look at what its proof proves'. Now is there not both truth and falsehood in this? For is the sense, the point, of a mathematical proposition really clear as soon as we can follow the proof?" (*RFM* VII, 10) A note is given that Wittgenstein refers in this remark to his view in the *PG*, a middle period work. Wittgenstein here responds to SV and expresses that there is both truth and falsehood in it. Thus again we find that Wittgenstein does not favour SV intact, that is, in its strong form, mixed with a reticence to abandon it entirely (that there is something to a verificationist view of the meaning of mathematical propositions). The concept modification thesis (CM*) and the no conjecture thesis are consequences of the strong verificationism (and no indication is given in this remark, as opposed to the one above, as to whether they would survive this weakened verificationism). At any rate, we may note that whatever verificationism concerning mathematical propositions survives into the later period, it is assimilated into a general discussion of rules for the rule-following remarks are intended to have compass over mathematical rules as well as others.

I should add that this denial of a strong verificationism from Section VII of the *RFM*, together with the rule-following remarks presented in Section VI of the *RFM* (which, as discussed, raise considerations that conflict with SV), show that the *RFM* is an inconsistent work in the themes it advances. This is no minor inconsistency since it evinces a change in dominant motifs from SV in the early sections (also earlier in date of composition) to rule-following in the later section. The editors of the *RFM*, while collecting Wittgenstein's remarks on the foundations of mathematics from 1937-44, have brought in two dominant and conflicting viewpoints of Wittgenstein's into a single work that should be kept separate so as not to mislead (and so this should be seen as a weighty editorial error).

[44] This incongruity of Wittgenstein's view with our experience of proofs is observed by Wright in his [1980], 41.

commonality with the rule-following considerations in the point that proofs do not compel (or at least need not). In the rule-following considerations this is conveyed in the thought that the correct way to follow a rule is not fully determined in our understanding of the rule (e.g., the full and correct application of the rule add 2 is not determined in our grasp of the rule; it should seem, then, that we may find ourselves one day following the rule differently than we now do without breaching what we now view as correct). This lack of determination in our understanding of a rule must be addressed (and will be) if we want to maintain that there is a correct way to follow a rule (that is not a matter of a decision). Alternatively approached, as we will come to see, Wittgenstein seeks to accommodate a view of necessity with the view that, for most any rule, there is scope for saying that it could be (or perhaps, could have been) followed differently or be subject to doubt. Again, although this account is very cursory, it does serve to point out that there is a connection in the charge of radical conventionalism between the middle and later periods in the apparent disregard of the thought that proofs necessitate the acceptance of a conclusion.

The last point I wish to bring up in addressing both SV and the rule-following considerations is that although both are the basis for the charge of radical conventionalism, they have been described as incompatible (see above). It is not logically impossible that two incompatible "theories" should have the same consequence but it should be a cause for further scrutiny. As it turns out, I will argue, there is no incompatibility. There is a case to be made (and has just been made) that SV does not lead to radical conventionalism (and even if it does, the exegetical case is made that it is a position abandoned). In addition, the rule-following considerations do not imply radical conventionalism. This is a case that will require more in the building (for it is less exegetical and more argumentative) and will begin in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

Rule-Following and Scepticism:

The Negative Programme

I. Introduction

It was stated, in the previous chapter, that the charge of radical conventionalism has its source in two different sets of views of Wittgenstein's: the concept modification thesis (and with it the no-conjecture thesis and the strong verificationism of the middle period) and the rule-following considerations. This distinction in source of radical conventionalism is not brought out by Dummett. It is with Wright that we see this distinction first attended to.[1] The concept modification thesis and kin were discussed in the first chapter. The discussion of the rule-following considerations (and their bearing on radical conventionalism, *inter alia*) begins in this chapter.

Dummett, in drawing his charge of radical conventionalism, does not refer to the different texts of Wittgenstein to any great deal. He focuses primarily on the *RFM* with a single other reference to the *PI*.[2] This is fair enough for his agenda is to offer an account of Wittgenstein's philosophy of mathematics as it is discerned from the *RFM*. At the beginning of the paper Dummett notes that the *RFM*, a set of notebooks comprising Wittgenstein's thoughts on the philosophy of mathematics, was not "intended by its author as a book"; that its thoughts "are expressed in a manner which the author recognized as inaccurate or obscure; some passages contradict others; some are quite inconclusive; etc."; and notes that the contrast with the *PI* is "marked, and is due entirely to the different origin of the two books".[3] Given all this, it would be a simple strategy to dismiss the charge of radical

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[1] In Wright [1980], especially Ch. 3.

[2] As noted in the first chapter, there is a rift in the *RFM* between Parts 6 and 7, which were composed later and conform to Wittgenstein's views in the *PI* and Parts 1-5, which were composed earlier and conform to and espouse Wittgenstein's mid-period views, e.g., a strong verificationism concerning mathematical propositions which is not upheld in the later period. This unnoticed but noteworthy division within the *RFM* explains, to some extent, Dummett's conflation in sources of the charge of radical conventionalism in his treatment of the work.

[3] Dummett [1966], pp. 420-421.

conventionalism on the grounds that the thoughts that lead to it are sufficiently unworked; that they are thoughts of Wittgenstein's as found in a work of progress which do not indicate a final commitment on the subject. Indeed, this was much of the strategy employed in the first chapter. However, this strategy will not work for the charge of radical conventionalism as derived from the rule-following considerations. The *RFM* may have been a set of notebooks of jotted thoughts but the thoughts on rule-following are to a fair extent repeated in the *PI*.[4] There is no scope for claiming a change of mind on the topic of rule-following such that we can say that the charge of radical conventionalism as drawn from rule-following considerations falls by the way side in the later period.

Having said this, there is something remarkable in Dummett's charge of radical conventionalism as derived from his reading of rule-following remarks in the *RFM*. There is an important parallel between this charge and a sceptical reading of the rule-following remarks. What is remarkable is that this sceptical reading emerges in the late 1970's with Kripke and Wright. Dummett drew his charge of radical conventionalism in 1959.[5] The charge of radical conventionalism makes no explicit mention of a sceptical take on the rule-following remarks but we will see that they are on a joined path. Briefly, the thought is this: the allegation of radical conventionalism, that we are at liberty to follow a rule as we please (that we are not compelled except by our own decision) is a close sister to the sceptical consideration that it is not determined in our understanding of a rule what will count as its correct future application. Dummett portrays the charge of radical conventionalism as drawn from rule-following considerations in these terms: "There is nothing in our formulation of the axioms and of the rules of inference, and nothing in our minds when we

[4] And further, according to the editors, both were written very close in date: Section 6 of the *RFM* – where its rule-following remarks are found – is dated at 1943/44 while Part I of the *PI* – which contains its rule-following remarks – is said by its editors to have been completed by 1945.

accepted these before the proof was given, which of itself shows whether we shall accept the proof or not; and hence, there is nothing which forces us to accept the proof."[6] This bears a favourable comparison to a central sceptical rule-following consideration, expressed by Wright, that "there is in our understanding of a concept no rigid, advance determination of what is to count as its correct application."[7] Thus Dummett is, perhaps unwittingly, prescient in drawing his charge of radical conventionalism. They are not the same theses: radical conventionalism and the sceptical thought just expressed. But they are closely tied. This will be further described below and further developed in later chapters.

Upcoming in this chapter, I will first give an account of basic rule-following considerations (and their connection to the charge of radical conventionalism). I will then present Kripke's sceptical argument, with special attention to his employment of these considerations, and briefly, his sceptical solution (primarily to point out that it does not withstand the charge of radical conventionalism and that this is a major flaw of the solution). Following this, I will submit two separate sceptical arguments. These arguments share a common negative conclusion concerning rule-following and a common initial premise; they are nevertheless separate arguments for reason of having other premises not in common and employing different tactics. I submit these both as Wittgenstein's own for the considerations which form the arguments are drawn closely from the rule-following remarks. These arguments bear important similarities and differences to Kripke's which I will describe. Also, the first argument will be seen to contain an unabashedly anti-realist premise. This premise features in Wittgenstein's case against rule-realism. I will present this case against realism primarily through a defense of this premise. I will show that there is non-

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[5] In Dummett [1966].
[6] Dummett [1966], pp. 426-427.
[7] Wright [1980], p. 21.

verificationist support for this premise that makes use of private language argument style considerations as they are presented in the rule-following remarks. In the end, defending this anti-realist premise of the first sceptical argument will involve considerations drawn from the second sceptical argument. The concerns of commentators that disagree with a sceptical reading of the rule-following remarks will be addressed in the next chapter.

II. Basic Rule-Following Considerations

Consider the following oft-quoted passage:

> 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 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)

This remark is the first of a cluster of remarks about rule-following in the *PI*. I will utilise the case of the deviant pupil presented in this remark often through this thesis as stage-setting for points I wish to make beginning now with some key rule-following considerations. First, note that the pupil in the remark follows the rule incorrectly. The remark indicates clearly that there is a correct way to follow a rule and that the pupil does not understand this. Let this be the first rule-following point.

RF1: There is a correct way to follow a rule.

Second, normally a certain amount of instruction is sufficient to convey to someone the correct way to follow a rule. Our own ability to learn and follow rules is a testament to

this. Wittgenstein is not putting *this* up for argument. Rather, he observes that this certain amount of instruction (and indeed, any amount of instruction) *may not* be sufficient to convey to someone the correct way to follow a rule (while maintaining that the person is responding rationally – in a sense to be later specified – to the instructions given). If we consider a set of instructions for following a rule in terms of a set of examples (and any instruction in a rule ultimately makes essential use of learning from a set of examples or illustrations, so the contention runs – and this point will be defended at length later), then there are an indefinite number of courses of action that are consistent with the instructions but not correct to the rule or the instructions as intended. Wittgenstein affirms this very point when he says, at the end of the paragraph quoted above, "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."" The pupil is following the instructions differently than we would have him but his behaviour is still consistent with the instructions; it is just that there are different interpretations of the instructions (i.e., different courses of action consistent with the instructions), not all of which are correct to the rule as intended. Let us express this point generally as follows:

RF2: Indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to be in accord with the instructions for a rule.

This is because the instructions for a rule underdetermine the rule.[8] Note that RF2 admits that someone may pursue a course of action that is a consistent interpretation of the instructions given but still act wrongly. And this is to admit that someone may be rational but still wrong in their rule-following behaviour. This is a distinction I will make use of in Chapter 4.

Also, notice that the above remark raises a difficulty for the charge of radical conventionalism: if there is a correct way to follow a rule (RF1), then one may not decide to follow a rule differently than this way and still be correct. It may seem that if the correct way to follow a rule is the product of an individual decision – as per the charge of radical conventionalism – that this is consistent with RF1 (which only says that there is a correct way to follow a rule and does not deny that this way may be the result of an individual decision). But this is still counter to the quoted passage above which clearly upholds that the way the deviant pupil followed the rule is not correct; hence, if he had decided to follow the rule as he did, his decision would not be correct. Radical conventionalism upholds that the logical necessity of a statement is decided; that the correct way to follow a rule is decided and that this decision is all that there is to following it correctly. Further, as the charge was originally levelled by Dummett, this decision is the individual's. Hence, there is no incorrect individual decision because the individual's decision determines the correct way to follow a rule in any case. But again, in the remark above, if the deviant pupil had decided to follow the rule add-2 as he did (rather than, as it is presented, reacting spontaneously), then his decision would be incorrect. And so it seems we have a difficulty with reading the first rule-following remark consistently with the charge of radical conventionalism.

The charge of radical conventionalism is in need of an amendment that is no less damaging to Wittgenstein (and renders the charge stronger for dealing with this noted inconsistency with the text). The amendment submits that the decision that establishes the correct way to follow a rule (at any given step) is the community's. Thus, in the above remark, the pupil wrongly follows the rule because he acts contrarily to the *communal decision* concerning how it ought to be followed. The charge of radical conventionalism is still

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[8] This thought will be further explained and developed below.

maintained because it is still by a decision that the correct application of a rule is determined, albeit now it is a communal one. This conventionalist view clearly runs against our intuitions concerning rules we consider necessary (that they be followed in a certain way) and is thereby still a radical view.[9] A community is free to accept the steps in a proof but reject the conclusion (or what we would otherwise view as the conclusion) and this rejection is thereby the correct response (and so we see that the proof does not *compel* the acceptance of the conclusion).

This view pairs well with what we may call 'Simple Communitarianism', according to which the correct way to follow a rule is simply the way that the community happens to follow it (and so there is no doing wrong for the community; there is no going collectively off the tracks). Thus, if the community were to decide to follow a rule differently, for some reason or not, then this different way would become the correct way. Hence, Simple Communitarianism is subject to the criticism of radical conventionalism (unless we say that the community is not free to decide to do differently or does not decide at all; but whatever grounds we give for saying this is grounds for saying that there is more of a story to tell about why the community follows a rule as it does than admitted under Simple Communitarianism – a sophisticated communitarianism perhaps). Kripke's Sceptical Solution, as we will further see, is a version of Simple Communitarianism.[10] Hence,

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[9] And notice that the community, under this view, is free to decide how to follow a rule at any step. Hence this view is different from the "modified" or "restrained" conventionalism according to which, as described by Dummett, "all necessary truth derives, immediately or remotely, from linguistic stipulations we have tacitly made, linguistic conventions we are trained to observe…Other necessarily true statements, however, do not directly reflect conventions we consciously follow, but are *consequences* of more basic conventions." As Dummett then observes, "This prompts the objection that it leaves the necessity of consequences unaccounted for," and that "radical conventionalism escapes this objection by treating *every* necessary truth as the direct expression of a linguistic convention." (Dummett [1993b], p. 447) The amended take on radical conventionalism, according to which it is by a communal decision rather than an individual decision that the necessity of a statement is established, is still "radical" under Dummett's account as outlined here.

[10] There are no truth conditions that bear on the correct way to follow a rule, he says, but only assertibility conditions and these are given by reference to a community. He does not develop this community view much

Kripke's solution is subject to the charge of radical conventionalism (in this amended form). At any rate, with radical conventionalism so amended, there need be no conflict with RF1 nor with the case of the deviant pupil presented in *PI* 185: there is a correct way to follow a rule (such that the deviant pupil of *PI* 185 is in violation) and this correct way is given by a communal decision.[11] Dispelling the radical conventionalist charge will require showing that we can follow a rule correctly, and that this is not a matter of decision, despite the fact that instructions in a rule underdetermine this correct way of following the rule.

Continuing on with rule-following considerations, it was noted that the pupil's actions in following what he believes to be the rule add-2 can be interpreted so as to be in accord with the instructions given him for the rule add-2. This interpretation allows us to make sense of the pupil's actions even though we believe he is not following the rule correctly. This draws on RF2. Let us suppose that *any* or *every* course of action can be interpreted to be in accord with a rule or instructions in a rule. This is much more extreme than RF2 (which admits that only indefinitely many courses of action can be made out to so accord). We can rationalise the behaviour of the deviant pupil in *PI* 185 because his course of action in following the rule was a consistent interpretation of the instructions given to him (granting that an understanding of those instructions involves, ultimately, an understanding gained from a series of examples or illustrations). Certainly and in contrast,

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and so perhaps it is only for reason of a lack of further development that the Sceptical Solution is a Simple Communitarian solution.

[11] This amendment may seem *ad hoc*. However, the amendment is needed if the charge of radical conventionalism is to be thought to consistently apply to the rule-following remarks for there is no rule-following by an individual (considered in isolation). According to Wittgenstein, rule-following is a practice that takes place only in a community; it instantiates, as he says, "an institution". Alternatively, we may turn to the private language argument (and I will argue for a version of this in the rule-following remarks) and say that there is no private rule-following; all rule-following is public and involves essential reference to a community. This amendment, thus, actually strengthens the charge of radical conventionalism for it is now consistent with key positions of Wittgenstein's while the charge itself remains truly damning.

we would want to say that *not any* course of action can be so rationalised. Nevertheless, let us give expression to and generalise this point:

RF3: Any or every course of action can be interpreted to be in accord with the instructions for a rule.

RF3 is involved in the paradox as stated by Wittgenstein in *PI* 201: "no course of action could be determined by a rule, because *every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule*" [italics are mine].[12] RF3 is a difficult point to accept and goes well beyond what RF2 admits. These rule-following considerations (viz., RF2 and RF3 – I will take RF1 to be uncontroversial) have been introduced but not yet much supported. RF3 not only seems to be the consideration in play in *PI* 201, as just indicated, but also, as we will see, it seems to be implied by RF2 (if RF2 is true of certain very basic cases of rules) and also plays a role in a separate sceptical argument (for as noted in the Introduction to this chapter, I will present two overlapping but separate sceptical arguments as Wittgenstein's own and that are different from Kripke's). Kripke focuses on *PI* 201 in his discussion of the sceptical paradox in his *Wittgenstein On Rules and Private Language*. In this discussion we find Kripke utilise (albeit with a twist) and present a defense of RF2 which, he attests, is drawn from Wittgenstein. It is to this discussion that I now turn.

III. Kripke's Paradox

I will now present Kripke's sceptical argument. This is an argument for which he claims Wittgenstein's influence, in the least, if not an attribution to Wittgenstein. I will give greater

[12] This manner of wording is also present in *PI* 198 where Wittgenstein says, "*Whatever* I do is, on some interpretation, in accord with the rule." – again, the italics are mine. I do not enter an important distinction

attention to considerations he raises that can be sourced and/or compared with those of Wittgenstein. Accordingly, beyond initial presentation, I will to a fair extent ignore his discussion of dispositions as a candidate source of meaning facts for the reason that the discussion, at this point, veers from Wittgenstein.

The conclusion of Kripke's sceptical argument is that there are no meaning facts.[13] Kripke begins his discussion with a quotation from *PI* 201 wherein Wittgenstein speaks of a paradox: "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."[14] It is this mentioned paradox that Kripke attempts to develop. Kripke develops the paradox with the use of a mathematical example, namely, "plus" (although his case is not to be restricted to mathematical terms and their rules). Kripke considers a sum which he assumes the protagonist has never carried out: 68 + 57 (and he assumes that all sums carried out in the past involved numbers smaller than 57; clearly, if this example will not do, there are others). Kripke's sceptic poses a dual challenge: first, is there any fact of the matter as to whether, upon performing an addition, I meant "plus" or "quus" (quus, for any addition involving a number equal to or greater than 57, yields a sum of 5)? Second, do I have any reasons for answering 125 (as per "plus") rather than 5 (as per "quus")? Correspondingly, the answer to the sceptic, Kripke challenges, must be two-fold: "First, it must give an account of what fact it is (about my mental state) that constitutes my meaning plus, not quus," and second "It must, in some sense, show how I am justified in giving the answer '125' to '68 + 57'."[15] These are certainly related challenges: if there is no fact of the matter as to which function

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between saying any course of action can be made out to accord with a rule and saying that any course of action can be made out to accord with instructions for a rule, and I will explain this in Section IV. iii. below.

[13] Kripke will say that it is because meaning statements lack truth conditions that there are no meaning facts. His sceptical solution attempts to redeem the possibility of communication by arguing that Wittgenstein admits assertiblility conditions, given by reference to a community, as applying to meaning statements.

[14] Kripke [1982], p. 7.

was intended, then there is no justification to be had by appeal to some fact of the matter; likewise, if there is no justification to be had about which function was meant by appeal to some fact about, say, past behaviour and mental states, then on assumption of perfect access to these presumed sources of facts, there is no fact (about past behaviour and mental states) as to which function was meant. Kripke utilises this latter strategy: the protagonist is assumed to have perfect access to and recall of past behaviour and mental history. Hence, if such an agent cannot justify whether plus or quus was meant through recall of past behaviour and mental history (for both of these are indifferent between which function was meant), then there cannot be any fact about past behaviour or mental history that establishes which function was meant (the idealisation of the agent links up the lack of justification to the lack of a fact). As long as other candidate sources for meaning facts are also found wanting (e.g., dispositions), then there cannot be meaning facts at all. The argument, at large, is one of elimination of candidate sources of meaning facts.

Kripke sums his argument as follows:

> The skeptic argues that when I answered '125' to the problem '68 + 57', my answer was an unjustified leap in the dark; my past mental history is equally compatible with the hypothesis that I meant quus, and therefore should have said '5'. We can put the problem this way: When asked for the answer to '68 + 57', I unhesitatingly and automatically produced '125', but it would seem that if previously I never performed this computation explicitly I might just as well have answered '5'. Nothing justifies a brute inclination to answer one way rather than another.[16]

Kripke adds that the sceptic, "merely questions whether my present usage agrees with my past usage, whether I am *presently* conforming to my *previous* linguistic intentions."[17] Kripke argues that if the sceptic establishes that there is no fact of the matter, either about my behaviour or episodes in my mind, as to which function I meant in the past, then neither is

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[15] Kripke [1982], p. 11.
[16] Kripke [1982], p. 15.
[17] Kripke [1982], p. 12.

there a fact about my present usage. If there is no fact about what I meant, there is no fact about what I now mean. And so he explains, "Of course, ultimately, if the sceptic is right, the concepts of meaning and of intending one function rather than another will make no sense. For the sceptic holds that no fact about my past history – nothing that was ever in my mind, or in my external behaviour – establishes that I meant plus rather than quus. But if this is correct, there can of course be no fact about which function I meant, and if there can be no fact about which particular function I meant in the *past*, there can be none in the *present* either."[18]

Kripke then considers the objection that, while it is agreed that if we consider instructions and explanations as involving the provision of a finite number of examples then there are indefinitely many compatible functions, if we rather consider instructions as involving the provision of a formula or algorithm, then this problem of indefinitely many compatible interpretations does not arise. The objector notes that Kripke may have learned to add at his mother's knee, as it were, counting the number of marbles in one pile and then another, and then after shoving them together, counting up the sum. This method, as Kripke notes, is perhaps simpler but no different in principle than the algorithm we may now use. Kripke's answer runs as follows, "True, if 'count', as I used the word in the past, referred to the act of counting, then 'plus' must have stood for addition. But I applied 'count', like 'plus', to only finitely many past cases. Thus the sceptic can question my present interpretation of my past usage of 'count' as he did with 'plus'. In particular, he can claim that by 'count' I formerly meant *quount*, where to 'quount' a heap is to count it in the ordinary sense, unless the heap was formed as the union of two heaps, one of which has 57 or more items, in which case one must automatically give the answer '5'...the point is

[18] Kripke [1982], p. 13.

perfectly general: if 'plus' is explained in terms of 'counting', a non-standard interpretation of the latter will yield a non-standard interpretation of the former."[19]

It will be instructive to explore Kripke's manner of dealing with this objection for it is certainly one that is reasonable to pose (indeed, it is the objection that should come first to mind against RF2 given above). This is that while admitting the point that instructions construed as a series of examples or illustrations underdetermine the rule as intended the objector counters that instructions construed as an algorithm or formula do not; that learning how to follow a rule upon being provided an algorithm does not encounter the underdetermination of a set of instructions in the form of a finite series of examples. Indeed, this is the substance of Dummett's point when he asks why it is that a machine can follow an algorithm but we, given the same presentation, encounter a degree of freedom; he states, "whence does a human being gain a freedom of choice in this matter which the machine does not possess."[20] Kripke responds by first noting that our understanding of a rule, such as that for plus, may involve an understanding of a more basic rule, such as that for counting. However, he continues, there is no reason why the same sceptical thought cannot attach to this more basic rule. Thus, if the objector is to make hay of the notion that we can understand the difference between plus and quus in virtue of an understanding of counting, then Kripke counters by asking how do we know we are counting and not quounting (i.e., what is it about our past mental or behavioural history that justifies the view that we are counting and not quountng?).[21]

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[19] Kripke [1982], p. 16.
[20] Dummett [1966], p. 428.
[21] And there is no reason that we cannot continue to apply the sceptical consideration here to more basic rules (rules an understanding of which is a prerequisite for being able to count). This will be discussed to a fair length later in this chapter.

To continue with Kripke's response to this line of objection, Kripke acknowledges his source here in Wittgenstein: "Here of course I am expounding Wittgenstein's well known remarks about "a rule for interpreting a rule". It is tempting to answer the sceptic by appealing from one rule to another more 'basic' rule. But the sceptical move can be repeated at the more 'basic' level also."[22] He further explains, "True, I may not merely stipulate that '+' is to be a function instantiated by a finite number of computations. In addition, I may give myself directions for the further computation of '+', stated in terms of other functions and rules. In turn, I may give myself directions for the further computation of these functions and rules, and so on. Eventually, however, the process must stop, with 'ultimate' functions and rules that I have stipulated for myself only by a finite number of examples."[23] Thus, however far we go in explaining our understanding of a rule by appeal to an understanding of a more basic rule, we must reach a point where such a process ends and we have only a recourse to examples to explain our understanding of a rule. These examples, as the sceptical thought contends, underdetermine the rule we come to understand (and so the examples can be variously understood to yield various rules). Therefore, any rule is underdetermined by its instructions for the understanding of any set of instructions ultimately involves an understanding which we gain by a consideration of a finite number of examples.

A similar response to the objector observes that our first tool in teaching the uninitiated is via examples and, as noted, it is always the case that these examples can be variously interpreted. This response differs from that made just above in that the focus is not a competent rule-follower (who is the target of Kripke's sceptic – indeed, the target of Kripke's sceptic is more than competent: he is ideal for reason of having perfect recall of

[22] Kripke [1982], p. 17.

past behaviour and mental episodes) but someone learning such rules for the first time. In this case the point that, contra the objector, instruction in a rule proceeds via examples is perhaps more clear for the child or language initiate would not yet have an understanding of the formula or algorithm in question; his initial training, say in producing the even number series (although this too would involve an understanding of more basic rules) is more readily seen as proceeding upon the provision of examples (for it is upon the grasp of the series from the examples that the formula is grasped and the stage set for the more advanced understanding involved in producing the series from an algorithm or formula). Alternatively stated, not having to use examples when explaining a rule presumes the learner has a facility with how rules of that type are followed. At the beginning of the day, as it were, the child who we are instructing in language does not yet have this facility and so we must use examples.

I want to make clear that what we have here is a defense of RF2. RF2 claims that indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to accord with any set of instructions. This is more obvious if we consider a set of instructions to take the form of a finite series of examples or illustrations. For instance, we may offer a finite series of examples in giving instruction for the function add-2. But there will be infinitely many ways of proceeding that are consistent with the examples given but then veer away (from the correct way of proceeding in applying the rule add-2) for instances not explicitly covered by the examples. In this sort of case it is clear that the examples given underdetermine the correct way of following the rule. The objection raised above asked why all instructions and explanations (that are used to convey an understanding of a rule) should be thought of in this way. *Prima*

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[23] Kripke [1982], p. 17.

facie, an instruction for a rule that takes the form of an algorithm does not underdetermine the correct way to proceed for following the rule.

Kripke responds to this objection (see just above for quotations) by attesting that if an instruction in a rule does not involve the provision of examples or illustrations, if, say, it involves the provision of an algorithm for following a rule, then it provides instruction in the rule through an appeal to another rule; that is, the provision of algorithms or formulas for instruction in a rule (such as add-2) involve an appeal to other rules. Kripke argues that if examples are not directly provided in the instructions for a rule then what we have is the offering of rules for following rules. These would include comparatively more basic rules since they must be understood for the rules being instructed to be understood. But if further rules are appealed to then we begin a regress. That is, if the instructions for a rule do not involve the provision of examples, then, says Kripke, they involve an appeal to another rule (a rule for following the rule being learned). But now the same thought applies to the appealed-to rule: instruction in this rule must either involve a direct appeal to examples or illustrations, or, an appeal to a further (and again, comparatively more basic) rule. Ultimately, Kripke contends, and we may say that this is on pain of a regress, our understanding of any rule must involve an understanding gained from a finite series of examples or illustrations.

The basic thought here in response to the objection relates that if an instruction in a rule does not take the form of a provision of a set of examples or use of illustrations, then an understanding of this instruction presupposes an understanding of a more basic rule that is learned from examples and illustrations. We may make this case a little differently than Kripke does for while Kripke contends that if we suppose that we can come to understand how to follow a rule in a way that does not ultimately involve an understanding gained

through the provision of examples and illustrations then we are led into a regress (where our understanding of any rule is gained only through instruction involving other rules), we may argue differently to the effect that basic rules (or at least, very basic rules) must be learned through the provision of examples and illustrations. Since an understanding of non-basic rules will presuppose an understanding of basic rules, an understanding of any rule will ultimately involve an understanding gained from the provision of examples and illustrations.

To this end, it was noted above that if someone does not understand how to follow a rule upon the provision of an algorithm or formula, we may provide a series of examples for instruction. Indeed, we should say that if he is able to grasp a rule from the algorithm or formula, then he already has a facility with following rules of this sort. But this picture does not fit the language initiate; it does not fit the person learning basic rules. For the language initiate (or at least, an initiate to the language game in question; that is, someone learning the basic rules for the language game to which he is being introduced), instruction in the rule would involve the provision of a series of examples or the use of illustrations (for if he could grasp the rule from an algorithm or formula – that is, through some means that does not involve examples or illustrations – then he would not be an initiate to the language game in question). For instance, someone being taught how to continue a simple arithmetical series for the first time would not learn to do so from an algorithm; such a method of instruction presumes that he has some mastery of these sorts of rules. Someone who is being instructed in basic rules does not have this mastery or facility for he does not have an understanding of the rules that are basic for the language game being introduced. Such a person must grasp these rules through a set of instructions that involve examples or illustrations for he does not have a mastery of the language game being played that would allow him to not have to learn through these means of instruction. But if our grasp of basic rules proceeds upon a

consideration of examples and illustrations (and so is underdetermined by these examples and illustrations), our understanding of less basic rules which presuppose an understanding of these basic rules, is also (and thereby) underdetermined (and no matter that these later, less-basic rules are learned through means that do not involve examples and illustrations); it is an understanding that is underdetermined for reason of being built on an understanding of basic rules that is underdetermined. Since indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to be in accord with the instructions for a basic rule, and since an understanding of basic rules is presupposed in an understanding of comparatively non-basic rules, indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to be in accord with any rule or the instructions for any rule.

We see Wittgenstein offer another (but not altogether different) line of defense for this thought (i.e., in support of RF2) early in the *PI*. He argues that ostensive definitions can be variously interpreted in every case (*PI* 28). For instance, he notes that if I am teaching someone the use of the word 'red' by pointing to red objects (and saying 'red'), then I can be taken to refer to the shape of the objects, the number, the position, and many other things (and this presuming the language initiate at least knows that I am referring). As I will make more of a point of later, for the language initiate to learn from an ostensive definition, given this various interpretability, requires that the learner be able to grasp a rule in a way that does not involve interpreting (and this already involves having some facility with learning from ostensive definitions). The point here supports RF2 for, insofar as we consider instruction in a rule as involving ostensive definition, we see that these instructions can be interpreted in indefinitely many ways. The use of ostensive definitions for instruction is especially prominent in the instruction of basic concepts to language initiates and so we have further good cause for upholding that an understanding of basic concepts involves an understanding

of instructions that can be interpreted in indefinitely many ways. The point here does not turn on the finiteness of the examples used (as in the case of instructions for continuing an arithmetical series), although this too would be a factor, but on the point that there are indefinitely many features of the examples that can be interpreted to be the point of reference in the ostensive definition. This is a defense of RF2 that observes that ostensive definitions can be variously interpreted in every case and as basic concept instruction often takes the form of the provision of an ostensive definition, this form of instruction in basic concepts is variously interpretable in every case; there are indefinitely many interpretations that can be made to accord with such instructions. And since these basic concepts may be presupposed in an understanding of other non-basic concepts, we have another means of defending the point that, at least for the large class of cases of rules the understanding of which ultimately involves an understanding of concepts gained through ostensive definition, these rules can be interpreted in indefinitely many ways.[24]

Continuing with an account of Kripke's sceptical argument, Kripke proceeds to make the point that the sceptical challenge is not merely epistemological; it establishes that there are no meaning facts (neither concerning my past nor my present usage). This point, as described above, proceeds on assumption that the subject has perfect access to (potential) sources of meaning facts (in this case, mental history and past behaviour). If such an idealised agent cannot answer the sceptic's epistemological challenge, then the factive conclusion follows (i.e., if the agent with perfect recall cannot justify whether he meant plus or quus by appeal to past behaviour and mental history, then there cannot be any fact about which function was meant in terms of past behaviour or mental history). Kripke states,

[24] As noted, the notion of a basic rule here is so far a relative one: some rules are basic to, in the sense that an understanding of them is presupposed in an understanding of, other rules. This notion will be elaborated at

"Given, however, that everything in my mental history is compatible both with the conclusion that I meant plus and with the conclusion that I meant quus, it is clear that the sceptical challenge is not really an epistemological one. It purports to show that nothing in my mental history or past behaviour – not even what an omniscient God would know – could establish whether I meant plus or quus. But then it appears to follow that there was no fact about me that constituted my having meant plus rather than quus. How could there be, if nothing in my internal mental history or external behaviour will answer the sceptic who supposes that in fact I meant quus?"[25] [26]

With this Kripke concludes,

> This, then is the sceptical paradox. When I respond in one way rather than another to such a problem as '68 + 57', I can have no justification for one response rather than another. Since the sceptic who supposes that I meant quus cannot be answered, there is no fact about me that distinguishes between my meaning plus and my meaning quus. Indeed, there is no fact about me that distinguishes between my meaning a definite function by 'plus' (which determines my responses in new cases) and nothing at all.[27]

Kripke moves on to consider whether a dispositional account can redeem meaning facts (i.e., whether dispositions can serve as a source of meaning facts where behaviour and mental history have failed). I will not elaborate this much; it is at this point that the discussion's source in Wittgenstein begins to depart. What I will proceed to offer in the next section is an account of two sceptical arguments that stays close to the text of the *Investigations*, draw out the case against rule-realism from these arguments, and thereafter compare these to Kripke's account. Prior to that, I want to draw attention to the last line in

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different points in the thesis but primarily in the discussion of bedrock in Chapter 4 (for we will see there that 'bedrock' is used to exact a discussion of basic rules).

[25] Kripke [1982], p. 21.

[26] The method of argument here proceeds to exhaustion: Kripke exhausts the possibilities of wherein meaning facts may lie, looking to behaviour, mental history, and later, to dispositions, and finds them wanting. The argument thus lies susceptible to the charge that not all sources of meaning facts have been properly considered. Ruth Millikan objects along these lines (c.f. "Truth Rules, Hoverflies and the Kripe-Wittgenstein Paradox", in A. Miller and C. Wright (eds) [2002]).

[27] Kripke [1982], p. 21.

the quotation from Kripke just above. It is one thing to say that there is no fact about me that distinguishes between my meaning plus or quus by 'plus'. It is a stronger claim to say that there is no fact that distinguishes between my meaning plus and nothing at all. Given the argument we have accepted so far, this should seem to involve a leap. To explain, it has been granted that given the numbers upon which I have performed sums in the past, there is nothing in my past usage of 'plus' to distinguish my having meant plus or quus ('quus' applying, *ex hypothesi*, to a sum not as yet performed). Further, as with my past usage, there is nothing to distinguish my presently meaning plus or quus by 'plus'. Let us grant this having observed earlier that the support in favour of this relies on the point that a series of examples underdetermines a rule (i.e., the set of additions I have previously performed does not differentiate between whether I was performing the operation of plus or quus). This draws on RF2 above. However, how does *this* establish that there is no difference between my meaning plus and my meaning nothing; or, alternatively, between my meaning plus and my meaning "hello"; or, between my meaning plus and my meaning that you should jump off a cliff; etc. The claim here, in brief, compares to that of RF3. And it does not seem justified by the considerations hitherto given.

The argument so far has relied on the point that the examples given for instruction underdetermine the rule. Kripke admits this and offers a good defense, which has been further supplemented, for the point that instruction in a rule, ultimately, must involve learning from examples (see above). But to underdetermine is not the same as to not determine at all (the point that Kripke ends up making in the quotation given above). Kripke's former claim is that there is no fact that distinguishes my meaning plus rather than quus by 'plus' (i.e., no fact about past behaviour and mental history, he then adds dispositions to the list). Kripke's latter and stronger claim, given in the above quotation, is

that there are no facts that would distinguish between my meaning plus and my meaning nothing at all, or anything at all. Kripke wishes to conclude from this that there just are no meaning facts. But this stronger claim is not established by the case that examples we use for instruction underdetermine a rule (or that examples of past usage underdetermine which rule was meant). *This* case is in line with RF2. Kripke is now after stronger game that is in line with RF3. For this he needs a stronger case that shows there is nothing which can serve as a basis for any meaning facts at all. He argues that dispositions do not provide any basis for meaning facts in his lengthy discussion of dispositions that follows the sections treated here, but we should say that the case is not yet adequately made that past behaviour and mental history do not determine at all, rather than underdetermine, what is meant by any particular utterance. RF2 allows that there may be facts about meaning for while indefinitely many courses of action can be made out to accord with a rule or set of instructions, it is not yet admitted that any course of action can be so made out (and admitting this much determination is consistent with admitting that there is something – some fact – in virtue of which a course of action cannot be made out to accord with a rule or set of instructions). Wittgenstein and Kripke both admit RF2 and utilise it to sceptical effect. Matters do not stand the same with RF3. It seems, based on the case so far considered, that Kripke is not entitled to the stronger consideration. And although there are good reasons for saying that RF3 follows from RF2 (such that if RF2 is true in certain basic cases of rules then RF3 is also true – and these reasons are to come soon – and of course, it is open to Kripke to adopt these reasons), we will see (in the last chapter) that Wittgenstein nonetheless denies that these reasons obtain and hence denies that RF3 is true.

Above it was argued that since we cannot escape the point that ultimately our understanding of any rule involves an understanding gained from a consideration of

examples or illustrations, we cannot escape the point that our understanding of any rule is underdetermined. This is a case for RF2. RF3 seems to follow if we admit that RF2 is true for very basic rules. I will explain the general thought to some depth soon but for now consider the basic rule that governs our understanding of accordance (i.e., the rule for sameness). This is the rule in virtue of which we understand that a course of action is in accord with a set of instructions for a rule. If the notion of accordance, between an act and a rule (or an act and instructions in a rule), is up for grabs then it should seem that any act can be made out to accord with any rule. But this is the claim of RF3. If we have differently (and hence incorrectly) grasped the meaning of accordance (due to underdetermining instruction in the rule, say), then it seems that we may find any course of action to be in accord with a set of instructions for a rule. For instance, we may view running down the road to be in accord with the instructions given for the function plus if we have the "right" notion of accordance between the act of running down the road and the instructions for plus (but of course, this is to admit that the concept of plus has not at all been grasped). This is admittedly a very liberal view of "accord", but that is very much the point. Once it is admitted that our understanding of very basic rules, such as that which pertains to accordance, is underdetermined, such that we can make out indefinitely many interpretations of these rules, then it seems we are led to admit that for comparatively less basic rules (an understanding of which presupposes an understanding of these very basic rules – and a correct grasp of any rule will presuppose a correct grasp of the rule for accordance or sameness, see Chapter 4, Section V), any course of action can be interpreted to be in accord with these rules (or for the instructions for these rules). There seems to be nothing that restricts the interpretations we can make (of a comparatively non-basic rule) if we admit that our understanding of the most basic rules is also open to interpretation. It *is* admitted,

though, that our understanding of very basic rules is underdetermined for this is part of the defense that, ultimately, an understanding of any rule rests on an understanding of a series of examples (which gives the case for RF2). And so this defense of RF2, which upholds that our understanding of basic rules is underdetermined and so open to interpretation along indefinitely many lines, seems to lead us to RF3 (and ominously so for RF3, in contrast to RF2, should seem quite implausible).

It is worthwhile making conspicuous, at this point, the difference between these two sceptical considerations. The first begins with the point that my past behaviour and mental history do not determine (offer no fact as to) whether plus or quus was meant by 'plus'. This draws on RF2: RF2 upholds that instructions in a rule, construed as a set of examples, underdetermine the rule. Accordingly, the point here is that past behaviour and mental history, offering a finite set of examples or instances, underdetermine the rule. This does not yet show that there is no fact (about mental history and past behaviour) about whether *any* function was meant (i.e., to say that there are no meaning facts that distinguish which of two functions was meant is not yet to say that there are no meaning facts at all in this case). The second consideration, the more egregious (and incredible), is that there is nothing – no fact about me, in my mind or in my behaviour – that distinguishes between my having meant plus (or any definite function) by 'plus' and my having meant nothing (or anything). This is likened to the claim of RF3 (which says that *any* or *every* course of action can be interpreted to accord with the instructions in a rule, in which case, as we will see Wittgenstein argue, there is no rule-following). There is a movement in considerations we see in Wittgenstein from RF2 (presented in *PI* 185) to RF3 (presented in *PI* 198 and 201) which is mirrored, though differently, in Kripke's analysis (for while Wittgenstein accepts RF2 as generally true but ultimately rejects RF3, Kripke seems to accept both as true).

Kripke's development from the former to the latter sceptical consideration seems to proceed simply. He establishes that there are no facts (in my past behaviour or prior mental history) that distinguishes between my having meant plus rather than quus. This point then generalises to the present: there are no facts that distinguish my currently meaning plus rather than quus. The argument hitherto is grounded in the consideration of RF2: the instructions we have for the rule (the examples we have so far considered) are indifferent between plus and quus. The next step is important. Since there are no facts that distinguish my currently meaning plus rather than quus, there are no facts[28] about my meaning plus. The rest is downhill: since this can apply equally to any term, there are no facts about what I mean by any term; generalising to every individual then, there are no meaning facts.

But what of this "important" step (and thus to continue with the question pressed above)? Does it follow from the point that there is no fact that distinguishes my meaning plus rather than quus that there is no fact about my meaning plus? The analogue in the case of the deviant pupil of *PI* 185 is as follows. It is admitted that the instructions we have so far given the pupil are consistent with the course of action of adding 2 up to 1000, 4 up to 2000, etc., as much as that of adding 2 (this follows from RF2); both these courses of action, which serve different rules, are consistent with the instructions. However, is the course of action of jumping off a cliff equally consistent with the instructions given as adding two? Alternatively stated, would we say that the rule (or order) for jumping off a cliff and that for adding two are equally served by the same set of instructions (that we would normally give for adding two); the same set of examples? Surely not. But an analogous move is being made in Kripke's analysis. Plus and quus both fit the facts of past usage; this is because the agent in question has not hitherto had to calculate a sum that would serve to distinguish the

[28] That is, facts about mental history and past behaviour; the lack of facts in the realm of dispositions is added

two. However, it is not the case that plus and schmus both fit the facts of past usage where schmus is a function such that, when given any addition to be carried out, the agent jumps off a cliff. And so there would seem to be some facts (about meaning): facts that distinguish between plus and schmus even though they may not distinguish between plus and quus. Kripke jumps from a point about underdetermination to the point that there is no determination (and so from a point that upholds RF2 as true to a point that, as we will further see, upholds RF3).[29]

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later.

[29] We may say that someone who jumps off a cliff in response to the request to apply the rule add-2 is following this rule: add 2 up to time *t* and at or after time *t* jump off a cliff. Time *t* is the time that he actually jumps off a cliff. We may say that this person's behaviour is consistent with the instructions given for adding 2, and his past behaviour in adding 2, because the rule just noted is consistent with these instructions and his past behaviour (i.e., the instructions given and past instances of adding 2 took place prior to time *t* and so could just as well instantiate the rule add 2 as add 2 up to time *t* and thereafter...). This would seem to admit that any course of action can be interpreted to accord with the instructions for a rule as long as those instructions underdetermine the rule (for it seems we can always contrive a rule, as here, that forges a fit between the instructions given and the action taken). Hence, given RF2 we get RF3; that is, if the instructions underdetermine a rule, then any course of action can be made out to accord with that rule (in which case, the instructions do not determine the rule at all). This point would vindicate Kripke from the criticism I am raising here (I argue that RF2 implies RF3 only if RF2 is true for the most basic rules; the point here is that RF2 implies RF3 even if basic rules are not considered, as the above illustration tries to show).

However, suppose we add an instruction that, when applying the rule at time *t*, one may not jump off a cliff. Of course, the person may do something else inappropriate (like jump off a bridge), but as long as he feels he cannot do something in applying the rule (in this case jump off a cliff), then we do not have RF3 (for not anything can be interpreted to accord; not anything goes). In a sense, with this added instruction we have overdetermined how the rule is to be applied at time *t*; this added instruction is akin to telling the deviant pupil to answer 1002 at the 501st step (and so the correct application of the rule add-2 at the 501st step can be arrived at with this rule or with the add-2 rule if followed correctly). Of course, someone may follow the added instruction differently than we would have him (but still somehow be acting consistently with the instructions), but the point should still stand that as long as the instructions bar him from responding in some way – i.e., as long as some course of action cannot be made out to accord with the instructions – then RF3 is not true of the rule in question. Ultimately, the point is that if instructions in a rule are flouted in such an egregious way – such that any course of action can be interpreted to accord with the instructions – then we do not have instructions; they are idle and delimit or determine no course of action as in accord or out of accord (this point will be developed further in Section IV. iii.). And so contriving scenarios, such as the one above, so as to try to show that if our understanding is underdetermined by a set of instructions then it is not determined at all only serve to show that once we move to view a set of instructions as open to interpretation in any way, then they cease to be instructions; they cease to be examples for how to apply a rule. That is why, if someone jumps off a cliff in a sincere attempt to follow the instructions for add-2, we should say that he did not understand the instructions at all (rather than say, as we may with the deviant pupil, that he is following the instructions incorrectly but is still consistent to the letter of the instructions). And so we should still say that it is only if RF2 is true for the most basic rules, such that our understanding of the most basic rules is open to interpretation, that we can see a way that RF3 follows from RF2 (and again, I will further develop this point below).

It should be noted that while Kripke's dialectic prior to the discussion of dispositions makes essential use of the point that instruction in a rule underdetermines the rule, the discussion of dispositions does not. The argument against dispositions as a basis for meaning facts rests on other considerations. Wright notes two (and very briefly they are): first, our use of rules, such as plus, can apply to an infinite number of cases for which we can have no dispositions of judgement (for presumably these would be finite in number). Second, dispositions cannot account for the normativity of meaning (I may be disposed to misuse an expression and so, this disposition cannot account for how I ought to use it).[30] I will now proceed to present Wittgenstein's own sceptical arguments and their use in arguing against rule-realism.

IV. Scepticism And Explanation-Transcendence

It is an important thought in Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations that an understanding of a rule does not transcend an understanding of an explanation of the rule. I shall call this thought an 'anti-realist premise' (for reasons that will become clearer soon). In this section I will begin by introducing and explaining this premise, then present and defend two separate sceptical arguments building on rule-following considerations (the anti-realist premise is a premise in the first argument but, as we will see, draws support from the second) and finally, with use of these arguments, which I maintain to be Wittgenstein's arguments, present the case against the realist view of rules. The case against the realist will largely proceed as a case against the rejection of the anti-realist premise (to which, it is argued, the realist is committed) and this has three lines. The first line argues that a denial of

[30] See Wright [2001f], p. 120.

the premise renders the epistemology of rule-following a mystery. The second line argues that the denial of the premise leaves the rule-realist prey to private language considerations as applied to rule-following. Of the three, this case is presented as being Wittgenstein's own and I take this to be the main argument against the possibility of explanation-transcendent understanding (i.e., against the rejection of the anti-realist premise) offered by Wittgenstein. The third line, which is connected to the first, argues that if the premise is denied then instructions become superfluous to rule-following and this is clearly at odds with the phenomenology of coming to understand rules and the observed practice of following rules. The sum of these arguments finds its conclusion to be that understanding does not transcend explanation and, as a consequence, a realist view of rules is not a viable option.

IV. i. The Anti-Realist Premise (AR**)

Consider the following remarks:

> But if a person has not yet got the *concepts*, I shall teach him to use the words by means of *examples* and by *practice*. - And when I do this I do not communicate less to him than I know myself. (*PI* 208)

> "But then doesn't our understanding reach beyond all the examples?" - A very queer expression, and a quite natural one! -
>
> But is that all? Isn't there a deeper explanation; or mustn't at least the *understanding* of the explanation be deeper? - Well, have I myself a deeper understanding? Have I *got* more than I give in the explanation? - But then, whence the feeling that I have got more? (*PI* 209)

> "But do you really explain to the other person what you yourself understand? Don't you get him to *guess* the essential thing? You give him examples, - but he has to guess their drift, to guess your intention." - Every explanation which I can give myself I give to him too. (*PI* 210)

In addition, consider these very similar remarks from the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* (the previous were all taken from the *Investigations*):

> Now I ask myself, what is it that I want him to do, then? The answer is: He is always to go as I have shewn him. And what do I really mean by: he is always to go on in that way? The best answer to this that I can give myself, is an example like the one I have just given. (*RFM* VI – 17, p. 320)

> And again I don't myself know any more about what I want from him, than what the example itself shews. I can of course paraphrase the rule in all sorts of different forms, but that makes it more intelligible only for someone who can already follow these paraphrases. (*RFM* VI – 21, p. 322)

> You do not yourself understand any more of the rule than you can explain. (*RFM* VI – 23, p. 325)

There is a thought concerning understanding and explanation conveyed in the above remarks. This is:

AR **There is not more to my understanding of a rule than what I can convey in an explanation or instructions.**

But often times, we do understand more than we can convey. For instance, when we have a word at the tip of our tongues - we have an understanding of what we want to say but are just missing the appropriate word. Or when we are ill or fatigued and just not up to conveying what we understand. And so, let us admit that Wittgenstein is making a principled point to which these considerations of circumstance do not apply:

AR* **There is not more to my understanding of a rule than it is possible for me to convey in an explanation or instructions.**

However, since explanations and instructions for a rule are public goods (they are common means by which members of a linguistic community communicate an understanding to each other), they provide a constraint on what can be understood in that linguistic community. Alternatively, AR* applies to any individual (I am not special in this regard); what can be said of me can equally be said of all. And so, Wittgenstein's remarks apply generally; he is

making a comment about understanding *per se* and not simply some particular individual's understanding. Hence we can say:

AR The understanding of a rule does not transcend an understanding of an explanation of or instructions in the rule.**

That is, whatever there is to be understood of a rule is available from an understanding of an explanation or instructions.[31] I will use 'instructions' interchangeably with 'explanation' for both explanations and instructions are means by which we convey our understanding of a rule and further, as per AR**, both are means by which we may fully or exhaustively convey an understanding of a rule.[32] The exegetical basis for AR** is not simply the remarks given above,[33] but also the place it fills in a sceptical argument which shows that such a premise is needed and, in connection, the role it plays in the case against rule-realism (more on this further below). I will return to an elaboration and defense of AR** but will now turn to present the first sceptical argument where we will see AR** feature as a premise.

IV. ii. The First Sceptical Argument: The Sceptical-Inductive

Wittgenstein, we will see in Chapter 4, maintains an important difference between justification and explanation: we can successfully explain how to follow a rule even when we

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[31] The denial of AR** is the claim that understanding is explanation-transcendent. This is terminology adopted from C. Wright.

[32] It may be the case that an explanation need not involve the provision of instructions but any such difference is not germane. I am interested in the thought that whatever there is to be understood of a rule can be communicated via some public means of communication; instructions and explanations are both means by which we communicate our understanding of a rule to others. AR** tells us that there is no understanding of a rule that cannot be conveyed in some explanation or instruction to others. In other words, and I will make an issue of this later (in Sub-section iv. B below), there is no understanding of a rule that is private.

cannot fully justify a course of action in following the rule (i.e., justification may come to an end but this need not bode ill for conveying an understanding of a rule). It may seem at first that the denial of explanation-transcendence is a basis for charging AR** as a verificationist premise. But this is not so far clear if verificationism involves a denial of justification-transcendence in our understanding of a rule (rather than a denial of explanation-transcendence). At any rate, the question concerning whether AR** is verificationist or not is not idle. AR** plays a pivotal role in a sceptical argument, built on rule-following considerations (in addition to AR**), that serves to argue against the realist view of rules. The realist, as we will see, will want to say that this argument, and specifically the use of this premise against him, begs the question for being verificationist. I will be denying this rebuttal.

Consider a rule for the development of a number series (say add-2). Any formulation, set of instructions, or in short, any explanation we give for the rule underdetermines the correct application of the rule; they do not determine how the rule is to be followed at every step. Consequently, an indefinite number of courses of action, often exclusive of each other, can be interpreted to be in accord with the instructions for the rule (for they vary at places or steps not covered explicitly by the instructions – this, to remind, is RF2). This is not to say that the rule, or its instructions, can be correctly interpreted (and followed) in an indefinite number of ways (for there are not an indefinite number of ways of following the rule that are correct). It is to say that the instructions given do not fully determine the correct way to follow the rule (more accurately, they underdetermine the correct way to follow the rule).

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[33] The fact that this thought is repeated in the *RFM* and in the *PI* (as seen in the above remarks), and expressed in very similar terms, testifies not only to the importance of the thought expressed but also that Wittgenstein was satisfied with the expression from one text to the other.

Now let us consider the following argument.[34]

S1. Instructions cannot but underdetermine a rule. [from the case for RF2 above]

S2. The understanding of a rule does not transcend an understanding of an explanation of or instructions in the rule. [from AR above]**

S3. Therefore, the understanding of a rule is underdetermined.

S4. An underdetermined understanding of a rule requires that the rule be interpreted to be understood (and followed).

S5. But if a rule must be interpreted to be understood (and followed), then we fall prey to a sceptical paradox.

S6. Therefore, we fall prey to a sceptical paradox (alternatively, there is no rule-following).

I will call this the 'Sceptical-Inductive' argument. Premise S1 has been defended above (in the case for RF2) and I will soon defend premise S2 (in sub-section IV. iv. below). Notice that S3 (the product of S1 and S2) does not assert that there is no rule-following (i.e., it is not paradoxical). It does not assert that indefinitely many courses of action *are* in accord with the understanding of a rule (and hence that any of these options is arbitrary), but only that indefinitely many courses of action *can be interpreted* to be in accord with the understanding of a rule (i.e., given that S1 above can be read to say that indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to accord with the instructions in a rule, and S2 again that the understanding of a rule does not transcend an understanding of instructions, it follows – as an alternative way of reading S3 above – that indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to accord with what is understood of a rule.) Hence, it is only if

[34] Again, to remind, a reference sheet with this argument, together with the next argument and the various theses presented, is attached at the end of the thesis, after the Bibliography, and can be extracted for convenience in reading.

understanding involves interpreting, that there *are* indefinitely many courses of action in accord with the understanding of a rule. Thus, if understanding is or involves interpreting (S4 above), then we would be unable to follow a rule for reason that we would have no basis for opting for a particular course of action over indefinitely many others (and so any course of action we pick will be arbitrary). Alternatively, we may say that if understanding a rule involves interpreting the rule (or its instructions), then there is no rule-following because we would need to understand the correct way to follow the interpretation and this leads us to a regress of interpretations (this is the regress of interpretations characterisation of the sceptical paradox used by McDowell). Either way, avoiding a sceptical paradox requires that there be a way to understand a rule that does not involve interpreting. And this, it is important to see, does not require forfeiting any of S1, S2 or S3.

I will focus on steps S4 through S6 in the next chapter (for these steps, as I will there argue, pertain to a correct "reductio" reading of the argument which I will focus on in the next chapter). To foreshadow, I will there argue that step S4 is the weak link in the argument for Wittgenstein; there is certainly some reason to think that if our understanding of a rule is underdetermined (S3) then we must interpret a rule in order to follow it (S4) – (for there are indefinitely many courses of action that can be interpreted to be in accord with what is understood of a rule, i.e., with the instructions and explanations given of the rule), but this connection is denied by Wittgenstein (explaining and defending this point – that we can correctly follow a rule despite an underdetermined understanding, or that we can correctly grasp a rule despite underdetermining instructions – will be a preoccupation of the fourth chapter on rationality and rule-following). Steps S1 to S3 are accepted by Wittgenstein. But S6, the paradoxical conclusion, does not follow without S4. I will focus

on steps S1 to S3 in this chapter for these provide the basis of the argument against the realist view of rules.

I will now present the case provided by Wittgenstein against the realist view of rules, in its initial steps, and then return to this case in full after having presented the second sceptical argument available from the rule-following remarks – the Sceptical-Conceptual argument – for steps from this second argument are key to the argument against rule-realism. To start, Wittgenstein characterises the realist view in related, but different, ways. He describes it as involving an intuition – and this is, as he characterises it, an explanation-transcendent understanding – in virtue of which we are able to grasp that "essential thing" (*PI* 210) that is necessary for an understanding of how to follow a rule but is not conveyed through the instructions or explanations. He also describes a realist view of our understanding of a rule as "flying ahead" to unconsidered steps; that an "act of meaning the order had in its own way already traversed all those steps…and took all the steps before you physically arrived at this or that one" (*PI* 188). The thought here is one after determination: our grasp of a rule is a grasp in which every step is, in some way, already determined. These are both epistemic characterisations and, as we will see, Wittgenstein's case against rule-realism is an epistemic one.[35] Wittgenstein adds that a realist view of rules, to draw another metaphor, is of rules as "rails invisibly laid to infinity" (*PI* 218). Under this view of rules as rails, the grasp of a rule involves a grasp in which "all the steps are already taken" (*PI* 219); in which the correct application of the rule is fully determined in advance of any consideration by ourselves (and thus that our following a rule involves following along this predetermined

[35] And perhaps this is not surprising as we commonly find that arguments against Platonism in mathematics (at least in more traditional forms) are epistemological in nature. For instance, it is argued that a Platonist intuition, which is to make contact with mathematical objects, Platonistically construed, violates a causal theory of knowledge. This is an epistemic criticism of Platonism that raises a "problem of access" (see Brown [1999], pp. 15-16). But we will see that Wittgenstein's argument against realism regarding rules unfolds differently (for it argues that a realist intuition must be a private understanding and that this is not possible).

and set path). This connects to the other metaphorical characterisation noted above for in grasping a rule our understanding, in some way, flies ahead along this rail; that is, our understanding, in some sense, takes in all these steps before we reach them in applying the rule.

The base of Wittgenstein's case against the realist, as I take it, is a case against a role for intuition in our understanding of a rule (i.e., against an explanation-transcendent understanding; against a denial of AR** or S2 above). But we may add that Wittgenstein's other characterisation of the realist view, the second offered above, i.e., as requiring that our understanding of a rule be one in which all the steps are determined in advance of our application, calls for a commitment to a role for intuition in our understanding of a rule for the realist. This thought proceeds along the following lines.

A role for intuition, in the realist's epistemology of rule-following, is perhaps already evident for it is common to characterisations of Platonist epistemologies in the philosophy of mathematics.[36] But Wittgenstein has something specific in mind with 'intuition', viz., an explanation-transcendent understanding, and he offers reason to think that the realist is committed to such an epistemology. A realist understanding of a rule, as also characterised by Wittgenstein and as noted above, is an understanding in which all the steps are already determined prior to our reaching any given step in applying the rule (again, our mind "flies ahead" when we grasp a rule). But any instructions or explanations that can be given cannot but underdetermine a rule; they cannot account for this "flying ahead" because they can only

[36] For instance, in describing Platonism, J. Brown offers: "Mathematical entities can be 'seen' or 'grasped' with the 'mind's eye'. These terms are, of course, metaphors, but I'm not sure we can do better. The main idea is that we have a kind of access to the mathematical realm that is something like our perceptual access to the physical realm." (Brown [1999], p. 13). Famously, we see that Gödel upheld a role for intuition by arguing that there are mathematical propositions that we can "see" to be true but that we cannot prove. There are many characterisations of Platonism in mathematics that defend and criticise appeals to intuition in different ways. Wittgenstein's criticism of a realist view of rules should be inclusive of a realist view of rules in mathematics,

determine a finite number of instances at best. Hence the need for a further epistemic resource and this is intuition (an explanation- and instruction-transcendent source of understanding).

To further explain, given that indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to be in accord with any set of instructions or explanations (by RF2), our coming to understand the correct way to follow a rule upon the provision of a set of instructions would seem to involve an epistemic leap. It is a leap from underdetermining instructions to a correct and unique understanding of how to proceed. Alternatively stated, whatever we say by way of explanation to account for our understanding of a rule will underdetermine the rule (and so will not determine a correct and unique application). But we don't hold anything back – something essential – in our explanations or instructions (by AR**), says Wittgenstein. And so how do we even know the correct way to go on? The realist's response, in Wittgenstein's view of the matter, is that something essential *is* held back and this is an intuition that transcends the explanations that we can give of the rule; intuition bridges this epistemic gap. The point may be put this way: supposing we grant an understanding of a rule to the realist, we may ask how it is that the realist knows how to correctly apply a rule from step to step. These steps must be determined in advance of any consideration by ourselves, by the realist account, but the instructions and explanations given can only determine a finite number of steps at best. Hence, for steps not explicitly covered or determined by those instructions, the realist must call on something else to know that he proceeds correctly and this is intuition. This is the "something essential", a source of understanding that transcends what there is to be understood from the instructions and explanations available.

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but it should be kept to mind that, as I will say above, Wittgenstein has a somewhat specific view of intuition in

But for Wittgenstein, following a rule from an underdetermined understanding does not involve an epistemic leap; it does not call for an intuition. It involves our ability to follow a rule *blindly*. I will explain blind rule-following in the fourth chapter and convey that it involves an alternative rational response to rule-instruction that allows us to follow a rule from underdetermining instructions without epistemic difficulty (and that this is connected with being able to follow a rule without reasons, or at least, reasons that fall short of justifying a course of action). But notice that this option, that of following a rule blindly, should not appeal to the realist because it does not face the epistemic gap; it does not admit that our understanding of a rule is of it as fully determined (for our understanding remains with underdetermining instructions).

Wittgenstein does not say that we cannot gain a correct understanding of how to follow a rule or that we proceed arbitrarily when we follow rules as we do (for reason that we could be pursuing any one of indefinitely many other consistent interpretations); he does not say that, although our understanding remains underdetermined, that we view a rule as in some way indeterminate in what it proscribes. But it remains to give an account of blind rule-following to show why Wittgenstein is allowed (or at least, why he thinks he's allowed) to not say these things (i.e., to show why we do not confront an epistemic inductive problem when trying to follow a rule from underdetermining instructions) and do so without appealing to an intuition. But the provision of this account (again, to follow in the fourth chapter) is aside from the case that is to be made against the realist. This case proceeds as a case against explanation-transcendent understanding or intuition (i.e., against the rejection of AR**) for, as motivated here, the realist must commit to an explanation-transcendent source of understanding of a rule (for the determination that is held by the realist to be required in

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mind in his case against a role for intuition in rule-following.

our understanding of a rule is not secured through underdetermining instructions and explanations). That is, an explanation-transcendent understanding is required for the realist to bridge an epistemic gap from underdetermining explanations and instructions to a correct and unique understanding of how to follow a rule.[37]

Thus, we see that S1 and S2 provide the keys to Wittgenstein's case against a realist view of rules. And so even if we deny that understanding a rule involves interpretation (S4), and so deny that the above argument results in a sceptical conclusion (S6) – as we will see Wittgenstein do – this does not at all undermine the use of steps S1 through S3 of this above argument (and specifically of premise S2 or AR**) in an argument against rule-realism. As stated, I will present this case largely as a case against the possibility of explanation-transcendent understanding or intuition (i.e., a case against the rejection of AR**), having above motivated the case that the realist is committed to an explanation-transcendent understanding (i.e., committed to rejecting AR**). Prior to undertaking this task, I will present a second sceptical argument, also taken closely from the text, for this will prove germane to the above task. This second sceptical argument will prominently feature RF3.

IV. iii. The Second Sceptical Argument: The Sceptical-Conceptual

According to Wittgenstein in *PI* 201, a paradox ensues if RF3 is true.[38] Wittgenstein says: "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 a rule. The answer was: if everything can

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[37] This is, of course, Wittgenstein's characterisation of realism concerning rules and it is this view that is being criticised and denied. Given the variety of characterisations of realism (and anti-realism, for that matter) on the market, there is perhaps a construal of realism as it pertains to rules – different than that characterised by Wittgenstein – that can cohabit with following a rule "blindly".

[38] That is, there is no rule-following if RF3 is true, or at least, as we will see, there is no following of rules for which RF3 holds or is true.

be made out to accord with a rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here." Wittgenstein's remedy, expressed in the second paragraph of this remark, is to affirm that there must be a way to follow a rule without interpreting.[39] This argument is not the same as that given just above (i.e., the Sceptical-Inductive). This argument reasons differently and, unlike the previous argument, makes essential use of RF3.

Wittgenstein relates, in the passage just quoted, that if every course of action can be interpreted to be in accord with a rule or set of instructions (RF3), then no course of action is determined by a rule or set of instructions. That is, if RF3 holds (as opposed to just RF2), instructions in a rule do not determine the way to follow a rule at all. Wittgenstein continues on to say that if this is the case, then a paradox results: there is no rule-following (for there is "neither accord nor conflict here"). I will present the argument directly below and then proceed to explain and support the premises.

C1. Indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to be in accord with the instructions for a rule. [RF2]

C2. If indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to be in accord with the instructions for a rule, then any (or every) course of action can be interpreted to be in accord with the instructions for a rule. [RF2 → RF3]

C3. If any (or every) course of action can be interpreted to be in accord with the instructions for a rule, then no course of action is determined by the instructions for a rule. [From *PI* 201]

C4. If no course of action is determined by the instructions for a rule, then there is no rule-following. [Also from *PI* 201]

C5. Therefore, there is no rule-following.

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[39] Notice that this remedy – that there must be a way to follow a rule that is not an interpretation – will serve as the means of avoiding the paradox of the first sceptical argument, i.e., the Sceptical-Inductive. This discussion

I will call this argument the 'Sceptical-Conceptual' argument, in difference to the 'Sceptical-Inductive' argument given above. I have defended the first premise above in the discussion of RF2. I have said some words about the second premise, i.e., of why we might think that RF3 follows from RF2. I will now elaborate this and the other premises. The second premise (C2) aims to connect the thought expressed in *PI* 185 (i.e., RF2) to that expressed in *PI* 201 (i.e., RF3). It upholds that if an *indefinite* number of courses of action can be made to accord with the instructions in a rule, then *any* course of action can be made to accord. Once again, the movement from the one claim to the other, I offer, resides on whether RF2 is true in very basic cases of rules. The connecting thought is that if indefinitely many courses of action can be made out to accord with the training and instructions for basic rules, then the training and instructions for comparatively non-basic rules, an understanding of which presupposes an understanding of these basic rules, is opened to a wider range of interpretations (i.e., the range of interpretations that can be made out accord to with a non-basic rule widens if grasping the non-basic rule presupposes an understanding of a basic rule that is likewise open to interpretation). The obvious candidate, again, pertains to accordance. If we have incorrectly grasped the notion of accordance or sameness (such that we incorrectly grasp what it is for an act to accord with a rule or instruction in a rule), then it is conceivable that we can find any act to be in accord with any rule (given a sufficiently liberal and admittedly incorrect understanding of accordance).

Recall that it is part of the defense of RF2 that if the instructions for a given rule do not involve the use of illustrations or examples, then there is a more basic rule, an understanding of which is presupposed in an understanding of the given rule, that does. That is, the point was made, in defense of RF2, that indefinitely many courses of action can

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will be taken up in the next chapter.

be interpreted to accord with the instructions for any rule because the instructions for any rule will either involve examples or illustrations or will presuppose an understanding of more basic rules which were learned from examples or illustrations (and of course, there is the point that any set of examples and illustrations can be interpreted in indefinitely many ways). But if indefinitely many courses of action can be made out to accord with basic rules, then it seems that for rules (comparatively non-basic) that presuppose an understanding of these basic rules, that the number of courses of action that can be interpreted to accord with these, granting that there are already indefinitely many, widens. And further, the thought continues, if indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to accord with the most basic rules (again, the rule pertaining to accordance is first to mind), then it seems that for rules that presuppose an understanding of these most basic rules, any or every course of action can be interpreted to accord.[40] An example illustrating this general thought, besides that involving the notion of accordance, is in order.

As Kripke observes, an understanding of counting is a precondition for an understanding of plus. Hence, relative to plus, the rule for counting is a basic rule. In Kripke's dialectic, it was observed that there were an indefinite number of ways of proceeding that are in accord with the instructions for plus (and, as he makes his case, with my past behaviour and mental history concerning the rule also). Suppose my instructions for plus consisted in a set of examples of addition for pairs of numbers up to ten only (i.e., 1 + 1, 1 + 2, … , 9 + 10, 10 + 10). Following Kripke's line, since I have not been instructed in sums involving individual numbers greater than 10 (and let us assume I have never encountered such a sum), this set of instructions is compatible with an indefinite number of functions that differ from plus in the results they yield when numbers greater than 10 are

[40] That is, as we move to ever more basic rules, and find that these are open to interpretation along indefinitely

involved (this is RF2). Now, let us suppose that I have not understood correctly the rule for counting (and note that a correct understanding of counting allows me to effectively follow the rule for plus by counting the objects in one pile, then another, and then counting them when piled together). Suppose my instruction in counting consisted of examples involving no more than 10 objects (this instruction is then compatible with rules that differ from that pertaining to counting when more than 10 objects are involved). Suppose my understanding of the instructions for counting is such that whenever more than 10 objects are involved, I count the number as 10 and always 10 (strictly speaking then, this is not counting; we may call it quounting to avoid confusion). This means my ability to carry out sums correctly is limited to cases where the numbers added result in a sum of no more than 10. For example, if I were asked to add 8 + 8, I would respond with '10' since I add by counting (i.e., quounting) 8 objects in one pile and then 8 objects in another pile and then shove them together and quount the objects in the joined pile and – since my understanding of the instructions for counting results in an answer of '10' for any group of objects greater then 10 – I respond with the answer '10'. We see that the instructions for plus are consistent with deviations when the numbers added are greater then 10 (since all the examples given were for numbers up to 10). But this should allow me to effectively add 8 + 8, i.e., reach the right answer (for these numbers are each less than 10). However, since the instructions for counting are consistent with deviations when the group to be counted contains more than 10 members (and since I understand these instructions by responding '10' to any group with more than 10 members), my misunderstanding of the instructions for counting enables a wider deviation in my misunderstanding of plus than the instructions for plus could by themselves license.

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many lines, we observe a trend towards RF3 for rules that presuppose an understanding of these basic rules.

In general terms, we see a trend towards RF3: the indefinite number of courses of action that can be made out to accord with the instructions for any given rule widens as we move to find more basic (prerequisite) rules open to interpretation. As just illustrated, the number of courses of action that can be made out to accord with the instructions for plus is less than the number enabled when a deviant understanding of the instructions for counting is figured in. Thus, per this trend, if RF2 is true for very basic rules, then we approach RF3. And, as also described, if RF2 is at least true for the rule that pertains to accordance, such that we can view this rule as open to interpretation along indefinitely many lines, then we can come to view any or every course of action as in accord with any rule (for, and this point will be developed in Chapter 4 on a section devoted to the rule for accordance or sameness, an understanding of the rule pertaining to the notion of accordance or sameness is presupposed in our understanding of any rule – for with any rule we must correctly understand what it is to apply the rule the same from step to step, from occasion to occasion, if we are to understand it correctly).[41]

At this point I wish to make clear that Wittgenstein means to uphold a difference between RF3 and RF2; that he is not being cavalier in his phrasing in *PI* 201. If in *PI* 201, when he discusses the circumstance in which "every course of action" can be made out to accord with a rule, he means only that "an indefinite number of courses of action" can be made out to accord with a rule then this would place our reading of *PI* 201 in line with the case of the deviant pupil of *PI* 185. It may just seem that Wittgenstein, in *PI* 201, is expressing himself imprecisely. One problem with reading Wittgenstein as meaning no more by 'every' than 'indefinitely many' is that he uses the same form of phrasing in *PI* 198 where

[41] The thought here, to be further discussed in Chapter 4, is that if accordance or sameness is opened to interpretation, then what is in accord versus what is not in accord need not be set by the rule, or its instructions, but by the interpretation of accordance.

he says: "*Whatever* I do is, on some interpretation, in accord with the rule." (italics are mine). Attention to the German usage corroborates that Wittgenstein was not being cavalier in his phrasing. The German word for 'every', as it occurs in *PI* 201, is 'jede'. As expected, this translates as 'every' or 'any'. The German word for 'whatever', as it occurs in *PI* 198, is 'was immer'. Again, as expected, this translates as 'whatever', 'whatsoever', or 'no matter what'. In contrast, the German word for 'indefinitely many' is 'unbestimmt' (close variations, but not capturing quite the same sense, are 'unendlich' and 'unbegrenzt'). Notice that this (or any of the close variations) occurs in neither *PI* 198 nor *PI* 201 in their original German.[42] The German usage shows no sloppiness in the phrasing that would count against the distinction as being intended and so we can say that the distinction under scrutiny is not an artefact of the translation.

We may say more in favour of the distinction between 'indefinitely many' and 'every' (and so in favour of a distinction that establishes RF3 as a rule-following consideration of note separate from RF2). In *PI* 185, Wittgenstein argues, by illustration, that indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to accord with the instructions for a rule (for instructions in a rule underdetermine the rule). Left by itself, this neither achieves the conclusion that our understanding of any rule is underdetermined (which is a consideration employed in the case against the rule-realist) or a sceptical conclusion. To establish that the understanding of any rule is underdetermined AR** must be added. To establish a sceptical conclusion, as per the Sceptical-Inductive argument, a further premise must be added to the effect that an underdetermined understanding of a rule necessitates a role for interpretation (see the Sceptical-Inductive argument above for more). Furthermore, if Wittgenstein had meant to assert RF2 rather than RF3 in *PI* 201 then no sceptical conclusion would

[42] Source for German translations is the useful online German-English dictionary provided by Informatik der

immediately follow here either. For one thing, RF2 is not strong enough to serve in the role of RF3 in the above Sceptical-Conceptual argument (i.e., the argument of *PI* 201). This is because it is not true that, if indefinitely many courses of action can be made out to accord with a rule (RF2), then no course of action is determined by a rule; this consequence only holds (as I will shortly explain) if RF3 holds. That is, if RF2 holds (without RF3 also holding) it only follows that the instructions underdetermine a rule (and this is not the same as to not determine a rule at all). A sympathetic reading of the paradox of *PI* 201 would require that we read it literally, i.e., as involving RF3. Additionally, I will explain that RF3 (and not RF2) figures in a non-verificationist reading of the private language argument (which I will initially present below and more generally defend in the Appendix to this chapter) and this further supports an important difference between RF2 and RF3. RF3 takes us straight to a sceptical conclusion, but RF2 does not; appropriately, RF2 is a consideration that Wittgenstein accepts as generally true, I claim, but RF3 not.

With C3 and C4 of the above argument we find conditionals taken from *PI* 201. The thought conveyed is that if RF3 holds then no course of action is determined by instructions for a rule and, therefore, there is no rule-following. This is put across as a conceptual truth. There is a contrast at play here between RF2 and RF3. RF2 seems to lead us towards an inductive scepticism: if there are indefinitely many courses of action that can be interpreted to be in accord with a rule – i.e., if each of these courses of action is consistent with the instructions given – then how do we determine the correct way to follow a rule. There are indefinitely many hypotheses we may form that are equally well supported by the data, i.e., the instructions given. And so, on the presumption that we must form a hypothesis or interpretation, we are stuck; any attempt to follow a rule correctly, on this presumption,

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would involve an epistemic leap (or just be arbitrary). The problem here is epistemological. But with C3 (and with it C4), the issue is not epistemological; the conditional turns on a conceptual point. If any or every course of action can be interpreted to be in accord with the instructions for a rule, then the problem is not one of choosing the right interpretation (as with RF2); rather, if such were the case, there would be no instruction in the rule. This is more clearly seen with illustrations. I will offer two.

Consider a road sign as an instruction in a rule. A sign that is ambiguous (say, part of an arrow that is ambiguous as to its direction) is not useless. It can still offer some direction to us (e.g., an arrow that is ambiguous between pointing north or east may still serve to tell us not to head south or west). Likewise, the instructions given to the deviant pupil of *PI* 185 do some work; they are informative for not every course of action can be made out to accord with the instructions. Indeed, since any set of instructions underdetermines a rule (a point that Wittgenstein accepts), it had better be the case that instructions can be useful even if they are underdetermining. But what if a sign were such that any way of proceeding could be made out to accord. In this case, the sign would offer no guidance at all, imprecise or not, ambiguous or not. It would not determine any course of action for us (it would not contribute to an understanding of the rule at all). It would not, in this case, be a sign for us (for it is not serving the function of a sign: to offer direction). The point here is that if we were to come to view a sign as accommodating any way of going on, then it would not determine any way of going on for us. Notice that the point here can be made to apply to any instruction: given any instruction, if we thought that any course of action could be made out to accord with the instruction, then it would not determine any

course of action for us (and so, to view it this way would be to not see it as an instruction).[43] Once we move from RF2 to RF3, we move from the inductive threat of having to pick the correct interpretation of the instructions to not having any instructions. That is, once we admit that RF3 is true of the instructions for a rule, we admit that the instructions do not determine any course of action and thus (as in the case of the road sign), we do not have instruction in the rule.

An elucidating way of thinking of an interpretation of a set of instructions is as an hypothesis consistent with a set of data. Wittgenstein affirms: "Now it is easy to recognise cases in which we are *interpreting*. When we interpret we form hypotheses, which we may prove false." (*PI* II, p. 212). With this in mind, consider the following illustration. Suppose we have an observation set consisting of exactly 5 black ravens seen in the back garden of Edgecliffe at a specific date. This is consistent with indefinitely many hypotheses. For instance, at that date, there are 5 black ravens in the back garden of Edgecliffe, there are 5 black ravens in the world, there are 6 ravens in Britain, all ravens are black, etc. However, this data set is not consistent with any hypothesis. For instance, there are 4 black ravens in the back garden of Edgecliffe, there are 4 ravens in Britain, there are no black ravens in the world. To say that there are *indefinitely many* hypotheses consistent with the data is not to say that the data do not determine, to some extent, the hypotheses made or that can be made (for they surely do, for not any hypothesis can be made). However, to say *any* or *every* hypothesis is consistent with the data is to say that the data do not determine the hypotheses made at all (e.g., to say that there are exactly 3 black ravens in the world flatly ignores the observation set). The data are idle. Further, to say that the data do not determine the

[43] But the same "instruction" may determine a course of action for someone else who did not view it as *so* open to interpretation. This is a way of making the point that what counts as a rule or instruction in a rule depends on its use.

hypothesis made at all is to say that the data are not data of or for the hypothesis; in the analogy, they are not instructions in a rule. And so there is a critical difference between RF2 and RF3: the former allows for instruction in a rule and the latter does not. Appropriately, the former invites an epistemological problem and the latter leads us to a paradox by asserting a comment on the (grammar of the) concept of instruction in a rule. It is the argument that utilises RF3 that is the argument of *PI* 201.[44]

I have given argument in favour of the above premises. However, as noted, for RF3 to follow from RF2 (as contended in C2 above), it is required that RF2 be true of very basic cases of rules (and especially for the rule pertaining to sameness or accordance, which is for Wittgenstein the most basic rule – see Chapter 4). But this, as indicated, will be denied in Chapter 4, i.e., it will be argued that for the rule for sameness, we cannot understand it in a way that involves interpreting; it is not the case that someone can latch onto a deviant interpretation of this rule because to fail to grasp at least this rule correctly is to fail to grasp the rule necessary for an understanding of any other rule (and hence, it is to fail to become a rule-follower or member of the linguistic community).[45] And so RF3 is a consideration that is not true or does not hold and this is because RF2 is a consideration that does not hold of at least one basic rule (that at least for one basic rule, it is not the case that indefinitely many

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[44] Again, the point is not that if any or every course of action *is* in accord with a set of instructions then we do not have instruction in a rule. This is a much more obvious point. Rather, the point is that if any course of action *can be made out to*, or *can be interpreted to*, accord with the instructions for a rule then we do not have instructions. This follows because if instructions are viewed as so open to interpretation then they are not at all instructive. Also notice, it is not enough to admit that there must be a way of grasping a rule that is not an interpretation (which will be called the 'master thesis' in the next chapter), to deny RF3 for this – the master thesis – still admits that interpretation may have a role in our grasp of a rule. What we want, when we do turn to interpret in grasping the requirements of a rule, is that we find at most indefinitely many and not any or every way of proceeding to be in accord with the rule or its instructions (and this will involve showing that at least for some very basic rules – viz., the rule for sameness again – that interpretation can play no role in our grasp, and this thought will be developed in the fourth chapter).

[45] Also, it will be argued that basic rules, taken generally and so not without exception, must be grasped correctly and without interpreting.

courses of action can be made out to accord with the rule or instructions in the rule).[46] This is not to say that our understanding of basic rules, including the rule for sameness, is not underdetermined by the instructions given and available; rather, it is to say that, at least for the rule for sameness, our understanding of the rule cannot admit a role for interpretation despite this underdetermination. Thus, it is still upheld that our understanding of any rule is underdetermined by (underdetermining) instructions and explanations. And so it is still upheld that there is an apparent epistemic gap from an understanding of these underdetermining instructions in a rule to an understanding of the correct and unique way of applying the rule that needs to be addressed.

Prior to closing this section, I want to address the bearing of a distinction between instruction in a rule and a rule on the above argument.[47] Let us admit that if any course of action can be made out to accord with the instruction in a rule (RF3) then there is no instruction in the rule. Does it follow from there being no instructions in a rule that there is no rule or rule-following (and notice that this transition is in play in the conditional expressed in C4 above)? The answer is "yes" for Wittgenstein and may be approached in two ways. The first, and shorter, is to affirm that there is not an important difference between a rule and an instruction in a rule. They are both, after all, followed (and are in this way epistemologically undifferentiated; i.e., our epistemic response to an instruction and a

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[46] We may call this, i.e., RF2 so qualified, RF2* and say while RF2 implies RF3 (presuming RF2 is true of certain very basic cases), RF2* does not. I refrain from formally entering this – RF2* – as a further and separate rule-following consideration because I don't think the added formalization yields added clarity or simplicity, preferring (in this case) to simply say that RF2 is a consideration that is admitted as generally true by Wittgenstein and RF3 not at all, and that the latter point is a consequence of the former (but this will not be argued for until Chapter 4, and so will become clearer then). Reasons have been given in this chapter, reasons staying within an account of Wittgenstein's views on rule-following, explaining why RF3 might be thought to be true and this involves its following from RF2 if RF2 is true in certain basic cases; in Chapter 4, exposing and defending Wittgenstein's positive views on rule-following, a responding case will be made explaining why, nonetheless, these reasons don't obtain (and thus the conclusion of the Sceptical-Conceptual argument avoided).

rule are the same: they are both to be grasped and followed). We may express the difference by saying that instructions are rules we must follow if we are to follow a rule (i.e., rules for following a rule). We may also say that there should not be a relevant difference between instructions in a rule and a rule for Wittgenstein once we take note that Wittgenstein is not a rule-realist or Platonist (and so does not bestow an existence to rules that would differentiate them ontologically from instructions – but of course, to deny this distinction, for this reason, would beg the question against the Platonist).

Let us nevertheless admit that there is a difference between instructions in a rule and a rule, to the effect that the conclusion of the above argument should not be that there is no rule-following, but that there is no instruction-following (or alternatively, there are no instructions, for instructions must be capable of being instructive – capable of being followed – to be instructions). In response, we may draw on AR** (our "anti-realist" premise) and affirm that since there is no instruction-transcendent understanding of a rule, if there are no instructions then there is no understanding of rules. AR** thereby denies any important epistemic difference between rules and instructions in a rule.[48] Alternatively, without appealing to AR**, we may say that if understanding instructions is a necessary element of coming to understand how to follow a rule (rather than more strongly require it that an understanding of instructions is all that there is to an understanding of a rule, as per AR**), then it still follows that there is no rule-following (for without instructions a necessary element of coming to follow rules is lacking). Even the rule-realist, who would want to reject AR** (as explained, and as we will soon further see), should admit that

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[47] For, to a certain extent, I have let this distinction slip; e.g., I have said, in C4 above, that if instructions determine no course of action, then there is no rule-following, rather than say that there is no instruction-following. I will now explain why this intended slip is not germane.

[48] And appropriately, as has been pointed out and we will shortly see, AR** is central to the case against the realist or Platonist view of rules.

instructions play an essential role in our coming to understand how to follow rules. To deny this would be to deny commonly observed practice. The point developed here is to affirm that if there is no instruction in a rule (or no instruction-following), then there is no rule-following.[49]

And so we have it, by the above argument, that given RF3 there is no instruction-following and hence, no rule-following. And so we have two separate sceptical arguments. I will begin to explain Wittgenstein's response to the first sceptical argument (the 'Sceptical-Inductive') in the next chapter and will discuss the response to the second (the 'Sceptical-Conceptual') in the fourth. I will now return to discuss the use of the first argument, and specifically of the "anti-realist" premise, in the case against rule-realism.

IV. iv. Rule-Realism and AR**

In this section I will return to a discussion of a premise from the Sceptical-Inductive argument and its bearing on rule-realism. As described earlier (in Section IV. ii. above), according to Wittgenstein, the rule-realist is committed to rejecting AR**; i.e., a rule-realist is committed to a role for intuition (described as an instruction- or explanation-transcendent understanding).[50] Briefly, to remind, the line of thought is this. A rule-realist (or at least, a realist about the class of rules under consideration), by Wittgenstein's account, upholds that a rule, independent of any consideration by ourselves, determines its extension fully; an understanding of a rule, accordingly, is of it as fully determined (metaphorically stated, in following a rule our minds "fly ahead" to all unconsidered steps). However, any set of

[49] And so to also affirm that the distinction between rules and instructions in rules is not germane here.
[50] I use the term 'intuition', despite its philosophical baggage, because, as we will further see, this is the term used by Wittgenstein to characterize understanding that is allegedly explanation transcendent.

instructions or explanations can only determine a finite number of steps at best (this is one reason why it is said that any instruction or explanation is variously interpretable). Hence, there is a seeming and yawning epistemic gap from an understanding of the instructions to a correct understanding of how to follow a rule (metaphorically stated again, an understanding of underdetermining instructions does not allow our minds to "fly ahead" to steps not determined in advance by the instructions). That is to say, different and conflicting interpretations of the instructions are available which, although consistent with the instructions, are not in accord with the series as fully determined. Thus, as alleged by the realist, an intuition – i.e., an explanation or instruction-transcendent understanding – is required in order to bridge this epistemic gap and know how to correctly follow the rule; to secure an understanding of the rule as fully determined. Someone who understands a rule, and so how to apply it correctly from step-to-step in previously unconsidered instances, must understand more than can be conveyed in any explanation or instruction according to the realist; and this something more, this further understanding, is an intuition.[51] Therefore, an argument against explanation-transcendent understanding is, by *modus tollens*, an argument against rule-realism so construed (and so it should be clearer why AR** is called an "anti-realist" premise).

I will now present the case that the rule-realist cannot reject AR** (i.e., he cannot uphold a role for intuition or explanation-transcendent understanding in our grasp of a rule) and this will involve, as earlier briefed, three different (albeit connected) lines of argument.

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[51] Certainly, the phenomenology of rule-following suggests a role for intuition in guiding us: when given instructions often it seems as if we are grasping something beyond what we are told (because, for instance, in being told we often do not immediately understand but later understand with a feeling of insight).

A. Epistemology is Rendered a Mystery.

There is the thought that our understanding of a rule must be explanation-transcendent because we are generally successful in understanding rules when explained without falling into a sceptical paradox; without being beset by indefinitely many interpretations of how to proceed. But if we agree with this we are left without means to explain how this understanding is conveyed since it is outreaching the explanations and instructions given.

The following quote from Wright makes this point. He says, "if we attempt to construe grasp of a rule as the presence in mind of an explanation-transcendent item, as the conception of the autonomy of rules expressed in the rule-as-rails imagery suggests, we are beggared for any satisfactory epistemology of step-by-step rule-following."[52] A "satisfactory epistemology" of rule-following should require that we be able to adequately explain why it is that we follow a rule as we do; that the explanation we can give of our understanding of a rule be sufficient to convey our understanding of the rule, but this is denied in the rejection of AR**. The acceptance of explanation-transcendence in rule-following is an acceptance that an account of the epistemology of rule-following is beyond our reach. This is an anti-rationalist account of rule-following for it prohibits being able to give reasons sufficient to the task of convincing and educating others (not being able to give reasons to account for why you follow a rule as you do is not startling since AR** is being denied).[53]

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[52] Wright [2001j], p. 186.

B. Intuition and Private Language Considerations

A case is given, by Wittgenstein in the *PI*, against a role for intuition or explanation-transcendent understanding in rule-following that utilises a private language argument consideration: with an intuition concerning the correct way to follow a rule, anything we think to be correct will be so. I will now develop this case.

Consider the following claim:

CP. If AR is not true of the understanding of a rule, then the understanding of the rule is necessarily private.**

To explain, when it is said in AR** that the understanding (of a rule) is not explanation or instruction-transcendent, the scope of 'explanation' or 'instruction' is exhaustive of public means of conveying understanding; of whatever can be publicly communicated in conveying an understanding of a rule. Thus to say that understanding transcends explanation is to say that understanding transcends any public expression of a rule. That is, the instructions and explanations that intuition is to transcend are public instructions and explanations in that they are means by which one member of a community conveys an understanding of a rule to another (be this through the provision of examples, algorithms, formulas, etc.); they are public goods. Thus, if understanding is explanation and instruction-transcendent, it is transcendent of public means of conveying understanding; of any means by which one member of a community publicly communicates his understanding to another. The claim CP (a Consideration of Privacy) is that an explanation-transcendent understanding is a private understanding. That is, if AR** does not apply to our understanding of a rule, then

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[53] Wittgenstein does say that our reasons in justifying a course of action in following a rule run out, as we will see in Chapter 4, but he does nevertheless affirm (in contrast to the position here) that the reasons we can give

our understanding is necessarily private for, by the definition of AR**, it is not possible for us to convey our understanding through public means.

But if our understanding is necessarily private when AR** does not hold, then private language argument considerations can be brought to bear when AR** does not hold. *PI* 202 makes a case that there cannot be private rule-following (and hence, that there cannot be an understanding of a rule that is private): "And to *think* one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately': otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it." (*PI* 202) To explain, there cannot be private rule-following because the private rule-follower cannot make the distinction between following a rule and thinking he was following it. Let us, for the moment, accept that following a rule requires being able to make this distinction. Since intuition is private (by CP and the denial of AR**), intuition is not a candidate for being followed. Hence, intuition is not a source of understanding that can guide us in following a rule. It may be wondered why anyone – especially the realist – should be required to be able to make this noted epistemic distinction (between knowing that one is following a rule correctly and it just seeming so). I will deal with this point soon – for it is surely a crucial concession – but for now will continue elaborating and then exegetically defending the argument.

We have it, by the use of this consideration against private rule-following, that AR** is a necessary condition of rule-following.[54] But this means that intuition – or whatever we are to call an understanding that outreaches the understanding that can be gained from an explanation of or instruction in a rule – cannot be a source or means of understanding a rule.

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are sufficient to convey an understanding of a rule.

[54] Notice that this vindicates Kripke's view that the first issue of the private language argument is in the rule-following remarks, and further, its role is not merely to foreshadow the private language argument starting at *PI* 243 but is essential to the dialectic of the argument against the rule-realist.

Thus, the rule-realist cannot deny AR**. But, as has been argued above, the realist's position is committed to a denial of AR**. And so rule-realism is not a viable position.

There is clear exegetical support for the above argument: Wittgenstein, in arguing against a role for intuition in rule-following (i.e., of explanation-transcendent understanding in rule-following) utilizes the above noted private language argument consideration. He says:

> So it must have been intuition that removed this doubt? [regarding which is the correct interpretation of a rule for the development of a series] - If intuition is an inner voice - how do I know how I am to obey it? And how do I know that it doesn't mislead me? For if it can guide me right, it can also guide me wrong.
>
> ((Intuition an unnecessary shuffle.)) (*PI* 213)

Wittgenstein's argument against a role for intuition in rule-following is essentially a private language argument consideration: he says that intuition could guide me wrongly just as much as rightly without my being able to tell. This is a private language argument consideration (as it applies to private rule-following) because it says that if we were to claim that intuition was guiding us correctly, we would have no basis for this other than its seeming so (for it is denied that we could know that it was doing so). In arguing against intuition as such, Wittgenstein is arguing against explanation-transcendent understanding. The exegetical case is strong that the "something essential" that is grasped but not conveyed by the explanation of a rule is likened to and called 'intuition'.[55] And so, Wittgenstein's remark supports the point that where AR** does not hold, private language argument

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[55] If not already clear, a strong exegetical case is available that by 'intuition' Wittgenstein refers to that alleged understanding that transcends explanation; that intuition enables the grasp of that "something essential" that is ineffectually conveyed by the instructions for a rule. For instance, in *PI* 209 he responds to the question concerning whether "our understanding reach[es] beyond all the examples?"; he accepts the locution but not the thought that there is a special feat of understanding – an intuition – behind this. In *PI* 210 he similarly responds to the question whether with any explanation someone must "*guess* the essential thing" or to guess the intention by an act of understanding transcendent of an understanding of the explanation. In *PI* 213 he responds to the point that an intuition is needed to remove the doubt raised by the various interpretations that are possible of any explanation in a rule. All three of these remarks concerning understanding that is explanation-transcendent lead directly to the case against intuition in *PI* 213 – quoted in the passage above – utilizing a private language argument consideration.

considerations are to be brought to bear. This supports my reading that where the anti-realist premise does not hold, we are dealing with an understanding that is private, and hence, susceptible to private language argument considerations.

Clearly though, the rule-realist would reject this use of the private language argument. The thought here is that a defense of AR** in terms of the noted argument in *PI* 202 against private rule-following begs the question against the realist. It begs the question by being verificationist: possession of an external and non-private correctness criterion is required for us to follow a rule correctly. This is an assumption the realist would want to deny. The realist would say that we can *just tell* how an intuition is to be followed so as to follow a rule correctly. Given a set of instructions, it is an intuition that enables us to follow them correctly (without want of interpretation) and this intuition is itself not in need of an understanding of something else – an appeal to an external and non-private correctness criterion – so that it may be followed correctly. It is of the nature of an intuition that it is an understanding that does not need to be verified; we can just know what to do when alighted by an intuition. Let us look to our sceptical considerations, viz., RF2 and RF3, to see if they offer any (non-verificationist) support.

The appeal to an intuition is, allegedly, an appeal to an explanation-transcendent understanding that allows us to understand how to follow a rule where the underdetermining instructions fail us. But we may wonder whether the understanding of an intuition is likewise underdetermined (recall that the point that instructions underdetermine a rule is the basis for saying that instructions can be interpreted in indefinitely many ways, i.e., RF2). There is a thought – reflected in the line of argument of the Sceptical-Inductive argument – that an underdetermined understanding requires a further epistemic resource to settle the correct way to follow a rule (for, presumably, there are indefinitely many interpretations of

the rule consistent with this underdetermined understanding). This thought underlies the appeal to an intuition in the first place (and obviously, it would lead to an unacceptable regress to say that a further intuition allows us to correctly follow an underdetermining intuition). But again, the rule-realist would counter that our understanding of an intuition is not underdetermined: having experienced an intuition, one *just knows* which course of action is correct to the intuition (further, the privacy of this matter makes it difficult, if not impossible, to directly challenge the realist on this point). That is, if intuition is given as the answer to how it is that we can follow a rule correctly even though the instructions we receive underdetermine the rule, then to say that intuition provides no such answer because the same sceptical worry attaches to an intuition begs a verificationist question according to the realist.

Furthermore, we may note that the understanding gained from an intuition (and the private instruction it yields) is just not like the understanding of a set of (publicly given) instructions and so it should not similarly stand that an understanding of an intuition is underdetermined by the intuition. There is no finite series of examples or instances given in an intuition which can be interpreted in indefinitely many ways (or at least, it is incorrect to describe the phenomenal experience of a single intuition in this way). The experience of an intuition, as a private instruction in a rule, is not analogous to the understanding of a public instruction in a rule which, as discussed, ultimately involves an understanding gained from a finite set of examples. And this is to say that RF2 is not the appropriate consideration to bring to bear on intuition-following.

Rather, the appropriate sceptical consideration to bear on private rule-following is RF3: any course of action can be made out to accord with an intuition. Given that with an intuition there is no distinction between what seems to be the correct way to follow an

intuition and what is the correct way, the correct way to follow an intuition is just what the agent believes (i.e., what seems to the agent) to be the correct way. But there is no bar on what may seem to be the correct way to follow an intuition (not without bringing in another intuition). But given the argument of *PI* 201 (i.e., given the steps from C3 to C5 in the Sceptical-Conceptual argument), if any or every course of action can be made out to accord with an intuition, then there is no following of intuitions. This consequent follows, as per the line of argument of the Sceptical-Conceptual Argument, as a conceptual point.

To elaborate, if an agent has an intuition with regards to following the rule for add-2 and he believes that the correct response is to jump off a cliff, we could not say that he is following his intuition incorrectly (for, after all, the content of his intuition is private to him). We would say that his intuition for following the rule is incorrect. But it still stands that it is open to an agent to believe any course of action to be appropriate for following an intuition. But again, if any course of action can be made out to accord with an intuition, then we have an instance of RF3. In sum, RF3 is true of private rule-following (following a rule by intuition) and this leads to the application of the Sceptical-Conceptual argument (and specifically steps C3-C5) as an argument against private rule-following.

Notice that there is no verificationist question begged here. It is not said that the agent has to epistemically establish, or ideally be able to establish, a distinction between following an intuition correctly versus it seeming to him that he is following it correctly in order to legitimately claim that he is following his intuition correctly. Rather, it is only asserted that with an intuition, the agent could believe any course of action to be in accord with the intuition. There are no bars on what can be believed or be seen to accord with an intuition. Indeed, the privacy of the matter ensures that any such bar on what can be thought to accord with an intuition would have to involve the understanding gained through

another intuition – i.e., another private source of understanding – and this would be unsatisfactory for leading to a regress (for then any way of proceeding can be seen to be in accord with this further intuition). And by the Sceptical-Conceptual argument, once RF3 is admitted (as being true of intuitions), it follows as a conceptual point that there is no following of intuitions. Just as there is no public instruction in a rule if any course of action can be made out to accord with the instructions for a rule, likewise there is no private instruction in a rule (i.e., intuition) if any course of action can be made out to (i.e., be seen to be) in accord with the intuition. That is, just as there is no rule-following if *any* course of action can be made out to accord with the instructions for a rule, likewise, there is no following of intuitions (i.e., private rule-following) if *any* course of action can be made out to accord with an intuition.

The realist does not deny the lack of a seems right/is right distinction in the case of intuition. He retaliates against the (epistemic) requirement that such a distinction *must* be able to be made in order to correctly follow an intuition (charging that this is a verificationist requirement); he says that with an intuition, the correct way to follow an intuition just is what seems right. An argument that tried to argue that there is no intuition-following because there is no way of knowing the correct way to follow an intuition from the indefinitely many that may seem to be correct would beg the question against the realist (and notice this is to argue along the lines of the Sceptical-Inductive argument). It would be to require a further epistemic move in following an intuition when the realist is denying that a further epistemic move is needed. This approach involves RF2. The picture is different once we see that RF3 is the consideration in play in private rule-following. There is no further epistemic move required and so no question begged. Since the correct way to follow an intuition is given by what seems right (given the lack of the noted distinction) it is

thereupon noticed that any course of action can seem right. The argument now moves conceptually: for the concept of accordance to have a place, it cannot be possible for any or every course of action to be seen to accord with an intuition (we have neither accord nor discord, Wittgenstein says, when RF3 holds). Likewise, it cannot be possible for any or every course of action to be made out to accord with the instructions in a rule because then the instructions are not instructive; they are idle and offer no guidance. It is exegetical corroboration that Wittgenstein makes a point against private rule-following (following an intuition) in *PI* 202 which is immediately after he makes the argument that the admission of RF3 leads to a sceptical paradox in *PI* 201. The indication in *PI* 202 is that the case against private rule-following involves an application of (or is a consequence of) the argument of *PI* 201. And as we see, the argument of *PI* 201 (i.e., steps C3 to C5 of the Sceptical-Conceptual argument given above) gives us a non-verificationist argument against private rule-following (see the Appendix to this chapter for a more general presentation of this argument).

Furthermore, we may say that the rule-realist, separate from the above line of argument, is still in trouble on grounds of privacy. To this end, notice the extent of privacy that the rejection of AR** commits the realist to: the understanding of a rule that comes from an intuition must not only be gained privately (for it is not gained through some publicly available explanation for, by the rejection of AR**, this understanding is explanation-transcendent) but further that this understanding, once gained, remains private, i.e., incommunicable. The understanding of the rule that I gain by an intuition is not conveyable to others because the possibility of conveying this understanding to others (fully, through public means like explanations or instructions) is denied with the rejection of AR**. This is a very strong claim and is more than any realist should like to admit. If we cannot effectively convey our understanding of a rule to others then there is no way to tell that we

have the same understanding of a rule as others. The only way to gain an understanding of a rule is if you have the intuition yourself. Any assurance that we understand a rule the same as someone else is denied when it is admitted that the understanding of a rule transcends what can be effectively explained (for an explanation of my understanding is how I communicate my understanding to someone else and that someone else must effectively understand this explanation to know that my understanding is the same as his). Intuition, as described above, is a private understanding or source of understanding (i.e., if is to be counted as understanding at all). But this means that intuition provides an understanding of rules that does not figure into public discourse. That is, the realist finds that explanations provide an unsatisfactory basis for conveying an understanding of a rule (for by RF2, they cannot but underdetermine the correct way to follow a rule); hence, as described above, the need for an explanation-transcendent source of understanding. But if explanations are thought to provide an unsatisfactory basis for conveying an understanding of a rule, then the same unsatisfactory basis underlies the claim that we share the same understanding of a rule (for this is evinced through our explanations to each other). The understanding of a rule through an intuition is a private matter, privately gained and held, and provides no support for saying that we have a shared understanding of a rule. This appeal to intuition is analogous to someone who is guided by what he claims to be the voice of Napoleon that only he can hear (the understanding that is yielded is private and remains inexplicable to others). AR** should not be rejected but the realist, as argued earlier, is committed to this rejection. This is a variant of the earlier point that the epistemology of rule-following in terms of following an intuition is a mystery (for it is unaccountably gained), but goes further

in noting that the understanding yielded by intuition cannot enter into public discourse for it *remains* inexplicable to others even once gained.[56]

C Intuition and Instructions.

Here I want to focus on the relation between instructions and intuition. If instructions yield an underdetermined understanding and intuition is to step in to provide a determined understanding of a rule, then what is the connection between the instructions and the intuition? If there is no connection, such that the intuition is by itself sufficient for conveying an understanding of a rule (and this intuition is not brought on or triggered by an understanding of the instructions), then the instructions are idle to following a rule. It is unsatisfactory for the instructions in a rule to be idle for this is clearly counter to the practice and phenomenology of rule-following which clearly evince a role for instructions.

As described, any set of instructions cannot but underdetermine a rule. An intuition is to provide, or at least aid in gaining, an understanding of a rule in which the correct way to follow a rule is fully determined. But if instructions are to have any role or do any work in coming to this understanding, they should at least be in the service of triggering the appropriate intuition. But this is not an option. Formulations and instructions given for following a rule cannot trigger a unique intuition because they cannot determine a unique understanding of a rule. That is, they cannot trigger a unique intuition because any set of instructions can be interpreted in indefinitely many ways. But then it is wholly unclear how we can have the appropriate intuition if it is not triggered by what can be said of a rule by

[56] Wittgenstein does not disagree with the description of (the phenomenology of) our rule-following practice as involving something like an intuition, i.e., as involving immediacy. Wittgenstein's disagreement is with the appeal to intuition in justifying a way of following a rule. See *PI* 197. *PI* 191 and 195 also make a similar point.

way of explanation or instruction (it is also obviously inadequate to say that a further intuition serves to trigger this intuition on pain of regress). Thus, there is a double difficulty here. If instructions do not serve to at least trigger an appropriate intuition then they are rendered superfluous to rule-following (which is clearly counter to the practice and phenomenology of rule-following) and it is left unexplained how we do arrive at the appropriate intuition (for again, the understanding of a rule that is gained through an intuition, by the rejection of AR**, is beyond what we can successfully explain or instruct). The argument of this section overlaps with the first one which argued that the appeal to intuition, by rejecting AR**, makes a mystery of the epistemology of rule-following.

The above three sections (A, B, and C) argue, through separate but connected lines of argument, that understanding is not explanation-transcendent (or equally, intuition is not a source of understanding in rule-following), and do so all on epistemic grounds. Since a realist view of rules, as explained, reveals a commitment to an explanation-transcendent account of understanding, a realist view of rules is not a viable option. The first section argued that an appeal to an intuition, by denying AR**, leaves us without an account of the epistemology of intuition-following. The third section added that intuition, by appealing to an instruction-transcendent understanding, renders the understanding gained from instructions idle in coming to understand how to follow a rule (and this is contrary to the observed practice of rule-following). The main defense of AR**, though, is in the second section (and it is this line of argument that is drawn directly from Wittgenstein). Therein it is argued that the understanding of a rule yielded by an intuition is private and so private language argument considerations can be brought to bear, viz., the case against private rule-following. It is argued that this case against private rule-following can be made, and is made

by Wittgenstein, in a non-verificationist way and this involved showing that RF3 holds of intuition-following. Once it is shown that RF3 is true of following a rule by intuition, then (by the Sceptical-Conceptual Argument, and specifically steps C3 to C5) it follows that there is no following of intuitions. This is a somewhat intricate argument employed but I believe, and have tried to show, that each step is exegetically and argumentatively supported. An interesting point here is that the defense of AR**, a premise of the Sceptical-Inductive argument and which is crucial to the case against the realist view of rules, involves a utilisation of (part of) the Sceptical-Conceptual argument. The latter is the argument of *PI* 201 and so it is herein that we find a crux of the argument against realism.

V. Revisiting Kripke

To remind, Kripke summarises his sceptical argument in this way:

> This, then, is the sceptical paradox. When I respond in one way rather than another to such a problem as '68 + 57', I can have no justification for one response rather than another. Since the sceptic who supposes that I meant quus cannot be answered, there is no fact about me that distinguishes between my meaning plus and my meaning quus. Indeed, there is no fact about me that distinguishes between my meaning a definite function by 'plus' (which determines my responses in new cases) and my meaning nothing at all.[57]

Kripke makes both an ontological and an epistemological point and his method, although drawing on rule-following considerations from Wittgenstein, deviates from that of Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein does not venture to establish that there are no meaning facts through a reductive analysis of wherein meaning facts may lie.[58] The line of argument most clearly shared by Wittgenstein and Kripke is the epistemological: there is nothing that

[57] Kripke [1982], p. 21.

justifies my meaning plus rather than quus because my past usage and the instructions I have been given (viewed as a set of examples) justifies each equally. That is to say, both make use of RF2 in establishing their respective sceptical arguments. Wittgenstein may not share Kripke's agenda in establishing the ontological claim that there are no meaning facts, however, it should be clear from the analysis I offer above that Wittgenstein's sceptical argument does have ontological consequences; specifically, it provides an argument against a realist construal of rules (this is an argument against realism that proceeds primarily upon epistemic considerations concerning what it is to understand and follow rules). Further, it is interesting to note that both also utilise the consideration of RF3 but to different effect. RF3 is pivotal in the Sceptical-Conceptual argument, but Wittgenstein's eventual rejection that RF3 is true (as has been briefed above and will be further explained in Chapter 4, Section V) is a rejection of the paradoxical conclusion of this argument. Kripke, in contrast, motions towards accepting RF3 when he says that there is nothing that distinguishes my meaning plus by 'plus' rather than nothing at all (see Section III above for details).

An important difference between the initial sceptical argument I offer (the Sceptical-Inductive) and Kripke's is the presence of AR**. There is no employment of AR** in Kripke's sceptical argument while for Wittgenstein, AR** is central to the Sceptical-Inductive argument and to the case against the realist. As noted, both begin their arguments with RF2 (indefinitely many courses of action can be made out to accord with any set of instructions; for Kripke, it is that indefinitely many functions can be made out to accord with my past behaviour and conscious recollections of past applications of a rule). Wittgenstein proceeds to argue that our understanding does not transcend an understanding of the

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[58] Wittgenstein does make a similar "factive" point regarding episodes in consciousness as not being the source of meaning; for instance, he does so when he argues that there need be no beetles in the box (no images or mental objects in mind) for me to talk meaningfully of beetles.

instructions available (AR**) and so our understanding of any rule is underdetermined. Presuming that an underdetermined understanding requires a role for interpretation, a paradox ensues. Wittgenstein responds, and this will begin to be discussed in detail in the next chapter, that an underdetermined understanding does not require a role for interpretation. The combination of RF2 and AR** tells us that the correct application of a rule is not fully determined in the understanding (for it is underdetermined by instructions and training). This result is not without positive comparison to Kripke's general programme for it can be read as saying that there are no determined facts about how to correctly apply a rule in unconsidered cases that we understand when we understand a rule (while Kripke's sceptical conclusion, although not quite the same, more severe, and more simply put, is that there are just no meaning facts).

As just noted, both Wittgenstein and Kripke make use of the rule-following consideration that I have labeled 'RF2'. Both sceptical arguments of Wittgenstein's (the Sceptical-Inductive and the Sceptical-Conceptual) employ RF2. RF2, as I have formulated it (and drawn it from *PI* 185), comments on the instructions for a rule: indefinitely many courses of action can be made out to accord with any set of instructions. But Kripke's use adopts a variation. Kripke uses the consideration to apply to past behaviour and mental history: considering these as built of a finite number of instances (just as instructions are considered as a finite number of examples), we see that they are compatible with different functions. This variation in use of RF2 can also be put in these terms: Wittgenstein focuses on the source or medium of understanding, i.e., instructions in a rule, and shows that they underdetermine the rule. On presumption that there is no other source of understanding (i.e., AR**), Wittgenstein is able to conclude that our understanding of a rule is underdetermined. Alternatively, there are indefinitely many ways of proceeding that can be

interpreted to be in accord with what is understood of a rule. Thus, if understanding involves interpretation (i.e., if the underdetermination of our understanding requires a role for interpretation in our grasp of how to follow a rule), then there is no rule-following because there is no basis for settling on an interpretation. Kripke, in contrast, focuses on the seat or reductive base of understanding; his argument is a reductive one. He is out to show that there are no facts about meaning (and understanding) and to do this he argues that there are no facts about past behaviour and mental history that can settle which rule was meant (and again, he later adds a case against dispositions to this).[59] This is not to focus on the source of understanding in the instructions given to us but on the constitutive or factual base of understanding. Wittgenstein's argument is pedagogical and epistemological and it is on this basis that he raises an argument against realism. Kripke's argument, in contrast, is not primarily epistemological with ontological application, but both epistemological and ontological from the start.

VI. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have developed and, to varying extents, defended what I understand to be key rule-following considerations of Wittgenstein's, namely, RF1, RF2, RF3 (although this is rejected as being true by Wittgenstein, as will be further explained in Chapter 4, it is an important consideration for the role it plays in the rule-following arguments) and AR**. I have shown that these considerations play important roles in two separate sceptical arguments: the Sceptical-Inductive and the Sceptical-Conceptual. These arguments share in

[59] Given that Kripke argues that there are no meaning facts by eliminating possible candidates (e.g., in behaviour, mental history, dispositions), he is susceptible to the charge that not all sources of meaning have

common a premise – viz., RF2 – and a paradoxical conclusion – viz., that there is no rule-following – but are nonetheless quite distinct for, besides other premises not in common, they employ markedly different methods of arguing.

Furthermore, I have shown how these considerations, and these arguments, are put in the service of an argument against a realist view of rule-following. As it turns out, parts of both arguments are brought in this service: defending AR** (which is a consideration employed in the first argument and is essential to the case against the realist) draws on a private language argument consideration and defending this latter consideration in a non-verificationist way in turn involves a case utilising RF3 (a consideration employed in the second sceptical argument). It is observed that RF3 is true or holds in private contexts and therefore for intuition. As it is part of the second sceptical argument that where RF3 holds true, there is no rule-following, it follows that there is no private rule-following or following of intuitions. As explained, this means that our understanding of rules is not explanation-transcendent (i.e., in violation of AR**) and so a realist construal of what it is to understand and follow rules (at least insofar as this involves a commitment to an explanation-transcendent understanding) cannot be maintained. In sum, S1, S2 and S3 of the Sceptical-Inductive argument provide a case against rule-realism; but defending S2 of this argument (i.e., AR**) draws on the line of argument of C3, C4 and C5 of the Sceptical-Conceptual argument (which is also the argument of *PI* 201). The two arguments, presented as separate arguments, with different premises and employing different ways of arguing, exhibit a dependence when looked at more closely (for a premise of one argument finds support in the other argument). In the Appendix to this chapter I provide a more general account of how it is that this key private language argument consideration is supported, in a non-

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been duly considered. I will discuss this line of objection in the next chapter and note that it does not apply to

verificationist way, in the line of argument of the Sceptical-Conceptual argument, found in *PI* 201.

In addition, I have presented Kripke's sceptical argument and, to a lesser extent, his sceptical solution and compared this to Wittgenstein's sceptical arguments. We have seen that both arguments build on similar considerations (especially RF2), albeit with differing employment, while other considerations (e.g., AR**) are not shared. Kripke's sceptical argument, Wittgensteinian in origin as it is, is not the same as either of the two sceptical arguments presented as Wittgenstein's own, despite the noted similarities. This does not at all diminish the point, as I have shown, that there are sceptical arguments to be discerned from the rule-following remarks. Finally, it should be highlighted that Kripke's overall perspective of Wittgenstein's rule-following remarks – as containing both a negative and positive agenda – is one that I believe to be correct and is one that I will continue to expose through the coming chapters. In this chapter, I have focussed on the negative agenda.

Wittgenstein's sceptical arguments presented here.

– APPENDIX –

Rule-Following And The Private Language Argument

In this Appendix, I make a general case of a point made earlier. It was earlier argued that we can defend AR**, using a private language argument consideration and that this can be done in a non-verificationist way. This is because the noted private language argument consideration is itself borne out by the argument of *PI* 201 (that is, by the argument that claims that if RF3 holds, then there is no rule-following). It is this defense of the private language argument – which I submit as Wittgenstein's defense – that I will attend to, in more general terms, here.

PI 202 states, "And hence, 'obeying a rule' is a practice. And to *think* one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately': otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it." *PI* 202 draws two conclusions following on the argument of *PI* 201. These are: one, rule-following is a practice (or involves a custom), and two (which I will express as a conditional), if a distinction between what seems to be the correct way to follow a rule and what is the correct way cannot be made, then one cannot lay claim to following a rule correctly (i.e., following a rule at all). I will focus on the second conclusion.

This second conclusion is the crux of the private language argument. It is criticised as a verificationist requirement (for rule-following, in this case) because it seems to say that we must be able to verify that our claim to follow a rule correctly involves more than it just seeming to us that we are following it correctly. That is, we must be able to justify – to the extent of being able to make the distinction – our claim to understand and follow a rule correctly. This is an epistemic requirement that requires that we must know something else

(involving some correctness criterion) in virtue of which we may say that we know, rather than just seem to know, that we follow a rule correctly. But this is criticised as verificationist. Consider someone who claims to "just know" that they follow a rule correctly without being able to make this distinction, say in virtue of a private source of understanding or an intuition. For this person any requirement that he must be able to make this distinction is unwarranted verificationism. It effectively begs the question against any claim to just know how to follow a rule from an intuition or private source of understanding.[60]

Notice that this person – who I will call a 'private rule-follower' – does not deny that he cannot make this distinction (for this is characteristic of the private case), but he does deny that such a distinction *must* be able to be made to follow a rule. Indeed, since the lack of this distinction is characteristic of the private case, to simply require that such a distinction is needed begs the question against the private rule-follower. I will give a non-verificationist argument for why there is no private rule-following (or intuition-following). This argument will not contend that the private rule-follower must be able to make this distinction (as an epistemic requirement of rule-following), but rather, any situation characterised by the lack of this distinction (as is the private case) is a situation in which there is no rule-following (and this follows as a conceptual – or perhaps transcendental – requirement of what it is to follow a rule).

The first point to note is that this "crux of the private-language argument" (or what I describe above as the second conclusion drawn in *PI* 202) is established prior to any consideration or discussion of privacy. That is, this "crux" can be expressed as a conditional (Conditional Two below), and it is in virtue of the antecedent of this conditional being true

[60] Following Wittgenstein, I treat intuition as a private source of understanding. See above for details.

of the private case that there is no rule-following in the private case (i.e., no private rule-following). I will argue that this "crux", in its conditional form, holds because of its connection to another conditional expressed in *PI* 201. Hence, there are two conditionals under view which can be expressed as follows:

Conditional One: **If any or every course of action can be made out to accord with a rule, then no course of action is determined by a rule (and hence, there is no rule-following).**

Conditional Two: **If a distinction between what seems to be the correct way to follow a rule and what is the correct way cannot be made, then one cannot lay claim to following a rule correctly (i.e., following a rule at all).**

Conditional One is familiar. The antecedent is RF3 (and thus is the same as the antecedent of C3 in the Sceptical-Conceptual Argument). The consequent is in line with C4 of the Sceptical-Conceptual Argument (and the conclusion in the parentheses is C5). I have already shown that the conclusion of the Sceptical-Conceptual Argument (that there is no rule-following) follows from RF3 and that it does so non-epistemically (i.e., it follows as a conceptual result; this is a contrast between the Sceptical-Inductive Argument and the Sceptical-Conceptual Argument).[61] Hence, it is already shown that Conditional One is true.[62] And this is to say that if RF3 holds, then there is no rule-following.

The consequents of Conditional One and Conditional Two say much the same thing, viz., that there is no rule-following. Establishing that Conditional Two is true, in this argument, will involve making manifest the connection between the antecedents of the two

[61] I refer the reader to the discussion of the Sceptical-Conceptual Argument above for details in order to avoid unnecessary repetition here.

conditionals (and so in subsuming Conditional Two under Conditional One). I will argue that a situation in which a distinction between what seems to be the correct way to follow a rule and what is the correct way cannot be made (i.e., the antecedent of Conditional Two) *is* a situation in which any or every course of action can be made out to accord with a rule, or with the instructions for a rule (i.e., the antecedent of Conditional One). That is, a situation in which this noted distinction between what seems to be and what is the correct way to follow a rule cannot be made is a situation in which RF3 holds. But then this means that if the antecedent of Conditional Two holds, then there is no rule-following (for this is the consequent of Conditional One). Once again, if the antecedent of Conditional Two holds, then (as I will argue) this implies that the antecedent of Conditional One holds, and since (as I have already argued above) the consequent of Conditional One follows from the antecedent of Conditional One, it follows that the consequent of Conditional Two holds if the antecedent of Conditional Two holds. And this is to say that there is no rule-following if a distinction between what seems to be and what is the correct way to follow a rule cannot be made. Since this describes the private case, it follows that there is no private rule-following.

Further, just as the consequent of Conditional One follows from its antecedent in a non-verificationist way (as argued in the Sceptical-Conceptual Argument above; it follows as a conceptual result), likewise the consequent of Conditional Two follows from its antecedent in a non-verificationist way. That is, what we do here, by way of arguing for Conditional Two (the "crux" of the private language argument given in *PI* 202) by subsuming it under

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[62] In saying that Conditional One is "true" (and, for that matter, in arguing for the truth of Conditional Two), I only mean to say that if the antecedent is true then the consequent is true, i.e., that the consequent follows from the antecedent or that the antecedent is a sufficient condition for the consequent.

Conditional One (the argument given in *PI* 201), is achieve a non-verificationist defense of the private language argument.

The situation in which a distinction between what seems to be the correct way to follow a rule and what is the correct way cannot be made *is* a situation in which any or every course of action can be made out to accord with a rule. If an individual cannot strike a difference between the correct way to follow a rule and what seems to him to be the correct way then there is nothing determining what this person will believe to be in accord with a rule apart from what seems to him to be correct. To say that this distinction is lacking is to say that there are no independent norms that serve to guide the individual in determining the correct way to follow a rule. But in such a situation, any way of proceeding can be found to be correct (for there are no restrictions on what can seem to be correct except, perhaps, what is conceivable). Indeed, in this situation, if there were a restriction on what can seem to be correct, it would involve another seeming – it would be a restriction that only seems to apply. But then we may say, thus starting a regress, that any way of proceeding can seem to be correct to this further seeming. And so, if correctness is just what seems to be correct, any way of proceeding, conceivably, can be made out to be correct; there are no limitations on what can seem to be the case that are not seeming limitations. Thus, when this distinction cannot be made (and we are guided only by what seems to be the case), it is possible that any course of action be found to accord with a rule, and this is to say that RF3 holds. But again, according to Conditional One, if RF3 holds (i.e., if any course of action can be made out to accord with a rule or set of instructions) then we have no rule-following or instruction-following.

We may make the case with an illustration: consider the scenario of two deviant pupils. The first is the deviant pupil of *PI* 185. His rule-following behaviour is incorrect but

still consistent with (in the way of being a consistent interpretation of) the instructions given to him. Hence, he provides an exemplification of RF2. The second pupil, upon being given the same instructions, proceeds to jump up and down. Let us assume that he is not joking or proceeding in code or acting this way for some other reason (i.e., that he is sincerely reacting to the instructions given to him). This second pupil's behaviour, in contrast to the first, is not even consistent with the underdetermining instructions. He does not exemplify RF2. He shows no understanding of the instructions given whatsoever. One way of making this point is to say that he makes no distinction between what the instructions tell him to do and what he wants to do. If this second pupil were to respond similarly to the first in *PI* 185 and say, "Yes, isn't it right, that was how I thought I was meant to do it", then we should say that he does not appreciate the correct way to follow the rule as involving anything more than what seems to him to be correct. In this second case, we should say that there are no instructions for this second pupil because the "instructions" we give him offer no instruction; they do not function as instructions for they do not guide; they do not serve to determine his ensuing course of action in any way. And as Wittgenstein argues in *PI* 201 (and as has been defended earlier), if no course of action is determined by the instructions for a rule, then we have no following of those instructions. More simply, if no course of action is determined by a rule, there is no following of the rule.

In the case of the first pupil, the instructions do serve to determine – to some extent – the course of action the pupil adopts (even though he proceeds incorrectly). In this first case, we can say that there is a distinction at work between what seems to him to be correct and what is correct because the instructions serve in determining what he comes to see as the correct way to follow the rule; that is, even though he proceeds incorrectly, we see that he is guided, to some extent, by something outwith himself. In the case of the second pupil,

we see the antecedent of Conditional Two in play and with it, the antecedent of Conditional One. The instructions do not serve in determining the course of action the pupil adopts at all. This course of action is determined solely within the individual (i.e., without any influence such that his view of what is correct is guided by or determined by something outwith himself and which would thereby serve to show a distinction in play between what he thinks is correct and what is correct). This second pupil is able to find any way of proceeding as in accord with the instructions, in this case jumping up and down, precisely because the correct way to proceed is not at all determined by the instructions but solely by himself; solely by what seems to him to be appropriate. This is a situation in which there is no distinction between what seems correct and what is correct at work (for if there were a distinction at work then the rule or instructions in the rule would have some normative impact in determining the correct way to proceed; for the instructions to serve in determining the correct way to proceed requires that the correct way to follow a rule, to some extent, stand independent of what is thought to be the correct way). And thus, this is a situation in which any way of proceeding can be found to be in accord with the rule or instructions in the rule (and therefore, there is no following of the rule or following of the instructions in the rule).

In sum, a situation aptly characterized by the lack of a seems right/is right distinction is a situation in which RF3 holds. This is because a situation in which this distinction is not available at all is a situation in which any course of action can seem to be correct; it is a situation in which any course of action can be made out to accord with a rule. Furthermore, we may add that this case is independent of the exegetical case that Conditional Two, presented in *PI* 202, is expressed as following from the sceptical argument of *PI* 201 on a straightforward reading of both remarks.

The antecedent of Conditional Two holds in the private case (for in the private case one cannot establish a difference between proceeding correctly and seeming to proceed correctly). Again, the private rule-follower or intuition-follower does not deny that this distinction cannot be made, only that it need be made; that it is a verificationist requirement that it need be made. But since the antecedent of Conditional Two holds in the private case, the consequent that there is no private rule-following (or intuition-following) also holds (and that this is not a verificationist result). The consequent of Conditional Two follows from the antecedent as a conceptual truth but this is not clear without drawing a connection between it and the Sceptical-Conceptual Argument given in *PI* 201. In conclusion, this Appendix defends that the crux of the private language argument is a result of the sceptical considerations found in the rule-following remarks and as a consequence, the former can be defended in a non-verificationist way.

CHAPTER 3

The Reductio-Reading:

A Transit-Point from Negative to Positive Programmes.

I. Introduction

Criticisms of Kripke's sceptical argument and sceptical solution can be broadly divided, as one may expect, into those that focus on the argument and those that focus on the solution. With regard to the latter, the attempt has been to show that Kripke's argument admits of a straight solution. This attempt itself, as Hale describes, falls into two camps: the first, "aimed at naturalistic solution – have been attempts to uphold some more or less sophisticated version of dispositional theory, or to show that a broadly causal account of meaning and/or reference escapes the sceptical argument. It has also been claimed that even if Kripke's objections are effective against a dispositional account, they do not dispose of the view that an expression's having a certain meaning consists in its being associated with an appropriate capacity. Others – the second group – take issue with what they see as a substantial reductionist assumption underpinning the sceptical argument, and have accordingly sought to defend the view that semantic facts, or closely related facts about intentions, need not be reducible to facts of some other naturalistic kind."[1] It should be observed that these points do not apply to the sceptical arguments, drawn directly from Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following, that I developed in the Chapter 2. These arguments, drawn from the text, do not build on the elimination of candidate sources of meaning facts and so are not susceptible to the charge that not all candidate sources have been duly considered; they do not make mention of dispositions as a source of meaning facts let alone make an argument against dispositional theories of meaning and so are not susceptible to the charge that a sophisticated dispositional theory (or a theory involving capacities, c.f., McGinn) is not adequately represented in an argument against dispositional

[1] Hale [1997], p. 374.

theories. It may be that, in the words of Boghossian, "The single most important strand in the [i.e., Kripke's] sceptical argument consists in the considerations against dispositional theories of meaning."[2] But this strength of Kripke's argument is not a strength of Wittgenstein's (at least directly so). In view of this, objections to Kripke's "considerations against dispositional theories of meaning" are not objections to Wittgenstein's arguments. Furthermore, it is not part of Wittgenstein's arguments, presented in the second chapter, that meaning facts, if there were to be any, must be reducible to some naturalistic kind. And so, Wittgenstein's arguments are not susceptible to the (anti-reductionist) charge that there can be meaning facts that are not reducible to facts naturalistically construed. There is no reductionist assumption about what must constitute meaning facts in the arguments of the second chapter and so there is no such assumption that needs to be defended. Accordingly, I will not address these lines of objection for they do not speak to the arguments raised in the second chapter. These arguments, while bearing some broad similarity, are different than Kripke's. Some objections to Kripke's argument hit on these differences and so fail to mark these arguments of Chapter 2. Other objections hit on the similarities and so need to be addressed.[3]

With this in mind, the second main line of criticism has focussed on the sceptical argument with one eye on exegesis. This is the objection that, although considerations raised in the rule-following remarks seem to lead to a sceptical conclusion, this conclusion is not one that Wittgenstein endorses. This is an objection that Kripke flatly ignores the second half of *PI* 201, the remark wherein Kripke finds expression of his paradox, where Wittgenstein asserts that the line of reasoning that leads to the paradox rests on a

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[2] Boghossian [1989], p. 528.

[3] For a fuller account of how these sceptical arguments, which draw closely on the text of Wittgenstein, differ from Kripke's see Section V of Chapter 2.

misunderstanding. Wittgenstein herein states: "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)

It is important to note that this line of objection does not aim to be merely exegetical. If it were it would not be a philosophically interesting objection; its interest would end with an interest in exegesis. Indeed, since Kripke is not even claiming a direct and full attribution to Wittgenstein for his argument, if the objection were merely exegetical then at best it would only establish what Kripke is already half-way admitting (when Kripke says that the argument he gives is not Wittgenstein's and not Kripke's but "Wittgenstein's argument as it struck Kripke" he is admitting that his argument is not fully exegetically accountable).

Rather the objection aims to be more interesting. The objection makes the point that Kripke's sceptical argument, at least somewhat sourced in Wittgenstein's rule-following remarks, fails to take stock of what Wittgenstein is trying to achieve in raising these sceptical considerations; he fails to see the end to which these sceptical considerations are put. That is, Kripke fails to see that Wittgenstein uses the sceptical considerations to argue, by *reductio ad absurdum*, against the assumption that leads us down a sceptical path. This is the assumption that understanding how to follow a rule involves an act of interpretation. And so the objection makes the point that Kripke fails to learn Wittgenstein's lesson and is consequently of more than mere exegetical interest. This is an objection that should weigh more on the sceptical arguments presented in the second chapter (i.e., the Sceptical-

Inductive and Sceptical-Conceptual) for these are, after all, claimed as Wittgenstein's own. Indeed, we see in both arguments references to 'interpretation'. For instance, RF2, a premise of both arguments, upholds that there are indefinitely many courses of action that can be interpreted to be in accord with a rule; and RF3, part of the Sceptical-Conceptual argument, that any or every course of action can be interpreted to be in accord. Also, it is a premise of the Sceptical-Inductive argument that if our understanding of a rule is underdetermined, then we must interpret the rule in order to follow it (this is premise S4). Thus, the reductio-reading of Wittgenstein's sceptical argument(s) – according to which there must be a way to grasp a rule that is not an interpretation – deserves careful consideration and this will be the main preoccupation of this chapter.

In addition, it should be made clear that dissenters from Kripke's reading, with the objection of the reductio-reading in hand, are not putting in doubt that there is a sceptical argument to be gleaned from the rule-following remarks. Rather, the difference of opinion lies in the use to which these sceptical considerations are put. Kripke claims that they are raised to argue for a sceptical conclusion; a sceptical solution is then the consolation offered. Dissenters contend that the sceptical argument is used to argue against the assumption which leads to the sceptical conclusion. This is not just a difference of exegesis but of the import and use of the sceptical considerations. I will not deny that the reductio-reading has merit, for it surely does. What I will do is offer a more accurate view of the premise that is to be rejected and, in doing so, note that this rejection is not dismissive of a negative impact to the sceptical considerations.

II. The Reductio-Reading

II. i. A "Misunderstanding" in the Works

To begin with, consider the following presentations of this objection against Kripke's argument by various key authors. First, in comment to Kripke, McDowell looks to *PI* 201, where Kripke finds expression of the sceptical paradox, and has this to say of the remark (specifically of the second paragraph):

> This looks like a proposal, not for a "sceptical solution" to a "sceptical paradox" locked into place by an irrefutable argument, as in Kripke's reading, but for a "straight solution": a solution that works by finding fault with the reasoning that leads to the paradox. The paradox Wittgenstein mentions at the beginning of this passage is not something we have to accept and find a way to live with, but something we can expose as based on a "misunderstanding".

Speaking to this "misunderstanding", McDowell has this further to say,

> The villain of the piece, Wittgenstein here suggests, is the idea that the notion of accord could be available in the way we need only by courtesy of an application for the notion of interpretation…If we can manage to follow Wittgenstein's direction to think of grasp of a rule that is not an interpretation, that will ensure that we do not even start on the regress of interpretations.[4]

Elsewhere McDowell states,

> But what Wittgenstein clearly claims, in the second paragraph of §201, is that the reasoning [that leads to the sceptical paradox] is vitiated by 'a misunderstanding'. The right response to the paradox, Wittgenstein in effect tells us, is not to accept it but to correct the misunderstanding on which it depends: that is, to realise 'that there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation*.'[5]

This last claim, that there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation, is what McDowell calls the 'master thesis'. This master thesis is the point of dissent in this line of

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[4] McDowell [1998b], p. 267.
[5] McDowell [1984], p. 331.

objection to Kripke. Consider some other respondents to Kripke who draw the same point. With regard to the second paragraph of *PI* 201, Pears has the following to say:

> The first sentence of this continuation makes it perfectly clear that the argument is a *reductio* and not the sceptical complaint that Kripke takes it to be. For the idea that is being criticised is said to be the result of a misunderstanding. The meaning of a sentence can never be completely determined by another sentence which interprets it and this impossibility is misunderstood by those who hope to overcome it by interpreting the interpretation and continuing in this way until a complete verbal determination of the meaning of the original sentence has been achieved.[6]

Again, in like manner, Colin McGinn speaking about the second (and third paragraphs) of *PI* 201, which he says Kripke "signally fails to quote, or even to heed", says the following,

> There are two things to notice about this passage which give the lie to Kripke's interpretation. First, Wittgenstein makes it clear immediately that the stated paradox arises from a 'misunderstanding', i.e., a false presupposition; so he cannot really be *endorsing* the paradox, as Hume embraces his own sceptical claims about causation. Second, when we ask what the misunderstanding is we are told that it is the mistake of assuming that grasping a rule is placing an interpretation upon a sign, i.e., associating it with another sign – an assumption which Wittgenstein thinks we are by no means compelled to make. In other words, Wittgenstein is putting forward the paradox as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the interpretational conception; it is the inevitable result of that particular misunderstanding about the nature of grasp of a rule...If there is one key oversight in Kripke's exposition of Wittgenstein, it is that of ignoring what Wittgenstein says in 201 straight after stating the paradox.[7]

And lastly and succinctly, Baker and Hacker,

> What has been rejected in §201 is not the truism that rules guide action... Rather, what is repudiated is the suggestion that a rule determines an action as being in accord with it only in virtue of an interpretation.[8]

Kripke's lapse would seem to be one of overlooking the obvious with regard to the remainder of *PI* 201. Certainly, there is at least exegetical error here. I will now turn to these considerations, raised by McDowell *et al*, and explain their bearing on the arguments of the previous chapter.

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[6] Pears [1988], p. 467.
[7] McGinn [1984], p. 69.
[8] Baker and Hacker [1984a], p. 20.

II. ii. The Master Thesis and the Rejection of a Premise

To remind, there were two sceptical arguments presented in the previous chapter as Wittgenstein's own: the Sceptical-Inductive and Sceptical-Conceptual. They share a paradoxical conclusion and a common first premise: RF2. Accordingly, if a paradoxical conclusion is to be taken as grounds for rejecting a premise, then RF2 should be the first suspect (for rejecting RF2 would allow us to deal with both arguments with a common motion). I will now explore this possibility (i.e., whether the "master thesis" requires a rejection of RF2).

It is clear that Wittgenstein asserts the master thesis in *PI* 201. However, it also seems clear that RF2 is promoted in the case of the deviant pupil in *PI* 185. If RF2 is to be rejected then not only must *PI* 185 be plausibly reread but the argument presented in favour of RF2 must be adequately refuted. But we need not go to this length (which would anyway just rehash the exegetical and philosophical case for RF2 presented in the previous chapter) in order to show that RF2 is not denied with the adoption of the master thesis. According to RF2, indefinitely many courses of action *can be interpreted* to accord with the instructions for a rule. Notice that this does not say that indefinitely many courses of action *are in* accord with the instructions for a rule which, obviously, would raise a prohibiting difficulty for following the instructions. But if we must interpret in order to understand the instructions for a rule (and so understand how to follow a rule), then we face this difficulty of having to choose among indefinitely many consistent interpretations (i.e., we are led into an inductive problem with RF2 only if understanding a rule involves interpretation). But this is just what the master thesis denies (i.e., that we must interpret a rule or its instructions in order to understand how to follow the rule or instructions). Thus, we see that the master thesis has

no difficulty with RF2 (i.e., RF2 takes us to a paradox only if the master thesis is rebuffed; upholding the master thesis together with RF2 does not take us to a paradox or involve a contradiction and so treating the sceptical argument as a reductio in favour of the master thesis does not present grounds for rejecting RF2). Further, we may add that RF3 is similar to RF2 in that it upholds that any or every course of action *can be interpreted* to be in accord with a rule (and not that any or every course of action *is* in accord). Hence, again we see that it is only if understanding what is in accord with a rule involves interpretation that RF3 is implicated in denying the master thesis; but since this is precisely what the master thesis rejects, RF3 does not contravene the master thesis. Thus, if the master thesis is to be the basis for the rejection of a premise, it would involve neither RF2 nor RF3. That is, the moral of the sceptical argument of *PI* 201 – the master thesis – is not at odds with the key consideration of *PI* 185: RF2. The master thesis must find another premise to reject.

Let us look again to the Sceptical-Inductive argument first presented in Chapter Two[9]:

S1. Instructions cannot but underdetermine a rule. [from the case for RF2]

S2. The understanding of a rule does not transcend an understanding of an explanation of or instructions in the rule. [from AR]**

S3. Therefore, the understanding of a rule is underdetermined.

S4. An underdetermined understanding of a rule requires that the rule be interpreted to be understood (and followed).

S5. But if a rule must be interpreted to be understood (and followed), then we fall prey to a sceptical paradox.

S6. Therefore, we fall prey to a sceptical paradox (alternatively, there is no rule-following).

S1 (and with it RF2, as just described) is not a candidate for rejection. And neither is S2 (i.e., AR**): this premise has been defended, exegetically and argumentatively, at length in the previous chapter (and what is more, AR** makes no mention of 'interpretation' and so viewing the sceptical argument as a reductio against AR** would involve the added difficulty of squaring this rejection with the master thesis). RF2 and AR**, or S1 and S2, together tell us that our understanding of a rule is underdetermined (for it is limited to an understanding of underdetermining instructions); and this conclusion is S3. I have earlier claimed that S4 is the target of the reductio reading. Now it seems that we have no other choice.[10] S4 claims that since our understanding of a rule is underdetermined (from S3), we must interpret the rule to follow it. S4, in requiring a role for interpretation in our grasp of a rule, contradicts the master thesis. Thus, S4 is the obvious and only choice.

But S4 is not simply rejected. If our understanding of a rule is not of it as fully determined, then it seems that our understanding of a rule is incomplete; it seems that we cannot avoid forming hypotheses or interpretations about how to proceed in following a rule if we are drawing on an underdetermined understanding (for we must bridge an epistemic gap – with an interpretation – between an underdetermined understanding of a rule to a correct and unique application of the rule). The underlying view here is that RF2 and AR** (or S1 and S2) pose an epistemic problem: given that indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to be in accord with what is given to us in the way of explanation for a rule, how is it that we come to know a unique way (let alone the correct way) to proceed? It seems that all we can know of a rule, given that we are constrained in our

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[9] Wittgenstein's response to the Sceptical-Conceptual argument will be dealt with in the next chapter.
[10] Assuming that if a rule must be interpreted to be understood, then we fall into a paradox (i.e., assuming S5 is not the target of the reductio). I take this point already well defended in the second chapter. This point is also made, borrowing from McDowell's favoured characterisation of this paradox, when it is noted that if

understanding to an understanding of instructions and explanations, is an interpretation of the rule. That is, the instructions and explanations given do not determine (can read here "justify") a unique way of following the rule, and as a consequence, it seems that all we can do, in doing our epistemic best, is try to interpret the instructions and explanations according to some unique course of action.[11] And hence, if we do manage to adopt the correct course of action, it seems that we do so through luck rather than an act of understanding (to borrow terminology from Wright, we seem to "latch on" or "cotton on" to the correct way of following a rule from underdetermining instructions). But if it is not an act of understanding that takes us to the correct way of following a rule – if any informed choice is ultimately arbitrary – then we should not say that we "follow" the rule. Of course, this is again to make the case, in barely altered guise, of the Sceptical-Inductive argument.

The master thesis does not tell us how it is that we do not have to interpret, only that there must be a way to grasp a rule without interpreting. It may be that the absurdity of the conclusion of the Sceptical-Inductive argument is enough grounds for the rejection of a premise, and that S4 is the only candidate, but this is not so far to say how it is that we can come to grasp a rule without interpreting. Again, it seems that any course of action we adopt in following a rule would be arbitrary because when we turn to explain why we opted for that course of action, the explanation we offer (and any explanation we could offer) will not determine that course of action to uniqueness (i.e., there will be indefinitely many ways of proceeding that can be made out to be consistent with the explanation we offer – in that they can be interpreted to accord with that explanation – and so any explanation we offer for

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understanding a rule is or involves an act of interpretation then we are led into a regress for this interpretation must also be correctly understood; see Chapter 2 for details.

[11] The underdetermination of our understanding of a rule is the reason, or at least a reason, for finding the interpretative view of what it is to understand a rule compelling; it provides a reason for thinking that the master thesis is wrong.

the course of action we choose to adopt would seem to betray an arbitrariness in the choice). But if our understanding of why we follow a rule as we do is arbitrary in this way; if it is consistent with following the rule in indefinitely many other ways, then we should not say that we understand why we follow the rule in the particular way we do. The course of action we adopt, it seems here, is no more than an interpretation of the rule which we cannot justify over indefinitely many other interpretations. This situation, if it holds, is certainly dire. The master thesis tries to lead a way out: it says that because we do not have to interpret a rule to understand it, we do not face the possibility of indefinitely many courses of action when grasping a rule (for RF2 tells us only that indefinitely many courses of action *can be interpreted* to accord with a rule and so, if there is a way to grasp the rule without interpreting, there is a way to grasp it without having to face or canvass through indefinitely many courses of action). But so far it is not said how it is that we can just take up the master thesis. This is a difficult case and requires, I believe, first building Wittgenstein's views on rationality (for it requires making Wittgenstein's case that in coming to understand how to follow a rule, we can be successfully guided by reasons that run short of justifying a unique course of action). I will tackle this in the next chapter. At this point I will consider the response that it is in virtue of a knowledge of the relevant custom that we know the correct way to follow a rule even though our understanding of the rule is underdetermined by instructions in the rule.

II. iii. The Master Thesis and the Appeal to Custom

The appeal to an understanding of custom or practice is thought to secure the master thesis: we need not interpret the instructions for a rule because we have an understanding of the

custom for how such instructions are to be understood; perhaps, we may say, we have an understanding of the *spirit* in which the instructions are to be taken which suffices to dispel the indeterminacy that arises with a *literal* understanding of the instructions. This view of securing the master thesis seems to carry two noteworthy presumptions. First, if our understanding of a rule is not of it as fully determined then the master thesis cannot be secured (i.e., we cannot maintain that we do not have to interpret in order to know how to correctly follow a rule if our understanding of the rule is underdetermined). Second, it is an understanding of the relevant custom that serves to secure a determinate understanding of the rule. As will be shown, neither presumption holds. In brief, and as regards the first presumption, it will be argued in the next chapter that Wittgenstein's view that we can follow a rule rationally even if without reasons (or without sufficient reason to justify the course of action taken) gives an answer to how it is that we can follow a rule from an underdetermined understanding (without recourse to interpretation). With regard to the second presumption, again in brief, it is in conflict with AR**. According to AR**, the understanding of a rule does not transcend an understanding of instructions or explanations. Hence, an understanding of a custom for following a rule of a certain type cannot answer how it is we follow a rule from an underdetermined understanding for the understanding of the relevant custom (a rule itself, as we will see) is underdetermined for it is learned through media that cannot but underdetermine the custom (this will be discussed just below). Advocates of the master thesis who appeal to an understanding of custom in order to secure determination in our understanding of a rule pursue an unsuccessful argument for the master thesis as well as misplacing Wittgenstein's dialectic. McDowell is just such an advocate and I will be discussing his views on custom and, in the following section, more generally on the master thesis and the sceptical argument.

The attempt to argue for the master thesis by an appeal to an understanding of custom or practice maintains that there are other sources of understanding (viz., our understanding of the relevant custom) besides the understanding of the instructions for a rule which we bring to our understanding of a rule. However, even though we may fairly admit that an understanding of a rule is not limited to the understanding of the content of the instructions given for the rule; that our understanding of the custom for following rules of this type contributes to our understanding of the rule, it is another thing entirely to admit that the understanding of custom is not itself gained from instructions or training in the custom. This would violate AR**. The case for AR** was pursued to some length in the second chapter and so here I will just assert that the master thesis cannot be secured through a rejection of AR**; that an understanding of custom, as this involves an understanding of a rule, cannot be explanation or instruction-transcendent.

Wittgenstein certainly seems to admit that an understanding of the relevant custom, practice or the regular application of a rule is integral to understanding how to follow a rule (and to do so without interpreting).[12] Insofar as someone has an understanding of how rules of a given type are regularly followed, that is, insofar as he has an understanding of the custom for following rules of this type, then indefinitely many courses of action need not present themselves as equally in accord with his understanding of the rule. This understanding of custom or practice is an aid to his understanding of the instructions such that he need not interpret or form hypotheses over the instructions. An understanding of the relevant custom is an understanding of how the instructions are themselves to be understood (it is an understanding of the norm for following instructions of this type). It is thus understandable to suppose that although any set of instructions may underdetermine a

rule, with an understanding of the relevant custom for following instructions of this sort, our understanding of the rule need not be underdetermined. For instance, it is because I am familiar with the "institution" or "custom" of pointing that when given the instruction of someone pointing out a direction to me I need not wonder whether he means for me to follow the direction of his fingertip to wrist, or the direction of his thumb, etc., in order to understand his instruction. The instructions do not strike me as underdetermining or indeterminate, and so there is no need to interpret when grasping the rule from the instructions. Likewise, what is missing for the deviant pupil of *PI* 185 is an understanding of how such instructions, given as a finite series of numbers to be continued, are usually followed. If the pupil had this understanding, he would have been able to follow the rule from the instructions given to him. The course of action of continuing on to 1004 from 1000 would not present itself as in accord with the instructions he received for he would share our understanding, an understanding of a custom or practice, for how these series are normally continued from a finite set of examples.

We may readily admit that if a person has a correct understanding of the relevant custom then he will, or be in a better position to, understand how to correctly follow a rule upon provision of a set of instructions. But again, it remains to be answered how the correct understanding of the custom is arrived at if any instruction or training we receive cannot but underdetermine the custom. Eventually, the problem of how we come to understand how to correctly follow a rule from underdetermining instructions, and do so without interpreting, must be answered (and answered in a way that does not make an appeal to an understanding of other rules, such as those pertaining to customs).

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[12] We observe Wittgenstein, in *PI* 197, 198, 199, and elsewhere, employ the notions of custom and practice as involving intersubstitutable cognates.

There are two important points regarding custom that, while already made in the course of discussion, need to be made conspicuous. First, an understanding of a custom or practice is itself an understanding of a rule. It is an understanding of how rules of a given type (rules for continuing arithmetical series say, or rules for following directions) are normally followed. And so, in short, what is being appealed to in the invocation of custom is an understanding of a rule for following other rules. Second, these rules are thus more basic rules; they are norms that govern the following of less basic rules and so must be understood (logically) prior to understanding the less basic rule. And so there is at least this hierarchy to rules. There are rules (rules of custom, as they have been called here) that must be understood in order that other rules be correctly grasped and followed.[13]

Accordingly, since a custom is itself a rule (albeit a rule for following rules, a more basic rule), it can be brought under the bearing of the above Sceptical-Inductive argument. That is, and as indicated just above, by RF2 and AR** (or S1 and S2), the understanding of a custom, any custom, is underdetermined. Thus, an appeal to custom cannot solve the problem of how it is that we can correctly grasp and follow a rule despite an underdetermined understanding because the understanding of a custom is also underdetermined. The problem is only set back a step: we now ask how it is that we can correctly grasp and follow the custom despite an underdetermined understanding of the custom (i.e., despite an understanding gained from underdetermining instructions and training). And of course this means that an appeal to custom cannot be the basis for the rejection of premise S4 above (for any such appeal would beg the question). Indeed, it is

[13] I recognize that I have described this hierarchy as involving types. For instance, to understand the particular instruction of someone pointing out a direction, you must already understand the customs that govern the giving of instructions of this type. But this is not to admit that rules find themselves in a rigid type-hierarchy; that is, it is not admitted that all rules stand in a type-token relationship to one another. Nonetheless, there is

subject to S4: S4 tells us a custom must be interpreted to be followed. And so, an appeal to custom cannot secure the master thesis (or at least, it cannot be the whole story). And of course, an appeal to a further, more basic custom (as an appeal to an even more basic rule) would lead only to an unsatisfying regress.

So far we have it that securing the master thesis does not involve a rejection of S1 above (or RF2), and so an appeal to custom should not (even if it could) enable the rejection of S1 (or RF2). Also, securing the master thesis through an appeal to custom cannot be had if it involves a rejection of S2 above (for this would involve rejecting AR**). But an appeal to custom, as just shown, is also not a basis for the rejection of S4 above (the premise I have argued that Wittgenstein aims to reject with the master thesis). In sum, the master thesis is not secured through an appeal to custom; the appeal to custom does not provide a way out of the above Sceptical-Inductive argument. Indeed, Wittgenstein, while he admits that an understanding of custom plays a role in our being able to understand and follow a particular rule without being beset by indeterminacy in the instructions for that rule, he does not likewise admit that an appeal to custom plays a role in defending the master thesis. Indeed, the contrary seems to be the case. Wittgenstein begins *PI* 202 by concluding that following a rule is a practice (and so, it would seem, involve a custom). He says, "And hence, 'obeying a rule' is a practice". But if this is a conclusion (and it is so indicated by the 'hence') then it is a conclusion of the argument of *PI* 201 (i.e., of the sceptical argument of *PI* 201). That is, that following a rule involves a practice or custom is presented as a conclusion of the sceptical argument given in the first paragraph of *PI* 201 and the master thesis, which is a result – by *reductio* – of this sceptical argument and given in the second paragraph of *PI* 201. Hence, straightforwardly read, the role of custom or practice in rule-following is not invoked as

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some hierarchy to speak of wherein some rules are basic to the understanding of other rules. At least some of

grounds for accepting the master thesis but is portrayed as a consequence of the master thesis already taken as established.[14]

A last further note about AR** as it bears on custom. AR**, discussed in the second chapter (as the second premise of the Sceptical-Inductive argument) tells us that our understanding of a rule does not transcend an understanding of the instructions in and explanations of the rule (not even I understand more of a rule than what I can offer, by way of explanation, to someone who I am training in the rule). This applies also to basic rules or rules for following rules. But often, there is no direct instruction or training in basic rules; a custom is often grasped in the process of coming to grasp the instructions for a specific rule that falls under that custom. Instruction or training in more basic rules is often indirect for the reason that it proceeds via direct instruction in less basic rules. For instance, an understanding of the custom for following the instructions regarding the continuation of arithmetical series is acquired, or at least may be acquired, in the process of coming to understand the instructions for continuing a particular series or a set of particular series'. Likewise, the misunderstanding of a rule for following a rule is displayed in the misunderstanding of a particular (i.e., the less basic) rule. For instance, the deviant pupil of *PI* 185 displays an ignorance of the custom for how instructions for continuing arithmetical sequences are usually followed in his misunderstanding of a particular continuation (that pertaining to the rule add-2). And so, we may say that the provision of instructions or training can fulfil a double role: it can convey the content of a specific rule while also instructing or training the rule initiate in how rules of this type are to be followed; this is to say that instructions can convey a general and specific understanding at once. And again, since the understanding of a custom is the understanding of a rule (albeit a basic rule or a

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these rules may be characterized as customs or rules that govern a practice.

rule for following rules of a certain type), it is underdetermined by the underdetermining training or instructions in the rule.

As a last point, we may take it as a virtue of treating the sceptical argument as a *reductio ad absurdum* argument that further reason need not be given for rejecting the culpable premise that leads us to paradox. As I have argued, this premise is S4. However, we cannot leave matters there. After all, to give no other reason for the rejection of the culpable premise other than that it leads to a paradox effectively begs the question against Kripke: Kripke accepts the paradoxical conclusion and offers a sceptical solution that (allegedly) accommodates it. We want an explanation of how it is that the rejection of S4 is to be accommodated (over an above merely noting that the reductio-reading requires this rejection); alternatively stated, we want an explanation of the master thesis (i.e., of how it is that we can grasp a rule without interpreting). It has been pointed out that the appeal to custom does not account for the rejection of S4 (it does not serve to secure the master thesis). In the next chapter I will provide argument, drawing on Wittgenstein's views on reasons and rationality as they bear on rule-following, explaining how it is that we can grasp and follow rules without interpreting despite an underdetermined understanding of any rule. In the next section I will consider specifically McDowell's views on custom in connection to securing the master thesis, and then more generally, his view of the master thesis and how it fits into the architecture of Wittgenstein's rule-following arguments. McDowell has much to say of weight and interest on these points but, I believe and will argue, misplaces the structure of Wittgenstein's arguments in the rule-following remarks. Since drawing out this structure is a principle objective of this thesis, paying individual attention to McDowell's position on these issues will allow me to indirectly pursue this objective. In the next chapter

[14] It is not so far clear, though, why this should be a consequence of the master thesis, only that it is so.

I will pick up on McDowell's account of sub-bedrock and bedrock as this pertains to how it is that we can follow a rule without reasons (a subject of the next chapter) and will again conduct a critique similar in its intent and scope.

III McDowell on the Master Thesis and Rule-Following Arguments

III. i. McDowell on Customs

McDowell places much emphasis on the role of custom or practice and contends that it offers grounds for securing the master thesis. Consider the following remarks.

> We have to realise that obeying a rule is a practice if we are to find it intelligible that there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation.[15]

> How can a performance both be nothing but a 'blind' reaction to a situation, not an attempt to act on an interpretation...; and be a case of going by a rule...? The answer is: by belonging to a custom (*PI* 198), practice (*PI* 202), or institution (*RFM* VI – 31)[16]

> How does Wittgenstein's insistence on publicity emerge? In my reading, the answer is this: it emerges as a condition of the possibility of rejecting the assimilation of understanding to interpretation, which poses an intolerable dilemma.[17]

> In my reading, it [the requirement of publicity] emerges as a condition for the intelligibility of rejecting a premise – the assimilation of understanding to interpretation – that would present us with an intolerable dilemma.[18]

In the last two quoted passages, the "requirement of publicity" or "insistence of publicity" are meant to refer to the notions of custom, practice, etc. Note the presumption here, although certainly not unwarranted, that custom, practice, etc., are to be understood as

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[15] McDowell [1984], p. 339.
[16] McDowell [1984], p. 342.
[17] McDowell [1984], p. 356.
[18] McDowell [1984], p. 342.

public goods or as involving a community. In opposition to Kripke, for whom the "requirement of publicity" is a facet of his sceptical solution, McDowell sees this requirement as part of a straight solution to the sceptical argument; as a way of rejecting the culpable premise which begets the argument (the "culpable premise" being the contradictory of the master thesis). Further, notice an ambiguity in McDowell's treatment regarding whether the appeal to notions of custom and the like is to be the grounds for the rejection of the culpable premise or to provide an explanation of this rejection. The first and last passages quoted above lend toward the latter reading; the middle two passages towards the former.

This distinction may be important. It has been shown above that custom cannot take on the task of rejecting the culpable premise (i.e., S4, or for that matter, any premise of the Sceptical-Inductive argument; see above). A lesser role may be available to custom in the form of making intelligible the rejection of the culpable premise (the task of rejecting the culpable premise, after all, is achieved by way of treating the sceptical argument as a *reductio*). As noted, the appeal to a custom may serve to explain how we can follow a set of underdetermining instructions without need to interpret those instructions. For instance, an understanding of the custom of pointing may allow us to follow the pointed-to direction without finding it at all ambiguous. But again, this presumes that we have a correct understanding of the custom. The role of custom here assumes that the culpable premise has already been rejected (and thus that we can already correctly follow a rule without interpretation) and so neither makes intelligible this rejection nor, as already described above, is the basis for rejecting this premise. This is because in following a custom we are following a rule (a rule for following other rules of a certain type) and so we should not assume an understanding of customs in giving an account of how it is that we can understand and

follow rules without interpretation. And so McDowell fails to appreciate that, as customs are norms or rules, to presume a correct understanding of these in an account of how we follow rules (and do so without interpreting, i.e., in an account of the master thesis) begs the question.

Furthermore, as discussed above, the premise denied by the master thesis is S4. We may wonder, with some cause, whether, far from rejecting S4 with an appeal to custom, McDowell accepts S4. This is not stated explicitly in the above passages but seems to be implicit in the appeal to custom. The thought is this. An understanding of custom is to enable us to follow a rule from underdetermining instructions without having to interpret those instructions. An understanding of custom, in this role, seems to serve as a top-up to the understanding of a set of instructions such that, with this top-up, our understanding is no longer underdetermined (for if we could follow the underdetermining instructions correctly, and without interpreting, then the understanding of custom is not needed in the first place). The implicit admission would seem to be that as long as the understanding of a rule remains underdetermined then the rule cannot be followed (and this is to admit that an underdetermined understanding is an understanding of the rule as indeterminate in what it proscribes). But this is an acceptance of S4: it accepts that if our understanding of a rule is underdetermined, then we cannot escape the need to interpret the rule (so as to settle the indeterminacy). What is required is not an account that denies that our understanding of a rule is underdetermined as seems implicit in McDowell's appeal to custom (for this would be to accept S4 and deny S3), but an account that says we can follow a rule despite this underdetermination (for this is what it is to follow a rule "blindly" in an epistemic sense – this is to be elaborated in the next chapter). But admittedly, the above passages, while they

indicate that McDowell accepts S4 in his attempt to secure the master thesis through an appeal to custom, do not do more than this.[19]

Also, notice that in the above quoted passages, McDowell speaks of custom and practice as public goods or institutions; that by custom Wittgenstein does not merely mean the custom of an accumulated repetition. Although McDowell does not argue for this view, there is certainly good exegetical basis to think this way: Wittgenstein speaks of rule-following as an institution, and so presumably, something only possible in a public context. However, the argument that following a rule is or is part of a public institution (in some sense or other) is given with a variant of the private language argument: this is the case against private rule-following given in *PI* 202 (i.e., it is with this argument in hand that we can uphold that customs are rules that cannot be followed privately). Hence, it is with this argument in hand that McDowell can appeal to custom in its public sense (and then use it to defend the master thesis). But as just noted, this argument is not given until *PI* 202. The master thesis is upheld in *PI* 201. Moreover, the argument against private rule-following is stated in *PI* 202 as a consequence or conclusion of the argument of *PI* 201.[20] Hence, the relevant sense of custom as a public good or institution is not available for the defense of the master thesis since this sense is only established after the master thesis is already taken as established and moreover, this sense is only established *if* the master thesis is already established (for it is portrayed as a consequence of the argument of *PI* 201). The point here is that McDowell has the arguments out of order: a case against private rule-following is required to maintain a sense of custom (which, after all, is still a rule or norm) as public but

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[19] In the next chapter, in a discussion of McDowell's views on bedrock in Section II. vii., we will see a return of this line of thought, i.e., that if we are to be able to follow rules, especially basic or "bedrock" rules, and be assured that we do so in step with others, then our understanding of these rules cannot be underdetermined (for this, as he would say, give us at best inductive grounds for our beliefs and expectations that we proceed in step with others in following basic rules).

this case is not available prior to the establishment of the master thesis in *PI* 201. This point is both exegetical (for Wittgenstein presents the case against private rule-following immediately after, and as a consequence of, the argument of *PI* 201 which is wherein the master thesis is presented as established) and philosophical (for, as I argue in the Appendix to the second chapter, the case against private rule-following is a product of the sceptical argument of *PI* 201).

III. ii. McDowell's Dilemma

In this section I will discuss McDowell's view of the general structure of the arguments involving the rule-following considerations; specifically, of the relation between the sceptical argument, the master thesis (i.e., that there must be a way to grasp a rule which is not an interpretation), and Wittgenstein's argument against the realist view of rules. According to McDowell, the rule-following remarks present us with a basic dilemma, indeed, an "intolerable" dilemma. At the tip of the first horn is the sceptical paradox. On the second lies Platonism or realism about rules (I will not differentiate these positions as they apply to rules). Both horns arise from the common and mistaken assumption that rule-following involves interpretation: the sceptical paradox is described as a product of a regress of interpretations and Platonism as involving a fixed interpretation. For McDowell, both horns are withdrawn when we realise that rule-following does not involve an act of interpretation. Accordingly, the way out of the dilemma lies in making the case for the master thesis. It is the contention of this section that the "intolerable dilemma" is a misdiagnosis. I will argue below that neither horn is adequately met with the master thesis and that, contrary to the

[20] I defend this point in Chapter 2, and more fully, in the Appendix to Chapter 2.

picture offered, the horns, and so the positions they represent, are not independent of one another.

A. Against the First Horn

Firstly, and briefly, McDowell claims that the first horn, the sceptical paradox, is avoided with the realisation that following a rule does not involve an act of interpretation; that instructions in a rule do not need to be interpreted to be followed. This is certainly exegetically correct. The absurdity of the paradoxical conclusion is presented as grounds for the rejection of a premise and acceptance of the master thesis (i.e., that there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation). However, this is not to account for why the culpable premise is rejected; that is, it is not to provide an explanation behind the rejection of S4, but only to note that it must be rejected. Given that there are reasons for finding S4 plausible (see above), these reasons go unchallenged in McDowell's treatment and are not explained away. McDowell's devices – i.e., the appeal to custom and practice – as argued above, do not enable the rejection of S4 (or, for that matter, S1 or S2, were we even to want to reject one of these premises; see above) and so certainly cannot explain the rejection of S4. All that is managed by saying that the sceptical conclusion is avoided with a realisation of the master thesis is to repeat, and not explain, Wittgenstein's claim in *PI* 201 that the sceptical argument is to be treated as a reductio in favour of the master thesis. Furthermore, we may again observe that to offer no such account in favour of the master thesis, although still exegetically in the right, does not do any damage to Kripke for whom the sceptical conclusion does not force the rejection of a premise, but rather, is to be accepted and met with a sceptical solution.

B. Against Independent Horns

Secondly, according to McDowell, the Platonist view of rule-following (which he casts as "the mythology") and the sceptical paradox are independent horns of a single dilemma; the dilemma is the result of the view that rule-following involves interpretation. He states, "the attack on the mythology is not support for the paradox, but rather constitutes, in conjunction with the fact that the paradox is intolerable, an argument against the misunderstanding [that following a rule involves interpretation]."[21] Thus viewed, the argument against the Platonist view and the intolerability of the sceptical paradox both argue for the master thesis (i.e., that rule-following need not involve an act of interpretation). Likewise, acceptance of the master thesis is a preventive for encountering the dilemma with both its horns. However, these horns do not stand independent of each other for one offers the resources of an argument against the other. To remind, it was argued in the last chapter that the sceptical argument (i.e., the Sceptical-Inductive), and specifically the first two premises, provide for an argument against a realist view of rules. The thought, very briefly, is that given that instructions cannot but underdetermine a rule (S1), and given that a realist understanding of a rule is of it as fully determined, a rule-realist is committed to an instruction- or explanation-transcendent understanding of rules (i.e., he is committed to rejecting AR** or S2). But these – S1 and S2 – are both premises of the Sceptical-Inductive argument. Thus, although we may admit that the sceptical conclusion (of the Sceptical-Inductive argument) provides grounds for viewing the argument as a reductio, this is not to admit that the argument is not of use in the case against rule-realism (and so is not

[21] McDowell [1984], p. 332.

independent of this case). In the view I have developed, the absurdity of the conclusion is grounds for rejecting S4 (of the Sceptical-Inductive argument) but S1 through S3 (and specifically S2 or AR** which denies the realist an explanation or instruction-transcendent understanding of a rule) provide for a case against realism.[22] The considerations upon which the sceptical argument is built and the case against rule-realism do not stand independently of each other. In supposing otherwise, McDowell does not take full heed of the resources employed by Wittgenstein in his argument against the realist view of rules.

C. Against the Second Horn

Thirdly, according to McDowell, rule-realism succumbs to the master thesis and its supporting argument. The thought is that the realist is committed to a role for interpretation in rule-following and so is also a victim of the thesis that there is a way to follow a rule which is not an interpretation. But in McDowell's characterisation, interpretation comes into play differently in the realist view of rules than it does in the sceptical argument. In the sceptical argument, as McDowell describes it, an interpretation of a rule is a substitute expression of the rule (e.g., the expression "turn right" is an interpretation of an arrow on a sign pointing right). If the understanding of a rule is a matter of interpretation, then we are faced with having to understand the interpretation which just leads us into a regress; interpretations, on this account, only serve to supplant one expression for another and so understanding a rule cannot be a matter of interpretation (again, if it were, the need to interpret the interpretation would arise and the regress begotten).

[22] See Chapter 2 for details.

In the realist's case, as viewed by McDowell, what is needed is a fixed or rigid interpretation. McDowell describes the second horn of the dilemma, the "mythology", as an attempt to hold on to a role for interpretation without succumbing to the sceptical paradox. He states, "Understanding an expression, then, must be possessing an interpretation that cannot be interpreted – an interpretation that precisely bridges the gap, exploited in the sceptical argument, between the instruction one received in learning the expression and the use one goes on to make of it. The irresistible upshot of this is that we picture following a rule as the operation of a super-rigid yet (or perhaps we should say 'hence') ethereal machine."[23] We may try to explain this requirement of rigidity, of an interpretation that itself is not open to interpretation, as due to the realist's requirement that a rule be understood as fully determined, i.e., as fully laid out in advance (for then there should be only one interpretation of the rule, or so the thought goes).

An interpretation plays the role, in McDowell's picture, of an intermediate step between our understanding of a rule and the rule itself (such that we must understand the interpretation to understand the rule). This intermediate role, in the sceptical argument highlighted above, leads to a regress. Carving a role for interpretation into the realist picture is not as clear cut. Certainly, we should admit that the realist would lay claim to a direct understanding of a rule via an intuition. For instance, the realist would lay claim to an intuition in virtue of which he "just knows" how to continue the series add-2; this is what it is to have an intuitive grasp of the rule. So characterised, the realist's understanding of a rule is not mediated, and so, should not involve an act of interpretation. Intuition, allegedly, is the source of understanding of a rule and this involves direct epistemic contact with the rule. Intuition, thus described, is not an epistemic (or, for that matter, phenomenological)

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[23] McDowell [1984], p. 332.

intermediary and so is not or does not involve an act of interpretation (or inference). That is, in the realist picture, there is no epistemic intermediary between an intuition and an understanding of a rule.

It should be fully available to the realist to say that, upon being given the instructions for a rule, an understanding of the rule (which, for the rule-realist, is of the rule as fully determined; an understanding that accounts for the whole use of the word or whole application of the rule) comes to mind without an interpretation. The described phenomenology of such an intuition does not, or at least need not, include an intermediary. Doubting the realist on his phenomenological account seems a troubled enterprise: how do we deny the claim of unmediated contact with a rule; how do we assert that the realist understanding must involve interpretation, if the experience is essentially private.[24] Accordingly, it is difficult to see how the need for an interpretation can be pinned to the realist. The ready to hand characterisation of intuition as an "immediate grasp" or as understood "in a flash" gives lie to the claim that the realist, who places his stock in intuition, must understand via an interpretation. Our description of the phenomenology of intuition in these terms is of a direct or unmediated understanding. And so, it is a mistake to view the master thesis as essentially involved in the attack against the realist view of rules (and neglects the arsenal that Wittgenstein does deploy in this cause). The realist does not, or at least need not, accept the characterisation of a realist understanding of a rule in terms of an understanding of an interpretation which then leads to an understanding of a rule (rather, this characterisation just seems to invite a regress as per McDowell's take on the sceptical argument). In sum, the essential difficulty with the realist picture is not an assumption about interpretation.

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[24] The point that the realist's alleged intuition of a rule would be private is a result of the previous chapter.

IV. Concluding Remarks

The appeal to an understanding of custom, by McDowell *et al*, is an attempt to retain the *reductio* reading of Wittgenstein's sceptical argument by rejecting a premise. The approach of reading Wittgenstein's sceptical argument as a reductio is exegetically correct, but the appeal to custom fails in this charge because it cannot carry the weight of rejecting a premise (any premise). It was shown above that if the appeal to custom is taken as an appeal to a means or source of an understanding of a rule different from that gained through instruction then this appeal violates AR** (for AR** denies explanation or instruction-transcendent understanding and this principle has been defended at length in Chapter 2). Thus, although it may be that an understanding of the relevant custom can combine with an understanding obtained through underdetermining instructions in a rule to yield an understanding of the rule, this does not serve to answer how it is that the rule is correctly grasped and followed despite an underdetermined understanding (for an understanding of the custom is itself gained from underdetermining instructions, explanations and examples). Likewise, if it is supposed that an understanding of a custom is not underdetermined by instruction in the custom, then it violates S1 (i.e., the first premise of the Sceptical-Inductive argument). It has been defended that the target of the reductio is S4: an underdetermined understanding of a rule requires that the rule be interpreted to be understood and followed.[25] An appeal to custom fails in the rejection of this premise also. The attempt to reject S4 with an appeal to custom fails to recognise that an understanding of custom is an understanding of a rule (a

[25] And the extent to which we can make this case against S4 is the extent to which we can make a case that Wittgenstein is not a "quietist" about a positive agenda or without constructive comment in response to the negative and sceptical considerations raised in the rule-following remarks.

rule for following rules of a certain type) and so an appeal to custom is open to the same sceptical question that it is to aid in answering: how is it that we are able to correctly understand and follow a custom without interpreting the custom and this despite an underdetermined understanding of the custom? And so, the appeal to an understanding of custom, as pursued by McDowell *et al*, is unsuccessful as a means of defending the master thesis.

Additionally, the argument against custom given here, it should be observed, is quite general. For instance, it might be thought that communal assent can serve to render the underdetermining instructions unproblematic: the correct course of action to pursue is that which has the consent of one's peers. A difficulty with this approach is that the consent of one's peers, as a guide to understanding a set of instructions, is itself something to be understood; it is itself something that plays the role of an instruction in a rule, for it is meant to be a guide to rule-following behaviour, and so is similarly open to the same sort of question: how do we correctly follow the nods and winks of our peers without having to interpret so that we may be correctly guided in following a rule without having to interpret. The generality of the argument against custom relates that whatever is to guide us in following a rule, insofar as it must first be understood, is itself open to the question of how it is to be correctly understood. In short, anything appealed to for its normative effect raises the sceptical question concerning how this is to be correctly recognized (and so any such appeal – as per the appeal to a custom – cannot answer our general rule-following problem: how do we correctly grasp and follow a rule despite an underdetermined understanding and do so without interpreting). The effect of this line of thought seems to be that it must be possible to have normativity (i.e., have the operation of normative constraints on our rule-following behaviour) without this having to be open to epistemological account (for

otherwise we are led to ask how these normative constraints are correctly appreciated and recognised, and then the sceptical question just repeats). This will be discussed in the next chapter, to some extent, in the discussion of what it is to follow a rule "blindly" (in an epistemic sense) and also, to a lesser extent, in the section dealing with McDowell and the notions of bedrock and sub-bedrock.

An upshot of this chapter is that the negative programme reaches a climax with the insight that we cannot but attain an underdetermined understanding of a rule (this is because our understanding of a rule, including basic rules such as those involving customs, cannot but be a product of an understanding of media (instructions and training) that underdetermine the rule). The thrust of the positive programme will then be to show that this does not commit us to a sceptical paradox; that this does not require a role for interpretation; alternatively, that this does not require that we view our understanding of a rule as indeterminate. As shown, this cannot be built (solely) around an appeal to custom and the like. The answer to this problem, which will involve an account of following a rule "blindly", will be the focus of the next chapter in its discussion of reasons, rationality and bedrock.

CHAPTER 4

Rule-Following and Rationality:

The Positive Programme

I. Introduction

For Wittgenstein, 'rationality' is an equivocal term. In this chapter I will present and defend two distinct senses in which Wittgenstein contends we are or can be rational. This distinction will be put to remedy unresolved difficulties raised in the previous chapters. In Chapter 2, two separate sceptical arguments were presented. The first argued that our understanding of any rule is underdetermined and that, insofar as this requires a role for interpretation in our understanding of a rule, we are led to a sceptical conclusion. The second argued that if a set of instructions underdetermines a rule, then this implies that they do not determine a rule at all. The difficulties raised by both these arguments will be attended to in this chapter through common means, viz., an employment of the distinction in senses of rationality as it pertains to rule-following. It is admitted that our understanding of any rule is underdetermined; that the correct way to follow any rule is not fully determined in our understanding of the rule. Nevertheless, we are not driven to interpret a rule, it will be later argued and elaborated, because the underdetermination of our understanding need not imply that we view a rule as indeterminate in what it proscribes. We may find ourselves standing in the role of interpreter in applying most any rule, at any step – and so confronting the underdetermination of our understanding – but there is an alternative mode of rationality available that offers an alternative mode of response in which we do not stand as interpreter.

In this chapter, the question asking how it is that we can follow a rule from an underdetermined understanding, without recourse to interpretation, will be answered largely through an account of how it is, according to Wittgenstein, that we can correctly follow a rule despite lacking a justification, fully fledged, for following the rule as we do. That is, the

problem of underdetermination will be matched to the problem of a lack of justifying reasons. These problems match up. Reasons that justify a course of action determine that course of action; in contrast, if our understanding of how to follow a rule draws on reasons that do not justify or fully vindicate, then our understanding of how to correctly follow the rule is underdetermined by those reasons. Thus, to have it said that our reasons will always run out (prior to justification) is to have it said that our understanding of how to correctly follow a rule will always be underdetermined. Accordingly, if it can be shown that the lack of justifying reasons does not present a problem, then it should follow that the lack of determination does not either. Wittgenstein makes this connection clear in *PI* 213, a remark situated within a discussion of reasons: " "But this initial segment of a series obviously admitted of various interpretations (e.g., by means of algebraic expressions) and so you must first have chosen *one* such interpretation." – Not at all. A doubt was possible in certain circumstances. But that is not to say that I did doubt, or could doubt." Wittgenstein, in this remark, relates the indeterminacy of a set of instructions (a finite set of examples) – the various interpretability of the instructions – to the possibility of doubt. He answers that we need not raise a doubt and this is to say that we need not be troubled by the indeterminacy of the instructions (and to not be troubled by the indeterminacy of the instructions is to not be troubled to interpret those instructions). And this is to say that a set of instructions or a rule can be viewed as indeterminate (due to the rule being underdetermined by the instructions) but it need not be so viewed; the underdetermination need raise no obstacle to our coming to understand a rule. That our understanding of a rule is underdetermined is not a flaw in our understanding and this will be shown, in this chapter, by showing that although our reasons will run out in an account of why we follow a rule as we do, this is not a flaw in our understanding of why we follow a rule as we do (or an obstacle to our communicating

this understanding to others). What is needed, and will be given (at least to a fair extent), is an account of rationality that is at ease with reasons running out. Indeed, our reasons must run out for to achieve a full justification would be to betray an understanding that has been shown to be invariably underdetermined.

II. Rationality

An intuitive view of rationality should uphold, in the least it seems, that an act of rule-following is rational if underlined by reasons. Wittgenstein does not deny that following a rule is a rational endeavour in this intuitive sense, that is, as involving a vital role for reasons. Wittgenstein only contends that the reasons we have to give will run out and that they will always run out short of fully justifying our rule-following behaviour. To presume that reasons only serve to justify is to presume that we can only be rational, under an intuitive view, if our rule-following behaviour is justified. Opposed to this presumption, and upheld by Wittgenstein, stands the view that we can be rational even though our reasons (were we to consider them) fall short of justifying our actions; that justification need not be an end of reason-giving. With this view in hand, I will argue that Wittgenstein presents us with two different standards or modes of what it is to be rational in following a rule. I hesitate to present his view in these terms, that is, as involving separate "standards or modes of rationality" for it is quite a heavy-handed theorisation (concerning someone who avoided theorisation, at least in the presentation of his views). Nevertheless, there is a distinction between senses of rational accountability that is elucidated by drawing forth Wittgenstein's views in these terms. Preparatory to a discussion of these dual modes of rationality, I will

draw a distinction between rationality and correctness in rule-following for they are not the same.

II. i. Correct Vs. Rational Rule-Following

A distinction is to be had between rule-following behaviour that is correct to the rule (and so properly rule-following) and rule-following behaviour that is incorrect to the rule (and so not rule-following) but still rational. This will involve what I will call the "interpretative" mode or standard of rationality.

There is a sense in which this distinction is readily available and that is the ordinary mistake. Someone may make a mistake in applying a rule but, upon having it brought out, accept their error (they see that they have followed the instructions incorrectly). The person has erred but is not irrational (a mistake does not send one to the asylum). This applies even to systematic errors for even these can be corrected if pointed out. But this is not the sort of case at issue: at issue is an error (or series of errors) such that the person, upon having it pointed out, does not accept that they have erred. The person insists that they are doing the same as they were instructed; that they have not changed course. Such a person is "deviant". The contrast is made explicit by Wittgenstein: "But you surely can't suddenly make a different application of the law now!" – If my reply is: "Oh yes of course, *that* is how I was applying it!" or: "Oh! *That's* how I ought to have applied it - !"; then I am playing your game. But if I simply reply: "Different? – But this surely *isn't* different!" – what will you do? That is: somebody may reply like a rational person and yet not be playing our game." (*RFM* I 115) The "deviant pupil" of *PI* 185 is a case of the latter sort of reply.

The deviant pupil follows the rule for add-2 incorrectly. And importantly, he neither sees nor accepts that he has gone wrong when we try to point out his mistake. However, there is a sense in which the pupil is still behaving rationally (in respect of the instructions given to him). This is because we can interpret his behaviour as in accord with another rule that is also consistent with the instructions and training that he has been given for the rule add-2. For instance, we may interpret him as instead following the rule: add 2 up to 1000, add 4 up to 2000, add 6 up to 3000, and so on, as Wittgenstein also offers in the same remark. It is this consistency with the instructions that is the basis for attributing rationality to the incorrect behaviour (for in a sense it seems that the instructions were still "followed" although the rule was not). And this "consistency" is made possible by the fact that any instruction and training in a rule underdetermines the rule. If the pupil (or any individual) interprets a set of instructions, he may find different (indeed, indefinitely many) ways of proceeding as in accord with those instructions. The deviant pupil is rational, or at least, may be viewed as rational because his course of action, although incorrect to the rule, is a consistent interpretation of the instructions given to him. But note that he is rational only if it is rational to interpret the instructions in coming to understand them; i.e., insofar as it is a rational move to interpret when given instructions, we may find his behaviour rational for being a legitimate interpretation (and this will be important later).

Further notice that this attribution of rationality to the deviant pupil involves RF2 and not RF3. According to RF3, any or every course of action can be made out to accord with a rule or instructions in a rule, but we should not likewise say that any or every course of action can be deemed rational (in response to instructions in a rule). There is a principled difference between RF2 and RF3 and this is that the instructions in the first case license some courses of action but not others (in the sense that some but not all courses of action

can be interpreted to be in accord with the instructions) and so there is still something to having to understand the instructions; understanding this much is grounds for an attribution of rationality (as with the deviant pupil). In the latter case, instructions can be interpreted to license any or every course of action but this is to say that nothing need be understood in the instructions for any course of action to be adopted (and to be thought to accord with the instructions). This is why someone whose rule-following behaviour is characterised as exemplifying RF3 is not rationally responding to the instructions, even if it is admitted that it is rational move to interpret a set of instructions in order to understand them.

II. ii. Two Modes of Rationality: The Interpretative and the Reactive

The deviant pupil's behaviour, as explained, can be construed as rational but still incorrect (and incorrect in a way that exemplifies a deviant understanding and not just an ordinary sort of mistake – see above). This example highlights two different standards of what it is to be right or correct in understanding (the instructions given for a rule). The deviant pupil is right in one sense for his behaviour exemplifies a consistent interpretation of the instructions (and the thought is that he is rational to at least understand the instructions to this extent). He is wrong for not following the rule and its instructions as we do and this points to a second sense of what it is to be right: to conform in application or judgement. The deviant pupil is not rational in this sense for he does not follow the rule as we do (and understanding under this sense requires something different than interpreting). These two senses of rightness are at the core of the two modes or standards of rationality.

Consider further the following famous passage: "To use an expression without justification does not mean to use it without right." (*PI* 289) Here we see Wittgenstein

unambiguously point to two rational standards: one in terms of justification and the other in terms of right. The sense of 'right' here is important, and will be exposed (along with 'justification') as we discuss the two rational modes, but it can first be said that Wittgenstein does not mean for rule-following behaviour to fall into irrationality (or non-rationality) for a lack of justification. We can still be rational even without justification.[1]

I call the two modes or standards of rationality the 'interpretative' and the 'reactive'. Per the interpretative standard, the correct way to understand a set of instructions is the interpretation that we can justify or best justify (and this may lead us to apply a rule in a way that does not conform with that of others). In this mode, the way to understand a set of instructions is to interpret them; it is to form a hypothesis over them. Likewise, to understand what someone means by an expression involves interpreting or forming a hypothesis over their utterance. In contrast, conformity in application (or equivalently, agreement in judgement) is the standard of correctness of the reactive mode (i.e., a set of instructions is understood correctly in this mode if they are applied in conformity with others). Much more needs to be (and will be) explained but in capsule it may be said that these two modes display different ways of dealing with the underdetermination of our understanding of a rule: the reactive mode is untroubled by the underdetermination finding correctness in conformity of application while the interpretative mode is troubled, finding the rule to be indeterminate, and sees a need to settle this indeterminacy along some interpretation or other.

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[1] Kripke reads the German for 'without right' as 'wrongfully' or 'wrongly' (Kripke [1982], p. 74); this does not disrepair the distinction being carved in modes of rationality for it is still under a separate sense of rationality that we do not follow a rule wrongfully even though we lack justification. Indeed, we see Wittgenstein translated in this way in a similar remark in the *RFM*: "To use the word without a justification does not mean to use it wrongfully." (*RFM* VII 40)

The underdetermination that characterises our understanding of a rule is a product of RF2 and AR** (see Chapters 2 for details). Another way of speaking of this underdetermination is to say that there are indefinitely many courses of action that can be interpreted to be in accord with what is understood of a rule (i.e., instructions and explanations). Thus, if following a rule requires interpreting, then we are unable to follow a rule for reason of being without (non-arbitrary) means of settling on an interpretation; alternatively viewed, we may say that if understanding involves interpretation, then we are led into a regress for the interpretation must then also be correctly understood. Avoiding a paradoxical result requires that there be a way of grasping a rule that does not involve interpreting; as Wittgenstein famously says in *PI* 201: "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." When Wittgenstein advises a way of grasping a rule that is "*not* an *interpretation*" he advises a way of coming to understand a rule that is not under the interpretative mode. This is what I call grasping a rule under the 'reactive mode'. It is exhibited in actual cases of rule-following (as Wittgenstein also says in *PI* 201) for in actual cases we see that we follow rules without interpreting; without need of full justification.

The underdetermination of our understanding of a rule poses an insurmountable problem only if it requires that grasping and following a rule involve interpreting. Accordingly, the underdetermination of our understanding of a rule is not problematic for understanding under the reactive mode. A way of following a rule under the reactive mode may be thought of as arbitrary if viewed from the interpretative mode (arbitrary because, from the perspective of the interpretative mode, there are other interpretations consistent with that understanding). Under the reactive mode, though, the instructions are not seen as

open to interpretation; that is, they are not seen as underdetermining. This is a sense in which grasping and following a rule under the reactive mode is "blind"; there is a blindness to the apparent epistemic difficulty of proceeding from underdetermining instructions to a correct and unique application of those instructions. We are not struck by the underdetermination of our understanding of a rule and so do not see the rule as open to interpretation or in need of justification.

It should seem that operating under the reactive mode involves a turning-away of sorts from indeterminacy in the instructions given for a rule that would otherwise lead us to interpret (i.e., to the interpretative mode). And so operating under the reactive mode, from the perspective of the interpretative mode, would seem to be a contrived ignorance (an ostrich-like burying the head in the sand). But notice that there is no independent standard of correctness to adjudicate between these two modes: from the interpretative mode, a way of following a rule under the reactive mode may seem arbitrary or unjustified, but this is only a relative view; it is not seen as such from the reactive mode. Again, in this account of Wittgenstein, it is given that the reason why we can follow a rule from an underdetermined understanding and do so without having to interpret (i.e., the reason we can reject premise S4 of the Sceptical-Inductive argument) is that we can grasp a rule under the reactive mode.

It has been shown that the interpretative mode by itself cannot yield an understanding of a rule (for it leads us only to paradox; see the Sceptical-Inductive argument). It is a result of this argument, taken as a reductio, that there must be a way to grasp a rule that is not an interpretation (this is what has been called the 'master thesis'); I am here saying that this other way to grasp a rule that does not involve interpretation is to grasp a rule under the reactive mode of rationality. That is to say, the reductio-reading of the Sceptical-Inductive argument (described in Chapter 3) is herein taken as a reductio in favour

of two different standards or modes of rationality; and the way to grasp a rule that is not an interpretation is the way of grasping a rule under the reactive mode. It may be thought that the reactive mode is not an alternative mode of rationality, or an alternative way of coming to grasp a rule. But to admit no other mode than the interpretative is to be prey to paradox; that is what I take the moral to be. Under the reactive mode, we are able to follow a rule from reasons that do not fully justify the course of action adopted; we are able to follow a rule from underdetermining instructions without being moved to interpret those instructions. I call this a mode of "rationality", rather than just merely an alternative way of understanding, because it speaks to the distinction Wittgenstein presses between senses of rightness or correctness with which we may apply a rule ("To use a word without a justification does not mean to use it without right" *PI* 289); it speaks to a difference in the role of reasons and notes that reasons that do not justify or vindicate may still be reasons that are successfully employed in conveying an understanding of a rule (and accommodating this difference requires a difference in the standards by which we measure and respond to reasons).[2]

This is so far a preliminary account of understanding under the reactive mode. A full account, though, is not readily furnished by Wittgenstein and so is not simply delivered. I believe there are resources in Wittgenstein's writings for fashioning an answer, but the material is disparately and indirectly presented. For that reason, there is a needed managerial component to the task: drawing on the strengths of seemingly separate lines of argument or

[2] Indeed, we may admit that we already accept something akin to the reactive and interpretative standards or modes of rationality. The rationality of the interpretative mode, which proceeds hypothetico-deductively, is exemplified in the scientific method: we make hypotheses that are consistent with the observable data and then look to further evidence to narrow the field of hypotheses or pick by some other consideration. But we also already accept, in some respects or in some cases, that we proceed rationally if we do as others do. The underlying thought here is that rational behaviour must be behaviour that is intelligible to others. But, to an extent, behaviour that is intelligible to others is behaviour that is like that of others. Applying rules in a

discussion to build an understanding. That is, an account of understanding and applying rules under the reactive mode – and the manner in which this serves to secure agreement in application – will involve pulling together various threads: a careful examination of reasons and basic rules for Wittgenstein, and in relation, of the notion of bedrock; a look to Stroud's (account of Wittgenstein's) distinction between conceiving clearly and conceiving as a possibility; and an investigation of Wittgenstein's understanding of sameness and of his account of our knowledge of intentions (of our own and of others').

II. iii. Reasons Running Out

A first point to note is that an intuitive account of rationality, according to which rule-following is rational if underlined by reasons, is not damaged if those reasons are not actively considered in the course of following a rule. The lack of a considered inference does not display the lack of a role for reasons. Indeed, this characterises most of our rule-following practice: we do not act with a consideration of reasons, but if questioned can still give some reasons. We may say that this is to follow a rule with immediacy in a phenomenological sense (for the reasons are not present to mind in following the rule but are nonetheless, in some way, present for they are available to be given after the fact). This may be contrasted with following a rule with immediacy in an epistemic sense by which we mean to say more than that reasons are not present to mind; we mean to say that they are not present in an epistemic capacity.[3] This should mean, if we are to make the contrast stark with the

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common way – or at least, applying basic rules in a common way – is necessary for seeing others as intelligible and this thought, as we will further see, underlies the view of rationality under the reactive mode.

[3] I owe this distinction, between following a rule with immediacy in a phenomenological sense versus in an epistemic sense, to C. Wright. I share his view that by "blind" rule following, Wittgenstein has in mind the latter.

phenomenological sense, that reasons are not available to be given, before or after the fact. But this would mean that there just are no reasons. Wittgenstein is admitting that our reasons run out, but this is not to say that there are no reasons to give (or that there are never reasons to give). Nevertheless, we should say that when Wittgenstein speaks of reasons running out, he means to make a point of epistemic import (and this will require careful attention).

Consider the following remarks: "Well, how do I know [how to continue a pattern]? - If that means "Have I reasons?" the answer is: my reasons will soon give out. And then I shall act, without reasons" (*PI* 211); and this: "If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: "This is simply what I do"."(*PI* 217). In these remarks Wittgenstein affirms that the reasons we can give in accounting for why we follow a rule as we do will run out; at this point we will go on without reasons (and we may find ourselves saying "this is simply what I do"). This is not just to say that we do not or need not actively consider reasons (i.e., that the reasons are present but just not present to mind; that we proceed without reasons in a phenomenological sense). Rather the point is epistemic: the reasons we can give do not justify the course of action we adopt. As described earlier (by RF2 and AR**), any explanation we give of our understanding of a rule will run short of determining a unique course of action. A similar point is being made here: any set of reasons we give will not fully justify or vindicate a unique course of action. Hence, we cannot hope to justify a unique course of action in any endeavour of reason-giving. That is, we see that by the underdetermination of our understanding of a rule, our reasons must give out short of justifying a way of following the rule. And so, in these remarks Wittgenstein is making a point very similar to that made in support of RF2: the reasons we can give to account for

our rule-following behaviour, just like the instructions and explanations we can offer to those to whom we are trying to convey an understanding of a rule, underdetermine the rule. Further, Wittgenstein is here making his view clear that this is not detrimental for our understanding of how to follow a rule; that reasons run out does not mean that we do not gain an understanding of how to follow a rule from those reasons.

Continuing on, that we do not need further justification does not signal that we are undermining rationality (for rationality is denied only if justification is needed *and* not available – for Wittgenstein it is not available, but not needed). Indeed, this is characteristic of our rationality for Wittgenstein: we will always reach a point where our reasons run out when trying to justify why we follow a rule as we do. This is because our understanding of any rule, ultimately, is underdetermined and so we cannot fully justify (so as to remove all possibility of doubt) a course of action. Wittgenstein's point is not just *that* we reach a point where our reasons run out in trying to justify a course of action (as an empirical claim), but that we *must*; we will always reach a point where we say "that is simply what I do". For Wittgenstein, this statement - "This is simply what I do" - is not intended as a statement of frustration at not being able to dig further. It is not an admission of ignorance regarding why we follow the rule in the way we do. Rather, it is a cue that further justification is not needed.

This lack of justification may be viewed in two ways. In the first, we do not feel unjustified in following a rule as we do even though not every possibility of doubt has been addressed. This is to say that the possibility to doubt our rule-following behaviour remains (as it always does) but it is unconsidered and for this reason untroubling. This is to operate under the reactive mode. In the second, we do feel unjustified in following the rule as we do because we realise we could equally well be proceeding differently; we feel doubt or

arbitrariness now about our way of proceeding and so feel a need to justify further. We have collected on the ever present possibility to doubt. This is to operate under the interpretative mode.[4] When we view what is correct in following a rule in terms of what can be interpreted to be in accord with a rule, we require justification to settle on an interpretation. Furthermore, if the point that reasons run out (and we say "this is simply what I do") is to count against rationality in rule-following under the reactive mode then it counts against any rationality in rule-following (for, as just noted, we can never achieve full justification and so if justification is a requirement then rationality is not attainable). Seen in this light, the reactive mode does not deny rationality in rule-following but saves it (for if we could not be rational without full justification then we would never be rational).

II. iv. Changes in Communal Rule-Following Practices

Suppose we adopt the view that the community is the arbiter of what constitutes correct rule-following. Correct rule-following just is what the community does.[5] This may not be a palatable view but it is one often attributed to Wittgenstein as a consequence of the rule-following considerations (and as we see, with the reactive mode or standard, where conformity in application is the correctness criterion, something like this would seem to be the case).[6] A consequence of the view that correct rule-following practice is determined with

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[4] The analogy between following a rule and obeying a command is useful here: we do not usually interpret a command, especially if it is barked at us (we move to act and interpret only if we need to). The interpretative mode is in use when we are trying to remove indeterminacy (for example, when we are trying to codify rules so as to reduce the occurrence of misunderstanding we try to minimise scope for misinterpretation).

[5] This was earlier labeled 'Simple Communitarianism'; see Chapter 2, Section II.

[6] The situation is dire if the community decides what is the correct way to follow a rule. Again, this is radical conventionalism. Earlier, in Chapter 2, Section II, it was described that Simple Communitarianism is subject to the charge of radical conventionalism and that Kripke's sceptical solution was a Simple Communitarian solution. The possibility of grasping and following a rule under the interpretative mode – i.e., the possibility of a role for interpretation in our grasp of a rule – allows for changes in rule-following practice, such that we can

reference to the community is that we have a hard time understanding how it can be the case that an individual may have a rule right and the community wrong. We want to enable such a possibility but this might-makes-right view does not leave space for it.[7] What is more, it does not leave space for the community to change the way it follows a rule in favour of the way of a deviant rule-follower.

However, the distinction between the reactive and interpretative modes of rationality (and the distinction and distance between rational and correct rule-following that it affords) serves to alleviate this difficulty. The point is simply that a way of following a rule that is incorrect under the reactive mode can still be accepted as rational if viewed from the interpretative mode (for it may exemplify a consistent interpretation of the instructions or the data). This is the case with the deviant pupil of *PI* 185. And so the scope of what we can admit as rational rule-following behaviour under the interpretative mode is broader than what we admit as correct under the reactive mode. Consequently, there is scope for a community to understand and appreciate a way of following a rule that is different than their own and which they hitherto viewed as incorrect. A community can come to understand a different way of following a rule because there are different interpretations that are consistent with their understanding of the rule (i.e., their understanding of the instructions and explanations of the rule). Thus, if they look at these explanations from the interpretative mode (which is to look at their own understanding of a rule from under the interpretative mode), they can find different ways of following the rule equally rational (if not correct).

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see a way for an individual to lead a change in communal rule-following practice (to be described shortly), and this tells us that Wittgenstein's view is not a "simple" communitarian view. And so, if the only mode available is the interpretative, then as argued by Wittgenstein and shown herein, we are led to a sceptical paradox. Alternatively, if the only mode available is the reactive, where correctness in rule-following behaviour is a matter of conformity in application of rules, then it would seem that we are led to radical conventionalism (via Simple Communitarianism). The availability of both modes, and the interaction between both modes, in our grasp of a rule allows us to reject both these ends.

[7] Blackburn raises this consideration in his [1984].

Under the interpretative mode we may come to see that our understanding of a rule is indeterminate, and consequently, that our current way of following a rule is an interpretation that need not be correct. And so, if we remain in the interpretative mode, and so remain with the view that our way of following a rule is an interpretation (equally justified as others and so in contest), then we will need reasons to justify our way of following the rule (and so quell this indeterminacy). But if reasons can be brought in to support our way of following a rule they can also be brought in to justify a course of action that is different than our way. Thus, a community can change its rule-following practice, and so its view of correct rule-following practice, by means of a change in rational modes. The interpretative mode of rationality, in contrast to the reactive mode, does not view correctness in rule-following in terms of the community's current practice. As a result, switching to this mode enables a community to appreciate that a rule may be followed differently than as established (and since no rule is understood as fully determined, it should always be possible that such a switch be made).

Rule-following under the reactive mode enables us to follow rules as others do (and so should be primary in our account of learning to follow rules from training or instructions). Grasping a rule under the interpretative mode is the basis for changing our rule-following practice. Presumably then, it is a basis for improving our way of following a rule (an "improvement" because we are convinced of it by further reasons). This is not a consideration, if correct, in favour of finding the reactive mode to be a non-rational or sub-rational faculty. As argued, following a rule from only under the interpretative mode is not possible (by pain of paradox). And so if rule-following is to be possible, there must be a way (a rational way) of grasping a rule that is not "interpretative". Hence, this is a consideration,

rather, to find the modes complementary in an account of our understanding and following of rules.

Wittgenstein's rabbit/duck example is useful to show the different modes in play.[8] The rabbit/duck example can be seen or understood to be either a rabbit or duck under the reactive mode. In this case, we do not interpret what we see when we immediately see either a duck or a rabbit. Suppose a certain community sees the picture as a rabbit but not a duck. The picture is open to interpretation (for they could see the duck, or both) but they just do not interpret the picture on seeing it and so are not open to seeing the duck. We can speak of their understanding of the picture as underdetermined for it is based on a picture that is open to interpretation as either a duck or rabbit. Their coming to realise that there is also a duck to be seen requires realising that their prior understanding of the picture was underdetermined by the picture. And we can readily imagine that it does not take much to get them to view the picture from the interpretative mode and confront indeterminacy (perhaps all it takes is to say that there is a duck there and they will see the picture differently; perhaps we move the picture a bit, or tell them to look for a face on the other side of the figure – in doing this we are getting them to view the picture from the interpretative mode). Once seen as a duck we can even imagine them forgetting that there is a rabbit to be seen and that they need to be led again to interpret the picture (or we can imagine them as recognising that the picture is indeterminate between the rabbit and duck and that they can see both at will). In this example the data set (the picture, analogous to a set of instructions) does not change and yet what was seen in one way can find itself being viewed differently once we move to interpret (i.e., to the interpretative mode). Likewise, any set of instructions underdetermines the correct way to follow a rule. Hence, our

understanding of those instructions can change from what we now view as correct if we can be coaxed into the interpretative mode.

On the basis of what has been said so far, it should seem that our view of the correct application of *any* rule is subject to revision if we can make the move to the interpretative mode. Argument will soon be given to the effect that for some rules we do not make this switch even though, in some sense, we could (i.e., for basic or "bedrock" rules we just do not make this move). Ultimately, it is the difficulty of this transition in certain cases (viz., basic cases) that is, according to Wittgenstein, the basis for our finding a way of following a rule to be *necessary*.

A comment on the epistemology of the reactive mode. Following a rule under the reactive mode is, as Wittgenstein describes, to follow it "blindly". We feel guided when we follow a rule blindly and yet, if we sought full justification for the course of action that we were guided along, we would not find it. By the very nature of the matter, an account of the epistemology of following a rule under the reactive mode is going to elude the standard of rationality of the interpretative mode (i.e., we cannot hope to understand the reactive mode from the point of view of the interpretative mode). And so we cannot *justify* the feeling of being guided in the reactive mode. And so we should not expect an account that justifies but seek some other way to elucidate the epistemology of rule-following under the reactive mode. Wittgenstein describes this sentiment as follows: "But now notice this: *while* I am being guided everything is quite simple, I notice nothing *special*; but afterwards, when I ask myself what it was that happened, it seems to have been something indescribable. *Afterwards* no description satisfies me. It's as if I couldn't believe that I merely looked, made such-and-such a face, and drew a line. – But don't I remember anything else? No." (*PI* 175)

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[8] The "rabbit/duck" example involves a drawing that can be seen either as a rabbit or a duck depending on

There is a sense of mystery to the epistemology of grasping rules under the reactive mode. Indeed, the very locution 'follow a rule blindly' indicates a concession that the epistemology of following a rule in this mode is a mystery in some sense (even to the rule-follower). But again, this is under the view of the interpretative mode; it is under the view that any proper account of how to follow a rule will proceed by justifying a course of action. But it should be remembered that this is also the value of the interpretative mode: it enables us to see that our understanding of a rule is unjustified or underdetermined and so open to modification. With our division of modes or standards of rationality, we may offer this preliminary observation of following a rule "blindly": we should not expect an account of the grasp of a rule under one mode to be readily accessible (or even seem rational) to the standards of understanding under the other mode. This is precisely what it means to say that they are different standards or modes of *rationality*.

II. v. A Nice Chess Example from Hacking

At this juncture, it is worthwhile presenting an example, taken from Hacking,[9] from the history of chess which nicely serves to illustrate some of the points so far raised. The example concerns the rule in chess where a draw is obtained when the same position on the board is produced three times. The historical point is that in 1924 the rule was found to be ambiguous: does it require that it be the (numerically) same piece or pieces or may it be the same *type* of piece; for instance, may one black rook be interchanged with another black rook in obtaining the same board position? Hacking uses this historical example to illustrate four different positions which are to serve, by analogy, as noteworthy features in the discussion of

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how it is *seen*. See *PI* II, p. 194 for the passage and drawing.

scepticism and rule-following. I will describe the first three positions as they are relevant to this discussion.[10]

In the first scenario, suppose that in a specific game in 1924, in the 47th move, the "same" board position is replicated three times with the black rooks switched. One player (and his supporters) disapprove saying that numerical identity must be preserved for it to be a draw (it must be the same *token* black rook in the same position three times). The other player (and his supporters) disagree: any black rook will do (after all, their functions or uses are the same and this is their only importance in the game). Both sides, however, see that the other has a legitimate point (i.e., they accept both as interpretations of the rule, but evaluate them differently). In the second scenario, at move 47, a player [Hacking calls him 'Bok'] calls a draw by producing the same position with the black rooks interchanged. No one disagrees or notices anything unusual. The game is drawn. In the third scenario, at move 47 again, a player [Hacking calls him 'Wit'] calls a draw by producing the same position with the black rooks interchanged. In this case, in contrast, the other player objects saying that the same position has only been produced twice and that the third time the rooks were interchanged. The player who called the draw admits the error and the game continues. Eventually, one of the players wins. The relevant differences in the three cases is that in the first, the claim to draw is met with disagreement and a recognition of ambiguity (i.e., of different interpretations of the rule). In the second and third cases, there is no disagreement and no ambiguity recognized: play goes on (in one way or the other between the two cases) without stopping to interpret the rule or without there even seeming to be cause to interpret.

In the first case, Hacking notes that a "*distinguishing*" and "*unprecedented*" situation is achieved; distinguishing for the reason that the rule was seen to apply in two ways and

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[9] Who takes it himself from Littlewood [1953].

unprecedented for the reason that the ambiguity had never been noticed before. In the second and third cases, neither of these descriptions apply for no ambiguity is even noticed; participants continue as ever before without taking note of having to apply the rule (in the third case it is noted that the person who calls the draw does not follow the rule, but the ambiguity in the rule never comes up for the player who calls the draw admits his error). Of the second and third cases, Hacking has this to say:

> It is in fact misleading to speak of applying a rule. When a competent player makes a move, he does not 'apply a rule'. He moves. A novice may ask, 'Was that in accordance with the rule for castling?' 'Yes', is the answer, but the question does not arise for competent players. One moves...Yet by hypothesis, before the 1924 game began *nothing* existed in the language behaviour (and, I am inclined to say, brains) of Wit and his community that he would proceed as [he does in the second case]..., rather [than] as Bok in [the first case]... [11]

Hacking goes on to say:

> At any rate, we are now in a position to state the sceptical doctrine about rules. We observe that in ... [the second and third scenarios] people make moves in what they take to be routine ways, although a novice could ask, 'Is that player following such and such a rule?' Since, when asked, we reply 'Yes', perhaps with explanation, we may say that the players were following the rules. But it was possible for move 47 to create a situation that was unprecedented and distinguishing. The sceptic says, likewise – the sceptical 'likewise' – an unprecedented but distinguishing situation could arise in any application of any rule. There is never anything in the rules themselves that precludes that. We do 'go on', but it is not the rules that make us do that. It is less in the nature of the rules than of ourselves that we go on.[12]

In the scenarios, the players move blindly (at least in the phenomenological sense) rather than consciously applying a rule. Further, the rule, as stated, is indeterminate with regard to its correct application but the players in the second and third scenarios do not see this. They could have if the situation had turned out as it did in the first scenario. Their course of action at move 47 and on settles the ambiguity (it is not the case that the ambiguity was decided one way or another or that justifying reasons settled it one way rather than another – there was only their moves which went in conformity). Their understanding of the rule is

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[10] See Hacking [1985b], pp. 115-116.

perfectly in order prior to the 1924 game, and in the second and third cases, remains perfectly in order after even though the ambiguity in the rule never occurred to them.

Hacking notes that, prior to the 1924 game, there was no difference in the linguistic behaviour of the players of the second and third cases, versus that of the players in the first scenario that would indicate their course of action at move 47. Hacking is also inclined to say that there is no difference in their "brains" prior to move 47. I say, in similar fashion on behalf of Wittgenstein, that there was no difference in their understanding (for the understanding of a rule is evidenced in the application and in the explanations we give of the rule, which are *ex hypothesi* indifferent in the three scenarios prior to move 47 of the 1924 game). The rule (concerning draws in chess) was indeterminate. However, this need not imply that the indeterminacy is recognized. The indeterminacy need not arise in the application of a rule as it did not in the second and third cases. In the second and third cases we see that the players do not see the indeterminacy and so feel no need to interpret. They do not see the rule from the interpretative mode. They follow the rule under the reactive mode where they find themselves understanding the rule the same in each case (but differently between the two cases). But the possibility of the first case tells us that they could have stopped to interpret. They could have seen the rule as indeterminate at any point, or in any game prior or hence. But to say that they could notice the indeterminacy at any point does not imply that they will (and so does not imply that they will see their current understanding as at all deficient). It is not determined in our present understanding of a rule how we will apply it in future and unconsidered cases. This point is made by Wright in an oft-quoted passage: "there is in our understanding of a concept no rigid, advance

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[11] Hacking [1985b], p. 118.
[12] Hacking [1985b], pp. 118-119.

determination of what is to count as its correct application."[13] The point is made by Hacking when he says that an "unprecedented and distinguished" situation may arise at any step for any rule (and that this is not marked in our present understanding of the rule). The point to add here is that we are not any worse the wear for this lack of determination in our understanding. Our application can (and usually does) go the way of the second and third cases. This is to say that the lack of determination in our understanding of a rule need not give cause for an interpretation (which, if always did, would lead us to a sceptical end). It sounds unconvincing and unspectacular to avoid the sceptical paradox by saying that we could face the need to interpret at any stage (so as to deal with the underdetermination in our understanding of a rule) but we usually do not. And that we manage to agree in our application of a rule (as in the second and third cases) by just going on with the game (for this just seems to jump over the issue of the lack of determination in our understanding of a rule). And so more should be said to explain following a rule under the reactive mode.

II. vi. Bedrock - Reasons Running Out Part II

The point that our reasons must come to an end in our account of a rule is made in the very first remark of the *Investigations* (although Wittgenstein speaks of explanations coming to an end). The point is made there that an understanding (of a rule for the use of the word 'five' or 'red') which leaves no room for further questioning or doubt (i.e., a fully justified understanding of a rule) is not required for us to follow a rule. Further questions can be raised but that need not matter; Wittgenstein notes, in the same remark, "No such thing was in question here." (*PI* 1)

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[13] Wright [1980], p. 21.

The point at which we run out of reasons in justifying an application of a rule is described by Wittgenstein famously as 'bedrock'. He says, "If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: "This is simply what I do." (*PI* 217). This description of bedrock, as the point where justification is exhausted, offers a touching-point between the reactive and interpretative modes of rationality. If justification is exhausted when we reach bedrock then our attempts to understand in the interpretative mode finds its end here. The inclination, at this same point, to say "This is simply what I do" is thereby a tell-tale marker of operating under the reactive mode; that is, the expression is not idle: it signals that the required mode of understanding, under which the rule-following behaviour will make sense, is the reactive. And so, we cannot understand why the agent follows the rule as he does (when he gets to the point where he runs out of reasons and says "this is simply what I do") from the interpretative mode (for under this mode the behaviour will continue to seem underdetermined, unjustified and arbitrary). Thus, if the expression "this is simply what I do" is not sufficient to quell the enquiry, then the questioner fails to make the switch in modes and so fails to adequately grasp the rule.

There has been discussion in this thesis, beginning in Chapter 2, of basic rules. Some rules are required for an understanding of other rules and are thereby relatively basic (e.g., an understanding of counting is required for an understanding of addition). This view presumes a hierarchy of some sort where basic rules underlie others (which themselves may be basic to other rules less basic than themselves). Granting that this hierarchy cannot continue downward infinitely, to ever more basic rules or levels of rules, we arrive at the

point of a collection of rules that are truly basic. An understanding of these does not depend on an understanding of still more basic rules.[14]

This view of basic rules has found a ready home in the notion of "bedrock". 'Bedrock' has come to signify a repository of sorts of basic rules (indeed the word itself suggests the imagery of having dug as deep as can go). Justification is exhausted at bedrock because there are no more levels of rules to draw on in accounting for our understanding of basic rules.[15] And so basic rules are the rules of bedrock; and in the literature the term 'bedrock' has been used in this way. Certainly, McDowell has this view of bedrock in mind when he argues that there are norms at bedrock which cannot be accounted for in terms of physical "contingencies" that lie underneath bedrock (see the next sub-section). However, this view of bedrock should not be taken for granted for Wittgenstein does not talk explicitly of bedrock in these terms. I will invest some effort into getting clearer on Wittgenstein's use of the term for there is scope to think that it has been misappropriated. For Wittgenstein, the term 'bedrock' is simply the point at which justification is exhausted. There would seem to be no indication that the term 'bedrock' is to apply singularly to a to a base level of rules lying underneath all language use. Indeed, the indication is otherwise: bedrock, the point where justification ends, can be arrived at different points for different rules in different language games. Our ability to give reasons, in the way of justification, can find its end at any point when explaining our rule-following practice. We may find ourselves saying "that is simply what I do" at different points for different rules (and differently for different

[14] Note, we may admit that we reach a level of basic rules whose understanding does not presuppose a further level of rules, and so stem a regress, while still also admit a circularity in our understanding of basic rules (a circularity at the base level). That is, Wittgenstein seems to uphold the view that to learn any rule we must already have some facility with rule-following and so no rule is learned independently in the first instance. Perhaps, basic rules must be learned collectively to some degree – or perhaps already be given or present collectively in some way – if they are to be understood at all.

individuals) and this need not make reference to a fundamental level of basic rules. And so there is an arbitrariness to where bedrock will be encountered for a given rule in a given situation and this belies the view of bedrock as a fundamental level.

Nevertheless, a good case is available that Wittgenstein uses 'bedrock' in this fundamental sense. Aside from the imagery that the term evokes is the distinction Wittgenstein makes between language games and language (as in "the language"). This distinction pairs up with the distinction between forms of life and *the* form of life (i.e. the human form of life). There is debate in the literature[16] as to whether Wittgenstein intends for there to be many forms of life or one (for he discusses it in both ways, even given the lack of remarks where the term is explicitly mentioned). I do not believe this to be an inconsistency on Wittgenstein's part for I think that he intends for both senses to have play (i.e., there is one human form of life and different forms of life we humans can take part in). The association of form(s) of life with language game(s) makes it clearer that Wittgenstein intends for the term to apply in both senses. Consider the following remark where he first defines 'language game' in the *PI*:

> We can also think of the whole process of using words in (2) [the first "slab" language game remark in the *PI*] as one of those games by means of which children learn their native language. I will call these games "language-games" and will sometimes speak of a primitive language as a language game.
>
> And the processes of naming the stones and of repeating words after someone might also be called language-games. Think of much of the use of words in games like ring-a-ring-a-roses.
>
> I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the "language game". (*PI* 7)

This remark not only brings out the distinction between *the* language game and the language games which comprise it but also the association between language and form(s) of life (for

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[15] Again, we may admit that an understanding of any particular basic rule requires an understanding of other basic rules – and so admit a holistic view of basic rules – without implying a further level of basic rules. See above note.

[16] See Garver [1994], Ch. 15 especially.

the language game consists of language *and* the actions into which it is woven i.e., *and* the form(s) of life into which it is woven). A similar point is also made by Wittgenstein in an analogy between language and a city: language games compare to parts of a city (some newer, some older) while the city is *the* language: "Our language can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses." (*PI* 18) And so there are different language games (and different forms of life) that can be all be understood (in principle) for they are all part of *the* language (and *the* form of life). Creatures that do not partake of our language or form of life (in this grander sense) are beyond our comprehension (e.g., "If a lion could talk, we could not understand him" says Wittgenstein [*PI* II p. 223]). This thought is also behind Wittgenstein's remark (*PI* 250) that a dog cannot simulate pain to us: to think of him as simulating pain is already to interpret his behaviour in terms of the human form of life or language.

Seen in this light, there is a bedrock for any given language game (i.e., a point at which we run out of reasons to justify why we follow a rule as we do) *and* a bedrock, in the sense of a fundamental repository of basic rules, that underlies our understanding of language in general. In this latter sense, the basic rules need not be rules for any possible language but rather, any possible language that we can come to understand.[17] And so 'bedrock' would seem to have a use in its fundamental sense that is not unfaithful to the text (even though this is not indicated in the famous remark (*PI* 217) quoted at the start of this

[17] I.e., a language of the human form of life – after all, if a lion were to have a language we could not understand him, says Wittgenstein, and so we should not be able to say what are rules for a language outside of our form of life.

section). The purpose of this exegetical aside was to confirm just this point (for this is the view of bedrock I will also work with).

When we hit bedrock, and exhaust justification, then if we remain in the interpretative mode, we will have to interpret (for the reasons given do not determine/justify a course of action). But this is not going to help us to follow a rule for, by the definition of bedrock, we have run out of reasons that can enter to support an interpretation. To follow a rule when bedrock is hit requires that we *must* now proceed blindly for there are no more justifying reasons even were we to consider them. But if all we had is the interpretative mode at this point then our rule-following behaviour at the point of bedrock would not be rational (for, by the definition of bedrock, justification ends and therefore so does our ability to understand under the interpretative mode). But we will always hit bedrock in our attempts to justify our rule-following behaviour and so we will always hit a point where our rule-following behaviour may come to seem arbitrary (and this can be taken as an admission that we are no longer following rules, for to act arbitrarily is to not be guided).[18] To repeat a point made above, if there is to be rationality at all in rule-following then there must be another mode or standard of rationality other than the interpretative.[19] Two further points are available here. First, since justification is exhausted at bedrock, an understanding of bedrock rules or basic rules is the sole propriety of the reactive mode. Second, understanding under the reactive mode is prior in our language learning. The second point follows from the first. Initial language learning proceeds under the reactive mode for initial language learning must involve a learning of basic rules (for they are presupposed in our understanding of other rules). Wittgenstein supports just this when, for example, he says

[18] The general point here, of course, is the sceptical one that rule-following strictly under the interpretative mode leads to paradox.

that ostensive definitions, used in the instruction of basic concepts, can be "variously interpreted in *every* case" (*PI* 28) for this argues that we cannot learn the meaning of a word through an ostensive definition under the interpretative mode. The language initiate must be able to understand from under the reactive mode if he is to learn language from ostensive definitions or to learn language at all.[20]

Wittgenstein's contention that learning the meaning of any one word (say through an ostensive definition) presupposes a certain mastery of language should not be read as saying that learning a language presupposes that we already have a language (which, of course, would be a circular account of language learning). This reading is prey to the Augustinian conception which assumes that the language initiate is already vested with linguistic skill such that he can learn from ostensive definitions as a simple matter of picking up vocabulary. Wittgenstein affirms, "Augustine describes the learning of human language as if the child came into a strange country and did not understand the language of the country; that is, as if it already had a language, only not this one. Or again: as if the child could already think, only not yet speak. And "think" would here mean something like "talk to itself"." (*PI* 32) Rather, the proper way of reading Wittgenstein's contention that we must have a certain linguistic mastery or proficiency to learn from an ostensive definition is that we must have a "mastery" of what it is to follow or understand a rule under the reactive mode. Ostensive definitions are open to interpretation (see *PI* 28) and so understanding under the interpretative mode cannot settle on the correct way to understand an ostensive definition.

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[19] Wittgenstein recommends that we need not be under the interpretative mode to "feel" rational if we could just "recognize the ground that lies before us as the ground." (*RFM* VI 31)

[20] There is a common, but perhaps not putative, view that rules of logical inference are the rules of reason and consequently, rational behaviour is ultimately defined in terms of following these rules (these logical rules underline rationality). It is worth pointing out that the positions defended in this chapter do not clash with the view that logical rules hold this special place. At issue here is what it is to follow such rules: do we interpret these rules and their instructions or do we follow them in some other way (as per the reactive mode). The

It is in virtue of being able to grasp a rule "reactively" or "blindly" that we are able to grasp an ostensive definition without falling victim to deviant interpretations.[21]

Grasping a rule in the reactive mode has been described as grasping a rule in a way that does not involve interpreting. It is a way of grasping and following a rule characterised as not requiring an appeal to reasons, or at least, if reasons are involved in the consideration of how to follow the rule, those reasons will give out short of justifying the course of action adopted. And hence, following a rule under the reactive mode would seem to involve an epistemic leap from reasons that underdetermine the correct way to follow a rule to an understanding of the correct way to follow a rule. It is the involvement of this epistemic leap that is the basis for calling this "blind" rule-following in an epistemic sense. Blind rule-following, which is to follow a rule under the reactive mode, seems epistemically arbitrary and unjustified from the perspective where the correct way to follow a rule must be seen to be correct against all other consistent interpretations; from this perspective, to follow a rule blindly is not to proceed rationally. But again, if we could not respond in a rational manner to underdetermining reasons and instructions, and so come to understand how to follow a rule from these reasons and instructions without interpreting, then by work of the sceptical argument (i.e., the Sceptical-Inductive argument), there would be no rule-following. One and the same rule, as in the chess illustration above, can come to be seen as indeterminate – and so incapable of being followed until the indeterminacy is settled along some interpretation – or it can be seen with ignorance of any indeterminacy – and so followed

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answer given for basic rules (which should surely include inference rules) is that they are grasped under the reactive mode.

[21] The reading of Wittgenstein, as arguing that we must have a language to learn a language, is upheld by Fodor who finds it supportive of his 'language of thought' hypothesis. See Fodor [1975].

without need of interpretation. Depending on how the rule is seen (i.e., as indeterminate or not), different rational responses will be in order.[22]

While blind rule-following behaviour, by its very blindness in the epistemic sense, escapes full justification, we can nevertheless speak of proceeding rightly rather than wrongly in following a rule blindly. That is to say, there are two rational standards or modes operative here: one by which we admit that we cannot fully justify or vindicate blind rule-following practice and another by which we can still speak of proceeding rightly rather than wrongly in following a rule blindly. We may add that, were we to be without means to distinguish between proceeding rightly rather than wrongly when we lack justification for following a rule as we do when we follow a rule blindly, then we would be unable to save blind rule-following from the criticism levelled in Chapter 2 against following a rule by intuition. That is, it was there argued that in cases of following an intuition, we cannot distinguish between proceeding rightly versus it just seeming to us that we do so (and so intuition-following is likened to private rule-following – see Chapter 2 for details of this argument); further, as the criticism continues, there can be no intuition-following (or private rule-following) where this distinction is lacking. This is a private language argument style objection. The availability of this distinction (and so the deflection of this sort of objection) in the blind rule-following case (where, admittedly, justification – and so the sense of rightness of being justified – is not on offer) is made possible by an appreciation of a sense of rightness, different than that involved with justification, that is characteristic of what I have chosen to call the 'reactive mode or standard of rationality'. This alternative sense of

[22] And of course, to not "see" this indeterminacy is to be "blind" to it. This is to say that although our understanding is underdetermined, this does not manifest as an understanding of the rule as indeterminate.

rightness in rule-following enables us to maintain a distinction with epistemic import between blind rule-following and following a rule by intuition.[23]

II. vii. McDowell and Bedrock/Sub-Bedrock

At this point, I will present a discussion of the bearing of basic human physical and psychological propensities and other non-normative considerations on our common application of rules at bedrock. McDowell labels the collection of these common propensities ("a web of facts about behaviour and 'inner' episodes, describable without the notion of meaning"[24]) as 'sub-bedrock'. I will work with an understanding of sub-bedrock that is likely more broad than, albeit still largely inclusive of, what McDowell has in mind and this is for reason of working with a more clearly formed notion. This does not undermine an attempt to criticise McDowell's position for reason that the understanding remains common in its essentials: basic non-normative and contingent facts about human beings. I will take sub-bedrock to be the collection of basic non-normative facts that human beings share in virtue of living in similar environments, societies, and sharing similar bodies with similar propensities and needs and similar perceptual apparatus. In other words, sub-bedrock is the region of investigation of the natural and social sciences as it bears on human beings.[25] This account leaves us better placed for a clearer discussion of whether bedrock can be understood in terms of sub-bedrock. McDowell contends that the commonalities of bedrock (that we uniformly apply basic rules) are not amenable to a description in terms of

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[23] Blind rule-following and intuition-following bear a certain affinity: they are, or at least may be, both cases of blind rule-following in a phenomenological sense (i.e., as involving an immediacy where reasons are not considered in the course of following a rule). Hence, any difference we seek to strike must be in epistemic ground and it is the recognition of proceeding rightly rather than wrongly under the reactive mode that allows us to strike this difference.

sub-bedrock commonalities.[26] The basic thought is that an account of bedrock in terms of sub-bedrock propensities to act does not provide us with a sufficient basis for our expectations that the application of rules by others will be in step with ours (i.e., that we will agree in judgement); my understanding of others and how they apply rules would be on a "precarious" inductive footing insufficient to justify my judgements that we proceed in step and understand each other. McDowell affirms, "coming to see the contingencies of resemblances, at this level [i.e., at sub-bedrock], on which meanings rests is supposed to induce appreciation that knowledge of another person's pattern could at best be inductive."[27]

According to McDowell, bedrock is ineliminably normative: rules and rule-following are of the essence of bedrock. Bedrock is "the deepest level at which we may sensibly contemplate the place of language in the world."[28] McDowell borrows the following quotation from Wittgenstein to make his point: "following according to the rule is FUNDAMENTAL to our language game."[29] (*RFM* VI 28) The thought here is in line with the view of bedrock I have established as signifying a level of basic rules (a repository of sorts of basic rules). Sub-bedrock, in contrast, is not normative. McDowell elaborates the point when he describes the commonalities of sub-bedrock as *contingent.* There is no guarantee that a contingent event will happen and so there is no guarantee that we will commonly apply rules at bedrock if this is based on contingently obtaining happenings at

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[24] McDowell [1984], p. 348.
[25] Facts about our human form of life, in other words.
[26] I do agree with the importance placed on the notion of common application of rules at bedrock. We see Wittgenstein highlight the importance of this notion, which he characterizes as 'agreement in judgement', in *PI* 242 where he describes it as necessary for the possibility of linguistic communication. I will conduct a fairly sustained elaboration and discussion of this notion through Sections IV to VI of this chapter (and explain how rule-following in the reactive mode serves to achieve agreement in judgement). In this section I disagree with McDowell that sub-bedrock commonalties are not of use in an account of agreement in judgement in basic rules.
[27] McDowell [1984], p. 349.
[28] McDowell [1984], p. 341.
[29] In McDowell [1984], p. 350.

sub-bedrock. But, to press McDowell's view here, this is a guarantee that we need if we are to be assured that we proceed in step with others in applying basic or bedrock rules. At best, the obtaining of commonalities at sub-bedrock gives us inductive grounds for our belief that we proceed in step; however, as McDowell indicates (in the passage in the paragraph just above), inductive grounds is no grounds in this case.

The characterisation, by McDowell, of sub-bedrock as contingent and as offering only an inductive footing draws out one side of the contrast between sub-bedrock and bedrock that McDowell seeks to make. The other side, that which characterises bedrock, is the sense that we operate under shared constraints when we follow rules at bedrock. That is, the crucial difference between the two levels is expressed by McDowell in terms of "the idea that mutual understanding is mutual knowledge of shared commitments."[30] The normativity of bedrock involves this sense of shared commitments. We have a shared understanding of how rules, especially basic or bedrock rules, are to be applied and this is the underpinning of linguistic interaction. But according to McDowell, this sense of shared commitments between individuals, at the basic level, is not sufficiently accounted for by the happenings in individual psyches or the propensities and dispositions of individual's bodies, i.e., the "contingencies", that may lie underneath this basic level in any individual. Thus, McDowell concludes, sub-bedrock commonalities cannot provide a sufficient underpinning for linguistic interaction (these commonalities need not obtain, and so – it is argued – they cannot account for the sense of operating under a shared constraint at bedrock, for if we felt that we need not be following a rule as we do at bedrock, or that others may not be following rules as we do at bedrock, then the sense of shared constraint at bedrock would dematerialise). Hence, McDowell insists that a sharp distinction be upheld between bedrock

[30] McDowell [1984], p. 349.

and sub-bedrock if the normativity of bedrock is to be maintained (and a natural way to think of this sharp distinction is as a resistance to a programme of reduction).

The attempt to account for bedrock from sub-bedrock is, as McDowell describes, a "leaching out of norms from our picture of 'bedrock'."[31] In his view, this attempt conflicts expressly with Wittgenstein's warning not to try to dig below bedrock; to "recognize the ground that lies before us as the ground." (*RFM* VI 31) This is an attempt that McDowell ascribes to Wright and he describes this as follows:

> The picture Wright offers is, at the basic level, a picture of human beings vocalising in certain ways in response to objects, with this behaviour (no doubt) accompanied by such 'inner' phenomena as feelings of constraint, or convictions of the rightness of what they are saying....But at this basic level there is no question of shared commitments – of the behaviour, and the associated aspects of the streams of consciousness, being subject to the authority of anything outside themselves. ('For the community itself there is no authority, so no standard to meet': Wright [1980], p. 220). How then can we be entitled to view the behaviour as involving, say, calling this 'yellow', rather than a mere brute sounding off?[32]

Leaving aside the question of whether McDowell has Wright's position exegetically on the bone, there is a sense in which McDowell is right: the sense of shared commitments, *as he sees it*, is not sufficiently accounted for by the "brute" goings on at sub-bedrock. But there are difficulties in his formulation of the problematic. The matter can be traced to a disregard of the underdetermination of our understanding of a rule and may be seen more clearly by bringing into context the reactive and interpretative modes of rationality. McDowell's insistence on the separation of levels can be taken as an insistence that our sense of operating under the reactive mode (which leads us to apply rules commonly) is not susceptible to an account in sub-bedrock terms. But this sense of shared commitment, as present when operating under the reactive mode, does not have the stability that McDowell

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[31] McDowell [1984], p. 341.
[32] McDowell [1984], p. 336.

affords it for it remains a possibility that we may switch to the interpretative mode for our understanding of a rule.[33]

To elaborate, McDowell, in his sustained criticism of the role of interpretation in rule-following, neglects that interpretation does have a role. McDowell reads passages like "A doubt was possible in certain circumstances. But that is not to say that I did doubt, or even could doubt." (*PI* 213) and "there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation*" (*PI* 201) in a single-minded way. That is, he neglects that these passages leave open a role for interpretation and doubt in our rule-following practice. Further to this exegetical point is the philosophical point that this role for interpretation is a facet of the underdetermination of our understanding of a rule (for this underdetermination tells us that indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to be in accord with what we understand of a rule – i.e., instructions and explanations). The underdetermination of our understanding is a reason for finding the interpretative view of what it is to understand a rule compelling, and so to deny any role for interpretation in our grasp and following of rules is to deny the weight of this reason.[34] What is needed is not an account that denies a role for interpretation but one that – and this is clearly to be in line with the maxim espoused by Wittgenstein in *PI* 201 – nevertheless admits that "there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation.*" That is, to say that there is a way of grasping a rule that is not an interpretation does not deny that that there is a way of grasping a rule that is an interpretation (it only denies that this is the only way). But if interpretation can have a role in our grasp of rules, including basic or bedrock rules, then our grasp of these rules is not beyond the possibility of doubt (for we may feel that these rules can be interpreted and

[33] The rule for sameness excepted. See Section V. below for details.

followed differently); but this means that the sense of shared commitment at bedrock is not as stable or secured as it is made out to be. The possibility of doubt or interpretation remains due to the underdetermination of our understanding of a rule. The fact that we nevertheless do not doubt or interpret – again, especially in basic cases – is due to our being able to follow a rule despite this underdetermination, and this is a matter of our being able to follow a rule blindly or reactively. Being able to follow a rule blindly or reactively does not require determination in our understanding of a rule; to the contrary, it involves our being able to follow a rule despite this lack of determination.[35]

According to McDowell, the normativity at bedrock – the sense of shared commitment that ensures that we commonly apply basic rules – is plainly not secured by the indeterminacy and contingency that characterises the happenings at sub-bedrock. However, any account, any explanation, we can give for why we follow a rule as we do – basic or not – cannot determine a particular course of action to uniqueness (this is a facet of the underdetermination of our understanding of a rule) and so we should not take it as a failing of any sub-bedrock account that it also cannot offer a determinative account of why we follow rules as we do at bedrock (i.e., an account that discounts the possibility of someone deviating like the deviant pupil). We do not cast off instructions and explanations

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[34] The reductio reading of the sceptical paradox does not deny a role for interpretation in our understanding of a rule, but only an exclusive role, and so does not deny that the underdetermination of our understanding remains as a reason for finding the interpretative view compelling.

[35] In McDowell's view, it would seem, blind rule-following should not be possible because it faces the inductive threat (and presumes that we can make the epistemic leap) of proceeding from an understanding of underdetermining instructions – that can be interpreted in indefinitely many ways – to an understanding of a correct and unique way of following a rule. Recall that McDowell criticizes sub-bedrock accounts for the reason that they give us at best an inductive footing for the belief that we proceed in step in our application of basic rules. But we see that, due to the underdetermination of our understanding, it would appear that we have at best an inductive footing for our grasp of any rule. If the threat of an inductive footing is grounds for denying normativity, then normativity is lost as soon as we admit that our understanding of any rule does not transcend an understanding of underdetermining instructions. Thus, McDowell does not save rule-following (and the normativity of bedrock) by denying the legitimacy of sub-bedrock accounts of our common application of basic rules; rather, he avoids providing the account – of blind rule-following – that would serve to explain how we are able to follow rules despite these looming inductive threats.

as irrelevant to our common understanding and application of bedrock rules for reason that they cannot provide a fully determined understanding (and so account for the sense of shared commitment at bedrock in this way). That is to say, our following a common set of instructions in a rule can serve to explain why we commonly apply that rule even though these instructions underdetermine the rule (even though someone may come to "follow" those instructions as the deviant pupil followed the instructions given to him for add-2). Likewise, we should not cast off sub-bedrock accounts of bedrock for reason that the "contingency" that characterises happenings at sub-bedrock cannot offer a determinative view – one that discounts the possibility of deviation – of the conformity of application that characterises rule-following at bedrock.[36]

At any rate, we may make two points about determination (or the lack thereof) in connection to bedrock and sub-bedrock. First, bedrock does not have the stability (with regard to our common understanding of basic rules) that McDowell would grant it[37] and second, and in consequence, it is not a failure of any sub-bedrock account of our rule-following practices that it cannot account for this stability (i.e., that it cannot provide for the determination in our understanding of basic rules). That is, since our understanding of any rule is not of it as fully determined, a sub-bedrock account need not aspire to a determinative account of our rule-following practices in the first place (for this would seek what is not

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[36] We may describe the difference between McDowell and the account given herein, in a nutshell, as one of paying due respect to sceptical considerations (viz., the underdetermination of our understanding of a rule), and trying to show that rule-following is nevertheless not undermined, and denying any import to these sceptical considerations (and thereby showing that rule-following is not undermined).

[37] The underdetermination of our understanding of any rule places our understanding of any rule – including basic or bedrock rules – under inductive threat. Thus, our expectation that we proceed in step in applying bedrock rules remains under the threat of an "inductive footing" whether or not we turn to a sub-bedrock account (i.e., whether or not we seek an account of bedrock in terms of the "contingencies" of happenings at sub-bedrock). Again, what is needed is an account – of following a rule blindly – that does not seek to abrogate this inductive threat (for we would not seem to proceed "blindly" if this threat was, in the least, not apparent) but allows for rule-following, even at the base level, in spite of this threat. McDowell seems to have shut himself off from such an account.

there to be found); something less is in order and this is an *explanation* of these practices. I will elaborate the latter point. Consider the over-worked deviant pupil of *PI* 185. A sub-bedrock account of the pupil's understanding of the rule add-2 does not *determine* that the pupil will deviate (or that we do not). But this is because there is no determination in the understanding (either in the pupil's or ours) as to whether there will be a deviant application. And so, a determinative account of our understanding of rules should not be the objective nor a criterion of success. Rather, we should accept that a sub-bedrock account should serve to explain why we apply rules commonly at bedrock. The possibility of deviation need not indicate a failure of the explanation for explanations do not endeavour towards being determinative accounts.

This point may be expressed differently. Given our definition of bedrock (as the point in the course of justification where reasons run out), we have no justification for why we follow rules as we do at bedrock. As I have read it, this is to say that we cannot offer a determinative account for why we follow rules as we do at bedrock (i.e., an account that can determine an interpretation to the exclusion of others). This is what we should expect if we accept the point that our understanding of any rule is underdetermined (for we cannot have an account that shows the full application of a rule to be determined in our understanding because it is not). McDowell accepts this definition of bedrock while he also accepts that a sub-bedrock account does not justify (i.e., offer a determinative account of) our belief that we commonly understand how to apply a rule at bedrock. But a sub-bedrock account cannot justify this belief or understanding, not merely because it appeals to "contingent" facts about ourselves, but because no account can take on the task of justification. McDowell does not give due weight to the point that the understanding of any rule is underdetermined, and so he does not realise that this serves to explain why attempts to

justify the understanding of a rule do not succeed, i.e., why reasons run out at bedrock. Consequently, he lays too much on the shoulders of normative constraints and senses of social commitments to muscle our understanding into being determinative of our application of a rule.

An appeal to sub-bedrock considerations, for instance, an appeal to considerations of human biology or of human evolution, can serve to *explain* why we apply rules commonly. For example, Baker and Hacker note that "cats do not look in the direction we point, but at the hand; we humans look in the direction of the pointing hand."[38] Presumably, there is some measure of biological or evolutionary explanation for this but it clearly would not aspire to say that it is determined that we will follow the rule for pointing in this way. We see Wittgenstein make similar points. For instance, he directs us to facts about our natural history as explanatory of our form of life (i.e., as explaining why we understand and apply basic rules as we do). When he contrasts a human form of life to a lion's (so as to say that if a lion could talk we would not be able to understand him) he makes a point that a different biological system (with different needs, which operates in different environmental conditions) is grounds for claiming that there is no common basis for an understanding of basic rules. But this is to bring in sub-bedrock considerations into our explanation of our common application of bedrock rules. Further, Wittgenstein affirms that even psychoanalysis, among other psychological accounts, can serve in an (of course non-determinative) account of our intentional behaviour (c.f., *PI* II p. 215). More pointedly, Wittgenstein notes that if we want to understand how it is that we could apply basic rules differently than we do, we need only imagine that basic facts about ourselves or our environments were different. He states, "If anyone believes that certain concepts are

[38] Baker and Hacker [1985], p. 233.

absolutely the correct ones, and that having different ones would mean not realizing something that we all realize – then let him imagine certain very general facts of nature to be different from what we are used to, and the formation of concepts different from the usual ones will become intelligible to him." (*PI* II, p. 230) Indeed, Wittgenstein's different illustrations of language games can be taken as an exercise of just this prescribed methodology. And so, once we see that sub-bedrock considerations need only explain then there is no reason not to turn to these considerations to gain some understanding of why we commonly apply basic rules. An explanation of bedrock from sub-bedrock does not destroy the difference in levels (nor leach bedrock of its norms) for explanation does not aim at reduction or determination. Indeed, we should find it a weakness of Wittgenstein's views if naturalistic, psychoanalytic, and other sub-bedrock explanations were of no aid in understanding why we apply rules as we do (we are only barred from upholding that they determine that we apply rules as we do).[39]

III. Stroud's Distinction

Stroud, in his reading of Wittgenstein (wherein he defends Wittgenstein against Dummett's charge of radical conventionalism), makes the point that we can posit and conceive of

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[39] As noted, I have offered a slightly different view of sub-bedrock "contingencies" than does McDowell for he speaks of mental episodes and ideolectic landscapes as also part of sub-bedrock contingencies whereas I have focussed on a view of sub-bedrock as accountable under the physical or social sciences. In doing so I have opened up sub-bedrock to investigation and description which would not be so easy were we to think of sub-bedrock strictly in terms of private goings-on in the minds of individuals. I think that this is fair for the point to make, and that is made, is that basic non-normative considerations about ourselves do serve to explain (and need not determine) our common application of rules at bedrock. It is also to come to grips with the notion of sub-bedrock which, especially in its reference to manifestations unavailable to all but the individual, is at once too quixotically described by McDowell and largely unmotivated in the text as Wittgenstein's own view of sub-bedrock. Wittgenstein plainly affirms that non-normative considerations about human beings (facts about the human form of life if you would) can explain (but not determine) the conformity in our rule-following behaviour. A view of sub-bedrock that can serve to deny this point dismisses a sense of sub-bedrock that Wittgenstein would endorse in favour of one that he would not.

alternative logico-mathematical systems – alternative systems to those employed in our own way of seeing the world – but this is not to say that we can freely adopt, decide upon, or even clearly comprehend these systems. These alternative systems, depicted in some of Wittgenstein's examples of alternative language games, do not involve contradictions and so pose no immediate threat to their being possible systems; it is just that they are so foreign to our own ways of doing things and our ways of reasoning that we can have no clear concept of them. Wittgenstein supports such a reading in the following quotation:

> So much is clear: when someone says: "If you follow the *rule*, it *must* be like this", he has not any *clear* concept of what experience would correspond to the opposite.
>
> Or again: he has not any clear concept of what it would be like for it to be otherwise. And this is very important. (*RFM* IV 29)

Wittgenstein points out that when something strikes us as logically necessary we cannot *clearly* conceive of its not being the case. We may think that we understand what it is to proceed differently (though we think it incorrect), but on closer inspection we find that we lack a clear concept. Alternatively, we may state the view this way: when something strikes us as logically necessary we do not view it as open to interpretation (and so we do not enter into the interpretative mode to understand it). This is one part of Stroud's reading of Wittgenstein as upholding a distinction between being able to have some (less than clear) concept and having a *clear* concept. This distinction lies at the heart of Stroud's defense of Wittgenstein against the charge of radical conventionalism: we can conceive – as possibilities – different logical systems, different ways of representing the world (different forms of life if you would). But we can only entertain these possibilities to an extent. We cannot fully envisage what it would be like to employ or inhabit these alternative systems; this is to lack a clear concept of what it would be to adopt these different systems in actuality. This is a distinction between conceiving of something as a possibility and

conceiving of something *clearly* which demands that we be able to see ourselves as enacting this possibility. Thus, conceiving of something clearly requires something in the order of empathy. And so Stroud's defense against the charge of radical conventionalism comes down to this: we cannot come to employ an alternative system of logic, or an alternative understanding of basic rules, for lack of a clear conception. And the reason we lack a clear conception is that our current logico-mathematical system, and our current understanding of other basic rules, restricts what we can clearly conceive; we view these rules as necessary and so do not have a clear view of following them differently.

Stroud uses the example of the wood-sellers to make his case. The wood-sellers are a community that measure a volume of wood by the land-surface area it occupies (and so two lots of wood piled to different heights, if they cover the same land area, are equivalent in volume). The wood-sellers, in contrast to the deviant pupil, present a case in which a whole community deviates from our normal practice in following a rule. Of them Wittgenstein says,

> How could I show them that – as I should say – you don't really buy more wood if you buy a pile covering a bigger area? – I should, for instance, take a pile which was small by their ideas and, by laying the logs around, change it into a "big" one. This *might* convince them – but perhaps they would say: "Yes, now it's a *lot* of wood and costs more" – and that would be the end of the matter. (*RFM* I 149)

The wood-sellers, in this passage, are not convinced by Wittgenstein's manoeuvre to redistribute the same volume of wood. We would say that we could always swindle these people, e.g., buy a lot of wood piled high and then sell the same lot of wood back, piled lower and wider and therefore covering a larger surface area, for a higher price.[40] But this just invites the response: "So what. So they can always be swindled". That is not to say that

[40] A similar point can also be made regarding the deviant pupil. We can imagine setting up a system of exchange where he can always be swindled (e.g., we give him $1000 plus $2 and he always returns $1004 thinking that it gives the same tally).

there cannot be such people, it is only to say that they do not act as we do. As Stroud observes, "surely it is not logically impossible for there to be such people: the example does not contain a hidden contradiction."[41]

According to Stroud, the wood-sellers are a community that seems plausible to us at first, but on further scrutiny we come to see that they have a way of representing the world that is beyond our clear conception. The wood-sellers serve to exemplify this distinction between conceiving of something as possible or in principle and conceiving of something clearly or as possible for ourselves in fact (i.e., where we can empathise with their way of seeing the world). Stroud relates:

> Surely they would have to believe that a one-by-six-inch board all of a sudden increased in size or quantity when it was turned from resting on its one-inch edge to resting on its six-inch edge. And what would the relation between quantity and weight possibly be for such people? A man could buy as much wood as he could possibly lift, only to find, upon dropping it, that he had just lifted more wood than he could possibly lift...And do these people think of themselves as shrinking when they shift from standing on both feet to standing on one?...And so on. Problems involved in understanding what it would be like to sell wood in this way can be multiplied indefinitely.[42]

It might sound a little grand to say that the wood-sellers inhabit a different form of life, but it is certainly the case that, as we ramify the consequences of their beliefs about volumes of wood, we see that we would not be able to share a large measure of their beliefs about the world; we could not understand what it would be like to see the world as they do. There is an obvious bearing here on rationality. We grant a measure of rationality to the wood-sellers when we find their rule-following behaviour conceivable in principle or as a possibility but deny them another measure when we cannot find their ways *clearly* conceivable.

This connects to our dual modes of rationality. If a certain way of following a rule is taken as necessary, then, as explained earlier, we do not view it as open to interpretation –

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[41] Stroud [1966], p. 484.
[42] Stroud [1966], p. 488.

we do not view it as indeterminate – and so do not understand it from under the interpretative mode. Thus, rules we deem as necessary are rules understood under the reactive mode. However, if we are to try to rationalise someone's deviant application of a necessary rule, we cannot do so from the reactive mode (for under this mode any deviance in application is precisely not correct or rational). We must view the deviant behaviour from the interpretative mode if we are to understand it but, concurrently, not view our own understanding from the interpretative mode. But this means that we do not obtain a clear conception of the deviant behaviour for we are not looking at it as something that we could ourselves accept (the rule is taken as necessary and so deviance is not open to a clear conception). Thus, any success in understanding the deviant application will not involve a clear conception. It will involve, at best, a conception of the deviant act as possible in principle (it is not very clear what this means, but then, this is very much the point). For instance, we see that we cannot clearly understand the wood-seller's practice for measuring volumes of wood (and that this only becomes clear to us when we draw out the consequences of this practice for their other beliefs, as Stroud does above). But this is not to say that we do not or did not have any understanding of their practice. Initially, when the case was presented, the system of the wood-sellers did seem understandable although also peculiar and naïve. As long as we remain with this view, which does not involve a clear conception, we can find the wood-sellers rational (but also incorrect) in their application of the rule (i.e., as long as we do not try to establish what it would be to adopt this pattern of application for ourselves – which would be to try and form a clear conception). Finding someone rational who applies a necessary rule differently requires viewing their application under the interpretative mode but also not doing so for our own understanding of the rule;

that is, it requires being able to have some conception of their application that is not a clear conception.

There is an uneasiness in the distinction that is not without its due. The distinction between conceiving clearly and conceiving as a principled possibility is not stable when applied to rules that we uphold as necessary. Once we see that we cannot forge a clear conception we may feel that we have no conception of what it is to deviate in the application of a necessary rule. On an initial view, the deviant application may seem rational; but when the turn is made to conceive clearly, our initial conception falls away with the failure to conceive clearly. For instance, after Stroud points out the extent of deviation that must be involved in the case of the wood-sellers, we should realise that we cannot find these people understandable at all. At first rational but quirky, they are later viewed as beyond rational circumspection. But now, with the failure of a clear conception, the distinction has fallen away: we have no conception of what it is to deviate in this way. It is with necessary rules that we cannot clearly conceive of a deviant application, and so it is with necessary rules that the noted distinction dissolves when the attempt is made to conceive clearly. But notice, prior to the attempt to conceive clearly, we did hold some conception of the deviant application (we did not yet think of it as an interpretation we could adopt, and so did not think of what this would involve, but we did think of it as a rational albeit incorrect interpretation of the rule[43]). Thus, the distinction is still present in the case of necessary rules – it is just that it is not stable (we cannot hold both ends).

The point here may be made with the case of the deviant pupil as it is with the wood-sellers. At first, it seems that the deviant pupil's behaviour in following the rule add-2, although incorrect, is rational for reason that his behaviour is consistent with the instructions

and training we gave him (his behaviour exemplifies a consistent interpretation of the instructions). On closer scrutiny, we find that we do not have a clear conception of his deviance. Indeed, on closer inspection, his deviance seems much more egregious than it first seemed. The reason is that he also differs, in virtue of his deviance in applying the rule add-2, in his understanding of what it is to do the same or go on the same. As Stroud describes it, adding 2 is about as paradigmatic a case of going on the same as we are likely to come by and so deviance in this case should indicate a deviant understanding of what it is to do the same (the pupil, after all, is presented as believing he went on in the same way in the remark).[44] And this is a deviance of which we can have no clear conception.[45] Stroud makes his point as follows:

> But in the case of writing "1002" right after "1000" there appear to be no alternatives open to us. It seems impossible to understand how we could "adopt the convention" that writing "998, 1000, 1004, ..." is going on in the same way, or taking steps of the same size. Surely if writing "998, 1000, 1002,..." is not taking steps of the same size, then nothing is.[46]

As noted earlier, since we do not have a clear conception of what it is to deviate in the application of a necessary rule, we do not view our own understanding of the rule as open to interpretation. This is the impediment with finding deviant behaviour, in rules we take to be necessary, to be rational: we do not view the rule as open to interpretation and so should not find any deviant application to be a legitimate interpretation of the rule (and so ultimately cannot ascribe rationality to the pupil's behaviour on grounds that it is a legitimate interpretation of the rule, i.e., rational *as viewed under the interpretative mode*). Since the behaviour is not rational as viewed under the reactive mode (since it differs in its application

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[43] See section II.i. above for an explanation of how we can hold an item of rule-following behaviour to be both rational and incorrect under the interpretative mode.

[44] If application is a criterion of understanding then misapplication in a paradigmatic case must be a criterion of a general misunderstanding.

[45] See Section V below on sameness for detail.

from us), it is not to be viewed as rational at all. But now we see that we take back what we first granted to the deviant pupil: an attribution of rationality. The grounds for taking this back is that we realise that we cannot have a clear conception and this is because the deviance is more egregious and with wider consequence than it first seemed (for instance, it involves a different application of the rule for *going on the same*); it is a deviance we cannot see ourselves as exemplifying. *PI* 185 ultimately presents an example beyond our clear conception. The marvel of it (and the wood-sellers example) is that it does not seem beyond our conception at first; it finds a way to wedge an unstable distinction between conceiving in principle or as a possibility and conceiving clearly.

If we have a clear conception of a different way of following a rule then we see this different way as something we can adopt ourselves (we are open to understanding the rule under the interpretative mode). This means that we are not wedded to our way of following the rule as necessary. This would be the case with rules we readily accept as conventional (e.g., traffic rules). Stroud's defense against the charge of radical conventionalism (which requires showing that logico-mathematical rules, and other basic rules of representation, are different from this obviously conventional variety) requires making the point that we cannot have a clear concept of deviance in such basic cases. The illustrations, involving the wood-sellers and the deviant pupil, are meant to show just this: our understanding of the deviance in these cases is limited to an unclear conception; once we move to understand clearly (which involves looking more closely, to the ramifications of this deviant rule-following behaviour for other basic beliefs, or more generally, to see if we could accept this deviant rule-following behaviour for ourselves), we see that we cannot do so. That is, these scenarios illustrate to us this distinction between conceiving (in some way less than clearly)

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[46] Stroud [1966], pp. 484-5.

and conceiving clearly for, at best, we can do the former but not the latter (for basic rules or rules we take to be necessary).

Given the underdetermination of our understanding of a rule, it may seem that we should always be able to turn to the interpretative mode in our understanding of a rule (and thus, it would seem, it is always open to interpret a rule along indefinitely many lines). But this admits that we can always come to doubt our current way of following a rule. However, it has been expressed by Wittgenstein that although we can doubt, in some sense, that does not mean that we do doubt or will doubt; that especially for basic or bedrock rules (which would include rules that we take to be necessary that they be followed in a certain way) we do not doubt (for these are rules grasped under the reactive mode). But still, there evidently remains a modal tension here (and perhaps, less charitably, a contradiction) when it is admitted that it is nevertheless possible that rules we take to be necessary can, in some sense, be open to doubt or interpretation. This tension is explicit in this remark: "A doubt was possible in certain circumstances. But that is not to say that I did doubt, or even could doubt." (*PI* 213). Here we have a view to Wittgenstein's (conventionalist sounding) position on necessity in an enigmatic nutshell: it is possible that we could doubt a rule, even a rule we take to be necessary, but that does not mean that we do doubt or even could doubt. The modal tension lies between admitting that doubt is "possible" in some sense (or in "certain circumstances"), but that this is not to say that we "could" doubt. To escape contradiction we should say that there is an equivocation between the senses of 'possible' and 'could' here. The necessity of a rule lies in the sense of 'could' according to which the rule could not be doubted or variously interpreted; the conventionality or contingency in this view of necessity lies in the sense of 'possible' according to which, in some sense, it is still possible to come to doubt or interpret the rule. I will proceed to briefly describe, and hopefully to an extent

explain, Wittgenstein's thinking behind this apparent modal tension, drawing on the different modes of rationality in doing so (while accepting that the account falls short of an argument or defense of this conventionalist or contingent view of necessity, which is a much more difficult charge). We see Stroud, with his distinction, offer a start.

Rules taken as necessary that they be followed in a certain way are rules for which we have no clear conception of following differently. But still, per Stroud's distinction, we can have some conception. This is illustrated with the cases of the wood-sellers and the deviant pupil. In both cases, as was described, we can entertain and rationalise the deviance, to an extent (for it may be a consistent interpretation of the instructions given for the rule, as was the case with the deviant pupil), but once we realise the extent of deviation involved, we realise that we cannot have a clear conception. The language games try to do by illustration what we should say we cannot do: take a rule we deem necessary and come to understand that it may be applied differently. But again, once we realise this, we find that we cannot hold a clear conception of the wayward application as an application of the rule. Stroud's elaboration of Wittgenstein's view on necessity, and so his defense of Wittgenstein against radical conventionalism, winds up being inadequate for reason that it weighs too much on this distinction. That is, that we can have an unclear conception of applying a necessary rule differently does not serve as an argument (or should not be taken as an argument) that the rule could be applied differently, or could have been applied differently (if only our current view of the rule in question did not prohibit us from a clear conception of the deviant application). This lays too important a point on the back of the possibility that we may have some hazy conception of applying a necessary rule differently (and further, a conception that falls away when we realise that we do not have a clear conception of applying a necessary rule differently).

However, the distinction in modes of rationality allows us to press the account at least a little further. On the one hand, it should seem that it is always possible to doubt our current understanding of a rule because our understanding of any rule is underdetermined (due to underdetermining instructions). That is, from the perspective of the interpretative mode, where our understanding is seen as underdetermined, there is scope for interpretation or doubt (a way of following a rule is seen as arbitrary for it is in contest with other consistent interpretations). On the other hand, our ability to follow a rule reactively is an ability to follow a rule without being troubled by this underdetermination (i.e., we move from underdetermining instructions to an understanding of the correct way of following a rule; there is no need to interpret because the underdetermination of our understanding raises no epistemic difficulty that would lead us to see a need to interpret). And so, in the availability of both modes we can make sense of how there can be a possibility for doubt but still a denial that there is scope for doubt. Given a set of instructions (from which we gain our understanding of a rule), under the interpretative mode, indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to be in accord (and this for reason that the instructions underdetermine the correct way to follow a rule). In contrast, the correct way to follow a rule can be grasped from the instructions if we are operating under the reactive mode (and this despite the fact that the instructions underdetermine the correct way). This involves what is called following a rule 'blindly' because we are blind to the epistemic difficulty that would seem to come with underdetermination. The modal tension, expressed in *PI* 213 (quoted above), points to our being able to understand under these two modes. A doubt is possible because understanding under the interpretative mode is a legitimate mode under which we may come to grasp a rule (i.e., the "certain circumstance" under which a doubt is possible is the circumstance of understanding under the interpretative mode). To say, in the

same breath, that this does not mean that we could doubt reflects that the reactive mode is also a legitimate mode under which we may come to grasp a rule and, under the perspective of this mode, a doubt is not conceivable.[47]

At any rate, we can have no clear conception of applying a rule we take to be necessary differently. We may, though, find that we have some (unclear) conception of applying a necessary rule differently as long as we have not yet tried to form a clear conception of the deviance. This distinction, which I have called 'Stroud's distinction', for reason that he lays emphasis on it in his reading of Wittgenstein, is exemplified in the cases of the deviant pupil and the wood-sellers. In both cases, we seem to have some understanding of their deviance but are denied any clear understanding (and it is in our failure to clearly understand the deviance that our commitment to the rule as necessary is displayed). Rules that are necessary, as with rules I have also described as 'basic' or 'bedrock' rules, are rules that are understood in the reactive mode; we do not move to the interpretative mode and this is to say that we do not understand them as open to interpretation. But we can have some (unclear) conception that is the extent of our understanding of those who apply basic rules deviantly.[48] This requires understanding the (deviant) application of others from under the interpretative mode but not to understand our

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[47] And since these are different rational modes, we cannot hold in mind that a rule can be doubted and cannot be doubted at once; i.e., we cannot see a rule in both these ways at once since this would involve understanding under different rational modes at once. In addition, I will explain in Section V below that the rule pertaining to sameness or accordance cannot be understood at all from under the interpretative mode, despite the underdetermination of our understanding, and that the same should hold of basic or bedrock rules taken generally (and so not without the possibility of exception).

[48] At some point we may feel that our inability to clearly conceive of an individual's or community's linguistic practices has extended to their practices taken as a whole or to some large measure. In this case, we may want to say that they are of a different form of life. I take this, in this usage, as something of a term of art for there does not seem to be a clear marker where deviant ways, of which we can have no clear conception, translate into a different form of life; or whether there is any set number of basic rules that must be so violated before this characterisation is applicable. What can be said, though, is that 'form of life' does have a use, for Wittgenstein, as marking off what we cannot find rational as described in terms of what we cannot come to clearly conceive. We can come to hold some conception of alternative forms of life, as Wittgenstein's examples try to show, but no clear conception.

own application in this way (but, of course, this is at least a step towards viewing our own understanding of the rule from the interpretative mode, and so possibly a step towards a revision in our understanding of the rule). At any rate, Stroud's distinction allows us to further characterise basic or bedrock rules, along with necessary rules (and as opposed to rules that are not basic or necessary), as rules for which we lack a clear conception of applying them differently; and that this is another way of portraying the thought that we do not notice the underdetermination in our understanding of basic or bedrock rules. That is, we do not turn to interpret when we apply a basic rule, despite the underdetermination in our understanding, because we can form no clear conception of doing differently in regard to the rule.[49]

IV. *PI* 242: A Transcendental Argument Against Rule-Following Scepticism?

A key characteristic of the reactive mode of rationality is the emphasis placed on agreement in judgement or application of a rule (for instance, a correctness criterion for understanding under this mode is achieving agreement in judgement with others). In this section, I will investigate a strategically placed remark of Wittgenstein's to see if it offers a transcendental argument to the effect that agreement in judgement or application is a transcendental requirement for rule-following. The reason for supposing that there is a transcendental argument to be had is broadly two-fold: first, the remark fits the form of a transcendental argument rather well and second, the remark speaks to the possibility of rule-following in

[49] The play of Stroud's distinction (i.e., Stroud's description of Wittgenstein's distinction) bears close connection to the play or movement of hinge propositions as discussed by Wittgenstein in *On Certainty*. Here we find propositions that stand as necessary, for we do not doubt them and can have no clear conception of doubting them (and these propositions serve as basic or bedrock rules that underlie our use of other rules), but

light of sceptical considerations raised (i.e., it seems to give an answer to the sceptic). In the course of this investigation, the important notion of agreement in judgement, and its role in the sceptical dialectic, will be further elucidated.

IV. i. The General Form

The general form of a transcendental argument is essentially that of *modus ponens*. One thing, S, is an enabling condition for another thing, X, such that S is a necessary condition for the possibility of X. X is our starting point. It is a given. Hence, any necessary conditions of X must obtain. And so S obtains. We may symbolise this as follows: $\Box(X \rightarrow S), X \vdash S$.

The connection between X and S is often described as a metaphysical necessity (and it is in this way that transcendental arguments are thought to have conclusions that are synthetic *a priori*: by way of reflection on our starting point, we deduce a substantial enabling condition). A simple example: existence is a necessary condition for thought.

A main historical feature of transcendental arguments is that they are used to argue against a sceptic. They are presumed ideal for this because they take something to which even the sceptic agrees (e.g., that there are thoughts, or language) – an uncontroversial given – and by the strong necessary connection derive a consequence the sceptic would otherwise not agree to but to which he is now committed. Because of this strong necessary or metaphysical connection, the enabling condition has the same surety as our starting condition. The necessary connection need not be a single step but can involve a chain of necessary connections (but, of course, the chain is only as strong as its weakest link).

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they are not in principle beyond doubt (i.e., we can conceive as a possibility that the hinge propositions did not

IV. ii. A Wittgensteinian Transcendental Argument?

The remark to be scrutinised is *PI* 242 (the putative end, and so a conclusion in at least this sense, of the rule-following remarks in the *Investigations*):

> If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgements. This seems to abolish logic, but does not do so. – It is one thing to describe methods of measurement, and another to obtain and state results of measurement. But what we call "measuring" is partly determined by a certain constancy in the results of measurement. (*PI* 242)

That this remark is given as the last of the cluster on rule-following invites contrasting views as to its reading. We may treat it as a "conclusion" that merely summarises the preceding argument and makes no important contribution to the dialectic by itself, or, that it is the concluding argument – the dénouement – of the rule-following remarks and thereby makes a key contribution to the dialectic of the rule-following considerations. Settling the status of this remark, along these lines, is the thematic objective of this section.

In this remark, the given, X, is language.[50] The enabling condition, S, in this case is two: agreement in definitions and agreement in judgements (we may call the former 'S*' and the latter 'S**' respectively). The necessary connection is as follows: if language is to be possible, then there *must* be agreement in definitions and agreement in judgements [$\Box(X \rightarrow (S^* + S^{**}))$]. Since there are two enabling conditions we may treat this argument, if so desired, as two transcendental arguments with two necessary connections: if language is to be possible, then there must be agreement in definitions [$\Box(X \rightarrow S^*)$]; *and*, if a language is

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hold).

[50] Wittgenstein states, "What has to be accepted, the given, is – so one could say – *forms of life*". (*PI* II, p. 226). For reasons given earlier, I do not distinguish an important difference between saying that forms of life are given and saying that language or language-games are given.

to be possible, then there must be agreement in judgements [□(X → S**)]. Thus, taking language as a given we can conclude both S* and S**.[51]

Now, a reminder note on scepticism. A sceptical argument with a paradoxical conclusion (a conclusion that claims that there is no rule-following and so no possibility of linguistic communication) is common to readings of the rule-following remarks (but of course, there are differences among commentators as to whether Wittgenstein accepts the conclusion but offers an accommodation (e.g., Kripke) or whether he treats the argument as a *reductio* against the devastating assumption that grasping a rule involves an interpretation (e.g., McDowell, Baker and Hacker); both these lines of response accept that there is a sceptical argument though they differ as to its role – see Chapter 3 for details). Taking this in view, we have further basis for reading *PI* 242 as offering a transcendental argument for it would be an argument against the view of rule-following scepticism developed and described in preceding remarks. That is, we have here two key reasons for finding a transcendental argument in *PI* 242: the form of a transcendental argument and an enabling condition that runs against rule-following scepticism (and of course, since the sceptical line is developed in the rule-following remarks preceding *PI* 242 it is also fitting in this regard that the latter be viewed as a response to the former).

However, if we take *PI* 242 as offering a transcendental argument against the sceptic then we run into an immediate difficulty: our starting point or the given – language – begs the question in a very obvious way. It assumes what the sceptic denies: the possibility of linguistic communication. Therefore, a charitable reading should lead us to say that

[51] And given the metaphysical necessity, we can so conclude in any situation.

Wittgenstein is not putting forth an argument against the sceptic in *PI* 242.[52] After all, the sceptical conclusion is rejected by treating the sceptical argument as a reductio (and this tells us that there is a way to grasp a rule that is not an interpretation, despite the fact that our understanding of the rule is underdetermined by instructions and explanations of the rule). However, this may be short-sighted. A charitable and proper exegesis need not suppose that *PI* 242 does not present a transcendental argument simply for the reason that it begs a question for the same accusation can be made against other historical examples of transcendental arguments. Indeed, Stroud, in an influential article on transcendental arguments[53] (since followed by other articles on the same topic), argues that *all* transcendental arguments beg a question against the sceptic; that they *all* make verificationist assumptions in their starting condition that need not be accepted by the sceptic. Hence, it should not be surprising if *PI* 242 makes a question begging argument; it is only surprising that it should lie so open to view.[54]

I will put this issue aside for the time being and suppose that we do have a transcendental argument (or at least a transcendental or necessary connection). I will now attend to an elaboration of the enabling conditions, specifically of the notion of agreement in judgement. In saying that we must have agreement in definitions, Wittgenstein is saying that we must agree on the instructions or explanations we give for a rule. In contrast, agreement in judgement refers to the agreement in our application of a rule; it is agreement with others in results (as noted, agreement in judgement stands as a correctness criterion of following a rule under the reactive mode; and so a proper understanding of this intriguingly-placed

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[52] And if there is no argument against the sceptic here then there is no argument at all for, as we will see, it is the sceptical position that is denied in the conclusion of the argument, i.e., that there must be agreement in judgement.

[53] Stroud [1999], p. 255.

remark should be of consequence for a proper understanding of what it is to grasp and follow a rule under the reactive mode).

On a first pass, *PI* 242 seems uninformative. We agree that to use language effectively to communicate with each other, we must agree on the meanings of our terms, in how we teach these meanings (agreement in definitions), and that we must apply these meanings in the same way (agreement in judgement). The point is uncontroversial because we presume that our common application is determined in our common understanding of the rules. But for Wittgenstein, our understanding of any rule is underdetermined. The definitions and explanations we give underdetermine a rule (from the case for RF2), and since our understanding does not transcend an understanding of these explanations (AR**), our understanding is likewise underdetermined. And so, we may agree on these definitions, we may all say that we are following the same instructions and explanations, and still deviate in our application. The underdetermination in our understanding of a rule undermines the point that a common application (agreement in judgement) is secured by or determined in our common understanding of the definition or explanation of the rule.[55] There is wide scope for acting under a consistent interpretation of the explanations or definitions given for a rule and not achieving agreement in application. This is the predicament highlighted by the case of the deviant pupil in *PI* 185.

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[54] Stroud's general criticism of transcendental arguments is interesting and I had thought to present them; but since *PI* 242 seems to fall prey to this criticism so quickly, a discussion of Stroud, in this regard, to make this point would not be bear its investment.

[55] Note, a likely rejoinder that we then cannot be understanding the definitions in the same way if we apply the rule differently, given that correct application is the criterion of understanding, is circular. Apart from our application, our only means of expressing our understanding is in our expressions of definitions and explanations (and this is the source of our understanding of a rule, by AR**). Indeed, Wittgenstein goes further to say our ability to explain our understanding, in addition to how we apply it, is criterial for our understanding it: "For when do I say that I see the rule – or a rule – in this sequence? When, for example, I can talk to myself about this sequence in a particular way. But surely also when I simply can continue it? No, I give myself or someone else a general explanation of how it is to be continued." (*RFM* VI 27) The sceptical point, at base, is then that we may all agree on these definitions and explanations and still deviate in application.

But then, *on this second pass*, *PI* 242 seems to say no more than what we discern from *PI* 185.[56] Let us consider this connection further. Both the deviant pupil of *PI* 185 and the community/teacher attest agreement on the instructions for following the rule add-2. The pupil says he is following the instructions (and his behaviour is certainly consistent with an interpretation of the instructions) and yet he deviates in his application (he goes on to 1004 from 1000). If this deviance were commonplace i.e., if we could all agree on the instructions but differ in how we apply any given rule, then the use of language for communication would be impossible (we would all differ in the application of terms). Agreement in application is required for language but is in no way guaranteed by an (attested) agreement between individuals in the meanings of the terms or rules with which they start. Hence the difficulty. When any definition or set of instructions is open to various interpretations (such that we may all claim to be following the same instructions), it is not determined in an understanding of those instructions that we will commonly apply those definitions and instructions. So, the question is, if any set of instructions underdetermines a rule, how is it that we all come to understand and apply a rule in the same way starting from an understanding gained from those instructions? We want to say that something must be missing but this just states the obvious thought.[57]

In *PI* 242, Wittgenstein says "This seems to abolish logic, but does not do so." Logic seems to be abolished because it does not carry us from an agreement in the definitions of rules to an agreement in their applications. If my future application of a rule is

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[56] This is exegetically interesting by itself for the reason that while *PI* 242 falls at the end of the rule-following remarks, *PI* 185 is the first of a sustained treatment on rule-following (remarks *PI* 143-184 notwithstanding). This is cause for us to find no surprise in the similarity between *PI* 242 and *PI* 185, dialectically speaking, for a conclusion often summarizes or crystallizes points that are first set up or delineated in an introduction. This suggests, or so I will argue, that *PI* 242 does not offer a new argument but a summary of an argument already made.

[57] Answers are obviously undertaken in the other sections but I do not enter these here so as to not interfere with the elaboration underway of *PI* 242.

not determined in my present understanding of a rule then, a common future application is not determined in a common understanding of a rule (i.e., in an agreement in the explanations and definitions of the rule). Logic, employed here in a wider sense by Wittgenstein, should serve to guide us in an application of a rule; it should take us from an understanding of the instructions and definitions to an application. However, if the correct application of a rule is not determined in our understanding of a rule, then it seems that logic has no role to play in guiding us from an understanding of a rule to a correct and unique application. That is, if we cannot speak of a correct application as determined, then it seems we cannot speak of being compelled to a correct application by logic. Thus, if a common correct application of a rule is made, it would seem to be no more than a result of luck or decision.[58]

To continue, logic is thrown into doubt when an agreement in definitions of rules, including rules of inference, does not compel us to an agreement in an application of those rules. At this point, it is a mystery how we arrive at a common application. It is worthwhile to note that a threat to logic is arrived at one step earlier. That is, we now say that our arrival at a common application is not a matter of logical inference starting from an agreement on terms and definitions (for, as with the deviant pupil, we may agree on these definitions and still apply the rule differently). Logic does not do the work of carrying us from agreed upon premises and axioms to an agreed upon conclusion (and this is because our understanding of the premises and axioms is underdetermined and so can be applied according to different interpretations). But logic is already under threat when we say that any rule is underdetermined by its instructions. Our understanding of any rule (which is constrained by

[58] Agreement in application by decision is radical conventionalism. When Wittgenstein states that "This seems to abolish logic, but does not do so" he is saying that although this seems to commit us to radical

an understanding of instructions – AR**) is underdetermined, and this includes rules of inference. But an underdetermined understanding is consistent – that is, can be interpreted as consistent – with different patterns of application or ways of following the rule. Thus, once we admit that we may each apply a rule of logic as the deviant pupil does for addition, although we may each expressly agree on the definitions of these logical rules, then logic seems lost (in the way that addition should seem lost if we admit that we may each apply the rule for addition as does the deviant pupil).[59] Hence, one sense of the loss of logic (the sense just described) is shown in the deviance admitted, even for rules of logic, by the underdetermination in our understanding of a rule. A second sense of the loss of logic is shown in the agreement in application that results in the face of an underdetermined understanding of rules (there is no reason to expect an underdetermined understanding to lead us to a common application even were we to use inference rules uniformly and correctly – hence, if there is a common application, we are not led there, let alone compelled, by logical inference).

At any rate, on this second pass, *PI* 242 seems to say no more than what we already knew from a discerning reading of *PI* 185: if language is to work, we cannot all be like the deviant pupil (i.e., the deviant pupil must be deviant). The first pass reading of *PI* 242 ignored the sceptical concerns brought out in the rule-following remarks. In the second pass reading, nothing seems to be added to these sceptical considerations.

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conventionalism, it does not do so. Thus, we may take the case that logic is not abolished, although it may seem to be, as an argument against radical conventionalism (despite its lurking presence).

[59] Given a view of arithmetic as logic, the deviance of the pupil of *PI* 185 already shows that rules of logic are subject to sceptical doubt.

IV. iii. An Analogy with Measuring

I will now turn to an elaboration of the analogy with measuring pointed to in *PI* 242.[60] Wittgenstein tells us that "what we call "measuring" is partly determined by a certain constancy in results measured." (*PI* 242) The case of measuring is held to be analogous to (and shed light on) the notion of agreement in judgement in a language. That is, we are told that in order to have language as a means of communication there must be agreement in definitions (of rules) and agreement in judgement (applications of those rules). Likewise, following the analogy, in order to have the "game" of measuring, there must be agreement in (descriptions of) methods of measuring and agreement in the results obtained. Let us suppose we are measuring distances.

Again, *on a first pass*, the point seems unproblematic. If we are to enjoin in the practice of measuring, then we must agree on our methods of measuring (e.g., to use rigid metric system rulers) and we must get the same results for the same distance measured. Getting the same results, though, is supposed to be guaranteed by our using the same methods of measuring to measure the same distance (on assumption that the world has not changed in any relevant respect). Likewise with rules, if we agree on the definition of a rule (e.g., add 2) we are supposed to get the same results when we apply the rule. But, as noted above, rule-following considerations show us, *inter alia*, that we may agree on definitions but differ in application; our common application is not determined in our respective understandings of the definitions. Whatever we say about a rule will not determine its correct future application and so our obtaining the same results in applying a rule is not determined through our agreement about what it means. The analogy is to hold with

measuring (even though it becomes, if anything, intuitively less plausible). We may agree on the stated methods of measuring but arrive at different results. But we should say this is not possible. We feel someone must have made a mistake. If someone obtains a different result in measuring a distance than the rest of us we will say to the person that he has made a mistake in applying his method of measuring. Suppose he responds by saying that he has not made an error and repeats his measurement and obtains the same deviant result. We may then say that there is something different in his method of measuring than ours. He responds that his method is the same as ours and describes it as such (i.e., describes it as we describe ours). This now seems to us an impossible state of affairs but it is essentially analogous to the case of the deviant pupil of *PI* 185 (and likewise with this case, despite attestations of agreement in descriptions of methods of measuring, we say that the deviant measurer does not understand what it is to measure; his deviance in application is the criterion by which we say that he does not understand the game of measuring).[61]

The game of measuring requires it that we get the same results if it is to be intelligible to others. This is agreed. But the logic of measuring, if we may speak of such a thing, seems abolished if we suppose that the uniformity of results is not determined by our agreement in methods of measuring and our applying those methods (on assumption that the world does not change in any relevant way while we measure in turn). There is no measuring as we know it if we simply decide to agree on our results in measuring some distance. The point that is difficult to admit is that our agreement in results is not determined in our applying methods of measuring that we expressly agree as being the same (for there is no difference

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[60] Measuring is a favoured source of analogy for Wittgenstein in discussions where his views already seem conventionalist and so serve to reinforce this characterisation.

[61] The matter may run the reverse course: if two individuals get the same results but have different and clashing descriptions of their methods (e.g., one says that he lays down his rulers end-edge to end-edge but the

in the definitions or descriptions of our methods). But, by analogy with the case of rules taken generally, this is a point already established (it is not for nothing that this view is thought to lead to a sceptical paradox, and so its incredibility in the case of measuring should not be a surprise).

Wittgenstein's response in *PI* 242, by analogy, involves the claim that the "logic of measuring" is not abolished even though it seems to be. The feeling is that this should be instructive. If the logic of measuring is not abolished then it must serve to take us to an agreement in our results given an agreement in methods of measuring (again, assuming changes in the world do not interfere in the interval). But, in keeping with the analogy, our understanding of any method of measuring is underdetermined by a description of (or our instruction in) the method. The analogy with rule-following tells us that this description is open to interpretation. Someone may say he understands this description (such that he measures in a manner strictly consistent with the description) and yet deviate in his application. We would say that he has not understood correctly. In a sense this is readily agreed. But what is it that guarantees our common understanding of a description of a method of measuring (evidenced in our common application) if the description is always open to interpretation?[62] We do have an understanding of measuring distances, as given in our practice, but this understanding is underdetermined. To say that logic is not abolished is to say that our arriving at a common application from an underdetermined understanding is not a matter of luck or express decision; it is to say that there is guidance in, or method to, our commonly applying a rule. However, the nature or source of this guidance or method, in this remark, has not been elucidated.

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other says that he leaves space – say the width of his hand – between the ends of the rulers), then we say that at least one could not have applied or understood his method correctly.

IV. iv. Conclusions

And so we notice that we are no further along with this remark. We knew already that we were in want of an answer explaining how we achieve conformity in application from a discerning reading of *PI* 185. *PI* 242 may serve to differently express and perhaps nicely crystallise the problematic, and so clarify the dialectic, but it does not push the dialectic further. This is not to admit that answers are not available (the rest of this chapter attempts just this), it is just to say that *PI* 242 does not make an independent case for any. And so we get no further than the *second-pass reading*. The measuring analogy serves to place the problem(s) in a different context. This aids in understanding what we are up against. But the analogy is not a spur to our intuition in coming to a solution (rather, it seems to spur our intuition so that we understand the problem correctly). Moreover, the point about logic (that logic seems abolished but is not) seems at first to offer a key to unlocking our problem (perhaps due to its enigmatic presentation). But it merely identifies and reinforces that we do have a problem; i.e., that we do not arrive at a common solution by means of an arbitrary decision or luck, that we are indeed "led", in some way (likened to a use of logic) in virtue of which we apply rules commonly. But we are not given an answer explaining how we are so led. In other words, we are not taken further than is available in a careful reading of *PI* 185. The point that logic is, in fact, not abolished only seems to tell us that Wittgenstein does not intend for a solution in terms of radical conventionalism (where we decide to conform in our application). This is of exegetical interest for our reading of Wittgenstein but does not

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[62] Of course, this is to point us to a way of grasping a rule, or a method of measuring, that does not involve an interpretation. This is to grasp a rule under the reactive mode, as discussed in above sections.

answer the philosophical question of how it is that logic is not abolished (and so how it is that radical conventionalism is avoided).

A clarified understanding of the problem is surely to step closer to a solution. The point here is that we take no step closer than what is already there to be clearly understood in *PI* 185. Perhaps I miss some mysterious turn of argument in *PI* 242. But I do not think, and this is independent of the case I have made here, that one should approach reading Wittgenstein in terms of solving mysterious passages. There is surely some temptation to see the matter in these terms, for Wittgenstein often seems to present himself enigmatically, but I think that it is a disservice to view his philosophy in these terms. Rather, a very careful reading, with an eye to argument and intention, should bare all (or at least very much). All signs point to *PI* 242, as a conclusion of the rule-following remarks, as a crystallisation of its main problematic. I think it does very well at that. It is not a conclusion in the sense of a climax in the argument. And so, my reading serves to deflate the importance of *PI* 242. The notion of agreement in judgement and how it is achieved in light of sceptical considerations raised is very important philosophically but *PI* 242 does not answer this question; however, it does serve to clarify the notion and help us to see its importance (for all of language use depends on it).

There is a transcendental argument in *PI* 242 in terms of its form. However, this is not to admit that *PI* 242 makes a transcendental argument (or any argument). As contended at the outset of this section, it does not argue against the sceptic (and not just that it does so very badly). We are now in a position to say more. The remark only makes sense in terms of scepticism (or at least, under the threat of scepticism). That is, *PI* 242 identifies conformity of application of a rule as a problem of note. However, it is only a problem in light of the sceptical considerations raised. Alternatively stated, *PI* 242 does not deny that

we have underdetermined understandings of rules, but rather, expresses what is needed for language to work in light of this admission; i.e., we need agreement in judgement for this is under threat if our understanding of a rule is underdetermined. More pointedly in this regard, the remark tells us that achieving conformity of application may seem to abolish logic but does not do so. But the appearance of an abolishment of logic only makes sense in the sceptical context. After all, on the first pass, where scepticism was not an issue, neither was the abolishment of logic (indeed, this is why the first pass is unproblematic; but it is also thereby an incorrect account of *PI* 242). That is, if the sceptical considerations did not hold, then an agreement in judgement is secured in an agreement in definitions (i.e., an agreement in application is determined in our common understanding of a rule). Logic is not abolished and, more importantly here, does not even seem to be. This is the first pass reading. Once we take on the sceptical considerations, but nevertheless insist on a conformity of application, then it seems that logic is abolished for it does not seem to be in the service of achieving that conformity of application (this is described above; if it is achieved it is not with a use of logic it seems, but perhaps, by a decision to conform); this threat to logic is a facet of a sceptical reading of *PI* 185. But this means that *PI* 242 does not argue against scepticism (it does not, for instance, argue for the situation as given in the first pass reading), rather, it clarifies what is needed under the presumption of those sceptical considerations. And so we have here, at the conclusion of the rule-following remarks, an exegetical case for a sceptical reading of the those remarks (and especially of *PI* 185). Far from a *prima facie* argument against scepticism, we finish with exegetical support for placing importance on the sceptical considerations (i.e., that scepticism is a threat). And once again, this means that the second pass reading of *PI* 242 is the correct one. Thus, although we can readily admit that the sceptical argument is to be read as a reductio, this does not diminish the thought that

Wittgenstein takes the sceptical considerations as serious and deserving of response; that we are still charged with the task of explaining how it is that a rule can be grasped in a way that is not an interpretation and this despite being underdetermined by instructions and explanations. An underdetermined understanding, as explained, threatens any agreement in application or judgement. With the importance placed on agreement in judgement in this remark, Wittgenstein reinforces the view that there is a way to correctly follow a rule from an underdetermined understanding; that we are not led to a sceptical conclusion because of it. But again, this message only makes sense if scepticism is still considered threatening.

As a closing note, I wish to note that I do not deny that there is a transcendental connection promoted in *PI* 242. That is, agreement in judgement is held up as a necessary condition for the possibility of linguistic communication. This is a point upheld for any possible language and so it seems a little bit out of character to hear of Wittgenstein speak in these terms (it is certainly not a conventionalist position to lay down a condition for any possible language; we should not be able to understand a lion's language, says Wittgenstein, but we can now nevertheless lay down a necessary condition for it). However, this is a point that is, in principle, available from *PI* 185 and its discussion of the deviant pupil: the possibility of linguistic communication requires the general impossibility of our being like the deviant pupil (i.e., it requires agreement in judgement). It may not be apparent, from *PI* 185, that agreement in judgement is a requirement for any possible language and not just ours, but this is just to say that *PI* 242 clarifies and states concisely points raised in *PI* 185.

V. Sameness

V. i. Resolving RF3

There are two related objectives in this section. The first is to resolve difficulties raised in Chapter 2 concerning RF3. It was argued that RF2 implies RF3 if RF2 is true of very basic cases of rules (and specifically of the rule pertaining to sameness, i.e., if indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to accord with this rule or the instructions for this rule). I will argue here that RF2 is not true of the rule for sameness (and in a related fashion, of basic rules taken generally). That is, RF3 does not hold because (at least) the rule for sameness cannot be understood as open to interpretation; it must be understood from under the reactive mode only. This will allow us to avert the sceptical conclusion of the Sceptical-Conceptual argument first presented in Chapter 2. The second objective, and the main, is to conduct an investigation into Wittgenstein's understanding of the notion of sameness. This will be put to the service of the first objective but will also draw connections with the main preoccupations of this chapter (viz., to add to our understanding of what it is to achieve agreement in judgement or application and hence, to our understanding of following a rule under the reactive mode).

According to RF2, indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to accord with a rule. Accordingly, if understanding a rule involves interpreting, then following a rule requires facing and choosing among indefinitely many courses of action. The Sceptical-Inductive argument works by arguing for a role for interpretation; that the underdetermination in our understanding of a rule or set of instructions requires a role for interpretation. In contrast to RF2, according to RF3 any or every course of action can be

interpreted to accord with a rule. As described in Chapter 2, if RF3 holds, then by the working of the Sceptical-Conceptual argument, there is no rule following. And as also described in Chapter 2, if RF2 is true of very basic cases of rules, and specifically of the rule pertaining to sameness, then RF2 implies RF3.[63]

It may be thought, as per the master thesis, that if there is a way of grasping a rule that is not an interpretation (which is what I have called grasping a rule under the reactive mode), then this is enough to reject a sceptical conclusion as following from RF3 (for RF3 claims not that any or every course of action *is* in accord with a rule but *can be interpreted* to be in accord). Thus, it would seem, as long as there is a way to understand a rule that does not involve interpretation, we do not face the result that any or every course of action can strike us as in accord with a rule (and so it should not matter whether RF3 is true or not as long as there is a way to grasp rules without interpreting).[64]

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[63] I have described, in Chapter 2, that we approach RF3 as we move to ever more basic rules and find them open to interpretation along indefinitely many lines (we approach RF3 because the rules which presuppose an understanding of these basic rules are opened to a wider range of consistent interpretations if the presupposed understanding of the basic rules is also open to interpretation). The thought then is that when we get to the most basic of rules, a correct understanding of which is presupposed in an understanding of all other rules, and find this or these open to interpretation along indefinitely many lines (i.e., if RF2 is true for these rules) then we hit RF3 (or at least, RF3 is true for every rule that presupposes these most basic rules).

And, separately, I have made the point explicitly for sameness or accordance, arguing that if this rule is opened to interpretation, then any or every course of action can be made out to accord with any rule given the right notion of sameness or accordance. E.g., jumping off a cliff can be made out to accord with the rule, or instructions, for add-2; in which case, we should say, there is no rule or instructions for there is no rule or instructions being followed – a rule must guide to be a rule, instructions must instruct (even if ambiguously) to be instructions (and notice that this admits that instructions may not be instructions for me if I do not find them at all instructive but may be for someone else who does find them instructive; this is a view of the standing – daresay ontology – of rules or instructions as dependent on their use). There can be no rule, or no instructions in a rule, if they delimit no course of action as in accord or out of accord (and the point here is that if accordance or sameness is opened to interpretation, then what is in accord versus what is not in accord is not set by the rule, or its instructions, but by the interpretation of accordance).

But notice, while I made the point that as we approach the most basic of rules and find them open to interpretation, we approach RF3, and the point that if the notion of accordance is opened to interpretation, then we get RF3, I refrained from saying, or at least forcefully and bluntly, that the most basic of rules *is* the rule for accordance or sameness. I will make this case, for Wittgenstein, in the next two sub-sections of this section, first exegetically and then philosophically.

[64] This is to treat RF3 similarly to RF2.

For instance, it has been argued that we cannot correctly grasp basic or bedrock rules from only under the interpretative mode. These are rules that must be grasped blindly if they are to be grasped at all (for reasons come to an end at bedrock; basic or bedrock rules must be grasped in a way that does not involve interpretation for there are no further reasons to draw in support of an interpretation – see Sections II. iii. and II. vi. above). In a related way this point is also made early in the *PI* in connection with the Augustinian picture of language. Therein it is argued that our initial language learning through ostensive definitions – which would surely include a learning of basic rules since an understanding of these is presupposed in an understanding of less basic rules – cannot proceed via interpretation (for reason that we would already have to have a prior conceptual repertoire – a "mastery of language" as Wittgenstein puts it – in order to guide our interpretation; in order to know where the word being learned is "posted" or "stationed", as Wittgenstein says).

However, these lines of argument contend that basic rules, if to be correctly grasped, cannot be grasped solely in a way that involves interpretation. These cases, thus, argue for the master thesis: there must be a way to grasp these rules that does not involve interpreting for otherwise they would not be correctly grasped; alternatively, that there must be a way of grasping rules under the reactive mode (and since giving an account of following a rule under the reactive mode is the main objective of this chapter, these are certainly worthy points). But to support the master thesis is not quite to make a case against the Sceptical-Conceptual argument (rather, it is to make a case against the Sceptical-Inductive argument). The master thesis, which upholds that there must be a way to grasp a rule that does not involve interpreting, does not deny that we can come to understand a rule in a way that does involve interpreting. Likewise, that we can grasp a rule under the reactive mode does not

deny that the interpretative mode is a legitimate mode under which we can also come to understand a rule and its requirements. Admittedly, we will not gain a correct grasp of basic rules if we come to understand them, and their instructions, only from under the interpretative mode (for the sorts of reasons given just above); this is why it is necessary that there be a way of grasping a rule that does not involve interpreting. But this does not deny that we can come to view any rule, and gain our understanding of any rule (even if this be incorrect), from under the interpretative mode. It is not yet denied that it is still a rational alternative to interpret a set of instructions in trying to understand them (after all, given that any set of instructions cannot but underdetermine a rule, it should remain a rational alternative, so it would seem, to interpret those instructions in coming to understand how to follow them). It is only denied that we will be successful in our grasp if we are grasping the rule, or its instructions, solely from under the interpretative mode.

However, if we do turn to the interpretative mode in coming to understand a basic rule then we turn to see this rule (or its instructions) as open to interpretation along indefinitely many lines (and this is to admit that RF2 is true for basic rules for it admits that indefinitely many courses of action can – in virtue of our being able to make the turn to understand any rule or set of instructions from the interpretative mode – be interpreted to accord with a basic rule or set of basic rule instructions). And since RF2 implies RF3 if RF2 is true in very basic cases, we are led RF3. That is, we are led to RF3 by our admission that the interpretative mode is a legitimate mode under which we may come to understand even very basic rules or basic rule instructions (and of course, once we admit RF3 as true, we are led to a sceptical conclusion). Hence, to avoid being led down this sceptical path, we want to say that it is not a legitimate and rational move, in coming to understand basic rules (or at least the rule for sameness), to turn to the interpretative mode. It is already admitted that

turning solely to the interpretative mode for our understanding of a basic rule will not be successful (and this point was used to argue for the master thesis). It is now added that, at least in some cases – particularly sameness – it is required that we obtain a correct grasp (and so turning to the interpretative mode is not an option, at all). There is no room or scope for doubt; there is no room for viewing the instructions or training in these rules as variously interpretable (for these are rules that must be grasped successfully, i.e., understood as understood by others). And this is to say that these are rules that must be understood under the reactive mode (i.e., at least for the rule for sameness, there is only *one* rational mode under which we can come to understand the rule). With this point in hand, we can say that at least for these basic rules, it is not the case that indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to accord with the instructions for these rules (which is to deny that RF2 is true for at least these rules, and since the implication from RF2 to RF3 requires that RF2 be true of the most basic cases of rules, RF3 is not true). This case will follow in the next sub-section but one, after the remarks concerning sameness have been introduced.

But prior to this, and most effectively, we may avoid being led to the conclusion of the Sceptical-Conceptual argument by treating the argument as a reductio.[65] That is, it has been argued that if RF2 is true for the most basic rules (such that indefinitely many courses of action can be made out to accord with these rules), then RF3 is true (at least for all the rules that presuppose an understanding of these basic rules). Given that this leads us down a sceptical path, we may take the resultant sceptical conclusion as (further) grounds for saying that RF2 is not true of the most basic rules (and again, sameness is in mind here); that it is not the case that indefinitely many courses of action can be made out to accord with these

[65] This should not be taken as an *ad hoc* or illegitimate means of rejecting the conclusion of the Sceptical-Conceptual argument, at least as a reading of Wittgenstein, for we see this given as a means of dealing with the

rules; that these rules cannot be understood, at all, from under the interpretative mode or be seen as open to interpretation.[66]

V. ii. An Understanding of Sameness – The Remarks

As described (in Section IV above) , agreement in application or judgement is a necessary condition for the possibility of linguistic communication. A similar point will be made, in the course of the following discussion, concerning sameness: an understanding of sameness is set apart from – and indeed is foundational for – our understanding of any other concept or rule. Indeed, we will find a close connection (an apparently circular connection) between the notion of agreement in judgement and the rule for accordance or sameness. Appropriately, the discussion of the rule for sameness will lead to a better understanding of the notion of agreement in judgement and how it is achieved.

Wittgenstein's views on sameness, at least in one regard, stayed much the "same" from the early to later periods. He makes it clear that he does not think that our common understanding of sameness or identity rests on our recognition of the universal or self-evident truth of an object's being self-identical; he has had an aversion to this view from the *Tractatus* to the *Investigations* (see *TLP* 5.5303 and *PI* 216). The concept of self-identity is meaningless or useless for Wittgenstein: it is a wheel on which nothing can turn and is not the basis for a common understanding of sameness. But at least part of the root of the

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Sceptical-Inductive argument (for it is argued, by *reductio ad absurdum*, that there must be a way to grasp a rule that is not an interpretation – the master thesis – for otherwise we are led to a sceptical paradox).

[66] Notice that the point here is a little different, in that it is stronger, than that made with the master thesis. Therein it is asserted that there must be a way to grasp a rule, basic or not, that is not an interpretation; that interpretation does not have an exclusive role in our grasp of a rule. Herein it is asserted, considering only the most basic rules (and again, the rule for sameness is in mind here), not merely that a correct grasp requires that we be able to grasp in a way that does not involve interpreting, but that our understanding involves no role for

rejection of self-identity as a basis for our common understanding of sameness, at least in Wittgenstein's later view, is that there is no criterion by which we understand sameness (i.e., a criterion is not needed and so, *a fortiori*, a universally appreciated criterion is not needed).[67] Nevertheless, a common understanding and application of sameness is necessary for Wittgenstein if linguistic communication is to be possible. We would not have common rule-following practices if we did not agree on what it is to apply a rule again. These points will be taken up below. But first, two related points of foreshadowing. Notice first the transcendental ring to the argument here: a common understanding of sameness is a necessary condition for the possibility of linguistic communication. Notice second, and in related fashion, we cannot commonly apply any rule unless we also hold a common understanding of sameness; i.e., to apply a rule in the same way as others requires that we have the same understanding of applying a rule in the same way from step to step. There are thus two senses of sameness here: the sameness of applying a rule the same way from step to step and the sameness of applying a rule the same way as others. As we will see, these are intertwined notions. The deviant pupil had an understanding of what it is to apply a rule in the same way, i.e., to repeat an application, but this was not the "same" understanding as ours. Hence, an understanding of "sameness" in application is only good for language if it involves an understanding that we are proceeding in the same way as others (and I will also discuss the circularity of this view below). If this understanding is not held then enjoining in a public language is not possible.

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interpretation; that we cannot come to see these rules as open interpretation. The modal force of these conclusions-by-reductio is different.

[67] This is not to say that an understanding of sameness is without criterion in the sense that we have no criterion by which to tell if someone else correctly understands sameness; correct application of the concept fits *this* bill. Rather, the point is that there is nothing specific that need be understood, no particular rule, as a required condition for an understanding of sameness.

Notice that it should not be correct to say that an understanding of sameness derives from an understanding of agreement in application with others for the recognition of the latter presupposes an understanding of sameness. Wittgenstein drives a similar point in the following passage:

> And does this mean e.g. that the definition of "same" would be this: same is what all or most human beings with one voice take for the same? Of course not.
>
> For of course I don't make use of the agreement of human beings to affirm identity. What criterion do you use, then? None at all. (*RFM* VII 40)

Wittgenstein here states that our understanding of sameness is not sourced in a recognition of human agreement in applying a rule (as noted above, this would beg the question anyway). Rather, our understanding of sameness is without criterion (in the sense noted above, i.e., an epistemic criterion). It is a little odd to see Wittgenstein affirm that there is no epistemic criterion for an understanding of sameness for it sets it apart from our understanding of other rules. The implication of this should be that our understanding of sameness, in some way, is a primitive or given. Wittgenstein seems to give it just this status in the following remarks:

> The word "agreement" and the word "rule" are related to one another, they are cousins. If I teach anyone the use of the one word, he learns the use of the other with it. (*PI* 224)

> The use of the word "rule" and the use of the word "same" are interwoven. (*PI* 225) [68]

These remarks draw out that an understanding of a rule, any rule, involves an understanding of sameness. The following remark makes a point, claimed as "of the greatest importance", that deviance in the application of our understanding of sameness "hardly" occurs and,

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[68] Passages from both *RFM* VII 54 and *RFM* VII 59 make similar points expressed very similarly; (*RFM* VII 56) also makes a similar point but expressed differently.

further, that the lack of this deviance in our understanding and application of sameness is a "framework" condition of language use.[69]

> It is of the greatest importance that a dispute hardly ever arises between people about whether the colour of this object is the same as the colour of that, the length of this rod the same as that, etc. This peaceful agreement is the characteristic surrounding of the use of the word "same".
>
> And one must say something analogous about proceeding according to a rule.
>
> No dispute breaks out over the question whether a proceeding was according to the rule or not. It doesn't come to blows, for example.
>
> This belongs to the framework, out of which language works (for example, gives a description). (*RFM* VI 21)

The next remark is, in part, the same as the first quoted remark of this sub-section (which is also from the *RFM*) but I quote it not simply for emphasis. Rather, two additional points are of note in the following remark. First, Wittgenstein relates that we can train someone in the use of the concept of sameness (he makes this point also in *PI* 208, but in this case I will avoid repetition). This is interesting because if we are to presume that an understanding of sameness is without an epistemic criterion then we might imagine that it is not something taught (and perhaps that it is innate). Wittgenstein shows that he does not uphold this here. This rule can be taught, but still it is not conditional on understanding some other rule. In this way, it would seem, an understanding of sameness is first (in the order of learning): it is not conditional on understanding any other particular rule but understanding any other particular rule is conditional on understanding it. Second, immediately after the point is made that our understanding of sameness is without epistemic criterion, the passage ends with the point that we may use a word rightly (or at least not wrongfully) even without justification. The latter is the now familiar point that we do not, or at least need not, use a word wrongfully when our reasons run out (i.e., when we are at bedrock); that is, we may

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[69] The uniformity of this understanding, such that we do not differ nor doubt each other's understanding of sameness, is quite effectively expressed here: " "But I know what 'same' means!" – I have no doubt of that; I know it too." (*RFM* VII 59)

know that we follow a rule correctly even though the reasons we can give to justify our course of action in following the rule run out prior to vindicating that course of action over other consistent interpretations. The same trend is observed in the *Investigations*: a discussion of sameness or identity is followed with this point about justification and bedrock. The indication, then, is that this latter point applies especially to our understanding of sameness: it is especially this understanding that is beyond justification. This is of course quite similar to the point that it is understood without epistemic criterion (except that now we not only say that it is learned without having to understand any other particular rule, we cannot justify this understanding through an appeal to an understanding of other rules).

> A language-game: to bring something else; to bring the same. Now, we can imagine how it is played. – But how can I explain it to anyone? I can give him this training. – But then how does he know what he is to bring the next time as 'the same' – with what justice can I say that he has brought the right thing or the wrong thing? – Of course I know very well that in certain cases people would turn on me with signs of opposition.
>
> And does this mean e.g. that the definition of "same" would be this: same is what all or most human beings with one voice take for the same? Of course not.
>
> For of course I don't make use of the agreement of human beings to affirm identity. What criterion do you use, then? None at all.
>
> To use the word without justification does not mean to use it wrongfully. (*RFM* VII 40)

Lastly in this train of remarks, the following seems to affirm that AR** (the understanding of a rule does not transcend an understanding of an explanation of or instructions in the rule) applies especially to sameness. Our understanding of sameness, if anything is to be, is gained from a consideration of a finite set of examples and further, there is not anything more to be understood than can be understood in the consideration of these examples. Since the understanding of any rule presupposes an understanding of sameness, this shows that the understanding of any rule presupposes an understanding derived from a finite set of examples (this is a key point defended in Chapter 2, but made a little differently here for the focus on sameness; an understanding of sameness is presupposed in the understanding of

any other rule, and since an understanding of sameness is underdetermined by the training and instruction in the rule, our understanding of any rule is underdetermined).[70]

> How can I explain the word "same"? – Well, by means of examples. – But is that all? Isn't there a still deeper explanation; or must not the understanding of the explanation be deeper? – Well, have I myself a deeper understanding? Have I more than I give in the explanation? (*RFM* VII 59)

These remarks draw out the special status afforded to sameness. It is a rule, like any other, that can be taught and learned. However, an understanding of the rule for sameness does not require an understanding of some other particular rule, but rather, an understanding of what is a rule *qua* rule (the concepts of rule and sameness are intertwined, according to Wittgenstein). It is, in this way, without epistemic criterion. In contrast, an understanding of any other rule presupposes an understanding of sameness (for we must understand that we apply the rule in the same way from step to step, occasion to occasion, if we are to say that we understand any rule) to the effect that there is no rule-following without an understanding of sameness. It does not seem that this can be said of any other rule. An understanding of sameness is fundamental to language use for Wittgenstein.

V. iii. An Understanding of Sameness – The Arguments

An understanding of sameness is an understanding under the reactive mode. It should seem that we could not, rather than merely do not, move to the interpretative mode in our understanding of it. That is, we could not conceive what it would be to understand the

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[70] Note, an understanding of sameness would have to be conveyed, indirectly, through examples that share a common property or aspect: e.g., sameness of the colour of objects in a group, or sameness of number between groups of objects. There is no sameness that is not a sameness in some respect – even in the case of self-identity – and so sameness cannot be referred to independently. But again, this is not to admit that an understanding of some other particular rule must precede an understanding of sameness (an understanding of sameness is logically prior, if not chronologically prior, to the understanding of any other rule).

concept of sameness differently than we now do; an understanding of sameness is fundamental to language use and so we should not be able to coherently frame a doubt. Notice that this is a consideration against our being able to conceive of a different application of sameness *clearly* (recall Stroud's distinction between conceiving as possible or in principle – i.e., in some way less than clearly – and conceiving clearly). Wittgenstein seems to present us an example in which we can conceive (in principle or as a possibility but not clearly) a different understanding of sameness with the deviant pupil. The pupil does not apply the rule add 2 as we do, but since this is a paradigm case of doing the same, it would seem that he also displays a deviant understanding of sameness. But once the example is viewed in these terms, and we realise we cannot have a clear conception of deviating in paradigm case of doing-the-same, we lose any understanding of what it is to deviate in this manner. We do not doubt an understanding of sameness, either for ourselves or others. To the extent that we could entertain such doubts, we realise on closer inspection that we cannot do so clearly.[71]

If we cannot turn to the interpretative mode for our understanding of sameness, then we should say that RF2 is not true of the rule for sameness. That is, it is not true that indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to be in accord with the training and instructions for the rule for sameness. To say otherwise presumes that the instructions can

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[71] In a rather obvious way it seems that our understanding of sameness cannot be held up to doubt or open to interpretation. Interpretation is not a language game without sophistication and so should carry the presumption that we know what is a consistent interpretation (over a set of data or instructions) and what is not. But this presumes an understanding of sameness. Likewise, it does not seem that we can coherently frame a doubt about our understanding of sameness. To question whether any two things are the same or different, or to question whether one application of a rule proceeds the same as another, presupposes an understanding of sameness. But what, then, would it be to question our understanding of sameness? How do we frame this question? The outcome of considerations such as these seems to be that questioning an understanding of sameness cannot be done coherently. But again, this just means that we can have no *clear* conception of what it is to understand sameness differently, not that we can have no conception (as per Stroud's distinction). Still though, the impossibility of having a clear conception of understanding sameness differently tells us that sameness is a concept or rule that cannot be grasped under the interpretative mode.

be viewed as open to interpretation. But what of the point that the instructions and training for the rule for sameness, as with for any rule, underdetermine the rule? That is, the rule is understood upon the consideration of a finite number of examples or cases illustrating the rule. And so, just as any finite set of examples can be continued in indefinitely many ways (i.e., there are indefinitely many ways of continuing a finite series, some of which conflict, that are consistent with the examples given), we should say that there are indefinitely many interpretations of the instructions given for the rule for sameness that can be considered. Someone may just latch on to a way of following the instructions – consistent with the examples given – that is different than our way of following the instructions (although, to be precise, we should not say he is "following" the instructions if he proceeds incorrectly). But if someone latches on to a different way of understanding the instructions or training given for the rule for sameness, and so comes to understand the rule differently than we do (and so incorrectly), then we should say that since a correct understanding of this rule is presupposed in an understanding of any other rule, this person fails to become a rule-follower. Such a person, who fails to grasp a rule fundamental to an understanding of any other rule is a person who we could not find intelligible (for if the person does not share our understanding of sameness, then this person will not share our understanding of any rule). Such a person fails to become a member of our linguistic community or alternatively, we may say, fails to make it into the human form of life.[72] Sameness is a rule that must be understood under the reactive mode if it is to be grasped at all (a point made for basic rules in general), and further, it must be understood in the same way as others for otherwise the person does not become a fellow rule-follower or member of our linguistic community

[72] This is not, so far, to deny the possibility that there may be a different form of life, with an understanding of what it is to do the same that is different than ours; but it is to admit that any such form of life, and with it any

(taken at large). Thus, RF2 is not true of the rule for sameness, despite the fact that the instructions underdetermine the rule (for a different interpretation of this rule or its instructions would point to a different form of life, a different linguistic community, that we could not understand for we would not share that essential understanding – of sameness – presupposed in the understanding of any rule).[73] And once more, since RF2 is not true of at least this rule, we can again make the point that RF3 does not obtain.[74]

As noted earlier, there is an apparent circularity in our understanding of the concept of sameness. Agreement in application of a rule would seem to presuppose an understanding of sameness (after all, we have to understand what it is to apply a rule in the same way from step to step if we are to understand that our application agrees with that of others). But there is no correct understanding of sameness that is not a commonly held

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such community fitting this account, is one we could not find intelligible. And so, restricting ourselves to what we can find intelligible, a different understanding of sameness is impossible.

[73] This restriction on RF2, that it does not hold of the rule for sameness, is a restriction to what we can find intelligible or understandable, and in this sense, is a restriction in our concern to our linguistic community (taken at large) or to our form of life. That is, we cannot intelligibly consider a different understanding or interpretation of what it is to do the same (and it is in this way that a different understanding of sameness would point to a different form of life). We cannot find someone with a deviant understanding of sameness intelligible; we should rather say that such a person is mistaken in some other way (e.g., with the deviant pupil, we may say that he has mistaken the instructions for add-2 as instructions for the rule add 2 up to 1000, add 4 up to 2000, etc., as Wittgenstein offers, rather than say that it is a mistaken understanding of what it is to go on the same that leads him astray in applying the rule add-2). We may make the point that a common understanding of sameness is a transcendental requirement for it is necessary for the possibility of linguistic communication (for, as an understanding of sameness is necessary for an understanding of any rule, a common understanding of sameness is necessary for a common understanding of any rule, and as argued earlier, we must be able to expect that others have a common understanding of basic or bedrock rules if there is to be linguistic interaction. I will have a little more to say about this thought below).

[74] We may also note, and this was said above, that a common understanding of basic rules – a shared understanding of the commitments at bedrock, as McDowell might say – is necessary for linguistic communication with others (for otherwise we may all understand and come to apply basic rules as the deviant pupil does addition which would make linguistic communication impossible). And so, it would seem, RF2 cannot be true of basic or bedrock rules either for these must be grasped as grasped by others for there to be linguistic communication; hence, they must be grasped under the reactive mode. But the point here is a little different than that made with sameness for, presumably, someone may not grasp a particular basic rule correctly, i.e., grasp it differently than others, and still be intelligible to others. That is, unlike sameness, it would seem that someone may grasp another particular basic rule differently without thereby becoming generally unintelligible to others. And hence, the point here is taken to hold generally: basic rules, in general or at large, must be commonly understood if there is to be linguistic communication with others. To hold an understanding of basic rules, taken generally, that is different from that of others is to be unintelligible to others – it is to be beyond the range of rational circumspection of others – and on these grounds we may affirm that

understanding of sameness (i.e., there is no correct understanding of a rule that stands independent from how it is understood by others for Wittgenstein). And so an understanding of sameness in application (i.e., an understanding that we apply a rule the same from step to step) seems to presuppose an understanding of sameness *as understood by others*. If this were not the case then we could all be like the deviant pupil: have an understanding of what it is to do the same in applying a rule that is different from that of others (in which case we would not have conformity in application and the practice of rule-following would break down). There are two notions of sameness or agreement here: the sameness of applying a rule in the *same way at each step* and the sameness of applying it the *same as other people*, and these notions seem to run a tight circle. The seas of language run high in this discussion of sameness.

Language is a given for Wittgenstein.[75] Since an understanding of sameness is a necessary condition of language use (since it is necessary for the understanding of any rule), it stands that an understanding of sameness carries this sense of being a given (and the passages quoted certainly seem to indicate this; notice this presents a transcendental connection from the givenness of language to the givenness of an understanding of sameness). Indeed, the above noted circularity may be taken as indication that the only way we are going to get an understanding of sameness of application is if it is given. However, contrary to this thought, the circularity runs right against the above passages (where Wittgenstein indicates that our understanding of sameness is without criterion). Forming a circle, an understanding of applying a rule the same way presupposes and is presupposed by an understanding that we apply it in the same way as others. As a circle, though, our

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basic rules, again taken generally or at large, cannot be grasped differently; they must be grasped under the reactive mode and cannot be viewed as open to interpretation.

[75] This thought is explained in Section IV above.

understanding of sameness is shown to be criterial (the criteria form a circle but they are nonetheless criteria: one must be understood for the other to be understood). But Wittgenstein, in the passages above, is clear to say that our understanding of sameness is not criterial, and certainly does not turn on an understanding that we are proceeding the same as others. The forced curve in the circle is the assumption that agreement in judgement or application is something we must understand as an item separate of our understanding of a rule.

It is stated that agreement in judgement is a necessary condition for following a rule.[76] This is not to state that an *understanding* of agreement in judgement is a necessary condition for following a rule. This position leads us only to problems. To have to know how others apply a rule in order to apply a rule is to have to know how others apply a rule at a particular step to apply the rule at that step. That is, we would have to know how others apply a rule for any given step as a necessary condition for our own understanding of the rule. This is logistically impracticable. It would rule out applying a rule for steps that no one else has applied yet; e.g., we would not be able to count to a number that no one has counted to yet for we could not know if our application of the rule for counting at that step agreed with that of other people. And more damning, such a view invites the abolishment of logic[77]: if we already know what is to constitute the correct application of a rule at any given step (in virtue of an understanding of how others apply a rule at those steps), then there is no need, and presumably no role, for a further act of understanding of the rule to take us to its correct application (the understanding of how others apply a rule at any step is all we need to apply the rule correctly); *a fortiori*, there is no need or role for logic in our understanding of a rule so as to guide (or compel) us to its correct application. And so,

[76] See *PI* 242 and the treatment of this remark in Section IV above.

agreement in application or judgement is a necessary condition of rule-following but it cannot be an epistemic condition.[78]

Notice that this is the stance maintained by the reactive view: under this mode, a rule is understood correctly, and applied correctly, if it is applied in conformity with others (i.e., we understand a rule correctly if we achieve agreement in judgement but we do not understand a rule in virtue of an understanding of what is the agreement in judgement). Agreement in judgement is not an epistemic condition for following a rule under this view, rather, it is a condition of correctness or rationality under the reactive mode. The difference here is perhaps not yet clear for it is not yet fully clear how understanding under the reactive mode results in an agreement in judgement (I will say in the next section, further in the way of an answer, that it involves understanding a rule *as intended*). What *is* clear is that there are *not* two acts of understanding here: an understanding of the instructions and an understanding of how others apply the instructions such that the latter conditions or directs the former (after all, as noted, if we already know how others apply the instructions, then we need have no further understanding of the rule to apply them as do others). The view that agreement in judgement is an epistemic condition is a view under the interpretative mode: it presumes that the instructions present themselves as something open to interpretation and so in need of some further item of understanding to settle the correct interpretation (and an understanding of how others apply the rule serves this end). Rather, under the reactive mode, we come to grasp a rule such that our grasp conforms in application with that of others. But again, we have the point that this seems to involve an epistemic jump. The

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[77] Also discussed in Section IV above.

[78] This is the difference between saying that agreement in application is a criterion by which we can tell that someone understands a rule and saying that someone understands a rule in virtue of an understanding of what behaviour would achieve agreement in application. Agreement in application is a criterion of understanding in the former sense but not the latter.

question survives as to how we achieve agreement in application or judgement in our following of rules without a separate act of understanding (of the applications of others). The next main section on knowledge of intentions provides the framework for, and takes steps towards, the answer to this question.

V. iv. An Understanding of Sameness - The Private Language Argument

Prior to that, a few more comments on the issue of sameness. Wittgenstein tells us that our understanding of sameness does not borrow from nor build on an understanding of other rules or an understanding of how others commonly apply those rules. It is in this way that an understanding of sameness is without (epistemic) criterion. An understanding of sameness is a necessary condition for language because we must understand how to apply a rule the same from step to step in order to follow a rule. Further, agreement in application or judgement, as it is for any rule, is a necessary condition for a correct grasp of sameness (which, as just noted, is itself a necessary condition for following a rule). But as stressed, we do not understand sameness in virtue of a recognition or understanding of an agreement in application. Such a view is circular and is problematic in its own right (see the account given above). We must achieve an agreement in application but it is not achieved through a separate act of understanding about what this agreement consists in. This indicates a public dimension to our grasp of a rule and that it is not grasped independently of our grasp of the rule. It is in this way said that agreement in application or judgement is a necessary but non-epistemic condition for rule-following. The full consequence of this point (and of the discussion of sameness in large) is not yet entirely clear to me, but it does seem to me to be profound in an understanding of Wittgenstein's later philosophy. To illustrate this

sentiment, I will draw out the bearing of the point on the private language argument for I think that it is crucial for a correct reading.

The standard view (and despite varying interpretations, this much seems in common) upholds that the argument is, in its essentials, epistemic. The private linguist cannot follow a rule (or meaningfully use a term) because he cannot *know* that he is applying it the same each time. The private linguist cannot distinguish between thinking he is apply a rule the same and doing so. And this is because a correctness criterion is lacking in the private case that would enable the private linguist to know that he is applying a rule the same. This correctness condition, it is supposed, operates as an epistemic condition: it is in virtue of a knowledge of this condition that we know that we use a term the same. For instance, this correctness condition is commonly viewed in terms of communal approbation or disapprobation and that recognition of this enables one to know that one is applying a rule the same and not just think that one is doing so. And so, we need to know something non-private in order to know that we apply a rule the same (and therefore, we cannot privately know that we apply a rule the same and so cannot private apply or follow a rule). There are two epistemic moves here (and these are analogous to the two senses of sameness described above): we must know that we apply a rule the same from step to step and this requires a knowledge of a public standard of correctness. And a knowledge of this public standard of correctness is ultimately a knowledge or recognition of how others apply the rule (for it is the common application that gets common approbation).

However, it is precisely denied above that an understanding of sameness in applying a rule (the same from step to step) requires an *understanding* of how others apply the rule (i.e., of agreement in application or judgement); indeed, it is denied above that an understanding of sameness is with any epistemic criterion at all. Agreement in judgement is described

above as a correctness criterion and necessary condition of an understanding of sameness such that we must achieve agreement in judgement if we understand the rule. But this does not mean that agreement in judgement or application is itself something to be understood in order that we may understand and correctly apply the rule for sameness (see above for the difficulties this would present).

Wittgenstein is clear to affirm that our understanding of sameness is without an epistemic criterion (and especially not that of an understanding of how others commonly apply a rule). But if so, it should not be a consistent criticism of the private linguist that he lacks an epistemic criterion for his understanding and application of sameness. The private language argument has been criticised as verificationist for presuming that an external and public correctness criterion must be known in order to successfully apply a rule. I made a case in Chapter 2 – elaborated in the Appendix to that chapter – that Wittgenstein's private language argument is not verificationist. I buttress this reading here. It is admittedly not very clear how agreement in judgement is to serve as a correctness criterion without also being an epistemic criterion; but this is a question as to the workings of the reactive mode (and I hope that the next section will further help here). But I do think that it is established here that agreement in judgement cannot work, either exegetically or philosophically, as an epistemic criterion.

In any event, we may take the basic point from the discussion of this section that sameness must be understood under the reactive mode; it cannot be viewed as open to interpretation or grasped from under the interpretative mode. This is a basis for saying that RF2 is not true of the rule (or instructions) for sameness (and as a consequence, as explained, RF3 is not true). This allows us to evade the conclusion of the Sceptical-Conceptual argument.

And of course, the simplest way evading the conclusion of the Sceptical-Conceptual argument is to treat it as a reductio. This gives us further means to make the point, by reductio that is, that RF2 is not true of the most basic of rules; specifically concerning the rule (or instructions) for sameness, it is not true that indefinitely many courses of action can be made out to accord with this rule (or these instructions). Thus, although it is true that our understanding of any rule is underdetermined by the instructions and training in the rule, it is not the case that we can come to view any rule or set of instructions as open to interpretation (or latch on to a different interpretation in acquiring an understanding of the rule).

VI. Knowledge Of Intentions

The question with which we began this chapter asked how it is possible to follow a rule from an underdetermined understanding without coming to interpret the rule. The approach to answering this question has been to first re-describe it as a question of rationality in rule-following. The question of how we follow a rule from an underdetermined understanding was seen to be the same as how we follow a rule with a lack of reasons (whether actively considered or not) that justify or vindicate our adopted course of action. The answer to this latter question, for Wittgenstein, reveals two modes or standards of rationality: the interpretative and the reactive. It is by grasping a rule under this latter mode that we are able to grasp it from underdetermining or unjustifying reasons (and that this involves grasping a rule "blindly"). As described, agreement in judgement is under threat from sceptical considerations: if our understanding of a rule is underdetermined by the instructions and explanations given, how is it that we achieve agreement in judgement or application; why it is

that we do not all end up applying rules as the deviant pupil does for add-2; what it is that draws us to conform in application?[79] But again, it is by being able to grasp a rule under the reactive mode, or so it is claimed, that we are able to achieve agreement in judgement. That is, if underdetermining instructions or reasons do not present an obstacle to grasping a rule under the reactive mode, then they should not present an obstacle for achieving agreement in judgement (for presumably, others are able to successfully grasp a rule from under the reactive mode). Nevertheless, the account is surely not complete. This section will continue to build a response to how we achieve conformity in application or agreement in judgement by drawing out Wittgenstein's view that we can have non-inferential and non-interpretative knowledge of the intentions of others. This will begin with a look at Wright's discussion of Wittgenstein on intentions for this presents us an intuitive picture of non-inferential understanding that we may apply to our question of agreement in judgement.

VI. i. Wright's Intuitive Proposal

Wright relates that Wittgenstein presents an example of non-inferential understanding in our knowledge of our own intentions. This is taken as intuitively correct. Our knowledge of our intentions is further characterised as involving "a special authority and whose epistemology is first/third-personal asymmetric."[80] An understanding of our intentions, insofar as this is a non-inferential understanding, is properly characterised as an understanding under the reactive mode. When we grasp a rule from under the reactive mode we grasp it "blindly". This is described in saying that we grasp a rule without reasons, or at least, without justifying

[79] As discussed in Section IV above, sceptical considerations convey that an agreement in judgement is not secured in an agreement in definitions.
[80] Wright [2001f], p. 125.

reasons. Thus, grasping a rule non-inferentially – which is grasping it in a way that does not involve inferring from some reason or other – involves grasping it blindly.

Further, we may make an explicit connection between grasping a rule non-inferentially and grasping a rule without interpreting for both involve proceeding with immediacy, in an epistemic sense (as opposed to a phenomenological sense) when grasping a rule. To uphold a role for inference in our grasp of a rule is to uphold that our understanding is mediated; that there is a reasoned step or epistemic gap bridged by an inference. Likewise, interpretation, we may say, involves (or better perhaps, is) an inference of a sort for grasping a rule in this way also involves (epistemic) mediation; for instance, an interpretation may serve to take us from a set of underdetermining (and seemingly indeterminate) instructions to a unique understanding of how to proceed in following a rule from those instructions (and we may characterise this as involving an inference on those underdetermining instructions). At any rate, if it is denied that our understanding of how to follow a rule is mediated (as it is when it is claimed that our understanding is non-inferential), then it stands that our understanding does not involve a role for interpretation. Thus, both non-inferential understanding and non-interpretative understanding are characteristic of grasping a rule in the reactive mode (i.e., blindly) and I will treat them so in this section.

An understanding of our own intentions does not involve an act of inference or interpretation under this intuitive view (i.e., we do not, or usually do not, come to know of our own intentions by an interpretation or inference on our psychological states or dispositions or bodily behaviour). Wright states: "Knowledge of one's own intentions, in the cases which interest us, is based on inference neither from one's behaviour nor from

other occurrent aspects of one's mental life."[81] However, turning to use these considerations to explain and defend understanding under the reactive mode meets an immediate difficulty. Knowledge of our intentions is not the basis for an understanding of what it is to understand under the reactive mode unless all our understanding under the reactive mode could be likened to an understanding of our intentions. At best, it seems, knowledge of our intentions can give us a special case of reactive understanding that cannot be generalised. There is an assumption here that there is a crucial first/third-person asymmetry in virtue of which we can have non-inferential and non-interpretative (i.e., reactive) knowledge of our own intentions but can only have inferential or interpretative knowledge of the intentions of others. Once this asymmetry of self-knowledge is denied, it stands that the special privilege it seems to afford (e.g., non-inferential and non-interpretative understanding) is lost. This is an assumption that, I will argue, does not fully hold for Wittgenstein (and without loss of this "special privilege").

The Cartesian view has it that the asymmetry is a product of my privileged access to the contents of my conscious mental states. Wright explains the inapplicability of this view for understanding Wittgenstein on intentions. He states:

> What is striking is that Cartesianism, whatever other difficulties it may encounter, is not even of prima facie service to us here. Cartesianism would view the authority as having the same kind of basis which it finds for a subject's authority concerning his or her occurrent sensations. The subject has privileged access to the state, is immediately aware of it in consciousness. Others, in contrast, can approach it only by an indirect, inferential route. But how, for instance, can my authority for the claim that at the so-and-so manyeth place I intended you to write down thus-and-such be based on introspection, if, as has been stressed, nothing which went on within me and which has any plausible claim to be regarded as a state of consciousness explicitly anticipated the case of the so-and-so manyeth place at all?[82]

[81] Wright [2001f], p. 126.
[82] Wright [2001f], pp. 128-129.

Wittgenstein argues, in a series of remarks, that intention and meaning are not to be thought of as mental states or processes.[83] An understanding of an intention or of what we mean or meant is not an understanding of a conscious mental state or process. Accordingly, a Cartesian account of the asymmetry of our knowledge of the intentional, which assumes otherwise, is not of service. We are in want of a non-Cartesian account to explain the first/third person asymmetry in our knowledge of intentions. And Wright offers one. According to Wright, it would seem we retain an authoritative and non-inferential understanding of our intentions because the expressions of our intentions are not so much descriptive but constitutive. He explains:

> The authority which our self-ascriptions of meaning, intention, and decision assume is not based on any kind of cognitive advantage, expertise or achievement. Rather it is, as it were, a *concession*, unofficially granted to anyone whom one takes seriously as a rational subject. It is, so to speak, such a subject's right to declare what he intends, what he intended and what satisfies his intentions; and his possession of this right consists in the conferral upon such declarations, other things being equal, of a *constitutive* rather than descriptive role.[84]

Wright presents remarks from the *Investigations* in which Wittgenstein certainly seems to advance the view that our declaration of our intentions may serve to constitute the intention. These remarks draw out that, at least in some cases, a declaration of an intention need not be a consequent event to the having of the intention and that stands to the intention as a report. In these cases, the declaration or recognition of the intention constitutes the intention. For instance, consider the following (the middle remark of three Wright offers in this connection): "I draw a head. You ask "Whom is that supposed to represent?" – I: "It's supposed to be N." – You: "But it doesn't look like him; if anything, it's rather like M." – When I said it represented N. – was I establishing a connection or reporting one? And what

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[83] For instance, he points out that mental states and processes may be characterized as having beginnings, ends and durations that, while properly ascribable to sensations, are not so ascribable to intentions or meanings.
[84] Wright [2001f], p. 138.

connexion did exist?" (*PI* 683) Wittgenstein here (as elsewhere in similar remarks) questions whether all declarations need report an intention; he advances the possibility that they may constitute the intention; that the recognition of the intention, as attested in the declaration, stands to establish a connection to the object intended. Notice that it is in a reporting role that an intention is open to interpretation. If the declaration or recognition of the intention serves to constitute the intention, then there is no divide between declaration and intention that is bridged by an inference or interpretation. Further, if a declaration or recognition serves to constitute the intention, then this declaration should be authoritative about the content of the intention. Thus, the constitutive proposal gives us grounds to uphold the non-inferentiality and authority of one's declarations of one's intentions and thereby preserve the first/third person asymmetry in the knowledge of our intentions (in a non-Cartesian way). It does so, that is, for at least declarations of intentions that constitute and do not report.

It is not part of the case in the remark above (or in similar remarks) that all our declarations of intentions serve to constitute those intentions. Wright does not seem to require that it be read this way when he observes: "The question is difficult and probably admits of no uniform answer."[85] It is not denied that declarations of intentions may report; it is only denied that they need report. In the above remark, it seems clear that Wittgenstein may have been reporting his intention when he said that the drawing represented N. Further, I do not believe that a reading of Wittgenstein should require that our declarations or judgements of our intentions are always constitutive for reason that a correct reading of Wittgenstein should not deny that we may stand in the role of interpreter, even though we usually do not interpret (and this is to say that knowledge of our intentions, as with most any

[85] Wright [2001f], p. 136.

case of understanding, is approachable under *both* modes of rationality). We may admit that any given declaration of an intention may be constitutive of that intention but this does not deny that declarations of intentions can also report. Indeed, it seems to me to be a strength of the constitutive account if it is not an exclusive account.

Nonetheless, we should still say that the subject has authority in his declaration (be it descriptive or constitutive) for reason that it is only *he* who is in a position to constitute his intentions by a declaration. To explain, as just noted, in any given case the agent may be constituting his intention in his declaration. However, we cannot say (and the above remark seems to indicate that even the subject may not be able to say) whether a given declaration is constitutive or descriptive. Hence, we have no basis for denying authority to the subject (on grounds that his declaration is not constitutive but only descriptive). But we do have some basis for granting authority to the subject (for it may be that his declaration is constitutive, in which case, he certainly would be the authority about his intention). Thus, on the basis that in any given case a subject's declaration of his intention may be constitutive we should grant authority over the subject's intentions to the subject. This is not an argument that the subject always is the best authority, but that he should be treated as authoritative on grounds that he is most likely to be the best authority (note that since any declaration is defeasible, we do not need an account that affirms that the subject is necessarily the best authority).

Moreover, we see that we must treat a subject as authoritative over his own intentions if we are to view him as a rational adult agent. Wright makes this basic point when he describes the authority we grant to the subject as "a *concession*, unofficially granted to anyone whom one takes seriously as a rational subject."[86] We may find ourselves treating a child as if he did not know best what he intends but would be hard pressed to do the same

[86] Wright [2001f], p. 138.

in our regular interaction with adults. It would not be language or linguistic interaction as we know it if we made a regular practice of not conferring authority over intentions to the subject. Our treating others as sensible and rational and, importantly, independent requires that we treat them as authorities, able to mean and intend what they say they mean and intend. Further, this is not even to consider the difficulty of establishing who should have authority over intentions if not the subject. It would be an odd world if the content of an intention was held to be mysterious to the subject until someone else had come along to decide (after the event). To use a turn of phrase from Wittgenstein, it would be foreign to our form of life to suppose that subjects are generally not authorities over their own intentions.

As stated, Wittgenstein in the above remark does not maintain that all our declarations or judgements of intentions serve to constitute those intentions. The constitutive view does not have this scope. As shown, this does not prevent us from regarding the subject as authoritative in his declarations. However, the matter does not stand equally regarding the non-inferential character of the subject's knowledge of his intentions: in cases where our declarations serve to report (and not to constitute) we do not have recourse to the constitutive view so as to maintain that the declaration is non-inferential. The constitutive role of a declaration gives us reason to say that the agent's declaration is arrived at non-inferentially but we lose this reason when the declaration is not constitutive of the intention. But now we seem without basis (i.e., at least that of the constitutive account) to maintain a strict first/third-person asymmetry in the non-inferential knowledge of intentions. One response is to say that the asymmetry breaks down in the case of a non-constitutive declaration of an intention: in this case, the subject's declaration is inferential. Another response is to say that the asymmetry breaks down such that non-

inferential knowledge of a subject's intentions is not to be understood as the strict preserve of the subject. *Prima facie*, we may be at pains to admit either; that is, either that the subject's knowledge of his intentions may be inferential or that others can have non-inferential knowledge of the subject's intentions. I wager on both responses as a reading of Wittgenstein (and this without losing the asymmetric character of our knowledge of intentions). As noted, it should be possible for the subject to stand in the role of interpreter in an understanding of his intentions (and so knowledge of intentions is not special in regard to being beyond the scope of the interpretative mode) even though we generally do not do so. In addition, I maintain that others can know of my intentions and meanings non-inferentially or without interpretation just as I can. It is this latter claim that I will focus on.[87]

VI. ii. An Asymmetry Reconsidered

There are three related considerations I will pull together, drawing on Wittgenstein, to make a case for the non-inferential knowledge of the intentions of others. One builds on the thought that, in the demise of the Cartesian view, there is no public/private divide to apply to intentions. A second builds on the observation that intentions or meanings are not properly understood as conscious mental states or processes; this is related to the first but does not involve the same argument. A third draws on the sceptical considerations and observes that if our knowledge of the intentions of others is necessarily under the interpretative mode then we do not have knowledge of the intentions of others (by pain of paradox). None of these arguments, I expect, is conclusive that we can have non-inferential

[87] They may be more prone to error but the possibility (and higher incidence) of error does not deny that non-inferential knowledge is possible (for the subject may be mistaken also). Rather, the higher ratio of defeasibility by others only further indicates that the subject has a special authority over his intentions.

knowledge of the intentions of others. I do endeavour, though, to at least take steps towards this end, viz., to turn our intuitions to their contrary.

First, the attachment to the intuitive view (that only the subject can have non-inferential knowledge of his intentions) is, I suspect, largely a residue of the Cartesian picture. Under the Cartesian picture, the first/third-person asymmetry in the knowledge of intentions divides along a public/private axis: knowledge of intentions is knowledge that is private to the subject; this is to give the subject direct or non-inferential access. Those that do not have access to this private domain can only infer and interpret. Wittgenstein aims to undermine this public/private divide as it applies to our knowledge of intentions and meanings. The private language argument tells us that meanings are not private; that my knowledge of my intentions is not a private knowledge. But this is just to admit that others know, or at least can know, of my intentions; it is not yet to admit that others know of my intentions without inference. But this is a worthy point: if I am to have non-inferential knowledge of my intentions, then since I cannot carry this knowledge privately, others must be able to come to this knowledge (either inferentially or non-inferentially). But if it is further argued, as it is in the third consideration below, that knowledge of the intentions of others cannot be (strictly) interpretative (by pain of sceptical paradox), then since this knowledge must be possible (for not only I can have knowledge of my intentions, by the private language argument) others must be able to have knowledge of my intentions without interpretation (and so without an inference of this sort). The thrust of this point (privacy aside) is picked up in the third consideration below. Nevertheless, we may make the milder observation that the private language argument shows us that our intuition for the asymmetry in this regard should not be on the basis of a private (and thereby privileged) access to my intentions. But once this source of the intuition (which has also been the prime

historical source) is denied, we should have at least as much reason to suspect the intuition as to seek other means of upholding it.

Second, and a related point, Wittgenstein argues that intentions and meanings are not aptly characterised as mental states or processes. He even says that, "If God had looked into our minds he would not have been able to see there whom we were speaking of." (*PI* II, p. 217) Briefly, we may defend this thought, as Wittgenstein does and as noted above, by pointing out that intentions and meanings are not suitably described as involving durations (and as always having beginnings and ends), and so in contrast to mental states and processes. And we may also defend the point, and perhaps more forcefully, by drawing on Kripke: even the ideal agent (with perfect recall and access to his mental states and processes) cannot determine whether plus or quus was meant and so there cannot be a fact of the matter (concerning mental states or processes) as to which function was meant.[88] Thus, if intentions and meanings are not properly viewed as mental states or processes, knowledge of intentions should not involve an inference to a mental state or process. That is, gaining an understanding of the intentions of others should not involve having to pierce through – by an act of inference or interpretation – to their conscious mental states or processes. This is not conclusive that knowledge of the intentions of others is not inferential or interpretative in some other way, but again a once putative source of our intuition to the contrary is denied.[89]

Third, sceptical considerations weigh in to show us that if we are to have knowledge of the intentions of others at all, then there must be a way to acquire this knowledge without

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[88] And of course we can extend the point, in similar fashion, to say that there is no physical or behavioural fact as to which function was meant.

[89] The intuition being challenged assumes that intentions are mental states or processes. Hence, on this assumption we cannot have knowledge of the intentions of others without inferring or interpreting (i.e., some

interpreting. As discussed (at length) for us to be able to grasp a rule requires that we be able to understand it without interpreting. But this requires that we be able to understand it as it was intended (for otherwise any set of instructions can be interpreted in an indefinite number of ways; indeed, if we have no knowledge of the intention "behind" them at all then we do not have knowledge that they are even instructions; they are just marks on a piece of paper or sounds in the air). But if we must interpret someone's intentions (concerning how a rule or its instructions are to be followed), then the sceptical line of thought that takes us to the paradox just repeats itself (for, presumably, there are indefinitely many ways of interpreting someone's intentions). Hence, to have rule-following it is required that we be able to understand (and follow) someone's intentions with regard to a rule without interpretation (and of course, this is to be able understand someone's intentions from under the reactive mode). In this third line, the sceptical argument is taken as a *reductio* against the assumption that an understanding of the intentions of another must involve interpreting.[90]

We see that the Cartesian defense of our intuition that we can have non-inferential and non-interpretative knowledge of our intentions but not that of others is not of service. We see that the constitutive account, read from Wittgenstein, cannot serve this end for cases where the declarations are not constitutive and, moreover as I claim, does not endeavour to serve this end at all; the constitutive account does allow us to maintain a claim to a special authority over our intentions and that *this* serves to maintain a first/third-person asymmetry in the knowledge of intentions. In addition, we have three considerations in favour of turning on this intuition. Aside from the third consideration above, the considerations do

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mediated way of understanding) for we lack immediate access to these; we are not the ones who have the mental states or processes in question. But as this assumption is challenged here, so is the intuition.

[90] As noted in the first consideration above, the point here can also be combined with that involving the private language argument to the effect that if we are to have non-inferential knowledge of our intentions then others must be able to do so as well – see above.

not contend to be conclusive of the point that we can have non-inferential and non-interpretative knowledge of the intentions of others. The objective is more to show that our intuition that only we can have non-inferential and non-interpretative knowledge of our intentions is not as well founded as we may suppose; and further, as these points are drawn from Wittgenstein, it is thereby argued that he does not intend for us to maintain this intuition (and so non-inferential and non-interpretative knowledge of the intentions of others is affirmed by Wittgenstein). I will finish this section with a discussion of how the possibility of non-inferential and non-interpretative knowledge of the intentions of others secures agreement in judgement or application of rules (and thereby enables rule-following under the reactive mode).

VI. iii. Non-inferential Knowledge of Intentions and Agreement in Judgement

Wittgenstein argues that we can follow a rule from an underdetermined understanding; that we can proceed without reasons that justify the course of action we adopt. This involves following a rule "blindly". If we can have non-inferential and non-interpretative knowledge of intentions, of our own and of others', then we can come to understand how it is that a rule or set of instructions can be so followed. Let us take an example. We want it to be the case that a pupil can come to understand the instructions for the rule add-2 without interpreting those instructions. But this means that the pupil must be able to come to understand the instructions *as intended* without interpretation.[91] And so, an understanding of instructions requires an understanding of intentions (of others, presumably of those that

[91] As noted, if the pupil has no knowledge of the instructions as intended, he has no knowledge that they are even instructions – they are just empty marks or sounds. What makes them "instructions" is an understanding of their intended use.

provide or author the instructions). But this should not be taken to mean that these intentions stand alongside the instructions as a separate item to be understood: instructions must be understood *as something intended* to even be instructions. To suppose that instructions and intentions (regarding those instructions) are separate items to be understood in our grasp of a rule presumes that an understanding of these intentions adds to our understanding of the instructions and, doubtless, serves to settle the correct interpretation of the instructions (and notice that this is to fully accept a view of grasping a rule as proceeding under the interpretative mode). This view violates AR** for it supposes that an understanding of intentions is separate from an understanding that we gain from instructions and explanations (and it does not help that we may speak of the intention as being "behind" the instructions). Further, to avoid rerunning the sceptical argument, there must be a way to grasp these intentions ("behind the instructions") without interpreting. And of course, this means that the pupil must be capable of understanding intentions that are not his own without interpreting.[92]

We may approach this thought a little differently. Wittgenstein affirms that when I give instructions for a rule I can tell the pupil all I know; hence, since *I* do not need to interpret this set of instructions to follow the rule – and since the pupil is given as much to work with as I have – *he* should not have to interpret. This point is a variant of AR** and is expressed here: " "But do you really explain to the other person what you yourself understand? Don't you get him to guess the essential thing? You give him examples, - but he has to guess their drift, to guess your intention." – Every explanation which I can give

[92] This may be expressed in saying the pupil must be able to understand our custom for following the rule; i.e., an understanding of the collective or communal intentions for how a rule is to be followed is an understanding of its custom. But again, a custom must be understood without interpretation to enable rule-following from an understanding of a custom – see Chapter 3 for details. The description of custom here as a "collective or

myself I give to him too." (*PI* 210) As expressed, I am not in a privileged position concerning what I know of a rule: I have told him all I know. Thus, if I can follow these same instructions without interpretation, so can the pupil. Wittgenstein is at pains to affirm that I do not keep something back – something likened to an understanding of how the rule is intended – when I convey to someone how to follow a rule. He receives as much as I have myself and so should be able to follow the rule with the same ease. The thought here is that when I communicate a set of instructions, I also communicate my intentions for how they are to be followed; my intentions are not a separate item to the instructions and are certainly not a separate item left behind to be interpreted.

It may be unclear how it is that we come to understand the intentions lying behind a set of instructions. Indeed, it may still seem a mystery how we are to do this without inferring or interpreting. But this sentiment is largely driven, as I tried to disclose in the last sub-section, by the intuitions that intentions are hidden or private, that we must pierce through to them (and the locution that an intention "lies behind" an utterance or instruction only reinforces this thought). We have it argued, by way of AR**, that an understanding of a rule does not transcend an understanding of instructions, and so intentions cannot lie behind instructions as something separate to be grasped. And we have it argued that we must be able to come to grasp the intentions of others without interpreting on pain of sceptical paradox. Much of the puzzlement concerning how this feat is turned, I suspect, is due to the entrenchment of these intuitions. But it is in an understanding of the intentions of others that we have an answer to how agreement in judgement is achieved.

We can achieve agreement in application or judgement if we can follow instructions as they are intended. For in following a set of instructions as they are intended we apply the

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communal intention" serves to show the means by which I expect custom directs our rule-following behaviour:

rule as those that author and provide the instructions would apply them (for presumably they do not apply the instructions differently than they intend for others to apply them). For instance, if the pupil applies the instructions as they are intended by his teacher he applies the rule as does the teacher. Hence, a conformity or agreement in application is achieved as a result of a non-inferential and non-interpretative understanding of the intentions of others. In a given language game, we apply rules in the same way because we commonly understand how those rules are intended to be followed. When someone breaks a rule but gives, in his defense, an interpretation which shows his action consistent with the rule, we may tell him he is not following the rule or instructions *as intended* (in a law court, we may say that he is nevertheless acting against the "spirit" of the law or that his defense, consistent as it may be, is in "bad faith" and this is supposed to be binding on the defendant).

So, we see that agreement in judgement or application (and so following a rule under the reactive mode) involves being able to grasp the intentions of others without inference and interpretation. It was earlier shown that this need not run contrary to our intuitions concerning first/third-person asymmetry in the knowledge of intentions. These intuitions are not denied but are argued to be modified. We have noted above that the subject still has a special authority. We may also add that there is still a measure of asymmetry with regard to access: I do not know of my intentions through an interpretation or inference (although this is not without the possibility of exception); others, in contrast, sometimes interpret and infer and sometimes not (they understand my intentions under *both* the reactive and interpretative modes with greater incidence). The considerations raised only attest that others must be able to understand my intentions non-inferentially and without interpreting, not that they always do or that they never stand as interpreters. Hence, there is also this asymmetric

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in virtue of an understanding of the intentions of others (but writ large).

difference: I know of my intentions without interpreting and without inferring with less exception than do others. Someone may come to interpret my intentions concerning a rule for reason that he is not sure how I mean for a set of instructions to be applied at some step. In response, Wittgenstein says, "So in this case he could ask; and I could and should answer him." (*PI* 210). But if it were not possible for him to understand my intentions for how a rule is to be followed without interpreting, he would not be able to follow a rule from my instructions. At any rate, the account here is not yet a complete answer to how it is that the intentions of others are understood non-inferentially and non-interpretatively. Nonetheless, it is shown that this need not deny a first/third person asymmetry in the knowledge of intentions; that this is what is involved in following a rule blindly or from under the reactive mode; and that this serves to explain how it is that agreement in judgement is attained.[93]

VII. Concluding Remarks

This chapter attempts to convey how rule-following is possible in light of sceptical considerations raised in the rule-following remarks. It is thereby an attempt at a positive programme in answer to the negative agenda developed in Chapter 2 and further described

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[93] McDowell seems to offer something in the way of a response to the question of how we follow a rule in a way that involves a non-inferential understanding of another's intentions. He describes that linguistic behaviour must be understood, not as it is on the "surface", but as contentful (and we may here say in substitute that linguistic behaviour must be understood as it is intended). McDowell adds that a "command of the language is needed in order to put one in direct cognitive contact with that in which someone's meaning consists. (This might seem to represent command of the language as a mysterious sort of X-ray vision; but only in the context of the rejected conception of the surface.)" (McDowell [1984], p. 348) The notion of "direct cognitive command" is at once promising and opaque. McDowell, elsewhere, describes this notion, in virtue of which we just "see" meanings, as something in the order of a perceptual capacity (McDowell [1981b], p. 239). However, McDowell does not do well to expand the notion. The perceptual metaphors, if they are metaphors, do not deepen our understanding of following a rule non-inferentially or without interpretation; they seem to say no more than what I find readily agreeable: to understand a rule without interpretation we must understand how it is intended (and to do this without interpretation); i.e., we cannot understand instructions without interpretation if we take them at their "surface" but must understand them as they are

in Chapter 3. This positive task, however, is more difficult to complete than the negative (and the account here is admittedly short of a complete picture, although I see this as an opportunity for interesting future work). This is because Wittgenstein's positive pronouncements are less systematically presented and their development less sustained than are the negative (even by his standards of systematic presentation). However, very much can be said in favour of a positive agenda and its disparate presentation just means that this chapter must unfold differently than the others. Different strands of thought and lines of argument are joined together to provide argument for and explanation of this positive agenda.

To this end, it is first argued that this positive agenda, and the moral of the sceptical argument, takes the form of a mode of rationality different from that which involves interpretation; that is, a way of rationally responding to instructions in a rule that does not involve interpreting. This is a way of responding to rule instruction that is unmoved by the underdetermination of the instructions (unmoved for not finding them indeterminate); it involves understanding how to follow a rule from reasons that run short of justifying a unique (let alone the correct) course of action. This involves what has been called following a rule "blindly" (for there seems to be an epistemic leap involved in coming to follow a rule correctly from instructions that can be interpreted consistently in indefinitely many ways). And this is a mode of rationality where agreement in application is the criterion with which we say that the rule has been understood correctly. This is the reactive mode of rationality and much space is given to explaining this mode, why there must be such a mode, and its interaction with the interpretative mode (e.g., an account is given explaining how changes in

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intended or as content-bearing. If they are more than metaphors, though, then they become truly puzzling. At any rate, a clear solution, let alone a clear Wittgensteinian one, does not seem to be on offer here.

common rule-following practice, a point of criticism of Kripke's sceptical solution, is enabled by the play of both modes).

An account of following a rule under the reactive mode is met with considerations that approach directly and others that proceed architecturally: these speak to the form of, and offer constraints on, a possible account. With regard to the latter, it is noted that an account of the epistemology of grasping and following a rule under the reactive mode – of what it is to follow a rule blindly – should not aim to be a determinative account; i.e., we should not aim to justify blind rule-following. This would be to provide an account of following a rule under the reactive mode to the standards of the interpretative mode of rationality and *this* is a hopeless task: we cannot account for what it is to understand under one mode to the standards of the other (this is what it means to have two modes or standards of *rationality*). What we should aim for is an explanation of the reactive mode and of the operation of normative constraints that do not determine but nevertheless serve to guide rule-following behaviour and lead to conformity of application. Furthermore, it is noted that agreement in judgement or application is necessary for rule-following (we see this with the case of the deviant pupil and this point is elaborated in Section IV). However, as argued (in Section V on Sameness), agreement in application is not achieved through a separate act of understanding. Agreement in application, in other words, is a correctness criterion (under the reactive mode of rationality) but not an epistemic criterion for following a rule. Thus, an account of how we achieve agreement in application from an underdetermined understanding of a rule should *not* argue that we do so through a separate act of understanding.

In addition, it is stated (in Section II. vii., on Bedrock and Sub-bedrock) that non-normative considerations about ourselves or our form of life (i.e., considerations about

ourselves available to investigation by the physical and social sciences) offer explanations of why we commonly apply rules. These explanations are not determinative, but as noted, this is not required anyway. This is one (fairly obvious) line of answer after our conformity in application.

Another line of answer is to look to actual cases (as Wittgenstein advises in *PI* 201). In actual cases, we observe that we proceed blindly (in the epistemic sense described) and without consideration of alternatives, and attain conformity of application even though, at any step, alternatives may be available that are consistent with our understanding of the rule (i.e., in actual cases we observe that we do not interpret even though we could). This line of answer is therapeutic: it aims to dispel our philosophical dissatisfaction by showing us that we are not dissatisfied in actual cases. The chess illustration draws this out: in scenarios 2 and 3 the players proceed one way and the other, respectively between the scenarios, without noticing the ambiguity in the rule (and so without noticing that they could stop to interpret). Scenario 1 shows that they could, but this just draws out that we always could doubt but not that we do doubt (*PI* 213).

Furthermore, (in Section III) it is argued that our understanding of a rule under the reactive mode, where we follow rules blindly, is characterised by a lack of a *clear* conception of an alternative practice (at least for bedrock or necessary rules). We could have some conception of an alternative practice, and so have some conception of proceeding differently, but the lack of a clear conception explains, to an extent, why it is that we do not doubt our application of a rule even though we could. And lastly, (in Section VI) it is argued that our intuitive view of the first/third-person asymmetry in the knowledge of intentions is not damaged if we admit that we can have non-inferential and non-interpretative knowledge of the intentions of others. This knowledge enables conformity in application for we

understand how to follow a rule as others intend for us, and presumably, also for themselves (for by AR**, they do not understand more of the rule than what they can convey to us; and so if an understanding of intentions is relevant to an understanding of how to follow a rule from a set of instructions, this understanding of intentions should not be lost in the giving and understanding of instructions).

In closing, Wittgenstein does not deny that we may, at any point for most any rule, come to doubt or interpret. His plain response is to say that there is nevertheless a way to follow a rule without an interpretation (*PI* 201) and without coming to doubt (*PI* 213). There is an important distinction here: there is a way of grasping a rule that does not involve an interpretation and there is way that does, which I have described as grasping a rule under the "reactive" and "interpretative" modes respectively. Wittgenstein, of course, does not talk explicitly in these terms (for it is likely too much theorising) but, as I have tried to show, there is a distinction in the way we come to grasp rules that is captured in the account of these two modes. This separation of modes, *pace* Kripke, constitutes an accommodation of the sceptical conclusion: in what effectively stands as a warning, (for almost any rule, i.e., at least sameness excepted) we may come to interpret or doubt our way of following a rule, but the possibility of following a rule reactively shows us that we need not.

CONCLUSION

A view has emerged in this thesis of different castes of rules. We have, beginning in Chapter 2, a distinction made between basic and non-basic rules. In one sense, the notion of a basic rule is purely relative: a rule that must be understood for another rule to be understood (e.g., counting for addition), but not vice-versa, is a comparatively basic rule. But since we cannot continue forever, to ever more foundational rules presupposed in our understanding of any given rule, we must, it seems, arrive at rules that are truly basic (rules that do not presuppose an understanding of a further level of basic rules, although we may want to say that any of these basic rules cannot be understood independently; and so we may admit, or at least it is not inconsistent to admit, a holism at the base level). Another approach to the notion of basic rules lies in the discussion of bedrock. Bedrock is described as the point where our reasons run out, where our attempts at justification end, and this gives rise to a notion of rules at bedrock which must be understood to understand other rules but themselves cannot be further justified by bringing in other rules. Bedrock gives us another way of talking about basic rules. These are rules which must be followed blindly, i.e., under the reactive mode, because they are followed without justifying or vindicating reasons (we cannot follow these rules from under the interpretative mode because, from under this mode the course of action we pursue in following the rule will seem arbitrary precisely because we have run out of reasons that would serve to justify this course of action over others).

But among basic rules – among those grasped and followed blindly – we see a special and fundamental status given to the rule pertaining to sameness or accordance. An understanding of any other particular rule presupposes an understanding of sameness and this in turn does not presuppose an understanding of any other particular rule. As explained, a correct grasp of sameness, i.e., a grasp that is the "same" as that of others, is a necessary condition for enjoining in linguistic communication with others. And so, although this

understanding, as with that of other rules, is gained through means that are underdetermining, it is not the case that this understanding can be seen as open to interpretation, or that someone can even latch on to a deviant interpretation. And this to say that sameness must be grasped blindly and must be grasped correctly. And it does not seem that the same can be said of any other particular rule (although we should want to say the same is true of basic rules taken generally, as described in Chapter 4).

The upshot of the negative programme, presented in Chapter 2, was that we cannot but obtain an underdetermined understanding of a rule. While admitting that grasping a rule need not involve interpreting (on pain of paradox), and thus that we are not led to a sceptical conclusion as a result, we are nonetheless left with an understanding of a rule in which the full and correct application is not determined. This is a sceptical consideration to be reckoned with even though we escape a sceptical conclusion. And so an account is needed explaining how it is that we can come to follow a rule from an underdetermined understanding without coming to see it as indeterminate in what it proscribes. It is certainly not denied that this is a common occurrence: we can readily find that instructions can be interpreted in indefinitely many ways, were we to try, but this poses no epistemic difficulty in our commonplace grasping of rules from sets of instructions. But that this is commonplace, to respond in this way, shows the same of our ability to follow a rule blindly and this involves grasping rules in a way that does not involve viewing them or their instructions as open to interpretation. It is this account that is pieced together in Chapter 4. Chapter 4 is long (apologies to the reader) and, for all that, not a complete account. But its success lies in laying the framework for what a proper account should be – viz., that this be an account of an alternative mode of rational response to instruction in a rule – and also in taking certain steps in fleshing out this account of what it is to follow a rule "blindly" and how it is that

agreement in judgement is achieved in spite of the noted sceptical consideration. This is the positive programme given in response to the negative programme described in Chapter 2. Commentary on Wittgenstein's rule-following remarks, especially since Kripke, has focussed on the negative considerations without much discussion of the positive (indeed, Wright even finds for Wittgenstein being a "quietist" about a positive agenda). Chapter 4, thus, offers some needed balance and shows that Wittgenstein, although perhaps less obviously so, is also a constructive philosopher.

Some final words on where we stand on the issue of radical conventionalism, the issue with which the thesis begins and that ties the first chapter to the rest, are due. In the first chapter, I dealt with the charge of radical conventionalism as it applies to the concept modification thesis and strong verificationism. I take that issue to be closed and that the chapter, as a result, is fairly self-contained. Concerning the charge of radical conventionalism as it arises out of rule-following considerations, the point was made that this charge is well incorporated into a sceptical reading of the rule-following remarks. A response to how we are able to follow a rule (truly follow, which requires that we be guided and do not decide at any given step) despite these sceptical considerations is a response to the charge of radical conventionalism. Thus, the charge of radical conventionalism was swallowed, as it were, into the larger discussion of scepticism and rule-following. But since the discussion of scepticism, and its response, is the dominant theme carrying through the chapters on rule-following, the issue of radical conventionalism was always close to the fore.

Given this incorporation into the sceptical reading, the response to the charge of radical conventionalism, to be treated fully, involves the account we can give of following a rule from an underdetermined understanding without interpreting (after all, it is the indefinitely many, and arbitrary, interpretations that are available of most any rule or set of

instructions – as seen under the appropriate rational mode – that serves to leads us to the view that decision or choice has a role in our rule-following practice, even for rules we deem necessary). Alternatively stated, an account of how and why it is that we do not decide is an account of how and why it is that we are led or guided in following a rule (or, as it is put in *PI* 242 and treated in Chapter 4, Section IV, how and why it is that logic is not abolished for "logic", in the looser sense employed by Wittgenstein, speaks to our being guided in following a rule). This is an account of following a rule blindly. Thus a full account explaining why decision does not play a role in rule-following, as with the similar story concerning interpretation, is ultimately had in the account of grasping and following a rule under the reactive mode.

But notice, a full account is more than we need to reject the charge of radical conventionalism. Most simply, we may reject the point that, at any given step, the correct way to follow a rule is a matter decided, as we reject the point that grasping a rule requires interpreting, on the basis of treating the argument to the contrary as a reductio. This is not a facile solution. A reductio-reading of radical conventionalism tells us that there must be a way to grasp the requirements of a rule without deciding, and without being pressed to decide, and this, again, points to a way of following a rule blindly or under the reactive mode (for decision makes sense as a decision over consistent interpretations; i.e., if we do not see a rule or set of instructions as variously interpretable, and we are guided in following a rule despite having an understanding of the requirements of the rule that is underdetermined, then decision has no place in our determining the requirements of the rule; when a rule is followed blindly it is not followed arbitrarily). Alternatively, and still quite simply, we may bring the discussion of sameness into context. As explained, an understanding of sameness is necessary for an understanding of any rule (and a common understanding of sameness is

necessary for a common understanding of any rule, and so for linguistic communication between individuals). But we cannot collectively decide to understand and apply the rule for sameness commonly (i.e., in the same way) for this would already presuppose an understanding of sameness. As explained, we must be able to agree in judgement without this requiring a further epistemic move or decision and this is just what it is to follow a rule under the reactive mode. Likewise, and differently again, we may say that deciding, like interpreting, involves a linguistic skill that is not without some sophistication; hence, deciding, like interpreting, cannot be a part of an account of our acquiring that basic linguistic skill (this is a point made, in a different setting, first in Section II. vi., where it was argued that basic or bedrock rules must be grasped under the reactive mode, i.e., blindly, if they are to be grasped at all). At any rate, a full account of the reactive mode is not required for a rejection of this role for decision, as with that for interpretation, along these lines.

In the end, what I hope to have achieved, for myself and for the reader, is a deepened understanding of Wittgenstein's thoughts, in particular, those on rule-following; that core of thought that sustains – like a root – his views on meaning, understanding, and rationality. Wittgenstein is difficult to understand, in this area as in others. That is fairly obvious, and this much seems to remain constant from early to middle to later periods. As a response to this difficulty, one approach to the material, among the many commenting on Wittgenstein, sees their task as a scholarly endeavour. Exegesis is important, and there certainly are points in this thesis where I give this special attention, but it is of limited value in gaining an understanding. And this is because the real difficulty in understanding Wittgenstein is the difficulty of philosophy, of engaging the issues that engaged him. The struggle of understanding him is a measure of his struggle to understand, less taxing (we should hope) for having his help, in the form of his writings, but still a struggle. The best

tradition among philosophers that work on Wittgenstein, in my view, sees the material in this light: as something to be engaged; as a struggle, less of deciphering seemingly obscure passages, and more of understanding and grappling with difficult issues. It is these philosophers that I have focussed on – borrowing from some and challenging others, gaining insight from all – and it is to this engagement with Wittgenstein that I hope to have made a contribution.

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A Handy Reference Sheet Of Key Points And Arguments

From the 1st Chapter.

RC: The logical necessity of any statement is decided.
CM: A proof serves to modify the sense of a mathematical proposition.
CM*: A proof serves to modify the sense of a mathematical proposition and it is not possible to give an account of how this sense has been modified.
SV: The sense of a mathematical proposition is its proof.
SV*: The sense of a mathematical proposition is the method of checking it.

From the 2nd Chapter and on.

RF1: There is a correct way to follow a rule.
RF2: Indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to be in accord with the instructions for a rule.
RF3: Any or every course of action can be interpreted to be in accord with the instructions for a rule.
AR** The understanding of a rule does not transcend an understanding of an explanation of or instructions in the rule.
CP. If AR** is not true of the understanding of a rule, then the understanding of the rule is necessarily private.

The Sceptical-Inductive Argument

S1. Instructions cannot but underdetermine a rule. [from the case for RF2 above]
S2. The understanding of a rule does not transcend an understanding of an explanation of or instructions in the rule. [from AR** above]
S3. Therefore, the understanding of a rule is underdetermined.
S4. An underdetermined understanding of a rule requires that the rule be interpreted to be understood (and followed).
S5. But if a rule must be interpreted to be understood (and followed), then we fall prey to a sceptical paradox.
S6. Therefore, we fall prey to a sceptical paradox (alternatively, there is no rule-following).

The Sceptical-Conceptual Argument

C1. Indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to be in accord with the instructions for a rule. [RF2]
C2. If indefinitely many courses of action can be interpreted to be in accord with the instructions for a rule, then any (or every) course of action can be interpreted to be in accord with the instructions for a rule. [RF2 → RF3]
C3. If any (or every) course of action can be interpreted to be in accord with the instructions for a rule, then no course of action is determined by the instructions for a rule. [From *PI* 201]
C4. If no course of action is determined by the instructions for a rule, then there is no rule-following. [Also from *PI* 201]
C5. Therefore, there is no rule-following.