

# **WITTGENSTEIN, KRIPKE AND RULE-FOLLOWING — A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF RULE-SCEPTICISM**

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF **PHILOSOPHY**

**SATRUGHNA BEHERA**, M.Phil.  
I. C. P. R. Fellow



DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
**UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD**  
HYDERABAD-500 134.

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Something that we know when no one asks us, but no longer know when we are supposed to give an account of it, is something that we need to remind ourselves of. (And it is obviously something of which for some reason it is difficult to remind oneself. )

**Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, sect. 89.**



Dr. Ramesh Chandra Pradhan,  
Reader.

Department of Philosophy,  
University of Hyderabad,  
Hyderabad - 500 134.

**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "**Wittgenstein, Kripke and Rule-Following - A critical Examination of Rule-Scepticism**" submitted by **Sri Satrugna Behera** for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** to the Department of Philosophy, School of Humanities, University of Hyderabad has been carried out under my supervision and embodies the result of bonafide research work.

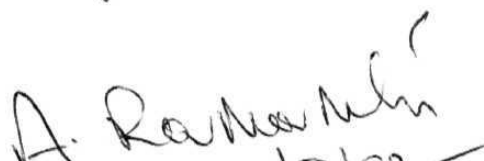
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(Ramesh Chandra Pradhan)

  
HEAD 3/7/92  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD  
HYDERABAD

  
Dean,  
School of Humanities,  
University of Hyderabad,  
HYDERABAD-500 134. 3-7-92

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled " **Wittgenstein, Kripke and Rule-Following - A Critical Examination of Rule-Scepticism\*** submitted for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** to the University of Hyderabad, embodies the result of bonafide research work carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. R.C, Pradhan. It has not been submitted either in part or in full for any other degree or diploma to this or any other University.

S. Behera

(SATRUGHNA BEHERA)

Date : 3.7.1992.

Department of Philosophy  
University of Hyderabad

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## ABBREVIATIONS

- NB** : *Notebooks 1914-16*, ed. G.H. von Wright and G.E.M. Anscombe, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1961).
- TLP** : *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D.G. Pears and B.F. McGuinness, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1961).
- PR** : *Philosophical Remarks*, ed. Rush Rhees, trans. Raymond Hargreaves and Roger White, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1975).
- PG** : *Philosophical Grammar*, ed. Rush Rhees, trans. Anthony Kenny (Blackwell, Oxford, 1974).
- WL** : *Wittgenstein's Lectures Cambridge, 1932-35*, ed. Alice Amborse, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1969).
- BB** : *The Blue and Brown Books*, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1958).
- RFM** : *Remarks On The Foundations of Mathematics*, ed. G.H. von Wright, Rush Rhees, G.E.M. Anscombe, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1956).
- LFM** : *Wittgenstein's Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics Cambridge, 1939* ed. Cora Diamond, (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1976).
- PI** : *Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe, R. Rhees, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1953).
- Z** : *Zettel*, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright, trans. G.E. Anscombe, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1967).
- OC** : *On Certainty*, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright, trans. D. Paul and Anscombe, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1969).
- WRPL** : *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language-An Elementary Exposition* by Saul A. Kripke, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1982).

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## INTRODUCTION

In this essay I propose to provide a rejoinder to Kripke's sceptical interpretation of Wittgenstein's concept of rule and rule-following. Kripke's interpretation, which has been widely acclaimed as innovative and original, has raised very fundamental questions in Wittgenstein's philosophy of language and meaning. Kripke has indeed raised the question; how is rule-following possible given that there is no fact of the matter to constitute the ground of this possibility? Kripke's answer to this question has been negative. Kripke has seriously argued that Wittgenstein's PI sect. 201 contains the sceptical paradox involved in rule-following and therefore, according to him, there can be no escape from the sceptical interpretation of the concept of rule-following. The sceptical problem has, of course, a sceptical solution. But that only reinforces the epistemic and ontological availability of rule-scepticism.

My effort in this essay is to refute Kripke's ascription of rule-scepticism to Wittgenstein. My strategy is to show that the so-called sceptical paradox at PI sect. 201 is the result of a grammatical misunderstanding and can be dissolved. Kripke's notion of sceptical solution embodied in the now famous communitarian solution is equally subject to doubt, and so it has received the closest scrutiny in my argument against rule-scepticism in general. My strategy in this essay is not to engage in an exegesis of either Kripke or Wittgenstein but to engage in a debate between Kripke's Wittgenstein and the real Wittgenstein. In the six chapters that follow I have a single

purpose: to show that Wittgenstein leaves no room for rule-scepticism and that he has a straight solution to the sceptical problem.

In chapter I, I will sketch the layout of Wittgenstein's notion of language and rules. Here my aim is not to give an exposition of Wittgenstein's well known concepts like language-game, forms of life, logical form, logical grammar, etc. I will provide a unified account of what Wittgenstein meant by a rule-structured language. This account, therefore, includes Wittgenstein's earlier programme of providing a logical syntax of language in the *Tractatus*. I have traced out the line of conceptual development from rules in logical syntax to rules in the formations of language-games. Wittgenstein has adopted the same syntactic technique in demonstrating the availability of rules in language both in his early and later philosophy.

In Chapter II, I focus attention on the grammar of rule-following. The concept of rule-following follows logically from the concept of rule itself. For Wittgenstein rule and rule-following or rule-application constitute one single logical space. Rules are logically or internally involved in their application. In this chapter I have shown that rule-following is an internal matter of grammar. And hence there can be no interpretation of this concept either as a social or an empirical phenomenon. Wittgenstein has repeatedly shown that to follow a rule is to master a technique and therefore, to master a language. This is Wittgenstein's argument to show that rule-following



cannot be separated from the use of language itself. This as such rules out the possibility that the rules can be Platonic entities. The grammar of **rule-following** is, therefore, the grammar of forms of life and not the grammar of **communitarian practices**.

In Chapter III, I will attempt to draw a sketch of Kripke's sceptical **interpretation** of **Wittgenstein**. Here though my aim is to refute the sceptical **presuppositions** in this **interpretation** I will begin with outlining the broad features of Kripke's **interpretation**. I will give considerable scope to shape the Kripkean sceptical strategy before I will dismantle it in my arguments. The strength of Kripke's argument **lies** in his sustained effort to locate the sceptical paradox in **Wittgenstein's** writings. He has developed considerable **philosophical** acumen in positing the sceptical problem. I will do justice to each step of the sceptical thesis before attacking it point by point. MY method in this chapter is to show that scepticism regarding **rule-following** is based on the sceptical **philosopher's misunderstanding** of language and linguistic behaviour. Wittgenstein has always defended language, meaning and **rule-following** against scepticism throughout his earlier and **later writings**.

In Chapter IV, the next logical step in the refutation of **rule-scepticism** has been taken i.e the refutation of the communitarian interpretation of rule and **rule-following**. In this chapter I have come to examine Kripke's so-called sceptical solution of the sceptical problem. . Kripke has argued that

Wittgenstein has offered a sceptical solution in the Humean way by proposing a **communitarian** escape route from the sceptical dilemma. The **communitarian** point of view aims at settling the theoretical dispute regarding the foundations of **rule-following** by arguing that **rule-following** is after all a **communitarian** and therefore, an agreed phenomenon. That is, we do practise rule-following even though we are not logically justified in doing so. This solution is a half-hearted solution. I have argued that Wittgenstein never opted for such a solution. He could realize that there is no gap between what we **practically** do and what we are logically justified to do. Wittgenstein has, therefore, provided deeper logical grounds of practice and agreement involved in all acts of **rule-following**. The practice and agreement are the matters of our forms of **life** which we necessarily have. Thus it cannot **follow** that our **rule-following** has only a **communitarian** sanction. It is, on the contrary, necessarily involved in the very modes of our grammatical existence. Thus the ontological **presuppositions** of rule-following are also the **presuppositions** of our grammar. These **presuppositions lie** in the deep structures of our forms of life.

In Chapter V, I take an excursion into the logical foundations of meaning and **understanding**. This is necessitated in view of the imperative of a **non-communitarian interpretation** of language and meaning. Here I have shown that not only rule-following but also the very concept of meaning and use of language is founded on something more **solid** and basic than what communitarianism can offer. The **communitarians** chase the concept

of meaning and rule up the wrong tree. The social practices themselves need a foundation and so cannot be the foundation of meaning **itself**. Meaning is either autonomous or nothing. The sceptic does not see the autonomy and so finds the meaning as **nothing**. This semantic despair is more or less a grammatical illusion. Meaning is embedded in the use of language and is integrally and holistically ingrained in the very structure of the language. It is in short the life of the language. The Kripkean attack on meaning can thus be rebuffed only by showing that meaning is primordial and primitive in language. Meaning is shown in the language. In this context I have argued that the so-called **anti-realist's interpretation** of meaning theory in Wittgenstein is based on an **one-sided** view. Wittgenstein has opted neither for realism nor for **anti-realism** in his **semantical** account. He opts for the totality of linguistic situation which entails a kind of holism in meaning theory.

In the Chapter VI, I have argued that **Wittgenstein's** solution to scepticism is a straight solution according to which there are logical and grammatical foundations of our rule-following and **language-use**. These foundations constitute the **ultimate** bedrock which **provides limits** to what we can think and do in language. In this connection I have examined the Cartesian and Kantian solutions as straight solutions to scepticism. Though Descartes and Kant differ from Wittgenstein in many ways they all agree that scepticism can be refuted by showing the solid bedrock underlying our language and thought. Wittgenstein has thus been inclined towards a transcendental argument without **all** the

Kantian **implications**. Whereas Kant needed a **transcendental justification** for **rule-following** and concept-use Wittgenstein opts for a pure descriptive account of **rule-following** and concept formation. However, he, like Kant, recognizes the limits of **empiricism** in the very structure of thought and language. Wittgenstein has shown that our forms of life or the common behaviour of mankind is the fountainhead of **all** the necessities involved in our **rule-following** behaviour. This may be called the grammatical alternative to Kant's transcendental argument. Wittgenstein's grammatical **foundationalism** is **diametrically** opposed to Hume's sceptical solution. Thus I have argued that it is a travesty of truth to say that Wittgenstein is a Humean in his understanding of language, meaning and **rule-following**.

Finally, I conclude that Wittgenstein can be understood better if we put off the sceptical glasses which we wear while interpreting **Wittgenstein**. Kripke's conceptual model does not satisfy the basic demands of **Wittgenstein's philosophical enquiry**. **Wittgenstein's** effort is to show how language works and works necessarily. Kripke has **topsy-turvied** the **Wittgensteinian** image of a **philosophical** grammarian. The job of the **philosophical grammarian** is not to distort or damage the fabric of our conceptual framework. He only puts the things as they are. Kripke's Wittgenstein seems to undermine the things as they are. This, in my view, must be a wrong way of looking at **Wittgenstein**.

## CHAPTER I

### WITTGENSTEIN ON LANGUAGE AND RULES

In this chapter I would investigate Wittgensteinian's concept of language as a system of **rule-governed activity**. The concept of language necessarily involves the concept of **rule**. Therefore it is imperative that the **rule-structure** underlying language gets prominence in our **investigation** into the nature and function of **language**. There are, however, two models<sup>1</sup> under which the nature of rules can be discussed, viz, (a) the calculus model and (b) the game-model. Whereas the calculus model brings the rules into the heart of the structure of language, the game-model submerges them in the ongoing and emerging patterns of **language-games**.

#### 1. *The Idea of a calculus*

The **calculus-model** is known as the logical or formal language model. In this model language is represented as a logical or formal syntax with a well defined set of **rules**. The logical syntax with a rule structure is designed to generate **all the propositions** of a language. Frege's *begriffsschrift* is the best known example of this model. It was constructed with the purpose of generating the whole of language from a finite grammatical base. Russell<sup>2</sup> and Wittgenstein<sup>3</sup> followed Frege in accepting the logical language as the most perspicuous language **available**.

Frege made a distinction between logic as a calculus and logic as a **language**. According to this view, **logic**, viewed as a calculus, is a method of inference and as such consists of a syntax with formal rules. But logic as a language has a full-fledged network of rules that can generate all the propositions that are **syntactically** permitted. In this respect, logic expresses all thoughts in a systematic linguistic structure. Language becomes a **medium of** expression of thoughts. Frege took logic as an **all-comprehensive** system of true thoughts. For him truth is the central concern of logic. So logic is bound to be a language expressing true thoughts.

Wittgenstein, however, abolishes Frege's distinction in his *Tractatus* by arguing that logic as a calculus is the **same** as logic as a language. The calculus itself is a language just as language itself has to be a calculus. A calculus is so-called because firstly, in it the rules are determinate and transparent, and secondly, every bit of language is generated from a given base. The base itself is primitive and so **unanalyzable**. The base in the *Tractatus* lies in the primitive symbols and their **concatenations** in atomic (elementary) **propositions**. Once such propositions are taken as the boundary of language, the super-structure consisting of **truth-functional** propositions and their variations in the quantified propositions is generated by truth - operational rules<sup>7</sup>. According to the *Tractatus*, the limits of language are **determined** by the structure of atomic **propositions**. Given the atomic **propositions**, the whole of language is given (TLP. 4.51, 4.52).

Now the question arises: how are rules situated in the calculus, especially the calculus in the *Tractatus*? Frege has made rules the syntactic inputs of his *begriffsschrift* and has made them the axioms, theorems and definitions in the grammar of the logical language. Logic broadly represents the rules in a transparent way. Logic, for Frege<sup>9</sup>, is the essential component of grammar, so the rules are the central features of the grammatical system. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* adheres to the Fregean programme of embedding the rules in the grammatical structure of language. For him rules are the bedrock<sup>9</sup> elements of grammar that define how elementary as well as non-elementary propositions are possible at all. Rules of logical syntax are the ones grammar is concerned with, Wittgenstein writes;

Definitions are rules for translating from one language into another. Any correct sign language must be translatable into any other in accordance with such rules: it is this that they all have in common (TLP, 3.343).

Thus syntax contains the rules in an idealized and formal domain. Yet they are applicable in language. Logical syntax in a way represents the formal structure of language which is common to all languages. Rules occupy the central place in this structure. For Wittgenstein;

What signifies in a symbol is what is common to all the symbols that the rules of logical syntax allow us to substitute for it (TLP, 3.344).

Logical syntax with the network of rules speaks not only of language but also of reality. Rules tell us how language represents reality. Waismann notes Wittgenstein's views on syntax in the following way:

Syntax hence becomes requisite where the nature of signs is not yet adjusted to the nature of things, where there are more combinations of signs than possible situations. This excessive multiplicity of language must be confined by artificial rules; and these rules are the syntax of language.

The rules of syntax assign to combinations of signs the exact multiplicity they possess in order to be pictures of **reality**.

You could say that a system of signs which is perfectly suited to **its** purpose renders syntax superfluous. And **conversely** - syntax renders such a system of signs superfluous. Each of **them** deputizes for the other.<sup>10</sup>

This passage clearly shows that syntax is assigned the task of bringing out the **identity** of logical multiplicity of language and reality. In the logical syntax we have the rules of the calculus from which we can derive the **propositions**, both the simple and complex ones. Besides, the logical syntax tells us about the logical structure of the world. It is because the calculus along with its syntax and rules needs application in the world. This application is the hallmark of the logical calculus.<sup>11</sup>

Wittgenstein tells **Waismann** in a **conversation**:

You apply a calculus in such a way that it yields the **grammar** of a language. In grammar, then, the words '**sense**' and '**non-sense**' correspond to what a rule permits and prohibits. As an example we may take **Euclidean geometry** understood as the system of syntactical rules according to which we describe spatial objects.<sup>12</sup>

Thus the calculus presents a grammar of rules that are to be followed in applying the syntax to **reality**. Thus **Wittgenstein's** early philosophy of rules and **rule-following** is bound up with the notion of calculus as a rigid body of syntactical **formulations**.

There are two theses in this **calculational** theory of rules, viz., (i) rules determine the calculus, i.e., the calculus -like structure of the logical **grammar**; (ii) the rules and their



applications constitute a single whole. The *Tractatus*, therefore, offers the thesis that logical grammar is a transparent system of rules, and that how the rules are to be followed is a matter already internally built into the system<sup>13</sup>. Wittgenstein writes :

The rules of logical syntax *must go without saying*, once we know how each individual sign signifies (*italics mine*) (TLP 3.334).

Thus, according to Wittgenstein, the *calculus-model* establishes (i) the autonomy<sup>14</sup> of language and its rules and (ii) the internal (i.e. *pictorial*) relationship between language and reality which is essential for rule-application in the world.

## 2. *The Calculus and Its Application*

In the *calculus-model* language is something already given as a part of human organism (TLP 4.0002) and is endowed with a logical structure or form entirely underivable from anything more ultimate. Language speaks for itself (NB P. 43). The logical form of language is mirrored or expressed in its syntax. Thus neither logical form nor the grammatical rules can be constituted by *metalogical* rules as there is no such a *meta-language*. Rules, like logical form, are reflected in the syntax itself.

The rules of grammar which define logical form are *a priori* rules and they determine what language can express, i.e. what can be said and can not be said. 'What can be said' represents 'all kinds of propositions that picture *reality*' and 'what can't be said' represents the matters that cannot be expressed, but can be shown. The logical form is itself shown in the logical notation describing the world. Thus logical form and the rules of grammar

cannot be justified by appeal to any fact since all facts are intelligible because of them (TLP, 4.12).

The internal relationship between language and reality which is completely logical reinforces the autonomy of rules. Language and reality share the common logical form because of which alone language is a logical picture of reality. Wittgenstein writes:

What a picture must have in common with reality, in order to be able to depict it - correctly or incorrectly - in the way it does, is its pictorial form (TLP, 2.17).

More explicitly he writes:

What any picture, of whatever form, must have in common with reality, in order to be able to depict it - correctly or incorrectly in any way at all, is logical form, i.e. the form of reality (TLP 2.18).

Moreover:

Propositions can represent the whole of reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it - logical form.

In order to be able to represent logical form, we should have to be able to station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic, that is to say outside the world. (TLF 4.12).

In the above passages it has been shown that the logical form of language is co-lateral with the form of reality. The fact that the logical form of language agrees with the form of reality is itself indicative of the fact that rules constitute the mode of a proposition's agreement with reality. The sense of propositions which consists in their being logical pictures of possible situations is internal to the propositions and thus can be demonstrated within the calculus of language itself. The sense of a proposition is not an extra-linguistic entity. It is within

the proposition and is expressed in the way the proposition pictures a fact. The possible situations which constitute reality are themselves possible moves in the calculus since they have the same logical multiplicity as the latter. *Tractatus* 4.04 clearly expresses this as follows;

In a proposition there must be exactly as many distinguishable parts as in the situation that it represents. The two must possess the same logical (mathematical) multiplicity.

Wittgenstein thus holds the view that it is grammar which determines what is called possible and what is not, and rules as such are constitutive of the moves in language as well as in reality. Wittgenstein writes: "The connection between language and reality is made by definitions of words, and these belong to grammar, so that language remains self-contained and autonomous (PG sec.55).

Thus the calculus-model presents the grammar of rules as a self-contained system. Language is presented as a network of rules and their applications.

### **3. Rules and Logical form**

According to Wittgenstein, the logical form which is common to language and reality shows itself in language, and nothing can be said about it in language i.e it cannot be put into propositions. Wittgenstein writes;

Propositions cannot represent logical form; it is mirrored in them. What finds its reflection in language, language cannot represent. What expresses itself in language, we cannot express by means of language. Propositions show the logical form of reality. They display it (TLP 4.121).

The logical form consists in the rules as the conditions of the possibility of language. Rules are, therefore, formal in character and are like the logical form shown in the structure of language.

We cannot represent logical form because, in order to represent it, "we should have to **able** to station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic, that is to say - outside the **world**" (TLP, 4.12). This is, however, not possible because we cannot go **beyond** the limits of our language and cannot, therefore, represent the logical conditions of all **representations**. Wittgenstein does not admit a **meta-language** in the way Russell<sup>15</sup> does, since such a language cannot express the logical form of the first order language without manifesting its own logical form. According to **Wittgenstein**, we cannot conceive of a higher-order language having a different logical form or rule, and even if we can conceive of it, it will not be a

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language by definition. Language is **self-revealing** in the sense that it shows its logical form in its **propositions**. Thereby it also shows the form of reality which it represents. This can be **conspicuously** noticed in the **sign-language** which adequately presents the syntax of our language, for, "**once** we have a sign language in which everything is all right, we already have a correct logical point of view • (TLP, 4.1213). The **sign-language** that is governed by logical grammar or logical syntax manifests the logical form of the world i.e. the formal properties of the states of affairs **represented**. The formal properties cannot be asserted by **propositions**, but make themselves manifest in the propositions that represent states of affairs (TLP 4.122). For

Wittgenstein formal properties are **formal** concepts which constitute the essential features of the propositions for which the variables stand. For example, the proposition '**Fa**' shows that the object '**a**' occurs in its sense i.e. "**a** is F ". Thus logical form, like formal properties, is shown in the way propositions reach onto reality. Wittgenstein has thus elevated logic to the status of a logical language, that is, a language that expresses its logical form in a perspicuous notation. The perspicuous notation is the hallmark of **philosophical** logic. It expresses the properties of language and the **world**. Wittgenstein writes:

In order that you should have a language which can express or say anything that can be said, this language must have certain properties; and when this is the case, that it has them can no longer be said in that language or any language... Thus a language which can express everything mirrors certain properties of the world by these properties which it must have; and logical so-called propositions shew in a *systematic* way those **properties**.<sup>1</sup> (*italics original*).

Thus logical language is a universal language that expresses all propositions including its own. Why is it universal then? It is so because it does not exclude anything to be expressed by another language. The so-called **meta-language** is impossible, since it would be outside logic and grammar. As Wittgenstein puts it, "It is impossible to say what these properties are, because in order to do so, you would need a language which had not got the properties in question, and it is impossible that this should be a *proper* language. Impossible to construct [an] **illogical** language!<sup>1</sup> 18

Logical properties thus make what language is and so cannot

be situated outside language. That is, there cannot be a medium of expression other than language itself. Hence language is a universal medium.<sup>19</sup>

#### 4. *The Universal Medium*

Logical syntax, as Wittgenstein conceives it, reveals the logical order which is internal to our thought and language. It is a grammar of logical form and rules. In this syntax the distinction between the descriptive and the normative structure of language is abolished. What is descriptive is bounded by the normative and vice versa. Hence the rules are part of the descriptive structure of language. Rules are the instruments (norms) of **descriptions**. In this sense, the logical language is the universal medium i.e. the great mirror (TLP, 5.511). Wittgenstein puts this as follows;

How can logic - all embracing logic, which mirrors the world - use such peculiar crotchets and contrivances ? Only because they are **all** connected with one another in an infinitely fine network, the great mirror (TLP, 5.511).

Wittgenstein has discovered this logical order in the rule-structure of the language. It is the underlying logical order **comprising the rules** that constitute the logical syntax. An illogical language, like illogical thought, is **inconceivable**. Language in order to be conceivable at all must be logical, for as Wittgenstein puts it, • it is impossible to represent in language anything that 'contradicts logic' (TLP 3.032). Since logic runs through all our thought and expressions about the world, the essence of thought and language must be expressed by **logic**. Logic being the universal language itself comprises all

that is logically essential in language. Language as an empirical reality, of course, is left out of logical consideration. But in *its* logical essence, language is out and out logical. Hence the importance of the image of the great mirror in the *Tractatus* that shows that language in its logical essence must contain the universal core of all languages. Rules belong to this logical or grammatical core. It is, therefore, imperative that rules are **syntactically** available in the logical grammar. Rules are not be **characterized** in any other way than as syntactic. <sup>20</sup>

## 5. *Rules are not in the Mind*

Could it be argued that the rules in the *Tractatus* are situated in the mind and not in the structure of language, i.e. the grammar? This is how Diane F. **Gottlieb** has argued. According to her, "rules for the translation of the **propositional** signs of the sentences of everyday life into elementary propositions will play a role in the mental processes of meaning and understanding. When I understand, the rules must be available to me, albeit dimly, in order to regulate the translation procedure". <sup>21</sup> This presupposes that rules are available in a mental medium and not in the linguistic medium, according to the *Tractatus*. "The nature of rules in the *Tractatus* has thus been made **psychological** in this interpretation." <sup>23</sup> This presents the *Tractatus* as a treatise on thought rather than on language.

According to the *Tractatus*, however, rules are syntactic

rather than **intentional**.<sup>24</sup> They are transparent in the linguistic **medium** that expresses how combinations of syntactic elements are possible. The so-called thoughts that are expressed in language are already having a linguistic structure. Therefore, thought is not taken as a **psychological** process. Thought has a logical structure. "Thought can never be of anything **illogical**, since, if it were, we should have to think **illogically**" (TLP 3.03). **Besides** a logical picture of facts is a **thought**" (TLP,3). This supports the claim that thought which is logically relevant has nothing **psychological** about it. Wittgenstein puts it very explicitly in the *Notebooks*:

Does not my study of sign language correspond to the study of the processes of thought, which philosophers have always taken as so essential for philosophy of logic? - Only they always got involved in inessential **psychological investigations**, and there is an analogous danger with my method too (p. 28).

But this anticipated danger becomes less serious in view of the declared aim that logic has nothing to do with psychology. Especially the syntactic rules have a clearly definable status that is grammatical rather than mental or intentional. This itself **vouchsafes** for the fact that the syntactic rules themselves enjoy some conceptual autonomy. The following passage from the *Notebooks* is a pointer to this:

Logic must take care of itself. If syntactic rules for functions can be set up at **all**, then the whole theory of things, properties etc., is superfluous. . . . Once more: logic must take care of itself (**p.2**).

The rules that are revealed in the grammar are nothing but the conceptual patterns which are the forms or ways of representing reality. They are the logical forms which show the



possible ways of pictorial representation of reality. The logical form is very **much** a logical mode of judging or thinking in language. Thought, **therefore**, is the expression of logical form in a logical notation. According to **Wittgenstein**, logical grammar is the visual **representation** of logical form. Thought is logically comprehended in the structure of logical grammar so far as thought and language share the same logical **form**. Thus rules have a **locus** in logical grammar.

**Wittgenstein's** primary intention to indentify language and thought and also rule and logical form lies in his anti-psychologistic conception of thought. For him, thought is not a **psychological** process nor the ideas which occur in our mind. It is that which is **determinately** expressed in language. He rejects the mental processes as irrelevant to the **consideration** of logical form because the latter can be read off alone from the linguistic expression. As Wittgenstein contends later, "When I think in language there aren't '**meaning**' going through my mind in addition to the verbal expressions: the language is itself the vehicle of **thought**" (PI, Sect. 329). And further he says;

The **psychological** processes which are found by experience to accompany sentences are of no interest to us. What does interest us is the **understanding** that is embodied in the explanation of the sense of the sentence (PG.P. 45).

According to **Wittgenstein**, logic that deals with logical form must be essentially a logical syntax. Syntax is least concerned with the activity of thinking. Thinking is a **psychological** process. So the **mental-mechanisms** simply drop out from the logical syntax. Wittgenstein does not deny the existence of the

mental processes which are supposed to **accompany** the uses of **language**; he seems to maintain that they are superfluous in that they do not logically i.e. **grammatically** constitute a language use. He opposes those who admit some third **element** such as mental image or process in addition to language and **its** representation of facts. **Wittgenstein's** main contention is that thought, **sense**, logical form and concepts of that sort are to be known from the language which contains them.

With **this**, it can be said that logical form which is displayed in propositions depicting facts acts like a grammatical rule. Grammatical **representations** are possible **only** because the grammatical rules are there. The rules that act as grammatical forms function within language. Language as a **representational** medium is in need of a determinate structure of rules. These rules are present in the **projective** structure of the linguistic medium.<sup>25</sup> They constitute what is called the grammatical system. Robert Arrington puts this in the following way;

Thus the agreement of thought and reality consists in the fact that the expression of thought is part of a grammatical **system** which cannot fail to **represent reality**. The harmony between thought and reality is the harmony between language and reality. This harmony is **logically** necessary rather than contingent and accidental. It is **inconceivable** that language as a whole should fail to represent the nature of **things**.<sup>26</sup>

Language is a system for **Wittgenstein**. A linguistic **system** is after all a grammatical device for explaining and reorganising phenomena and thus it involves a wider conceptual structure for that purpose. A set of rules comprising this conceptual network function within this net-work as '**representational** forms'. The rules constitute the methods of **representation** (**PI**, sect- 50).

The rules which act like concepts have therefore, their use within **language**. We do not disagree over whether or not we have the same rules of thinking and using language because they provide the very presupposed grounds of our language and thought. Logical rules in this sense **lie** entrenched in the very framework on which **all** our linguistic activities are based.

#### 6. **Rules** and Language-Games

The Game-model enlarges the scope of the calculus and the **rule-structure** by assimilating the idea of calculus into that of a **language-game** with a set of rules.<sup>27</sup> A **language-game** is a language use and a determinate form of activity bounded by rules (PI, Sect. 23). According to Wittgenstein a **language-game** is so-called because of the set of rules which are underlying it. In his *Philosophical Grammar* Wittgenstein endorses the view that "language resembles a game (*Spiel*) as both have employment of rules and thus are **rule-governed**" (PG, Sec. 26). Wittgenstein writes:

We are interested in language as a procedure according to explicit rules, because **philosophical** problems are **misunderstandings** which must be removed by **clarification** of the rules according to which we are inclined to use words (PG, Sect. 32).

The game-model brings out the importance of the conception of a rule. **However**, it does not presuppose that rules are formally laid down and made explicit. They can in fact remain implicit in all possible uses of language. Rules are implicit grammatical principles which make a language-use possible. So it is not imperative that wherever rules are present, they are

necessarily formalized. It may also be the case that we make up rules when we go along using language. For example, when we say "Bring the crimson-red", we form a new rule for 'crimson-red'. Our colour-language gets a new word and therefore, a new rule. Of course, it is not unconnected with the rules of colour-words like 'red' etc. What Wittgenstein suggests is that rules are laid down in the use of language and not in an extra-linguistic realm. Wittgenstein writes:

We can easily imagine people amusing themselves in a field by playing with a ball so as to start various existing games, but playing many without finishing them and in between throwing the ball aimlessly into the air, chasing one another with the ball and bombarding one another for a joke and so on. And now someone says: The whole time they are playing a ball-game and following definite rules at every throw. And is there not also the case where we play and make up the rules as we go along? And there is even one where we alter them-as we go along (PI, Sect. 83).

Rules thus unfold themselves as we use language. According to Wittgenstein, the perspicuous representation of language is possible and that always is a representation of the multifarious uses of language. The implication is that rules are not completely formalized as in a calculus nor need they be so completely laid down in every case of language-use. Wittgenstein contends that "there are words of which one might say; they are used in a thousand different ways which gradually merge into one another. No wonder that we can't tabulate strict rules for their use" (BB, P.28). This shows that our language-use is not guided by rules in a strict sense. However, by this Wittgenstein does not mean that use of language is completely without rules and to that extent is free floating. What Wittgenstein requires of rules is that they can have loose ends and a certain amount of

flexibility about their formulation but nevertheless they *must* be there. We use language in different ways for various purposes in varying situations. In this sense there must be rules to the extent the uses of language are possible. Wittgenstein, therefore, does not abolish the rules and thus does not abolish grammar (PI Sect. 108, 292). He only brings the rules back into the language use itself.

Wittgenstein's approach to the concept of rule is not Platonic. For there is no common essence in it and "requiring a rule-generality is just making an ass of yourself" (WL. p. 155). Wittgenstein maintains that the concept of rule can be construed in the manner the concept of 'game' or 'language' is construed (RFM, VI, 32). This is to say in case of many words of the natural language such as 'language', 'game', 'religion', 'rule', etc. to attempt at an analytic definition of them will be not possible. Because to specify any common essential property is impossible in those class-denoting words. But from this we must not infer that the terms are arbitrarily used without admitting any general meaning. These class-denoting words are 'family-resemblance' concepts, according to Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein's notion of 'family resemblance' states that a word or term may not have unitary meaning nor the things it denotes must have some common essence. Thus the concept of rule may not have strictly a unitary meaning nor does all the rules (linguistic and non-linguistic) must share some common essence. There might be, as is the case, a large number of features which characterize the rules.

According to this **non-essentialistic** point of view all linguistic rules are exhibited through various **illustrations without** bearing any precise definition. Wittgenstein explains rules through various **illustrations** like "a scheme of **arrows**" (BB, p. 90, PI, sect. 86, FG p.93) "a chart correlating words and **pictures**" (PI sect. 48) "a sign post" (PI sects 85, 198) "a rule-**line**" (PI sects. 222-37) which represent all linguistic rules. Further more, Wittgenstein says:

We are not saying 'what a rule is' but just giving applications of the word "**rule**": we certainly do this by giving applications of the words "**expression of a rule**" (BB, p. 98).

Wittgenstein rejects the realistic **characterization** of rules. He rejects Frege's type of grammatical forms which exist **eternally** and immutably (RFM, I, 155). All linguistic rules which include rules of logic and mathematics are the rules which are involved in our linguistic activities. Rules by virtue of this language-boundedness do not correspond to any eternal truths which can be discovered through the process of reasoning. A rule is alive when it is followed; a sign gets its life in use. Thus abstraction of linguistic rules from their applications (i.e. expressions) results in metaphysical puzzlements because, rules and their applications are **conceptually bound** (BB, p. 98) so that "a rule, so far as it interests us does not act at distance" according to Wittgenstein (BB, p. 14).

## **7. Rules as Bedrock Principles**

The persistent question which Wittgenstein raises in this connection is whether we could go without rules. That is, could

it be the case that we do manage to play **language-games** but without either an explicit or implicit set of rules? This demand for a grammar of language is **philosophically** imperative in view of the availability of the logical calculus conception of language. The game-model does not avoid this question. It squarely meets the problem. For **Wittgenstein**, rules are the standards or paradigms; they are the instruments of teaching and practice of language (PI, Sect. 54). To be without rules is to be without any fixed guidance except by a fortuitous Deity (PI Sect. 234). Rules are, therefore, part of the framework on which the working of our language is based. Rules, in this sense, are involved in our language-use and in our descriptions of reality. Rules come into being in the way we go on in the use of language. The **rule-structure** is **built** into the language we use and the forms of life we have (PI, Sect. 241). Thus Wittgenstein does not give the impression that the **language-games** are without rules or norms. A **normless** or ruleless language is an impossible language.

The game-model brings out the organic relationship among the different **language-games** and this relationship is based on the notion of 'family resemblance.' Language-games constitute a system just as the propositions in a calculus do. This holistic conception is underlying **Wittgenstein's** description of language as an 'ancient city' (PI Sect. 18) or as a multiplicity or **motley** of language use (PI sect. 23). Language functions as a system wherein all linguistic expressions operate like moves within the organic whole. The organic whole called language is

like a calculus<sup>20</sup> with rules, explicit or implicit; it is characterized by linguistic activities (PI, sect.140) and is therefore, called a form of life (PI sects. 19, 23). Each **language-game** is a form of life and is governed by rules, however implicit and **imprecise**. And, rules, to that extent, are laid down in the language-use and are part of the structure of language; they are the bedrock principles of language use.

Now the question arises, are the bedrock principles the constitutive rules of language use in the way the synthetic *a priori* principles are the **constitutive** conditions of knowledge in Kant's system?<sup>29</sup> The comparison of **Wittgenstein's** rules with Kant's categorial principles is appropriate for the reason that **Wittgenstein**, like Kant, is trying to show how language-use is not possible without a set of undefined rules that underlie it. What **Wittgenstein**, unlike Kant, demands is that rules need not be fully articulated in a calculus. Wittgenstein writes:

Disputes do not break out over the question whether a rule has been obeyed or not. People do **not** come to blows over it, for **example**. That is part of the *framework* on which the working of our *language* is based (for *example* in giving description) (PI, Sect. 240), (*Italics mine*).

The immediate consequence of this **view** is that rules do constitute the basic conditions of how a mathematical calculation or description of physical phenomenon is carried on. To make a linguistic move in a **language-game** is to follow a rule. The move is permitted by the rules. So the rules are not only norms but also constitutive norms. Wittgenstein does away with the distinction between the constitutive rules and the regulative rules emphasised by Searle<sup>30</sup> and by also many others.<sup>31</sup> This



distinction is based on the idea that rules may either make a linguistic move or only regulate it. But this issue has no special relevance for **Wittgenstein**. He believes that rules are laws (**RFM**, III, 21) and also they are the laws that constitute a language-game. In the case of linguistic rules, **thus**, the rules and norms collapse into each other and so both are constitutive of the linguistic moves,

### **8. Rules, Representations and Reality**

Rules are not only constitutive of language but also of the language-reality relationships. That is to say, they tell us how language reaches out to reality and how language is capable of conveying truths and falsehoods about reality. Thus reflection on rules leads Wittgenstein to the problem of the relation between language and reality.

For the early **Wittgenstein**, language is a logical picture or a logical model of reality; language represents the reality. In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein has defined the reality in a way which includes the totality of existing atomic facts and also atomic facts which do not exist (**TLP**, 3.06). The picture theory states that language and the world have a common logical form, and that language displays the logical form of reality in its own form (**TLP**, 2.18). As we have already seen, the logical form is manifested in the way we make pictures of the world. The picture-making is a rule-governed activity and this is defined by the underlying set of rules. Logical form is, therefore, a rule-defining concept. And the application of rule is to make a proposition that fits a state-of-affairs. Thus language-world

relationship is logically **mappable** according to the *Tractatus*.

In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein admits that a proposition can represent a **state-of-affairs** by virtue of its pictorial form. The pictorial form of a picture is the possibility of its structure - the possibility that objects are arranged in the way the names are arranged in a determinate way in a proposition. Hence the pictures themselves show that application of logical rules results in the possibility of the **representations** of reality. Rules are the ways in which reality is mirrored in our linguistic medium. The method of projecting the state-of-affairs in the linguistic medium is to think out the sense of proposition (TLP, 3.11), which involves grasping the meanings of the names and grasping the possibility that the objects named are arranged as are the names themselves. This is how pictorial **representation** takes place according to fixed rules of picture-making. Rules themselves are the **representational** or projective methods of **language-use**.

A proposition is a paradigm logical picture in so far as it is constituted according to rules and it then logically **fits** the world. **Propositions** are the living pictures of the world. It is only by being pictures of the world that propositions acquire their sense, and so the rule must underlie the sense of **propositions**. By the '**sense** of the proposition'<sup>32</sup> Wittgenstein often means the situation which the proposition describes (TLP 2.221). But it is the logical possibility of the situation that matters for defining sense. Sense is **logically** a projection of a possible situation. Thus the propositions which have determinate

sense must represent a determinate situation. Thinking of the sense of such proposition in this way involves two aspects; (i) meaning or intending each name of the **propositional** sign to denote one **specific** object and no other (that is correlating the name with the object) and (ii) meaning that those objects are arranged in such a manner that the **state-of-affairs** has such and such a **structure**. So when we use an elementary **propositional** sign and mean by it that certain definite objects are arranged in a certain definite way we are thereby thinking the sense of the proposition and using the **propositional** sign to express the **proposition**. It is in this way that it is a logical picture of one state of **affairs** and no **other**.

For **Wittgenstein**, propositions express a thought or sense by virtue of being logically articulated as a logical picture of reality. Thus thoughts are expressed in the use of symbols with **rules**. The function of thought is to represent facts, "A thought is a proposition with sense" (TLP 3,142), The proposition, i.e, thought is expressed in the **projective** relation with the world of facts (TLP. 3,12). Thought as a proposition is an objective fact and has an articulated structure (TLP 3.141). **Wittgenstein**, like Frege, has a **non-psychologistic** view of thought. He excludes imagination and other subjective mental activities from **thought**. For **Wittgenstein**, however, thought is not a Platonic entity to be found independent of its expression in **language**. Thought is that which is expressed through symbols. Hence thought cannot be independent of its expression. **Wittgenstein**, thus, develops a **non-realistic** view of thought

according to which thoughts are objective without being the Fregean kind of eternal existences.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, he does not commit himself to a thought - reality dualism in which a causal relation can be established in describing the relationship between thought and **reality**. The reason is that logical form that constitutes the **language-reality** relation 'does not act at a distance'.

Wittgenstein's concern with sense, rules and **representations** reappears in his later writings. Now the focus is on the rules rather than on logical form. Rules are the essence of a proposition and they are manifested in the use of language. A **language-game** is the use that sustains the rules, these being the constitutive grounds of **language-use**. Conceived in this way, rules become the methods of **representation** (PI sect. 54). The rules are transformed into norms or paradigms and so representationality is built into them from their very inception. Rules **are** applied in the world. The result is propositions with senses. The **language-game** is the logical home of the **propositions**. This is the exterior structure that makes a **language-game** what it is. Rules constitute the inner dynamics of the language game. In this sense we can say that there is continuity between logical form and the rules in so far as the latter define the possibility of language.

## **9. *Language-games, Rules and Form of life:***

Language-games are systems, or forms of linguistic activity. A form of linguistic activity represents a form of human communication.<sup>34</sup> Wittgenstein calls these forms of human.

communication the 'language-games'. The basic idea involved in the concept of a language-game is that it represents a 'form of life'. He aptly says:

I shall call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the 'language game' (PI sect. 7).

Here the term "language-game" is to mean to bring into prominence the fact that speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life (PI, sect. 23).

These remarks suggest that language is basically a form of activity that is intimately related to our form of life. Or, to be more elaborate, language represents a form of life that comprehends the totality of our concepts, rules and representations. Thus language use is not merely a form of activity but also a pattern of grammatical structure with rules, paradigms and projections. Rules that are underlying a language-game represent both semantical and non-semantical conditions. Language-games, to that extent, are semantically rich systems of representations.<sup>35</sup> Language-games provide the methods of representations (PI, Sect. 50).

A form of language, primitive or developed, represents a form of behaviour of people eg. builders life or the life of the tribes in a jungle. As a form of life it takes into account what people actually do, and also what they are capable of doing. According to Wittgenstein, we can imagine a language consisting only of orders and reports of battle or a language only of questions and expressions for answering yes and no. Each language-game represents essentially an order of activity or behaviour and also certain rules or norms which make that

activity possible. Thus a form of life is rich in details of normativity and the possibility of conceptual extension. That is why, a form of life is identified with a **language-game**. It is a **language-impregnated** form of life.

Language is said to be pluralistic just as life is. That is, language is a motley of **language-games** consisting of **multidimensional** forms and these forms represent different kinds of use of what we call 'symbols' 'words' 'sentences', etc. Language, for **Wittgenstein**, is a growing organic phenomenon - an organism consisting of old and new forms added to it from time to time. Wittgenstein expresses this as follows:

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 Sect. 18).

It is suggested that there is a continuous evolution of our language and so new **language-games** come into existence and others become obsolete and forgotten. This is quite evident in the **symbolism** of mathematics and natural sciences and these are the **subburbs** of our language according to Wittgenstein (PI Sect. 18).

Language is **basically**, thus conceived, a social and human phenomenon.<sup>uu</sup> It is concerned with the life and activity of people, and thus is natural to the human species like any other activity of walking, eating, drinking **etc.** The life of people is the ultimate ground which gives language its unity and **significance**. Life is the ultimate ground of the linguistic activities or **language-games**. Language-games do not, however,

appear as the 'essences of **language**'. They are the actual practices in which there is no hidden essence; everything is before us like our forms of life. We cannot give any foundation to language and the associated forms of life since they constitute the foundation of everything else. It is in this sense that we can say "to imagine a language is to imagine a form of life • (PI Sect. 19) .

Wittgenstein's intention in introducing the paradigmatic concept of "**language-game**" and "**form of life**" is without any relativistic consequences. It does not entail making language relative to a social group or community of speakers. Language is not a relative phenomenon since everything that we do and think is relative to language. The argument that Wittgenstein has made language **culture-specific** <sup>50</sup> in the Whorfian manner is without foundation. Our forms of life are not relative to a finite linguistic **community**. These forms of life constitute the community of speakers. The network of **all** our forms of life is also a network of social and communal **relationships**. And the social reality of this network shows itself in the fact that our forms of life i.e. our common ways of acting determine the conceptual scheme. The **understanding** or acquisition of language itself follows the path of custom and habits, and also of rules and regulations. This regularity of our language **permeates** our lives. This is connected with the fact that the totality of rules and practices pervade our lives. From it we get our '**world-picture**' which is embedded in **our** language as the method of representation. A language game contains a '**world-picture**'

which is 'the inherited back-ground' against which we distinguish between what is true and false (OC, Sect. 94). Since this inherited background does not change, our uses of language and hence forms of life do not change so easily. There is a regularity or stability in our form of life. Nonetheless, to enquire after the ground and **justification** of a form of life is to direct a question at a void; it is to ask a senseless question. Wittgenstein aptly tells;

You must bear in mind that the language game is so to say something **unpredictable**. I mean; it is not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or **unreasonable**). It is there - like our life • (OC, sect. 559).

For **Wittgenstein**, it is a fact of experience ~~tht~~<sup>3</sup> human beings alter their concepts and exchange them for others when they learn new facts. It is facts which often **lead** to new concepts. But there is a limit to such conceptual shift, since we cannot go beyond the forms of life which we have. There is a stubborn fact **necessitating** our forms of life. It is a necessary fact - a transcendental fact<sup>39</sup> that underlies our agreed forms of life. If there were no agreement in action, there would also be no common concepts, no rules and therefore, no language use at all. As a matter of fact, since there are common agreements in our actions i.e. forms of life, we have rules, and we use language under such rules i.e. by following them.

#### 10. *Agreement, **Rules** and Practices*

Wittgenstein consistently rejects a subjective **understanding** of language since in that case there are no criteria to dictate our use of language. At the same time he emphasises the



view that • "if **humans** were not in general agreed about the colours of things, if undetermined cases were not exceptional, then our concept of colour could not exist". No - our concepts would not exist" (2, sect. 351). And also in the case of **understanding** "in order to make a mistake, a man must already judge in conformity with **mankind**" (OC, sect. 156). These remarks suggest that 'people's common modes of acting' are the '**ultimate** conditions that justify our uses of language.

A problem now arises; Does this mean that it is not possible to enquire after **justification** (s)? Couldn't one 'dig down the ground' further? Those who are interested in the construction of **meta-theses** or theories would claim that **justification** can be possible in every case. However Wittgenstein has rejected **all** kinds of **justification** and **meta-theories** in his philosophy. In the *Investigations* he says:

Our mistake is to look for an explanation where we ought to look at what happens as a "**proto-phenomenon**". That is, where we ought to have said; *this language-game is played*. The question is not one of explaining a **language-game** by means of our experience, but of noting a **language-game**... Look on the **language-game** as the *primary* thing. And look on the feelings, etc. as you look on a way of regarding the **language-game**, as **interpretation** (PI, sects. 654-6), (*italics original*).

Wittgenstein suggests that 'agreement in forms of life' is sufficient to justify our common **understanding** of language and the acceptance of rules that define it. On this foundation **lie** our judgements of truth or falsity. Our agreement in judgements and beliefs presupposes a common ground of actions which can not itself be justified. That is, it is impossible 'to dig down the ground' that is our 'common way of living', 'the court of final

appeal'<sup>40</sup> This is to say "I mean; this is simply what we do. This is use and custom among us, or a fact of natural **history**" (RFM, I, 63).

Our language thus embodies rules i.e. conceptual **forms** which make their appearance in all forms of **language-use**. To use language is to think in terms of rules. Our language, in this **sense, is** rule-bound. Our linguistic forms embodied in language-games make use of diverse conceptual patterns constituting our forms of **representation**. Each **linguistic representation** is an activity through rules. Thus all **representations** in language are bound up with rules. Besides, there is the underlying necessity to make these rules socially available. The need of agreement in forms of life is a unique need to be fulfilled only by assuming that we are all **linguistically** together in a close circle of speaking habits and practices. These practices do make a rigid boundary of language-use which provides coherence to our linguistic activities. In this sense there is a reciprocity between the rules **and** practices and the conditions of agreement. Agreement and rules are perfect logical cousins (PI, sect. 224).

## 11. *The Frame of Reference*

Both the calculus and game-model of **rule-analysis** arrives at the following conclusions.

(1) Language is constituted through the rules so that rules define what is possible and **permitted** in language. And thus language is basically a **rule-governed** activity presenting a form of life.

(ii) The rules are laid down in the language use and are part of the structure of language. They are internal to our language-games.

(iii) The **rule-following** is a public activity since it is learnable in social situations and therefore, is publicly detectable.

These features constitute the broad framework of language and rules in both the calculus and game-model analysis. The framework so constituted is the basic frame of reference in which the notion of **rule-following** can be considered.

## NOTES

1. See S. Hilmy, *The Later Wittgenstein: The Emergence of a New Philosophical Method* (Blackwell, 1987) Chapt. 4, PP. 98-137. In this regard the model of language presented in the *Notebooks* and the *Tractatus* can be characterized as the **calculus-model** as distinguished from the model presented in the *Blue* and *Brown Books*, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* and *Philosophical Investigations*. The latter can be called the game-model. It is, however, not that both have not **simultaneously** existed as in the *Philosophical Remarks* and *Philosophical Grammar*. It is a unique feature of both models that that concept of rule finds a prominent place in them.
2. G. Frege, *Begriffsschrift eine der arithmetischen nachgebildete Formelsprache des reinen Denkens*, Halle, 1879. trans. in *Conceptual Notion and Related Articles* trans. and ed. T.W. Bynum, (Oxford, 1972).
3. B. Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics* (Cambridge University Press, 1903 and 2nd Edn., Allen & Unwin, 1937).
4. See, TLP, 3.325.
5. See Jean Van Heijenoort, "Logic as Language and Logic as Calculus", *Synthese*, 17(1967), PP. 324-330.
6. *Ibid.*
7. The truth-operational method in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is the basic device through which all propositions including the general or quantified propositions can be generated.

Wittgenstein has no independent treatment of quantifiers except the truth-operational one. The truth-operational method consists in **truth-operational** rules. (See TLP, 5, 5.01, 5.21, 5.233, 5.234, 5.526, & 5.5261).

8. See Frege, "Logic" in *Posthumous Writings*, eds. H. Hermes, F. Kambartel, and F. Kaulbach, trans. by P. Long & R. White (Blackwell, Oxford, 1979), PP. 126-151.
9. See Diane F. Gottlieb, "Wittgenstein's Critique of the *Tractatus* view of Rules" *Synthese*, 56 (1983), PP. 239-251. Gottlieb, however, believes that Wittgenstein has repudiated the *Tractatus* view in his later philosophy. I shall argue that the later Wittgenstein has not rejected it at all.
10. See F. Waismann, *Wittgenstein and The Vienna Circle*, trans. by J. Schulte and B. McGuinness, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1979), PP. 240.
11. *Ibid.*, PP. 126-27. See also Wittgenstein, "Some Remarks on \* Logical Form" in *Essays on Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, eds. I.M. Copi and R.W. Beard (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1966), PP. 31-37.
12. *Ibid.*, P. 126.
13. See, R.C. Pradhan, "A Note on Wittgenstein's Philosophical Grammar," *The Journal of the Indian Academy of Philosophy* Vol. XXVIII (1989), PP. 32-47.
14. *Ibid.*

15. See Russell, "Introduction" to the *Tractatus Logico - Philosophicus* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1961), P. xxii.
16. See M. Black, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1964), P. 189.
17. Wittgenstein, "Notes Dictated to G.E. Moore in Norway, April 1914" in *Notebooks 1914-1916*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1961), P. 108.
18. *Ibid.*
19. See Merrill B. and Jaakko Hintikka, *Investigating Wittgenstein* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1986), Chapt. I.
20. Hintikka and Hintikka are right in saying that syntax is predominant in the description of language in the *Tractatus* since the rules are **syntactically** formulated. The semantic rules are ineffable, according to them. See Hintikka and Hintikka, *Investigating Wittgenstein*, Chapt. I.
21. See Gottlieb, p. 241.
22. *Ibid*, pp. 246-249.
23. *Ibid.*
24. See for a contrasting view J.N. Findlay, *Wittgenstein: A Critique* (RKP, London, 1984), Chapt. IV.
25. See Robert L. Arrington, "Representation in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and Middle Writings", *Synthese*, 56(1983), pp. 181-198.
26. *Ibid*, p. 198.

27. See R. C. Pradhan, "A Note on Wittgenstein's Philosophical Grammar", pp. 32-47.
28. *Ibid.*
29. The notion of principle (rule) plays a significant role in Kant's transcendental framework. Rules, according to him, are constitutive of human knowledge, and so are themselves synthetic and *a priori*. See I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* trans. by N. Kemp Smith (Macmillan, St. Martin's Press, 1929), A. 147, p. 188.
30. See John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay on Philosophy of Language*, (The University Press, Cambridge, 1970), pp. 33-42.
31. See R. Prasad, "Regularity, Normativity and Rules of language", *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research*, Vol. 1 (1983), pp. 39-61.
32. See G. Pitcher, *The Philosophy of Wittgenstein* (Prentice-Hall of Indian Private Limited, New Delhi, 1972), Part. I, pp. 44-47.
33. See Frege, "The Thought: A Logical Inquiry" in *Philosophical Logic*, Ed. P.P. Strawson, (Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 17-28.
34. See H.F.M. Hunter, "Forms of life" in *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations* in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Critical Assessments* ed. Stuart Shanker, Vol. 2 (Croom Helm, London, 1986) PP. 106-24. According to Hunter, there are

four possible interpretations of 'form of life' viz., as language-games, as a package of behaviour, a style of life and organic behaviour. What is a form of life is not language, but the using of language, i.e. doing something in language. Learning language is simply not applying rules, rather to participate in the form of activity that it represents.

35. Hintikka and Hintikka have pointed out that language-games alone mediate the language-world relationships. It is in a language-game alone that the world is related to us, that is, we can have contact with the world. See Hintikka and Hintikka *Investigating Wittgenstein*, Chapt. 9.
36. See David Pole, *The Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein* (The Athlone press, London, 1958), PP. 51-61. See, for a better understanding of Pole's interpretation of Wittgenstein, Stanley Cavell "Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy", reprinted in *Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G. Pitcher (Macmillan, 1966), pp. 151-185.
37. See R.C. Pradhan, *Language and Experience: An Interpretation of the Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, (Anu Prakashan, Meerut, 1981), Chapt. II.
38. Sapir and Whorf have argued that language is culture-specific and that language and culture are both relative to particular social groups. See Benjamin Lee Whorf, *Language, Thought and*



*Reality* (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass, 1969). For further discussion see David E. Cooper, *Philosophy and the Nature of Language* (Longman, London, 1973) Chapt. 5.

39. See J.N. Findlay, *Wittgenstein: A Critique*, (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1984), "Introduction".

40. See Baker & Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1985), Vol.2 for further discussion on this problem of agreement and its background.

## CHAPTER II

### THE GRAMMAR OF RULE-FOLLOWING

In this chapter I propose to investigate what may be called the grammar of **rule-following** i.e. the logical conditions under which rules can be followed by the speakers of language. The notion of rule already discussed in the Chapter I inevitably ~~leads~~ to the notion of **rule-following**. The concept of rule-following got no pre-eminence in the early **philosophical** developments of Wittgenstein for the reason that language was hardly considered as a matter of **rule-following** in concrete human situations. Wittgenstein took it for granted that language can take care of the rules and their **applications**. But the later Wittgenstein realised that **rule-following** or application of rules does need an embedding in the total system of language-use and **the** form of life. Hence, the importance of **rule-following** in the scheme of his later philosophy. Rule and **rule-following** constitute two aspects of the same reality i.e. the language. In this cahpter I will argue that **rule-foll**owing is logically (**grammatically**) related to rules.

#### J. *What is it to follow a rule?*

Now the problem is, what does it mean by "following a **rule**" or "being in accord with a rule"? **What** is the ground of our rule-following behaviour? These questions raise a fundamental issue about the rationality<sup>1</sup> of our language-use.

According to Wittgenstein, following a rule **implies** applying a rule or playing a **language-game** according to a rule. It is a fact about our linguistic behaviour that we set paradigms or standards and follow them. **Rule-following**, in that sense, is a practice in a social setting (PI Sect. 202). This suggests that we can follow a rule through learning and mastering **the** language use in public situations with proper guidance through outward **checkability**. Wittgenstein says:

Following a rule is analogous to obeying an order, we have been trained (aberichtet) to do so; we react to an order in a particular way (PI, sect. 206).

The public checkability or detection is the fundamental criterion for 'following a **rule**' because "being in accord with a **rule**" presupposes **corrigibility**. Whether one is following a rule correctly or incorrectly in developing a series (e.g. 1,000 1,002 1,004 ...) according to the rule (i.e. +2), can be checked by the fellow **rule-followers** who have already shown mastery of that procedure (PI sect. 186). The concept of following a rule thus presupposes acting in accord with standards. For in the absence of the normative activities and guidance distinctive of **following** rules, there will be no such thing as rules at all and hence no possibility of accord or conflict with rules<sup>2</sup>,

There is a sense of being guided in **rule-following**. This is reinforced by the demand that in following a rule, one is asked to be in accord with it, that is, one is required assent to a pattern or paradigm. This assent is a kind of choice, so far as the choice is itself guided by the rule; for example, one is

guided by the rule ' + 2 ' in developing a number series e.g. 2,4,6 ,., etc. Here the assent to the rule is manifested in the continuation of the series. The sense of guiding involved is not an occult process, however. It is as manifest and public as the rule-following is (PI sect, 178),

What is most note worthy in the concept of rule-following, as we shall see in the subsequent sections, is that rule-following is a normative concept and that it is embedded in the organic frame of a language-game. Like a language-game, rule-following is nested within the total activity of using language. To make a linguistic move is to follow a rule. This is not an isolated act in any circumstances. One cannot follow a rule if one is not trained to do a lot of other activities. Systematic training along with the normative behaviour provides the ground for following a rule. "Now I know how to go on" is the indicator of the fact that a deeper preparation is made for rule-following. Wittgenstein writes:

Think how we learn to use the expression "Now I know how to go on", "Now I can go on" and others; in what family of language-games we learn their use (PI, sec. 179).

## **2. Rule-following and Regularity**

The important feature of a rule and rule-following which Wittgenstein has stressed is that rule-following presupposes regularity. Following a rule is like going by a signpost (PI, sect. 85). It presupposes a regular use, not to be possible for a single person to have only once in his life. Obedience to a rule is a practice or custom; it is not "something that it would be possible for only one man to do, and to do only once in his life"

(PI, sect. 199), A formula, for example,  $x^2 = x.x$ , in order to be a rule must be applied in different instances in various occasions, not by a single man but by all those who know how to go on with it<sup>3</sup>. Wittgenstein has the idea of 'many occasions' applications of rule in the following passage:

We might imagine rails instead of a rule. And infinitely long rails correspond to the unlimited applications of a rule (PI, sect. 218).

Baker and Hacker in their commentary on the rule-following passages in the *Philosophical Investigations* write:

What is crucial about a regularity exemplifying a technique of applying a rule is that the agent not only acts in a regular fashion (a bee or bird does that), but also that he sees a certain pattern as regularity<sup>4</sup> and that he intends his actions to conform to this pattern.

That is to say, following a rule is a customary practice conforming to common agreement. For Wittgenstein this sort of agreement is not an agreement in opinions of members of a community i.e. communal agreement. However, it is an agreement in language use and the form of life (PI sect. 224, 241), This shows that rule-following is bound up with the publicly available regular and normative behaviour of mankind.

Furthermore, Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations focus on the conceptual links between following a rule and the notions such as agreement, regularity, identity, consistency etc. These suggest that whenever one follows a particular rule, one does the same thing repeatedly, that is, on each occasion one follows the same rule in the same way (PI sect. 223-

5). Of course, what is essential to repeatedly following a rule is that it leads to the regularity in his **rule-following** practices (PL sect, 237). For example, what makes it possible to regard someone as following a rule in his expansion of the series 2,4,6 , .. n is that he does the same thing, that is, he adds two to the previous number each time he continues the series following the rule "+2". Thus it seems that mastery of the concept of identity may enable one to follow a rule without guidance. To know how to apply the rule '+2' is to know how to perform the same mathematical calculation in each future situation. To do so is to act in accord with this rule. One's **understanding** of the '**same**' can enable one to know how to develop the series. However, can the '**same**' here define what is a rule or what it is to act in accord with the rule? Wittgenstein suggests that though '**a rule**' is related to the concept of *same* (PI sect. 225), the latter does not define the former. Rather the conceptual relation between "following a rule" and "the same" explains how we are **able** to follow particular rules by reference to our grasp of the concept of "**the same**". The concept of '**the same**' analogously plays a crucial role in private language considerations.<sup>5</sup>

The concept of "**the same**" somehow entails the notion of identity and regularity. This enables us to exhibit our grasp of the concept of rule. Besides, it exhibits our ability to apply a rule in similar **circumstances**. And it cannot entail that it is possible to train someone the use of '**the same**' without teaching him the use of particular rules. The concept of '**the**

'same' is itself the result of a rule. Hence one cannot teach someone the concept of 'the same' without teaching him the application of rules. Of course, there is a difficulty here. The problem is that we do not often learn a general definition of the 'same' which we then go on to apply in trying to act in accord with particular rules. A general definition of 'the same'<sup>1</sup> such as "Everything is the same as itself" is completely meaningless in deciding what is in accord with a rule (PI sect. 215-6). On the contrary, as Wittgenstein suggests, we follow particular rules in training, and in applying a new rule we do not require any pre-existing conception of 'doing the same'. One just follows the rule '+2' in learning and thereby comes to know what 'doing the same' consists in the case of a particular rule (i.e. +2).<sup>u</sup>

The above interpretation of the concept 'same' shows Wittgenstein's repeated assertion that one cannot give a general account or definition of what is a rule and what it is to act in accord with a rule (PI sect. 208, Z 318, RFM VII, 39). The demand for such an account will lead us to the search for general definition of regularity, consistency, etc. But if further asked what 'doing the same' consisted in, one will be not able to give a general definition of 'the same' (or the rule). However, this does not mean that one cannot explain what 'the same' means, but that one can only do this in the case of a particular rule, and only by teaching the use of the rule (RFM, I, 17, 18). This is the reason why Wittgenstein suggests that in order to know what it means to follow a rule, that is, to know what regularity,

consistency, the same, identity etc. involve, one must already have mastered the technique of applying a rule. To follow a rule is after **all** to master a technique.

3. A process **"according to a rule"** and A process **"involving a rule"**

In the *Blue Book*<sup>7</sup> Wittgenstein makes a distinction between a process 'according to a **rule**' and a process 'involving a rule'. A process means an activity or series of activity which is not something queer (PGL I. 60). 'A calculus proceeding according to exact rules', 'understanding' 'obeying an **order**' etc. are well established instances of a process. Wittgenstein has illustrated the logical significance of the distinction between a process 'according to a rule' and a process 'involving a **rule**' through a mathematical calculation. For example, A orders B to square the cardinal number like 1,2,3,4. ; if B goes on writing 1,4,9,16 **respectively**, he does it **according to** a mathematical rule of squaring. But the activity may be carried out by other rules of mathematics (BB P. 13). Here, the rule is not **involved** in the process of squaring the numbers. But if the result is arrived at by a particular "rule of **squaring**" which is expressed **algebraically**, then in that case this rule is involved in a sense in which no other rule is. Wittgenstein writes: " we shall say that the rule is **involved** in the understanding, obeying etc. if, as I should like to express, the symbol of the rule forms part of the calculation" (BB, P. 13). In this case the process is constituted through the rule, so that "the expression of rule" forms part of the process. Rules involved in the process of



**understanding** and meaning are those which make these activities what they are. As Wittgenstein puts it, "~~the~~ rule which has been taught and is subsequently applied interests us only so far as it is involved in the **applications**. A rule, so far as it interests us does not act at a distance" (BB P. 14).

However, in **all** cases where the processes are "in accordance with a rule", the rule remains at a distance such that it cannot be said **determinately** that it is that rule which one is following. Wittgenstein thus seems to suggest that rules either constitute the processes or they do not. Therefore, rules acting at a distance fail to determine the course of application. Rules

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and their applications are internally related. The internal relation can be explained by showing how a particular rule leads to a particular application which uniquely follows from it. The application fits the rule necessarily and vice **versa**. Hence it cannot be maintained that there is a contingent relation between the rule and its **application**. Baker and Hacker write:

The relation of accord between an act and a rule is an internal **relation**. The rule itself, not <sup>9</sup>some third entity, determines accords and conflicts with **it**.

This further explains why and how the act of **rule-following** is constituted by the rule itself and so **rules** stand in logical or grammatical relation to their **applications (uses)**. This entails further that there is no theoretical content in the notion of "process according to a rule" because it ultimately collapses into a "**process involving a rule**". It is only the latter that constitutes **rule-following**. As Baker and Hacker put

it:

It is only against a certain complex background that acting in accord with a rule counts as following a rule. So if we were still to say that there is something more to following the rule than merely acting in accord with it, then this would be the **circumstances** of someone's **actions** that entitle us to say that he has followed the **rules**.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4, *Rule-following is not a Mental Process*

For Wittgenstein following a rule is not backed by any kind of **psychological** accompaniments and so following a rule itself is not a mental state or mental process (PI, sects. 151-155). According to Wittgenstein it is not true that when one decides to **play** a. game of chess the rules of the game pass through his mind. The so-called states of **consciousness** never guarantee that the person understands how to continue the **series**. There is nothing that stands in the person's **consciousness** when he understands **how** to go on. As Wittgenstein says "we interpret the **enigma** created by our **misunderstanding** as the enigma of an **incomprehensible** process (PG, I, 105, PI, sect. 196). The **misunderstandings** created by our allusion to mental processes standing behind the acts of following a rule are the results of the tendency to see the rule-following in a mental medium called the "**understanding**" (PI, sect, 146), But this "**hidden**" medium is not only inscrutable but also **philosophically** misleading, Wittgenstein writes:

We are trying to get hold of the mental process of **understanding** which seems to be hidden behind those coarser and therefore more readily visible **accompaniments**. But we do not **succeed**; or, rather, it does not get as far as a real attempt. For even supposing I had found something that happened in all those cases of **understanding**, - why should

it be the **understanding**? And how can the process of understanding have been hidden, when I said "**Now I understand**" because I understood? And if I say it is hidden-then how do I know what I have to look for ? I am in a muddle (PI, sect. 153).

The so-called conceptual muddle arises because of our wrong **understanding** of the grammar of **rule-following**. **Understanding** a rule involves knowing **its applications** as well as knowing the conditions (**circumstances**) in which the rule is to be applied. When, for example, we know how to use a word or to play chess, we know how to apply the concerned rules. These involve the general case of knowing "**how to go on**". A rule **application** is a case of knowing how to go on with the rule. However, following a rule in playing a chess or using a word, or in **understanding** a word is not having mental processes. If it is not so, it can be asked how does one know his intentions to follow a rule? Besides, it may be asked, how does one know that he is following a particular rule and not another? Is this something known by experience? For **Wittgenstein**, it is redundant to ask whether one knows that he has a certain intention (or mental picture or image) to follow a rule. It is taken for granted that one who follows a rule is already trained to do so and therefore, must have known what he has to do when the occasion for following the rule comes. The practice of **rule-following** in the relevant **circumstances** is a standing guarantee that the **rule-follower** knows how to go on. **Wittgenstein**, in a very illuminating passage, settles this matter in the following way:

There is no doubt that I now want to play chess, but chess is the game it is in virtue of all its rules (and so on). Don't I know, then, which game I want to play until I have played .

it? or are all the rules contained in my act of intending? Is it experience that tells me that this sort of game is the usual consequence of such an act of intending? so it is impossible for me to be certain what I am intending to do? And if that is nonsense - what kind of **super-strong** connexion **exists between** the act of intending and the thing intended? - Where is the connexion effected between the sense of the expression "Let's play a game of **chess**" and all the rules of the **game?** - Well, in the **list** of rules of the game, in the teaching of it, in the day-to-day practice of playing (**PI**, sect. 197).

It can be argued that if, when one knows the use of a word one knows the rules, then one has the capacity to produce them on demand. This capacity might be considered a **psychological** state. The question then may arise: what becomes of the distinction one has made between the *states* of mind and the knowledge of rules? According to Wittgenstein, introduction of **psychological** states in this connection does not make any sense at **all** so far as the knowledge of the rules is concerned. Our knowledge of rules is unaffected by the presence or absence of the **psychological** states since they do not constitute knowledge or **understanding**. Knowledge **lies** in competence (i.e. capacity) or skill of applying the rule (cf. **PI**, sects. 147-151). If one claims that knowing the use of a word is a state of mind, then one may fail to distinguish between states of **consciousness** as they occur to the **rule-follower** and the practical mastery which he exhibits in following the **rule**. Knowing the rules of chess or the use of word, therefore, is not a state of consciousness. It is logically unsound to ask oneself what it is **like** to know the rules all the time. The logic of the words "**knowing the rule**" and "being able to play chess" is completely different from the logic of the words "feeling something when one moves a chess piece". Understanding a word is here used in two ways; one in the

sense of an accompanying mental **process**, and another in the sense of knowing the use of a word (a rule). The logic of "feeling something when we hear the word" (or "having an impression to follow a rule") and "knowing the word's use" (or simply actually knowing the application of the rule") are entirely different. For knowing the use of the word 'pain' is not the same as the "feeling of pain" and knowing the use of verb "is" in "The rose is red " and in "2+2 is 4" is different from the mental event accompanying each use. The misleading tendency underlying the **misconstruation** of the knowledge of rules is that to understand the use of a word or an expression is to swallow the meaning of a word or an expression as a whole so that to understand a rule means to know all its applications in a flash. As Wittgenstein puts it;

It is as if we could grasp the whole use of the word in a flash". *Like what e.g.?* - Can't the use-in a certain sense - be grasped in a flash? And in what sense can it not? - The point is, that it is as if we could '**grasp** it in a flash' in yet another and much more direct sense than that. - But have you a model for this ? No. (PI sect. 191).

A system of rules is sufficient for fixing or **determining** the meaning of words or sentences. Rules can do so only in so far as they are used and followed by the users of language. The application of rules in actual uses of language justifies the distinction between "a process being in accordance with a rule" and "a process involving a rule". All serious cases of rule - following ~~are~~ cases of rules being involved in them. A linguistic use or practice is a paradigm of rule - following and of rule being involved in practice. And Each rule-involving

linguistic practices determine which cases do **fall** under them, and reveal what it is to apply the rules correctly. "Roughly speaking, it **characterizes** what we call a rule to be applied repeatedly in an indefinite number of **instances**" (**BB**, p. 34), says Wittgenstein. It has been often objected that Wittgenstein confuses a rule with the sign used to express it while comparing a rule with a sign-post (**PI** sect. 85). It might be very well to say that a sign post or any other expression can be interpreted in different ways and might be **incomprehensible** to someone who could not understand the rule it expresses. However, this shows nothing about the rule itself, and about how the rule is to be applied and meant. The **interpretations**<sup>11</sup> simply do not add anything to the meaning of the **rule**. Wittgenstein writes:

.... any **interpretation** still hangs in the air along with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support. **Interpretations** by themselves do not determine meaning (**PI**, sect. 198).

Wittgenstein has not given any importance to the **consideration** of rules apart from their **formulations**. In the *Brown Book*, he generally has identified rules involved in language games with tables and **inscriptions**. And in distinguishing rule-accord from rule-involvement in the *Blue Book*, he has considered cases in which the '**expression**' or '**symbol**' of a rule forms a part of the language-activity (**BB**, P.13). He disallows any kind of distinction between a rule and its expression and so any kind of conceptual gap between them. This closes off any possibility of **interpretation** of the rule thus denying indeterminacy in rule-following.

However, empirically the distinction between a rule and its

**application** could be made under certain **circumstances**. Granted that, if the rule is quite distinct from its **expression**, the application of the rule still requires those cases in which the rule is applied. It is essential to the correct application of a rule that each **application** must conform to the rule. What will actually be relevantly called right (application of rule) or wrong (application of rule) depends upon the way in which the rule is grasped and understood by those who apply it. A rule tells us what performances are and what performances are not correct under similar **circumstances**. That is to say, it is logically determined by the rule what would be called a correct application or an incorrect application. This **consideration** explicitly raises the problem; what is it to be the **understanding** (grasping) of a rule and how is it different from interpreting a rule?

##### 5. *Following a rule; A mastery of a technique*

In the previous section it is noted that following a rule is a **mastery** of a technique. Wittgenstein has made this idea clear in the following passage:

The grammar of the word "knows" is evidently closely related to that of "can", "is able to". But also closely related to that of "understands". ('Mastery' of a technique) (PI sect. 150).

For Wittgenstein a **technique** is not the same as a practice. However, the concept of a technique is conceptually related both to the concept of following a rule and to the concept of **practice**. There must be rules by reference to which certain **acts** are judged to be correct or incorrect. This needs practice.

Practice leads to mastery. To understand a language is to have mastery of a technique (PI, sect, 199). When we understand a language we know how to use it in all relevant *circumstances*. We thereby gain a sufficiently strong control over the language. Thus, mastery of a language manifests itself in various linguistic activities in a *rule-governed* way. To understand a rule, therefore, is to be able to apply the rule *correctly* in all possible situations. And it is not that one can apply a rule only at one place or instance; rather one can follow it whenever one is asked to *that*. One knows 'how to go on with it' in all relevant situations (PI, sect, 199).

For Wittgenstein, 'grasping a rule' is just not to give an interpretation. In this regard Wittgenstein says in *Investigations* sect, 201: ".... there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an *interpretation* but which is exhibited in what we call "obeying a rule" and "going against it" in actual cases". This remark suggests that the rule does not depend on interpretation. To follow a rule *correctly*, i.e., understanding a rule, is often presupposed by certain interpretations. Interpretations always consist in providing alternatives or possible applications. However, there are no unlimited unfolding of future applications since all *interpretations* come to an end. Understanding a rule often needs explanations or *interpretations* but giving interpretations is *not involved* in grasping the rule. Interpretations in this sense might be considered as a *means* for the grasping of a rule whereas grasping of a rule (rules) is considered as an *end itself*. The way of grasping a rule is not



an interpretation but what is exhibited in what Wittgenstein calls 'obeying a rule' and 'going against it' in actual cases. Here expressions "obeying a rule" (accord) and "going against it" (conflict) logically suggest that following a rule is a practice and a mastery of a technique. My understanding of a sign-post is manifested in how I respond to it on the various occasions. The failure to recognise this fact may give rise to many conceptual puzzles regarding how rules are followed in a systematically normative way. The question of rule-paradox which I shall discuss in subsequent chapters is the most enticing of those puzzles.

What Wittgenstein has achieved by redefining the concept of rule-following in terms of practice, custom and mastery of technique is to rule out the possible misinterpretations of our standard patterns of rule-following. Rule-following is a normative exercise and therefore, any attempt to do away with the normative foundations of rule-following is to deny the possibility of regular linguistic behaviour. Backer and Hacker have put this point in the following way;

In observing that 'rule' and 'following a rule' relate to a technique or custom (RFM; p. 346) or that 'following a rule' is a practice (PI, 202), he located these concepts in a wider and widely remifying grammatical context of the concepts of regularity, doing the same, agreement, justification and explanation ... The conceptual connection between techniques and rules makes clear how central the classification of following rules is to a wide range of issues in philosophical logic and the philosophy of mathematics.<sup>13</sup>

## 6. *Practice, Custom and Social Consensus*

Let us consider in what sense Wittgenstein conceives of "practice" in order to explain the notion of following a rule which in turn is associated with "use" or "custom" or "institution". Wittgenstein writes:

Is what we call "obeying a rule" something that it would be possible for only one man to do, and to do only once in his life ? This is of course a note on the grammar of the expression "to obey a rule".

It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which someone obeyed a rule. It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion in which a report was made, an order given, or understood; and so on. To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are customs (uses, institutions) (PI sect. 199),

There are two issues<sup>14</sup> involved **here**, namely, (1) whether only one man could follow a rule in the absence of a community of **rule-followers** (i.e. language users) and (2) whether one man or many men could follow a rule if they follow it only once in their life times. The first relates to the question of the community being involved in the practice of **rule-following**. The second relates to the question of there being many occasions involved in the use or practice of language. Both talk of customs or **institutions**. The custom, in the first sense, is **community-based institution** which commands universal **allegiance**. But in the latter sense custom is a **well-orchestrated** and **systematically** regulated practice,<sup>15</sup> Wittgenstein writes:

The application of the concept 'following a rule' presupposes **a custom**. Hence it would be non-sense to say; just once in the history of the world someone followed a rule (or a sign-post; played a game, uttered a sentence, or understood one; and so on) (RFM, VI, 21), (*italics mine*).

Further he **says**:

In order to describe the phenomenon of language one must *describe* a practice, not something that happens once, no matter of what kind (RFM, V, 34), (*italics mine*).

Wittgenstein thus suggests that nothing could be called following a rule if there were not a custom, or institution which regulates rule-following as such. For example, it is impossible to invent a game which no one has ever played or which has been played only once in the history of mankind. Similarly, it is impossible to conceive of a language which no one has ever used or used only once (cf. RFM, VI, 43). Such a possibility threatens the **conceivability** of a game or of a language. Both games and languages are rule-governed activities and their regularity must be recognizably established as a matter of customs or norms. Rules are the essence of such customs. Rule-following is embedded in these customs or practices. So practices constitute the bedrock of **rule-following**. The practices, however, speak for themselves<sup>16</sup> (OC, sect. 139). Thus Wittgenstein has argued that the concept 'following a rule' presupposes a custom and that a game, a language or a rule is an institution. By this he means to suggest that a rule needs practice and that practice is based upon regular training. Moreover, a practice explains (i.e. describes or, more plausibly, shows) what is to follow a rule. Language relates to a form of life and in order to describe the phenomenon of language, one must describe a practice, not something that happens once, no matter of what kind. What, in a complicated surrounding, we call "following a rule" we should certainly not call that if it is stood in isolation. Hence rule-following must be part of an

organic system of languag-use.

## 7. *One cannot follow a rule privately*

The private language argument as discussed by Wittgenstein in the *Investigations* sects 243-351 has shown that a language in which one gives instructions to oneself and follows a rule privately is impossible. One does not give a rule to oneself and follow it because there is no such institution in our language. In a private language where one follows a rule by oneself we cannot distinguish between 'following a rule' and 'thinking of following a rule' because we cannot have any criteria of what is right and what is wrong in rule-following. Wittgenstein writes,

.... 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 sect. 202).

The private language abolishes the distinction between correct and incorrect rule-following since the very possibility of rule-following is questioned. The notion of private rule-following is a self-contradiction in the sense that none can logically claim to have followed a rule in the absence of a custom or institution of rule-following. As we have already discussed, it is the custom or regular practice of rule-following which makes any particular rule-following intelligible.

Discussions on the private language issue have centred round in the notion of sensations and other mental concepts, besides the linguistic concepts like rule and rule-following.

Wittgenstein has designed the private language argument to show that if we allow for such a language we simply invite its own grammatical collapse. This argument is a *reductio* argument showing how language in general is possible. Private language is conceptually ruled out by this argument,<sup>17</sup>

Wittgenstein has raised the problem of private language in *Philosophical Investigations* sect. 243:

..... the individual words of this language are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking: to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language.

That is, according to Wittgenstein, a private language is a language that **definitionally** is **incomprehensible** to anyone but its inventor-user. In such a language, the concept of public **rule-following** is not available. Therefore, it entirely depends upon the concept of a private **rule-following**, e.g, in **referring** to one's immediate private sensations.

The conception of private language is primarily based on two fundamental ideas, namely, the idea regarding the nature of experience and the idea about the nature of language. The first idea is that one's own experience is private i.e, there are private sensations and the second one assumes the relation between sensations and the **sensation-words** on the model of name-object **relationship**. The latter in short adheres to a very simplistic theory of meaning which is often characterized as 'referential or denotational theory<sup>1</sup> of the Augustinian variety. Both these ideas are **questionable**. Wittgenstein has subjected

them to closer scrutiny before rejecting the possibility of a private language.

## 8. *The Illusion of Private Experience*

The basic principle of private language is that the words of this language are to refer to what can only be *known* to the person speaking (i.e., the inventor-user) and that they refer to the person's *immediate* sensations. The assumption is that the person's immediate sensations are only accessible and intelligible to the private linguist and to no one else. Wittgenstein describes the nature of private experience in the following way:

In what sense are my sensations *private*? Well, only I can know whether I *am* really in pain; another person, can only surmise it (PI sect. 246).

Further he says:

The essential thing about private experience is really not that each person possesses his own exemplar, but that nobody knows whether other people also have *this* or something else (PI, sect. 272).

The solitary person using the private language not only uniquely possesses his sensations but also can alone have access to them. These experiences are not intelligible to others and so are not communicable at all. The solitary individual's understanding of his own sensations is therefore private because the objects referred to by the words in such a language are presented only to the inventor-user of the language. This involves not only the private *ownership* of sensations, and hence the inalienability of experience but also the incommunicability

of experience.<sup>19</sup> Both these implications are questionable so far as our actual experiences are concerned. The so-called private objects of experiences are so absurd that it needs no elaborate argument to show that they are logically **inconceivable**. Experiences as such are not **incommunicable** and are easily accessible to all and shareable by all (PI, sect. 275). As Wittgenstein points out, the word 'red' refers to something which is commonly accessible to all and not to the person alone who utters the word (PI, sects. 273-74). The red object is not a private object at all. Even the sensations like pain, toothache etc., are shareable by and communicable to others. Hence sensations are not **exclusively** private objects. The demand for private experience is absurd. It is based on the **misconception** of experience as such. For Wittgenstein experience is fully public and structured through the public language games. To have an experience is to play a kind of language-game.<sup>20</sup> That is to say, to have a sensation like 'pain' is to express a certain behaviour or form of life. That is linked with a pain-language e.g., saying 'ouch!' or making certain natural expression. This natural expression is not a description of the pain-experience but it constitutes what we call pain-sensation. As Wittgenstein puts it, "words are connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensations and used in their place" (PI sect. 244), Besides "the verbal expression of pain replace crying and does not describe it" (PI, sect. 244),

The notion of private object<sup>21</sup> or content of experience becomes very illusory for the reason that there are no criteria

for their identity. The private speaker himself fails to tell how he identifies it given the slippery nature of such objects (PI sect, 293). He has no identity criteria worth the name except the so-called private definitions which ultimately lose all semantic footing (PI sects. 253, 257-258). Wittgenstein throws light on such private definitions in the following passage :

It might be said: if you have given yourself a private definition of a word, then you must inwardly undertake to use the word in such and such a way. And how do you undertake **that**? Is it to be assumed that you invent the technique of using the word; or that you found it ready-made? (PI, sect. 262).

## **9. The Impossibility of Private Language**

Wittgenstein's argument against the private language begins with his criticism of name-object ostensions for determining the meaning of words and expressions used to describe our experiences. The ostensions are themselves not logically adequate because, firstly, language not only consists of names, but also a wider spectrum of words, expressions and their uses, and secondly, ostensions can be variously interpreted (PI sect. 256). Naming in the private language eludes its effective use in view of the fact that no stage-setting in a language-game is involved (PI sect. 257). Wittgenstein says that the user of the name "would not make himself understood when he uses the word" (*Ibid*). Thus, for Wittgenstein, the private ostensive definitions cannot act as the proper grammatical rules. One cannot appeal to such rules to clarify or confirm the meaning of



the words. That is to say, "there are no criteria of correctness. One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about right" (PI sect. 258). Therefore, correct application of names to objects is impossible, since there are no standards or criteria. That is, there are no reliable criteria for distinguishing correct from incorrect applications of a name in a private language. Wittgenstein's argument proves that "private language is incapable to serve as a language not only for the originator of the language but as possible medium of communication for others."<sup>22</sup> This suggests that the rules of private-language cannot be adopted and used by anyone else since the objects (sensations and experiences) are not accessible to anyone else. Such rules cannot be learned by anyone. Wittgenstein writes:

If I say of myself that it is **only** from my own case that I know what the word "**pain**" means-must I not say the same of other people too? And how can I generalize the *one* case so irresponsibly?

Now someone tells me that he knows what pain is only from his own case - Suppose everyone had a box with something in it we call it a "beetle". No one can look into anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at *his* beetle. - Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box. One might even imagine such a thing constantly changing. - But suppose the word "**beetle**" had a use in these people's language? - If so it would not be used as the name of a thing. The thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all; not even as a *something*; for the box might even be empty. - No one can 'divide through' by the thing in the box; it cancels out, whatever it is.

That is to say: if we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of 'object' and 'designation' the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant (PI, sect. 293).

The "beetle box" analogy shows that if sensations are

conceived as private objects like beetles in the boxes, while we have names for them, there is no guarantee that they mean the 'same' for all the persons using them; they may not refer to anything at all. In fact, there may not be anything to be referred to at all. Thus Wittgenstein's argument establishes that the use of words in the private language is not based on any grammatical rules. Wittgenstein writes:

.....'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, sect. 202).

He further says:

Are the rules of the private language *impression* of rules? - The balance on which impressions are weighed is not the impression of a balance (PI, sect. 259).

I could not apply any rules to a *private* transition from what is seen to words. Here the rules really would hang in the air; for the institution of their use is lacking (PI, sect. 380).

For Wittgenstein, somebody's sincerely thinking that he is following the rule never logically guarantees that he is following the rule. For, mere thinking cannot be a substitute for the real doing. To follow a rule is to be in *conformity* with it, and not to imagine that one is following it. In short, a rule must determine what counts as acting in accord with it. A person on a particular occasion is said to *follow* a given rule only if he acts in accord with this rule. Whether one is following a given rule correctly or not is checked by another

person who has already mastered that technique. Somebody's thinking that he is following a rule in an instance cannot be checked because there are no criteria by which it can be decided whether he has followed the rule correctly or not. It, as we said elsewhere, would be a case like "whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that we can't talk about 'right'" (PI., sect. 258).

What Wittgenstein focuses on in his private language argument is that there is no sense in the concept of following a rule privately.<sup>23</sup> Nothing is affirmed in one's saying that one is following a rule privately which nobody else can detect or follow. This points neither to a private source of justification of one's acts of rule-following, nor does it entail a case of subjective justification (PI sects, 266, 267). There is nothing called justification at all in such cases, since there is no institution called giving oneself a rule (i.e. subjective rules) (PI, sect. 268). Wittgenstein's private language argument has indirectly shown that language in order to be possible at all must vouchsafe for well ordered and grammatically grounded rule-following. The so-called private language denies the very grammatical foundation of rule-following and language-use in general. Therefore, it cannot be an alternative language to our rule-governed and normatively structured language, i.e. the natural language. Rule-following is the real normative test of what language must be.

## 10. *The Critique of a False Grammar*

Wittgenstein's critique of private language is a critique of a false grammatical model which captivates the philosophical mind. It is a critique of an alternative suggestion that language can dispense with its normative structure and opt for an arbitrarily contingent grammar. The latter, however, collapses into an unruly mass of semantic exercises without any foundation. For example, the notions of private use, private rule-following, private reference and private meaning and truth become illusory notions. They are the illusory concepts that have crept into one's grammatical framework. But such a framework is without a root in our language and form of life. Our forms of life are bound up with certain criteria or norms which regulate our use of language. Wittgenstein writes:

Let us remember that there are certain criteria in a man's behaviour for the fact that he does not understand a word: that it means nothing to him, that he can do nothing with it. And criteria for his 'thinking he understands', attaching some meaning to the word, but not the right one. And, lastly, criteria for his understanding the word right. In the second case one might speak of a subjective understanding. And sounds which no one else understands but which I 'appear to understand' might be called a "private language" (PI, sect, 269).

The concept of criteria plays a significant role in the private language discussions. The criteria are the grammatical features which are distinguished from contingent and inessential features of language. P.M.S. Hacker suggests that Wittgenstein meant by criteria "those conditions which non-inductively justify the use of application of a sentence".<sup>24</sup> It is also suggested that the criteria so defined are conventionally fixed, and that they constitute part of what Wittgenstein calls the 'grammar'<sup>25</sup>

of a sentence. The private language argument brings into sharp relief the nature of **criteria-based** grammar which demands that nothing matters to language other than the grammatical rules. If the grammatical rules are sought to be arbitrary and contingent, the whole notion of language collapses.

Wittgenstein's notion of grammar plays a prominent role in the formulation of his conception of language. Language as a form of life associated with the natural history of man is nothing but the actual happenings of everyday life which consists in our activities, like thinking, speaking, commanding and counting etc. (PI, sect, 25). Wittgenstein explains:

What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of human beings; we are not contributing curiosities however, but observations which no one has doubted, but which have escaped remark only because they are before our eyes (PI, sect. 415).

Thus **grammar** has to take into account to facts of natural history. The remarks on natural history are grammatical remarks. By bringing the question of grammar into the heart of our natural history <sup>20</sup> Wittgenstein has made it clear that man's linguistic concerns are internally related to the forms of life of people. Therefore, the so-called private linguist's grammar proves false. Grammar cannot be derived from the subjective **life** of the private speaker. It owes its origin to the **cumulative** forms of life of the '**linguistic community**'. But these forms of life are an extension of the natural facts. This logical continuity between the two, i.e. life and the world is depicted in the following passage:

Our interest certainly includes the correspondence between concepts and very general facts of nature (Such facts as mostly do not strike us because of their generality.) But our interest does not fall back upon these possible causes of the formation of concepts; we are not doing **natural** science; nor yet natural history -since we can invent **fictitious** natural history for our purposes (PI, II, xii).

Philosophy like grammar is not a natural science. It is only a grammatical **investigation** into the facts of nature (PI sect. 90, 109). That is to say, it investigates the grammar i.e. the calculus of our everyday language. The concept of natural history brings into prominence the natural facts about our **language-use**. But the grammatical remarks on these facts cannot be **anthropological** descriptions<sup>27</sup> (RFM, II, sect. 65) because they are grammatical propositions which define our natural activities themselves. This brings into the fore the normativity or **grammaticality** of all our linguistic activities. The grammar of natural history of man as a normative discourse describes not only what happens or takes place in our everydayness<sup>28</sup> that represents our natural life but also what **must happen**.<sup>29</sup> That is to say, grammar does not rest only with curiosities or opinions but displays these grammatical propositions which constitute our frame of **reference**.

Can there be possibility of alternative grammars, rule-structures and natural histories including the private linguists'? Wittgenstein's answer definitely would be in the negative. We can imagine alternative forms of life (Z sect. 387, 358, 390) wherein our rules do not **work**. But they are hardly intelligible to us. Therefore these forms of life are no alternatives at all. Wittgenstein says:

For here life would run on differently - what interests us would not interest them. Here different concepts would no longer be **unimaginable**. In fact, this is the only way in which essentially different concepts are imaginable (2. sect. 388).

This remark emphasises that alternative forms of life are imaginable in the sense that we can think that ours is not the only form of life possible. This, however, proves that they are necessary for us because in fact we cannot *comprehend* the alternative forms of life and the alternative grammars. What we can understand are **really** part of our conceptual **framework**. The **admissibility** of genuine alternative grammars or conceptual frameworks is only imaginary. The imaginary grammar of the private linguist shows the limits of our grammar and our **rule-following** concerns. By projecting the possibility of a private **rule-following**, Wittgenstein has shown that our **rule-following** is an ultimate grammatical fact about us - inviolable, **transcendental** and necessary. This fact is inviolable in the sense that it states a universal principle for us so that we cannot go beyond it. It is **transcendental** for its being non-empirical. And it is necessary because it constitutes what we speak and think in language.

## NOTES

1. The rule-following questions pertain to the normativity of our language-use and therefore, it is pertinent to raise the question of rationality. Rules, primarily, are norms of linguistic behaviour. For a full discussion on rationality and normativity, see Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science And Its Relation to Philosophy*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1958), chapt.2. Also see Margaret Urban Coyne, "Beyond Rules: Mapping the Normative", *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 18(1981), pp. 331-337.
2. See Stanley Cavell, "Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy", in *Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigation*, ed. G. Pitcher, (Macmillan, London, 1966), pp. 151-185.
3. The question whether Wittgenstein accords priority to "many men" application of the rules or the "many occasions" applications cannot be easily solved. It seems that dependening upon the context Wittgenstein accords equal emphasis on both. For further discussion see P.H. Werhane "Some Paradoxes in Kripke's Interpretation of Wittgenstein", *Synthese*, 73 (1987), pp. 253-73. See also Collin McGinn, *Wittgensteiron Meaning* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1986), pp. 79-81.
4. Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessi ty*, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1985), p. 162.
5. See N. Malcolm, "Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations"



in *Wittgenstein and the Problem of Other Minds* ed. Harold Morick (McGraw - Hill Book company, London, 1967), pp. 46-54.

6. *Ibid.*

7. cf. BB, p. 13. This distinction has not been maintained in the *Philosophical Investigations*, since the basic idea that a rule-following behaviour involves both 'accord' and 'involvement' is emphasised.

8. Baker and Hacker have defended the internalist view. They have pioneered the opinion that rule and their use are logically related. See their *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, Chpt. IV. They have also developed this 'internalism' in their critique of Norman Malcolm's "Wittgenstein on Language and Rules" *Philosophy*, 64 (1989), pp. 5-27. See Baker and Hacker, "Malcolm on Language and Rules", *Philosophy*, 65 (1990), pp. 167-179.

9 Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, p. 154.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

11. The conception of 'interpretations' has a limited role in the formulation and meaning of a rule. Interpretations come to an end as they are limited by the determinate sense of the rule-following. See for further discussion, Malcolm Budd, "Wittgenstein on Meaning, Interpretation and Rules", *Synthese*, 58 (1984), pp. 303-323. And see also his *Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1989), chapt. II.

12. For detailed discussion on this issue see Baker and Hacker,  
*Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, pp. 161-65.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
14. See McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1984), Chapt. I.
15. Wittgenstein writes in *RFM*, III, sects 66-67:  
... we should not call something "calculating" if we could not **make** such a prophecy with certainty. This really means: calculating is a technique. And **what** we have said pertains to the essence of a technique.  
  
This consensus belongs to the essence of *calculation*, so much is certain. i.e.: this consensus is part of the phenomenon of our calculating.  
  
In a technique of *calculating* prophecies must be possible. And that makes the technique of calculating similar to the technique of a *game*, like chess.  
  
But what about this consensus - doesn't it mean that one human being by himself could not calculate? Well, one human being could at any rate not calculate just once in his life."
16. For further discussion on the autonomy of practices see K.S. Johannessen, "The Concept of Practice in Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy", *Inquiry*, 31(1988), pp. 357-69.
17. See J.R. Jones (ed) *The Private Language Argument*, (Macmillan, London, 1971).
18. See A. Kenny, *Wittgenstein* (Penguin Books, 1973), chapt. 10.
19. *Ibid.*
20. See R.C. Pradhan, *Language and Experience: An Interpretation of the Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, (Anu Prakashan, Meerut, 1981), pp.11-28.

21. For detailed discussion on the notion of privacy see John W. Cook, "Wittgenstein on Privacy", in *Wittgenstein: Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G. Pitcher, pp. 286-323. See also A. Kenny "Cartesian Privacy" in the same volume, pp. 352-370.
22. Milton K. Munitz, *Contemporary Analytic Philosophy*, (McMillan Publishing Co Inc., New York, 1981), p. 312.
23. See R. Rhees, "Can there be a private language?" in *Wittgenstein: Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G. Pitcher, pp. 267-285.
24. P.M.S. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1972), p. 111.
25. See B. Harrison, *An Introduction to Philosophy of Language*, (McMillan, London, 1979), pp. 256-258.
26. See R.C. Pradhan, "A Note on Wittgenstein's Philosophical Grammar", *The Journal of the Indian Academy of Philosophy*, Vol. xxviii(1989), pp. 32-47.
27. *Ibid.*
28. cf. Charles Guignon, "Philosophy after Wittgenstein and Heidegger", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 1(1990), pp. 649-72. Guignon has equated the concept of 'everydayness' with Wittgenstein's concept of 'natural-history' and suggests that "the description of everydayness also brings out the way in which our lives are always nested in the wider context of a historical culture". p. 655.

29. Wittgenstein writes in *On Certainty*:

I would like to regard this certainty, not as something akin to hastiness or **superficiality**, but as a form of life (OC, sect. 358).

## CHAPTER III

### RULE-SCEPTICISM AND KRIPKE'S INTERPRETATION

Saul Kripke's *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*<sup>1</sup> is an extensive commentary on rule-scepticism in Wittgenstein's later philosophy. Rule-scepticism, according to Kripke, follows from the fact that in following a rule any rule could be followed since there is no objective ground of knowing or determining which is the rule to be followed. Commenting on the *Philosophical Investigations* sect, 201, he claims that a "sceptical paradox" underlies Wittgenstein's contention that "no course of action could be determined by a rule because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule". This, he thinks, undermines the very foundations of rule-following and language-use. Further, Kripke maintains that Wittgenstein gives a "sceptical solution" to this sceptical paradox by committing himself to an anti-realist and communitarian view of language and rules.

In this chapter I will expound and examine Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein's philosophy of rule-following and will show that Kripke's Wittgenstein differs from the real Wittgenstein on the issues of rule-following and their logical foundations. I will argue that rule-scepticism does not hold good in Wittgenstein's philosophy.

## I. THE SCEPTICAL PROBLEM

### 1. *Rule-Scepticism and the Paradox*

Kripke observes that the sceptical problem arises from the fact that our past knowledge of the application of a rule gives us no absolute guarantee about how in future we will apply the same rule. Our past history which includes intentions and overt behaviour can never justify that we follow a particular rule in a given instance in the way we followed it in similar circumstances in the past. For example, there is nothing in our mind which can be taken as the instruction to justify our developing the series e.g. '1002, 1004, 1006, 1008. . . . ' rather than '1004, 1008. . . ' in following the rule (i.e. + 2). One could be consistent with both ways of proceeding. Equally, nothing in one's mind constitutes the fact<sup>2</sup> of his meaning to go on in a particular way or otherwise, Kripke writes:

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 mean plus rather than quus. (italics mine).

That is to say, according to the sceptic, nothing in one's mind determines whether one is following the rule of addition (plus) or the rule of quaddition (quus).<sup>4</sup> If God looked into the mind, the sceptic asks, what would God have observed in our mind?<sup>5</sup> So the sceptical conclusion is that there is nothing in one's mind that was one's meaning "addition" (plus) rather than "quaddition" (quus) or some other function by '+' which makes

it correct for one to give the answer of '125' rather '5' to the question "57+68 ?".<sup>6</sup>

Kripke has contended that a paradox underlies the concept of rule-following considered above. The paradox is: no answer to "57 + 68 ?" can be determined by an act of 'meaning' addition by '+' because any answer can be made out to accord with the act i.e. addition function. This is exactly the paradox mentioned by Wittgenstein in PJ sect 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". Commenting on this Kripke writes:

There can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word. Each new application we make is a leap in the dark; any present intention could be interpreted so as to accord with anything we may choose to do. So there can be neither accord nor conflict.

Kripke, thus, generalises this paradox as appearing in all cases of rule-following, thus leading to the near fatal conclusion that there can never be anything called following a rule or meaning anything by the use of a word. Kripke summarizes the paradoxical situation in the following words:

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.<sup>8</sup>

Scepticism as presented above involves two questions<sup>9</sup> according to Kripke, namely,

(i) What is the fact that constitutes the meaning of plus by  $^{*+}$ , not quus?

(ii) What is the reason that justifies me to give the value '125' rather than '5' when computing ' $68 + 57$ ' ?

These two questions provide the broad spectrum in which scepticism arises at all. The first one, as McGinn<sup>10</sup> points out, is regarding the constitutive or metaphysical facts underlying rule-following, and the second one is regarding the epistemological problem of justification of how to go on with the application of a certain rule. Both the questions are interrelated, however. The fact is that Kripke's scepticism takes a metaphysical turn<sup>11</sup> for the reason that his effort is to show that there are no facts in the ultimate analysis to satisfy the sceptical questions.

## **2. Facts of the Matter: The Dispositional Account**

What are these facts then that the sceptic is after? Kripke seeks to demonstrate that these facts are not easy to come by and so scepticism remains unrefuted. He argues that there are no facts in the external dispositional behaviour of the rule-followers which can constitute the metaphysical facts needed. Dispositions are such that one is disposed to follow a rule in a habitual or customary manner. Such dispositions are formed after a finite number of applications of the rule. Now the question is: Can the dispositions so (finitely) structured establish what must be done in an infinite number of cases?<sup>12</sup> Most of us are



disposed to die of old age before getting to the end of some large mathematical computations. Besides, our past and present applications of mathematical rules are bound to be finite. So it is not *determinately* known which is the absolutely correct application of the rule. The future application is always *indeterminate*. So our past and present dispositions cannot settle the question.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, we can be disposed to give mistaken answers. So dispositions must themselves presuppose what are 'correct' answers. Thus the *dispositional* account confuses a *factual* question i.e. "what answer would one give?" with the normative question i.e. "What answer should one give?". That is, the *dispositionalist* can only give a descriptive account of the *rule-following* behaviour and not the normative account which is, in fact, needed. As Kripke puts it:

The point is not that, if I meant addition by '+', I will answer '125', but that, if I intend to accord with my past meaning of '+', I *should* answer '125'. Computational error, finiteness of my capacity, and other disturbing factors may lead me not to be *disposed* to respond as I *should*, but if so, I have not acted in accordance with my intentions. The relation of meaning and <sup>14</sup>intention to future action is *normative* not descriptive.

Consequently, *rule-following* is based on grammatical norms for how one should go on rather than a matter of *dispositions*. To follow a rule is to respond normatively to a situation and not to show a sense of behavioural reactions.<sup>15</sup> This enables us to distinguish between what we actually do under the force of habit and what we ought to do under *grammatically* determined conditions. This is, in short, the distinction between facts (the *accident* features) and grammar (the necessary features) of *rule-following*. Rule-following problem is concerned with the

latter.

Kripke's argument against the dispositionalist thus is that the dispositional facts are too descriptive to be of any avail at all. Only the normative (grammatical) facts may serve the purpose. But the latter are not available to the rule-followers. Hence Kripke's conclusion is that the sceptical challenge remains

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unrefuted as *there are no facts of the matter* to show that the sceptic is wrong. The dispositional facts are not the facts proper.

### 3. *Facts of Introspection*

Kripke also has refuted the suggestion that meaning addition by '+' should be analysed by appeal to some special introspective experience. Meaning addition by '+' cannot be a certain feeling like a special sort of headache or toothache.<sup>17</sup> And he has emphatically maintained that mental images, pictures or any psychological accompaniments cannot account for one's following a rule in an instance and so for meaning-ascription to expressions. The so-called introspective facts do not constitute the meaning of the expressions. Wittgenstein, according to Kripke, has rejected the introspective model of understanding by rejecting that mental processes underlie understanding and meaning. Kripke puts it as follows:

So : If there were a special experience of 'meaning' addition by 'plus', analogous to headache, it would not have the properties that a state of meaning addition by 'plus' ought to have - it would not tell *me* what to do in new case,<sup>18</sup> (*italics mine*).

Wittgenstein has repeatedly said that the so-called mental experience running concurrently with the use of language and **rule-following** is **grammatically** unhelpful in constituting meaning. So it is a wrong move to search for meaning in the mind itself. In a **telling** passage Wittgenstein writes:

We are trying to get hold of the mental process of **understanding** which seems to be hidden behind those coarser and therefore, more readily visible accompaniments. But we do not succeed; or, rather, it does not get as far as a real attempt. For even supposing I had found something that happened in all cases of **understanding**, - why should it be the **understanding**? (PI, sect. 153).

The fate of the **introspective** facts is the same as that of the **dispositional** ones. Both are descriptive and not normative in character. The **introspective** facts are not only not easily available, but also, if available, do not constitute meaning and **understanding**. Meaning is presupposed by the so-called **introspective** experience. Meaning is ultimately a normative fact.<sup>19</sup> Kripke, therefore, rightly shows that an **introspective** state, being a finite<sup>20</sup> and at best a causal state, cannot constitute a normative fact.

#### 4. *Against Platonism*

Finally, Kripke briefly outlines and rejects Platonism i.e. the realistic position which he has **characterised** as "**largely** an unhelpful evasion of the problem of how our finite minds can give rules that are supposed to apply to an infinity of cases".<sup>21</sup> On this account the so-called facts are neither **dispositional** nor **introspective**, but are objective in the Platonist sense. The facts are like the Fregean senses<sup>22</sup> which enjoy a fair degree of **autonomy**. The rules are the Platonic entities which determine

the particular applications thereof. Thus rule-following is determined according to an infinity and timelessly existing algorithm. This model of rule-following, Kripke thinks, is as unhelpful as any other to stem the sceptic's challenge. The sceptic can very easily question the legitimacy of these supposedly 'real' entities. Besides, the basic question as to how one is sure that one follows one rule rather than another remains unanswered. Besides, it does not tell how a finite mind can 'grasp' an infinitely applicable rule. The so-called mental grasping of the rule can be subjected to the sceptic's attack.

Thus, Kripke argues, there are no facts or substantial contents by which meaning of a certain word in a certain way (i.e. the possibility of a rule) can be justified. So one cannot know that in the current application one is still following the same rule, e.g. the rule of addition by 'plus'. His application of a rule, "is an unjustified stab in the dark, I apply the rule blindly". So, for Kripke, scepticism about following a rule virtually leads to the conclusion that language-use as a rule-governed activity is impossible.

## II. THE SCEPTICAL SOLUTION

### 5. *The Sceptical Vrs Straight Solution*

Kripke, as I have already argued, arrives at the sceptical conclusion that according to Wittgenstein there is no such thing as using a word in accord with a rule, no such thing as meaning

something by a word or symbol and no such thing as a meaningful language. According to Kripke, however, Wittgenstein does not leave the matter there. Wittgenstein offers a "sceptical solution" to the sceptical problem. The sceptical solution is a kind of Humean<sup>25</sup> strategy to tackle the sceptical problem. This strategy consists in accepting the sceptical premises but denying that sceptical conclusion follows from them. Kripke writes:

A sceptical solution of a sceptical philosophical problem begins on the contrary by conceding that the sceptic's negative assertions are unanswerable. Nevertheless our ordinary practice or belief is justified because - contrary appearances notwithstanding - it need not require the justification the sceptic has shown to be untenable.<sup>26</sup>

In this sense, a sceptical solution is not a complete refutation of scepticism. It is accepting the ordinary beliefs without refuting the sceptic straightforwardly. The sceptical solution, as A.J. Ayer puts it, is thus, "a solution that admits the cogency of the sceptic's argument but denies that this invalidates the beliefs which the sceptic has set out to demolish".<sup>27</sup> According to Hume, for example, one cannot provide a necessary evidence which can tell us that the sun will rise in the east tomorrow. One may doubt that the sun will rise in the east tomorrow, which seems equally irrefutable. Hume admits the fact that "not an *a priori* argument, but custom, is the source of our inductive inference".<sup>28</sup> This solution to the problem of induction can be called a sceptical solution, Hume's<sup>29</sup> analysis of the concepts of material body and causation also falls under this category.

A stright solution, as Kripke points out, is a solution to a sceptical argument according to which "the scepticism proves to be unwarranted." <sup>30</sup> Descartes' proof of the external world can be taken as a stright solution. So, as Kripke says, "an a priori justification of inductive reasoning and an analysis of the causal relation as a genuine necessary connection or nexus between pairs of events, would be straight solution of Hume's problem of induction and causation respectively".<sup>31</sup>

Wittgenstein's solution to the problem of rule-following is a sceptical solution according to Kripke. In a mathematical calculation such as  $57 + 68$  one follows the rule of addition (the meaning given to '+') and gets '125'. But no necessary a priori argument is possible against someone who claims to follow the rule of quaddition (i.e.  $\oplus$ ) and gets '5', Wittgenstein propounds, according to Kripke, the theory that following a rule is a custom, a communal usage based upon a communal agreement.<sup>32</sup> Here the sceptic's counter arguments still remain irrefutable though his conclusions are invalid. The main thrust of Wittgenstein's argument, according to Kripke, is not to refute the sceptic but to opt for the communal justification of rule-following. Wittgenstein's sceptical solution allegedly lies in showing that the institution of rule-following does not have any "substantive content".<sup>33</sup> This institution of rule-following entails, therefore, the communality of the justification, so that "others will then have justification conditions for attributing correct or incorrect rule-following to the subject".<sup>34</sup> In this sense, the statement "Jones is following rule R" does not

satisfy any truth-conditions because there is no fact of the matter which corresponds to the above statement. But, on the contrary, it satisfies justification or assertion-conditions. The justification conditions are the circumstances under which we are allowed to make a given assertion. Thus, according to the justification conditions, Jones is entitled to say "I mean addition by 'plus' whenever he has the feeling of confidence that he can give correct responses in new cases!" Jones's response must agree with those of the fellow members of the community. Thus one's rule-following will be judged by the community; if his responses agree with those of the community's, then he passes the tests of rule-following. This communitarian solution is broadly in agreement with what Kripke calls the Humean sceptical solution. This obviates the need of the straight solution which would have to be based on *a priori* and transcendental reasoning.

## 6. *From Truth-conditions to Justification-Conditions*

Kripke contends that Wittgenstein's approach to language in the *Philosophical Investigations* is not based on truth-conditions but on assertibility or justification conditions.<sup>37</sup> Contrasting justification conditions with truth conditions, Kripke maintains that 'truth-conditions' are the conditions of agreement or disagreement with the facts or the world. The *Tractatus* has provided a theory of language and meaning based on the notion of truth - conditions. According to this conception a declarative sentence gets its meaning by virtue of its truth-

conditions. Hence, what would make "I mean plus by '+' true would be some fact in my mind. And what gives sentences or expressions in general their meaning are their correlations with facts. These are their truth-conditions.<sup>38</sup> The truth-conditional strategy is Wittgenstein's early method of securing meaning or sense on the basis of a detailed ontology of determinate facts and objects. The fact-ontology stands contrasted with the later justificational approach, according to Kripke,

For Kripke, on the other hand, justification conditions which constitute meaning consist of the communal circumstances under which we are licensed to follow a rule in language-use. As a result, meaning-determination takes place within such conditions. These conditions involve 'communal agreement'. The communal agreement justifies our attribution of meaning to assertions and symbols with reference to the authority of a community life. As Kripke says "the game of asserting them under such conditions has a role in our lives. No supposition that 'facts correspond' to those assertions is needed",<sup>39</sup> This idea leads him to attribute to Wittgenstein an anti-realist communitarian view in which the community is the final court of appeal on the understanding and meaning of a concept, Kripke argues that the replacement of truth-conditions by justification conditions has revolutionary significance in the *Investigations*. Firstly, it explains meaning in terms of the assertibility conditions of the sentence in contrast with the truth-conditional theory of meaning in the *Tractatus*. Secondly, it treats justifications<sup>40</sup> as the goal of all semantic exercises including



the so-called **truth-assertions**. It is the '**use**' of a sentence that is important and not the sentence as such. So the **assertibility** conditions are basic to meaning and **understanding**. Kripke has put the main thrust of the new semantics in the following way :

Wittgenstein replaces the question, " **What** must be the case for this sentence to be true?" by two others: first, "Under what conditions may this form of words be **appropriately** asserted (or denied)?" second, given an answer to the first question, "What is the role, and the utility, in our lives of our practice of **asserting** (or denying) the form of words under these conditions?"<sup>41</sup>

The second question as mentioned by Kripke brings in the reference to the community of speakers. This in turn entails the conditions which determine what it is for an individual in a community to follow a rule correctly i.e. use an expression in right **significance**. Thus to follow a rule is a practice in a linguistic community such that all of us agree on what we do in language. Wittgenstein introduces the notion of **language-game** to show that what matters in language is the use or practice and not the sentence structure itself. Kripke summarizes this point of view as applied to mathematics as follows:

Do not look for '**entities**' and '**facts**' corresponding to numerical assertions but look at the **circumstances** under which utterances involving numerals are **made**, and the utility of making them under these **circumstances**.<sup>42</sup>

What is true of mathematical sentences is true of sentences in general. Everywhere it is the assertion or **justification-conditions** that matter in **semantics**.

## 7. *The Community of Rule - Followers.*

The necessity of assertibility-conditions goes with the availability of 'communal agreements'. Kripke concedes Wittgenstein's concept of agreement as not an 'agreement in facts' but an agreement in "shared form of life in a community".<sup>43</sup> Kripke has construed the idea of form of life in the following way:

The set of responses in which we agree and the way they interweave with our activities is our form of life.<sup>44</sup>

That is, the use of language meshes with the activities of people in a single community. Someone will be judged by the community to have mastered such and such a rule "if his particular responses agree with the responses produced by members of that community".<sup>45</sup> Agreement with the community thus plays a part in the assertibility conditions. The communal agreement is taken by Kripke to be the central feature of rule-following and language use in general. This marks the following characteristics of our rule-following behaviour:

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- (a) each individual is at the merecy of the community so far as his indentity as a rule-follower is concerned.
- (b) the legitimacy of rule-following is derived from the communally sanctioned standards or paradigms.<sup>47</sup>
- (c) the communal agreement underlying rule-following is a brute fact.

To put it in Kripke's words:

There is no objective fact... that explains our agreement in particular cases. Rather our license to say of each

other that we mean addition by '+' is part of a 'language-game' that sustains itself only because of the brute fact that we generally agree. (Nothing about 'grasping concepts' guarantees that it will not break down tomorrow).<sup>48</sup>

Thus if the main structure of the sceptical solution is the communality of agreement legitimizing rule-following, then the possibility of private language and private rule-following is logically excluded. This is the reason why Kripke takes Wittgenstein's private language argument as part of the broad sceptical solution. According to Kripke, a language developed by a single person in complete social isolation makes no sense. So the notion of a private rule-following by a single person in isolation "can have no substantive content".<sup>49</sup> A person in linguistic isolation has no criteria to justify his present and future applications of what he thinks are rules, Kripke argues, as I have discussed earlier, that there is no 'corresponding facts' to verify that his present application of the rule in a new instance is justified. What he can appeal to is his own intentions and fallible memories of past intentions. For him, therefore, what seems to be right is right. Thus Kripke endorses Wittgenstein's contention that "to think one is obeying a rule is not obeying a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule privately" (PI, sect. 202). Thus to deny a private language, according to Kripke, is denying "what might be called the 'private model' of rule-following, that the notion of a person following a given rule is to be analyzed simply in terms of facts about the rule-follower and the rule-follower alone, without reference to his membership in a wider community".<sup>50</sup>

In view of the above, Kripke interprets Wittgenstein's exhortation such as "obeying a rule is a practice" (PI, sect. 202) to mean that one cannot be said to obey a rule in isolation. The criteria for correct and **incorrect, in application, in** such a case is not obtained. Kripke says that "the falsity of the private - model need not mean that a *physically* isolated individual cannot be said to follow rules; rather that an individual *considered in isolation* (whether or not he is physically isolated) cannot be said to do so".<sup>51</sup> What this suggests is that a person in physical isolation i.e. an exile may develop and **follow rules**. But an individual considered in linguistic isolation (as opposed to a physically isolated individual) is a person who is not merely out of contact with a community but is a person with whom one cannot communicate. For, our notion of a rule simply cannot apply to whatever this person does or utters. He, in fact, has a form of life quite distinct from ours. Hence **communication breaks down**. A person in social isolation cannot justify his uses of rules in the absence of an institution of **rule-following**. The institution of **rule-following** on the Kripkean model presupposes a community of **rule-followers**. Therefore, one needs a community to justify the use of rules. Kripke insists that as members of a community of **rule-followers**, we can agree on what we take to be correct uses of **rules**. A person in linguistic isolation, i.e., social isolation cannot follow rules, since there is nothing that he can call the correct use of words. Thus, for Kripke, the very need of standards of correctness in following a rule or using a word entails that

language is **community-based** and so a private language in the sense of a language developed by a person in isolation or in the sense of a language that is **unintelligible** to persons other than its **inventor-user** is impossible.

Developing the above arguments, **Kripke** finds out that it is not difficult to take **Robbinsqn Crusoe**, the physically isolated individual as a **rule - follower**. That is to say, we can regard **Crusoe** as a person who must have participated in some community **life**. Of course, the rules that **Crusoe** follows are different from ours since our experience is different from his experience. This, however, does not preclude his belonging to the linguistic community in a very broad sense. He and we belong to very similar forms of life. So **Kripke** says "our community can assert of any individual that he follows a rule if he passes the tests for **rule-following** applied to any member of the **community**". This suggests that **Crusoe** acts in the same way in which a rule-follower like any of us acts except with the difference that his responses do not agree with ours. **Crusoe's** physical isolation does not stand in the way of his being called a member of a community in this larger sense.

Thus the community **interpretation** of **rule-following** is established by **Kripke** as the only viable **Wittgensteinian** response to the sceptical challenge. According to this solution the concept of following a rule can be applied to an individual only to the extent he belongs to some community. **Rule-following** is thus a social practice.

### III. WITTGENSTEIN'S CRITIQUE OF RULE-SCEPTICISM

#### 8. *The Illusoriness of the Paradox*

Now the question arises; Does the passage 201 in the *Investigations* contain a sceptical paradox as Kripke interprets it to contain? Kripke with a sense of finality has come to the conclusion that Wittgenstein has presented a paradox at *Investigations*, sect. 201. But what sort of paradox Wittgenstein talks of ? Is it sceptical? And if so, can it be answered or not? Kripke supposes that it **cannot**. Thus scepticism remains a permanent challenge to the very idea of **rule-following**.

The paradox mentioned at PI sect. 201 is formulated in two ways: first, it is shown that "no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule", and secondly, if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. From this the paradoxical conclusion follows: "So there would be neither accord nor **conflict**." Hence scepticism about **rule-following**. The formulations of the paradox are slightly different from each other. Whereas the first formulation is in categorical terms, the second is a conditional. The effect of the first is to suggest that all actions which are **interpretable as rule-according** are also **interpretable as violating the rule**. The second suggests that if an action is **interpretable as in accord with the rule**, then the same action also can be interpreted as being in discord with it. The paradox is inevitable if the same set of actions are twice interpreted in

opposite ways. The net effect of the two formulations is the same, that is, to show that there is nothing called "accord or conflict" with a rule. Now the question is: Is this paradox genuine or is it a play of words? Again, can it be dissolved or not? Kripke thinks it is genuine and sceptical at that. Besides, according to him, it is non-dissolvable, so all our rule-following actions are ultimately paradoxical. But Wittgenstein had a different approach to these paradoxes altogether. According to him, they are based on grammatical illusions and are, therefore, mere play of words. Wittgenstein writes: "Such a contradiction is of interest only because it has tormented people, and because this shows both how tormenting problems can grow out of language, and what kind of things can torment us" (RFM, III, 13). Paradoxes, therefore, grow out of language and can be a mere play of words. They signal that there is a conceptual (grammatical) muddle involved in the so-called a paradox or contradiction.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, for Wittgenstein, the paradoxes are never genuine logical blunders and can easily be dissolved by 'clarification of concepts'- by looking straight into the functions of language. Wittgenstein shows that 'a paradox' is a paradox only in defective surroundings. If this is so, then every paradox is a disguised non-sense and can be dissolved. Wittgenstein in this regard points out that "something surprising, a paradox, is a paradox only in a particular, as it were defective, surroundings. One needs to complete this surrounding in such a way that what looked like a paradox no longer seems one" (RFM, VII, 43). That is, a

paradoxical sentence looks like a **contradiction** because of an inherent grammatical mischief; the mischief is in the misuse of the logic of language. Once the grammar is made transparent and perspicuous, the **contradiction** disappears.

The rule-paradox is no exception. Wittgenstein questions its authenticity even in PI, sect. 201 itself which Kripke has not taken note of. Wittgenstein writes:

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 shows 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.

Hence there is an inclination to say: every action according to the rule is an **interpretation**. But we ought to restrict the term "**interpretation**" to the substitution of one expression of the rule for another (PI, sect. 201).

This "**misunderstanding**"<sup>54</sup> which Wittgenstein refers to here is the thought that **understanding** or grasping a rule always involves an **interpretation**. This idea is confused since it conflates two distinct notions.<sup>55</sup> Firstly, **interpreting** a rule consists in substituting one expression of the rule for another. It is a fact that in order to understand something precisely or to make some concepts more explicit and compact we often need explanations and **interpretations**. An **interpretation** may, therefore, be seen as a rule which one employs to enable one to follow the original rule. The second notion is that **understanding** or grasping a rule, on the other hand, is an ability, a **rule-competence** which is exhibited in one's



application of the rule. This rule - competence consists simply in being able to act in accord with the rule. When the notions of **interpretation** and **understanding** are conflated, we encounter a queer situation. We search for an **interpretation** for every case of **understanding** of a rule. That is, we think that every case of grasping a rule involves an **interpretation**. When one **interpretation** fails, we search for another and so on. We assume, mistakenly though, that all these **interpretations** are standing behind one another. This must be a **semantically** unwelcome situation, according to **Wittgenstein**.

The reason why Wittgenstein finds it intolerable is that one does not need to interpret a rule in order to follow it; whenever one follows a rule, one's ability to apply that rule correctly must be dependent on his **understanding**. But his **understanding** is not derived from a **mystrious interpretation** that he has already given to the rule. If one follows a rule, it may be conceded,<sup>99</sup> one's knowledge of what the rule means in that context may be derived from an **interpretation** of that rule or it may not. **Similarly**, if one interprets the rule, one's knowledge of his **interpretation** may be based on a further **interpretation**. However, the chain of **interpretations** at some point must come to an end if one is to follow the rule **determinately**. One cannot go on interpreting a rule *ad infinitum*, since this will not permit any **rule-following** at all. According to Wittgenstein one must follow a rule without **interpretation**. **Interpretations** are not semantically necessary for **understanding** and following a rule. So Wittgenstein remarks: "There is a way of grasping a rule which is

not an interpretation" (PI sect. 201). Besides, according to him, any interpretation still hangs in the air along with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support. "Interpretations by themselves do not determine meaning" (PI, sect. 195). Interpretations themselves presuppose meaning and cannot constitute it. Thus the paradox at PI sect. 201 disappears once we see how the notion of interpretation misleads us in deciphering the meaning of rule and rule-following. However, this necessitates further probing into the nature of interpretation.

## 9. *Semantics of Interpretations*

Wittgenstein has taken the so-called semantics of interpretations<sup>57</sup> to task for the misunderstanding generated by the paradox. The so-called interpretations meant to solve the problem of rule-following are really misinterpretations of some sort. And interpretation is generally a substitution of one sign for another. It is explaining one sign by another. There is nothing mysterious about ordinary interpretations that are required for understanding. But if it is said that every understanding of a rule requires a particular interpretation, then that smells fishy. That kind of interpretation is ill-conceived. Wittgenstein writes:

But an interpretation is something that is given in signs. So if one were to say "Any sentence still stands in need of an interpretation" that would mean: no sentence can be understood without a rider (PG, sect. 9, cf. Z sect. 229).

This situation arises only when we have allowed the ordinary interpretations to assume mysterious roles in bringing out the mental contents involved in a sign. Interpretation in this case

becomes an ascription of meaning previously unheard of. Wittgenstein thinks this sort of **interpretation** is not only not warranted, but also misleading. It leads us away from the exact meaning of a sign which is in the sign itself. **Interpretations** try to add something to the sign but it cannot add anything, since it itself requires another **interpretation** and so on *ad infinitum*. Malcolm Budd has put it so eloquently in the following passage:

Just as the original sign can be variously interpreted, so can any **interpretation** of the sign. Hence it is not a requirement of hearing a sign with **understanding** that the sign should be interpreted: an **interpretation** yields only something of the same nature as the original sign, and an **interpretation** does not determine what if anything the sign is taken to mean.

Thus **interpretations** are unwarranted and, **semantically** speaking, useless. They do not determine meaning. That is why, the temptation to say "**every** action according to the rule is an **interpretation**" (PI, sect. 201) is so disastrous, according to Wittgenstein. This is the reason for which Wittgenstein says:

But we ought to **restrict** the term **interpretation** to the substitution of one expression of the rule for another (PI, sect. 201).

This restriction amounts to abandoning the so-called semantics of **interpretations** in favour of the semantics of the sign and its use.

Kripke has not taken due note of the last two passages of PI sect. 201, and has made them completely irrelevant in the exegesis of the paradox-passage. Kripke willingly falls a victim of oversight when he claims that Wittgenstein was out to succumb

to the sceptical paradox. Kripke lends credence to the semantics of interpretations when he admits that in rule-following one ought to wait for an interpretation. At least the sceptic allows for the possibility of a variety of interpretations. Wittgenstein has therefore warned us of the futility of the method of interpretation when he writes:

How can he know how he is to continue a pattern by himself - Whatever instructions you give him? - Well, how do I know? - If that means "Have I reasons?" the answer is: my reasons will soon give out. And then I shall act, without reasons (PI, sect. 211).

This shows that asking for a reason is as good as offering an interpretation, and since reasons come to an end, interpretations must come to an end. We do not have always reasons for following a rule, so that we follow it without interpretation. That is, we do not choose to follow such a rule out of considerations of utility or practical advantages. For the notion of choice implies a deliberative selection among alternatives and consequently, the sceptical uncertainty will follow with the possibility of "quus - rule" replacing "plus - rule" or there being uncertainty between "grue" and "green".<sup>59</sup> This leads

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to indeterminacy in rule - following like the one Quine faces in translation. Meaning-indeterminacy is much more serious than indeterminacy of translation, since the former denies the possibility of rule-following itself. If alternative meanings are possible then it is impossible to ascribe any determinate meaning. Hence rule-following will suffer the disability of not taking off at all. However, according to Wittgenstein, this is exactly what does not happen when one follows a rule without

interpretation. Wittgenstein, thus, says: "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" (RFM, IV, 29), And "It must be like this, does not mean: it will be like this. On the contrary: 'it will be like *this*' chooses between one possibility and another. 'It must be like *this*' sees only one *possibility*" (RFM, IV, 31). For example, when one continues the series in following a rule '+2' it is not the case that he first finds several *possibilities* and then adopts some method or procedure for determining which of these alternatives is correct, Wittgenstein has ruled this out from the *rule-following* practice, since one does not find reasons before following a *rule*. But, this does not mean that following a rule is arbitrary and irrational. *Rule-following* is as it is - it is a practice, spontaneous, creative and *grammatically organized*. Choices or reasons have an *end*. But grammar does

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not. Grammar specifies what one does in following a rule.

#### 10. *"I obey the rule blindly"*

Kripke's sceptical problem arises precisely because he believes that Wittgenstein allows for the possibility of various *interpretations*. Kripke's contention is that reasons can be offered for an act of *rule-following*. Hence the sceptic is allowed to question those reasons. Scepticism ends up with showing that *rule-following* has no rational basis and so must be *impossible*. But this goes against the spirit of Wittgenstein's objection to the so-called "*reasons*" in *rule-following*. More significantly, it goes against what we discussed as the grammar

of rule-following. Wittgenstein's objections are based on considerations which are not sceptical. The following passages are worth considering:

"But the initial segment of a series obviously admitted of various interpretations.... 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 even could doubt... (PI sect. 213).

And, ... I can easily imagine someone always doubting before he opened his front door whether an abyss did not yawn behind it, and making sure about it before he went through the door ... but that does not make me doubt in the same case. (PI, sect. 84).

The first passage tells us that the chain of interpretations must come to an end, and one must follow a rule without interpretation. One is not required to offer a reason as to why one does follow it. There is a sense of finality about one's following a rule. But this does not preclude the possibility that one needs explanations or clarifications for the sake of the perspicuity of the grammar of a rule. There is a logical possibility of doubting as to what the correct rule is. But this does not license one to doubt wholesale every formulation of a rule. In that case no rule-following will be possible. The second passage quoted shows the irrationality of the doubt about the matters of fact of life. Such doubts are raised only when one has gone crazy. Similarly, doubting that rule-following is possible at all is no less crazy. In terms of familiarity and perspicuity, rule-following is no less a matter of fact.

sign in various ways, we are tempted to think that there is a gap that requires filling by an interpretation. We are tempted to feel that there is a single interpretation which fills the bill though we have surely been misled so far. This leads us to search for the unique interpretation - the single fact - that satisfies all the requirements. Kripke has glorified this fact as the one that must be available if the sceptical doubt is to be resisted. Besides, for Kripke, this must be the fact that legitimizes all our previous meanings and will sanction our future rule-following. This, however, leads the rule-follower into infinite regress of interpretations and facts. To escape from such a blunder, Wittgenstein suggests that "there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation" (PI, sect. 201). More significantly, interpretations come to an end, and all that remains is what we do. Wittgenstein tells this clearly in the following remarks:

"How am I able to obey a rule?" - if this is not a question about causes, then it is about the justification for my following in the way I do. If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bed rock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: "This is simply what I do" (PI, sect. 217) And ... when I obey a rule, I do not choose. I obey the rule *blindly* (PI, sect. 219)

That is to say, there is ultimately the rule that matters and not the interpretations, reasons, and justifications. The rule simply guides the follower to the grammatically intended result. The *absolute* character of the rule rules out the doubtings, hesitations and half-heartedness. "When someone whom I am afraid of orders me to continue the series, I act quickly, with perfect

certainty, and the lack of reasons does not **trouble** me" (P1, sect. 212).

The sceptic ignores the idea that "there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an **interpretation**" and stresses the fact that "**every** action according to the rule is an **interpretation**". The sceptic's mistake lies in his thinking that every rule needs to be interpreted before it is followed and, as Kripke emphasises, there must be a **fact** to be brought out by this **interpretation**. The sceptic sees a gap between a rule and its application, and so he demands filling the gap through **interpretation** which contingently makes the relationship possible. But this **gap** is a misnomer if the rule and its application are seen more logically.

#### 11. *The Facts: Kripke's False Model*

The Kripkean sceptic demands that there be fact - a superfact - that can bridge the gap between rule and its application. The sceptic despairs that there is no such fact, no such condition either in the 'internal' or 'external' world.<sup>63</sup> Hence there can be nothing called meaning and rule-following. The so-called gap between rule (language) and application (reality) remains. There is no **super-semantic** fact that can bring the two together according to the sceptic. Wittgenstein, however, never finds such a gap between rule and its application or more generally between language and the world. There is no language **independently** of the world (reality) or the world **independently** of language. Languages expresses the world in so



many ways. The world is what it is because it finds expression in language. There is no logical gap between the two. There is a harmony between language and the world which is expressed by grammar. Wittgenstein writes, " Like everything metaphysical the harmony between thought and reality is to be found in the grammar of the language" (Z, sect. 55).

Baker and Hacker,<sup>64</sup> have rightly contended that rules and their applications are *internally* related. By "internal" they seem to mean what is logical or grammatical. They argue against Kripke's sceptical interpretation of rules and the separation of rules from rule-following. For them " to understand a rule is to know what acts count as correct applications and what acts are incorrect ones".<sup>65</sup> One cannot separate 'grasping a rule' from 'knowledge of how to apply it.' Understanding a rule consists in knowing how to apply a rule correctly. Thus, obeying a rule is a practice (PI sect. 201) and so grasping a rule is manifested in "obeying the rule" and "going against it" (*Ibid*). This is to suggest that rule and the practice of applying it are internally related. Rules must be connected with rule - following practices in a logical way. Kripke's sceptic, however, appears to destroy this logical relation in favour of a contingent relation which can be subjected to various interpretations. The paradox arises because of the supposed distance between the expression of rules and the actions in accordance with the rules. The paradox will disappear if there is a clarification of the relation between rule and its application.

Against the sceptic Wittgenstein has held that there is no causal.<sup>66</sup> connection between the expression of a rule and its applications. He, therefore, clearly insists that "what we call 'obeying a rule'" would not be possible if the rule were followed only once; for "it is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which a report was made, an order given or understood: and so on" (PI sect. 199). Understanding or grasping a rule is an ability which is exhibited in one's application of the rule. My understanding of a signpost is, for example, manifested in how I respond to it on the various occasions I encounter it. I understand a word if I can make use of it in a certain way in an appropriate context; if I can be the "master of a technique" (PI sect. 199). Understanding is not a mental state or process. It is a mastery of a technique, that is, it consists in how one puts concepts to practice. But a practice is not *mere* action; it is a regular action in accord with a rule; "not something that happens once, no matter of what kind" (RFM, VI, 34).

It is this practice which is all that matters and can satisfy the sceptic. It is a fact that rules are followed under normative conditions, that is, where there is regularity of linguistic responses. That is why "a game, language, a rule is an institution" (RFM, VI, 32). McGinn<sup>7</sup> calls this the "multiple-application thesis", according to which signs must have been applied often enough so that there is a "regular use" of signs, a "custom". To say that this is the fact which can be adduced in support of the rule-follower against the sceptic is

only to point out that rule-following is a well-grounded normative phenomenon which brooks no sceptical resentment. McGinn<sup>68</sup> has rightly pointed out that this fact is neither a mental **nor** a behavioural fact, and so is not subject to the sceptic's attack. It is a fact of a normative kind - a fact which we are inclined to recognize under normal **rule-application** situations. McGinn writes:

At any rate, if we want to talk in terms of facts, it seems that Wittgenstein does suggest that **understanding** consists in a fact, the fact of having an ability to use signs,<sup>69</sup>

Kripke has not recognized this basic fact about us as **rule-follower** in his search for the rationale of **rule-scepticism**. If the only fact relevant for the sceptic were mental and that too regarding one's past mental history, then it would have been not only too narrow but also too tenuous a **fact**. That deserves little **attention**. The fact - the encompassing fact - is that we follow the rules - both singly and collectively - as a matter of **rule-competence** and **practice**. It is an ultimate grammatical (logical) fact about us.

Wittgenstein has excluded from **rule-following** all superficial views of intuition, **pragmatic** considerations, instincts or **dispositional** contents. The only relevant fact recognized by Wittgenstein is the normative or grammatical fact. It pertains to the grammar of **rule-following**, and not to its contingent and causal **manifestations**.

Wittgenstein writes:

"Then can whatever I do be brought into accord with the rule?" - Let me ask this: what has the expression of a rule - say a sign-post got-to do with my actions? What

sort of connexion is there here ? - Well, perhaps this one: I have been trained to react to this sign in a particular way, and now I do so react it (PI sect. 198, Cf. RFM, VI 35, 38).

This 'reaction' mentioned above is not a causal state, but what I am compelled to do in the normative situation. Of course, that involves teaching and training. But it is not a mechanical habit or disposition.<sup>70</sup> Wittgenstein, therefore, writes:

If a rule does not **compell** you, then you **aren't following** a rule. But how am I supposed to be following it; if I can after all follow it as I like? (RFM, VII, 47).

Wittgenstein further explains:

It may now be said: "The way the formula is meant determines which steps are to be **taken**". What is the criterion for the way the formula is meant? It is, for example, the kind of way we always use it, the way we are taught to use it . . . . *That will* be how meaning it can determine the steps in advance (PI, sect. 190).

This is, in short, to explain how the fact of **rule-following** is logically linked with the use i.e., the **language-game**. To follow a rule is to engage oneself in a **language-game**. "Following a rule is a particular **language-game**" (RFM, VIII, 52). Our rules and concepts rest on a "**scaffolding of facts**" (Z sect. 350, OC sect. 615-19), which include not only **fact** about us but also about the world.

Our rules and concepts are coeval with very general facts of nature. But these facts are frequently overlooked simply because of their generality and familiarity. Facts are always concerning the objects. So if objects lose their stability and continuity concepts would become both impossible and pointless. That is to say, the concept of length and the technique of measurement, for example, will not be possible if there were no stability in

nature (cf. RFM, VI I, 1-2). Under unstable **circumstances**, our rule 12 inches = 1 foot will not apply and be pointless. So our whole system of measurement would collapse (RFM, III, 74-5). The facts in the world, however, do not causally constitute our concepts. They form the background against which our concepts and rules become significant. Wittgenstein says:

If the formation of concepts can be explained by facts of nature, should we not be interested, not in grammar, but rather in that in nature which is the basis of grammar? - Our interest certainly includes the correspondence between concepts and very general facts of nature (such facts as mostly do not strike us because of their generality). But our interest does not fall back upon these possible causes of the formation of concepts; we are not doing natural science; nor yet natural history - since we can also invent fictitious natural history for our purposes (Pl, II, xii).

Thus our concepts and rules have perfect logical adjustment with the world. **Kripke's** quest for facts might be satisfied with these facts which are before our eyes. Besides, those facts which concern our concepts and rules are logical facts which perfectly agree (fit) with the facts of nature. In view of this, the sceptic cannot talk about ideal or super facts which are a misnomer and an unnecessary verbosity, to say the least. These metaphysical facts have to be replaced by the facts which determine **concept-formation**. These facts consist in our inexorable practices (i.e. facts of natural history) and also our common agreement which is not an agreement in opinion, but agreement in our forms of life (Pl, sect. 241).

## **12. The Limits of Scepticism**

Now, then, the question is: does scepticism survive with regard to **rule-following** ? From the epistemic point of view, the

sceptic's **claim** is that we do not. *know* what is in accord with a rule which we follow without **interpretation**. That is, we do not know whether we are following a rule correctly or incorrectly in the absence of any determinate fact about our meaning and **intention**. This form of **rule-scepticism** has been highlighted by **Kripke**. But we have seen so far that this cannot be ascribed to Wittgenstein. It is not that Wittgenstein is unaware of this problem. But it is not the problem that Wittgenstein has taken as **unresolvable**. Of course, Kripke has canvassed for a sceptical solution in **Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations**. But to admit a sceptical solution is to admit the legitimacy of the sceptical problem itself. The **rule-sceptic**, like the epistemic sceptic, does not deny the practice of **rule-following** at all. But he claims that we follow a rule without **interpretation** and so we have no *reason* for what we take to be the rule, that is, we do not have any rational ground for following that rule and **not** some other rule. The sceptic faces an impasse in **rule-following activities**.

Wittgenstein has always kept the epistemic sceptic on the defensive, for, according to him, our **knowledge-claims** are not only not without grounds, but are embedded in our form of life. He writes in *On certainty*: "One says " I know" when one is ready to give compelling grounds. "**I know**" relates to a possibility of demonstrating the truth ..." (OC, sect. 243). And "If someone believes something, we needn't always be able to answer the question" why he believes it", but if he knows something, then the question "**how** does he know?" must be capable of being

answered" (OC, sect. 550). Knowledge (i.e. knowing the reality) is not an irrational phenomenon. It is widely and firmly based in our life. Wittgenstein writes:

My life shews that I know or am certain that there is a chair over there, or a **door**, and so on. - I tell a friend e.g. "Take that chair over there", "shut the door", etc., etc., (PC, sect. 7).

That is to say, knowledge is not one of the aspects of our life which we can coherently deny at all. To deny that knowledge is possible is to affirm a kind of knowledge. This is obviously a **self-contradiction** - a **self-refuting** thesis on the part of sceptic's claim.<sup>71</sup> Wittgenstein rules out global scepticism because he thinks it makes no sense to doubt everything. He attempts to refute the sceptical arguments by pointing out that if we did not accept some facts as undoubted, we could not proceed as we do. If everything were doubted, **understanding** would be impossible. We do presuppose some kind of certainty which we exclude from the possibility of doubt in general. The examples Wittgenstein offers include such statements as '12 x 12 = 144', 'I have just had lunch', 'I have never been on the moon'. What these examples show is that the sceptical doubt about everything is impossible. Moreover, '**the** game of doubting itself presupposes certainty' (OC, sect. 115). These '**undoubted truths**' are the grounds of **justification** of all that we assert. They provide objective grounds for our system of beliefs. They come directly into play in our **knowledge-claims**. Answering the sceptic in this way, Wittgenstein stresses the fact that **philosophical** doubt<sup>72</sup> does not get foothold in our ordinary way

of behaving i.e. in our forms of life. He says:

If someone doubted whether the earth existed a hundred years ago, I should not understand, for this reason: I would not know what such a person would still **allow** to be counted as evidence and what not (OC, sect. 231).

The rule-sceptic is not in a happy position either. He too shares the weakness of the epistemic sceptic. He claims that there is no **rule-following** at all since we can never be sure as to what step we shall take in applying a rule. Kripke sums up the sceptic's position as one of complete despair and disbelief in the rational **justifiability** of **rule-following**. To repeat Kripke's words: "**There** can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word. Each new application is a **leap** in the dark; any present intention could be **interpreted** so as to accord with anything we may choose to **do**!"<sup>73</sup> But one can see that the sceptic fails to see the logicity i.e. normativity of our rule-following practice. He does not see the logical certainty and necessity underlying our **rule-following** behaviour. The rule-sceptic's search for **justification** pushes the necessity further and further back by extending the chain of **interpretation**. The sceptic's demand for **justification** in following a rule is, however, virtually incoherent. He demands **justification** where it is not available. Wittgenstein makes it clear that the demand for **justification** must come to an end. Wittgenstein says:

The danger here, I believe, is one of giving a **justification** of our procedure where there is no such thing as <sup>we</sup> **justification** and we ought simply to have said: that's how <sup>a</sup> do it (RFM, III, 74).

And in the *Investigation* he says:



Was I justified in drawing these consequences? What is called a **justification** here? - How is the word "**justification**" used? Describe **language-games**. From these you will also be able to see the importance of being justified (PI, sect 486).

To follow a rule without **justification** is not to commit a logical blunder. It is not to forfeit one's right to use it. We do perfectly follow rules without offering any **justification**. It is not because we are incapable of providing **justification**, but because there are no **justifications** as such. Our regular practices prove the certainty of our **knowledge-claims** about the rules. We are drilled in counting numbers, and calculating mathematical **complexities**. These activities themselves make sure of what I can do in the next instance. This is **revealing** in the following passage:

What we call "**counting**" is an important part of our life's activities. Counting and calculating are not - e.g. simply a **pasttime**. Counting (and that means; counting like *this*) is a technique that is employed daily in the most various operations of our lives. And that is why we learn to count as we do: with endless practice, with merciless exactitude; that is why it is inexorably insisted that we shall **all** say "**two**" after "**one**", "**three**" after "**two**" and so on. - But is this counting only a use, then: isn't there also some truth **corresponding** to this **sequence**?" The *truth* is that counting has proved to pay (RFM, I, 4).

The sceptic raises the question of **justification** where we should take the facts of **rule-following** as ultimate and inexorable. They constitute the limits of our activities and **language-games**. In this way the **justification** of our knowledge claims (e.g. how do we know which rule is to be followed) comes to an end when we reach the very forms of life which enmesh with our **language-games**. As Wittgenstein puts it:

Disputes do not break out (among **mathematicians**, say) over the question whether a rule has been obeyed or not. People don't come to blows over it, for example. *That is part of*

*the framework on which the working of our language is based*  
(for example, in giving **descriptions**) <PI, sect. 240)  
(*italics mine*).

The sceptic challenges this framework of our language and faces the charge of **being** illogical. Wittgenstein has refuted scepticism at the very beginning of his **logico-linguistic investigations** as follows:

Scepticism is *not* irrefutable but obviously nonsensical when it likes to raise doubts where no question can be asked. For doubt can exist only where a question exist; a question only where an answer exists, and an answer only where something can be said (TLP. 6.51 cf. NB, p. 44).

This should explain why, according to Wittgenstein, scepticism, including **rule-scepticism** is illogical and ultimately **non-sensical**. Scepticism is **non-sensical** precisely because if it is true, it cannot be expressed or said in language. Our language, as it is, excludes scepticism. This **anti-sceptical** argument in general concerns the *limits* of the sceptical doubt, given the fact that, for Wittgenstein, doubt has itself to be situated in a **language-game**, and so has to presuppose *certainty*. The limits of knowledge and also of doubt can be redrawn in language and therefore, there is no scope for the sceptic to disown the conceptual system which legitimizes doubting itself. Wittgenstein's **anti-sceptical** argument thus provides the right way to meet the sceptic on his own ground by raising questions about the legitimacy of doubting itself. It is not difficult to realize that the sceptic cannot be seriously persuaded by the argument that the sceptical question is **non-sensical**. But that only shows that global scepticism cannot be taken seriously.

## NOTES

1. Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1982). Henceforward to be abbreviated as WRPL.
2. By 'fact' Kripke supposedly means some determinate evidence - mental or otherwise - which can vouchsafe for the happening or otherwise of another fact. In Kripke's argument the role of 'fact' in mind plays a crucial role. See WRPL, pp. 7-22.
3. WSRPL, p.13.
4. By quus function Kripke means the function defined as follows:  
$$x \oplus y = x+y, \text{ if } x,y < 57$$
$$= 5 \text{ otherwise.}$$
5. WRPL, p. 14.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
10. See Colin McGinn *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1984), p. 62. McGinn writes: "Kripke's sceptic is not (primarily) interested in question of certainty, knowledge or justification - his real interest is 'ontological' or 'mentaphysical' (p.62 fn).
11. *Ibid.*, p. . 62.
12. WRPL, pp. 26-37.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
15. Behavioural **dispositions** constitute what Quine calls the **stimulus-response** network. This network underlies the behaviourist account of meaning and **understanding**. This account seems to be far from satisfactory as a correct account of meaning. See Quine, *Word and Object* (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass, 1960), chapt. II.
16. The discussion on the fact of matter underlying semantical questions of meaning, translation and **interpretation** is typically Quine's. Quine's own conclusion is that there are no such facts. See, Quine, *Ontological Relativity and other Essays*, (Columbia University Press, New York and London, 1969). Also, see Quine, "The facts of the **Matter**" in *Essays on the Philosophy of Quine*, eds. R.S. Sahan and Ch. Swoyer, (The Harvester Press, Hassocks, 1977), pp.155-169.
17. Cf. WRPL, pp. 41-45.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
19. Cf. McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, pp. 59-92.
20. WRPL, p. 54.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
22. See Frege, "Thoughts", in *Logical Investigations* ed. P.T. Geach (Blackwell, Oxford, 1977), pp. 1-30.
23. Cf. WRPL, p. 54.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
25. See Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1888), Book I, Part IV, Sect. I.

Hume's strategy consists in conceding the foundationlessness of our ordinary causal beliefs while accepting their practical utility.

26. WRPL, p. 66.

27. A. J. Ayer, *Ludwig Wittgenstein*, (Penguin Books, 1985), p.72.

28. WRPL, p. 67.

29. See Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* ed. L.A.Selby-Bigge, Book I, Part IV, sect. 11, p.187 on the nature of our belief in the existence of a body. He writes: "We may ask, what causes induce us to **believe** in the existence of a body? but it is vain to ask, whether there be body or not ? That is a point, which we must take for granted in **all** our reasonings". (*Ibid.*, p. 2).

30. Cf. WRPL, p. 66.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-113.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

36. Kant's **transcendental** reasoning can **equally** be called a straight solution. Kant provided a transcendental **justification** of our beliefs in causation and knowledge of the external world. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N.K. Smith, (Macmillan, London, 1929).

37. See WRPL, p. 74.

38. The *Tractatus*, in fact, is committed to the truth-

conditional structure of meaning as it is clear from the following statement: "To understand a proposition means to know what is the case of it is true (one can understand it, **therefore**, without knowing whether it is true)". (TLP 4.024).

39. WRPL, p. 78.

40. The notion of **justification** is central to the anti-realist interpretation of the later Wittgenstein. Kripke agreed with Dummett that Wittgenstein's anti-realism brings in verification or **justification** to the centre of semantics. See Dummett, "Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mathematics", in *Wittgenstein : The Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G. Pitcher, (Macmillan, London, 1966), pp. 420-47. Also see Dummett, "Truth", in *Philosophical Logic*, ed. P.F. strawson (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1967).

41. WRPL, p. 73.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

43. *Ibid.* , p. 97.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

45. *Ibid.*

46. See S. Blackburn, "The Individual Strikes Back", *Synthese*, 58(1984), pp. 281-301 for a discussion on the individual's **place** in the community in the Kripkean interpretation.

47. See P. Pettit, "The Reality of Rule-following", *Mind*, 99(1990), pp. 1-21, for a discussion on the notion of the semantic legitimacy of **rule-following**.

48. WRPL, p. 97.

49. *Ibid.* p. 89.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
53. Wittgenstein treated the paradoxes e.g. the paradox of the liar, the paradox of the classes, etc. with utmost contempt. He argued that they are based on grammatical puzzlement. See *Remarks on Foundations of Mathematics*, VII, 43. Wittgenstein writes: ... a paradox, is a paradox only in a particular as it were defective, surrounding". (*Ibid.*).
54. For further elaboration on this misunderstanding see Andrew Lewis, "Wittgenstein and Rule-Scepticism", *Philosophical Quarterly*, 38 (1988), pp. 280-304. See also, Malcolm Budd, "Wittgenstein on Meaning, Interpretation and Rules" *Synthese*, 58 (1984), pp. 303-323.
55. See Lewis, "Wittgenstein and Rule-Scepticism", p. 285.
56. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 286.
57. See for more details on interpretation Malcolm Budd, "Wittgenstein on Meaning, Interpretation and Rules," pp. 314-316.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 315.
59. See Nelson Goodman, *Fact, Fiction and Forecast*, (Bobbs Merrill, 1973), pp. 73-81.
60. See Quine, *Word and Object*, (MIT Press, Cambridge-Mass, 1960), chapt. II.
61. For detailed discussion on the grammaticality of rule-following, see Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1985). Also see

- their "Critical Study; on misunderstanding Wittgenstein: Kripke's Private Language Argument", *Synthese*, 58(1984), pp. 407-450.
62. For more discussion on 'doubt' and 'certainty' and their relative merits see Wittgenstein *On certainty*, sects. 342, 354. . .
63. WRPL., p. 69.
64. Cf. Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, pp. 86-91.
65. See Baker and Hacker, *Scepticism, Rules and Language*, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1984), pp. 100-102.
66. Wittgenstein has repeatedly rejected the causal account of rule-following. Neither the physicalist model nor the mentalist model has escaped the causalist bias. Causes have been superseded by reasons in the normative account of rule-following. See PI, sect. 217.
67. See McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, p. 37.
68. Cf. *Ibid.*, chapt. 11.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
70. See *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.
71. See Bary Stroud, *The Significance of Philosophical Scepticism*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1984). Also see R. Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981), for discussion on the notion of epistemic scepticism and the self-contradiction involved in it.
72. See Norman Malcolm, *Wittgenstein: Nothing is Hidden*, (Blackwell, 1986), pp. 201-235.
73. WRPL., p. 55.



## CHAPTER IV

### AGAINST COMMUNITARIANISM: A RE-EXAMINATION OF KRIPKE'S SCEPTICAL SOLUTION

In this chapter I propose to re-examine Kripke's so-called sceptical solution to the sceptical problem. In the last chapter the main theme of the sceptical solution has been outlined. The sceptical solution is, according to Kripke, the natural reaction to Wittgenstein's sceptical paradox. Like Hume, Wittgenstein is said to be offering the solution that scepticism can be checked and overcome only within a communitarian framework. The paradox of rule-following can, therefore, be contained within the framework that enjoins upon all the rule-followers a stable agreement in the judgements of rule-following. My response, in this chapter, will be to show that the communitarian solution is only a half way house to the proper solution to the sceptical problem.

#### 1. *Communitarianism: An Outline of the Sceptical Solution*

What Kripke has characterized as the sceptical solution to Wittgenstein's rule-paradox can broadly be called the communitarian view. According to this view, the sceptic's radical conclusions about language and rule-following can be avoided by a social interpretation of the concept of following a rule. That is, if rule-following is considered as a community-practice, i.e. a socially sanctioned custom, then there can be an

assurance that in computing '68+57' one will arrive at 125 and not at '5'. According to Kripke, Wittgenstein maintains that what it is for someone to be **following** a rule e.g. the rule of addition cannot be explained without reference to the **rule-following** community. The concept of following a rule can therefore, be applied to a person only by virtue of his membership in a community. From this it follows that following a rule is an activity in a social setting and that there must be *public* criteria for whether there is a rule that a person is following. This logically rules out the possibility of a private language. The **communitarians**<sup>1</sup> following Kripke argue that rules and rule-following develop only in a community through its practices, customs, and habits. The community decision functions as the '**court of last appeal**' in following a rule and language learning. Stating the **communitarian** position Kripke writes:

In fact, our actual community is (roughly) uniform in its practice with respect to addition. Any individual who claims to have mastered the concept of addition **will** be judged by the community to have done so if his particular <sup>2</sup> responses agree with those of the community in enough cases...

Thus, for Kripke, the community is the highest **arbitor** of the correctness of the particular **rule-following** act. The community sets the rule as the standard for all future **applications**, and so **rule-following** is a community sanctioned application of the rule. It, as Kripke puts it, "places a substantive restriction on the behaviour of each individual, and is not compatible with just any

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behaviour he may choose\*.' An individual passes as a rule-follower if he or she agrees with most of the members of the community in enough cases. **All** deviant cases are those which

fail to pass the test. A particular **rule-follower's** deviance is a challenge to the **rule-following** community itself. So, Kripke says :

When the community denies of someone that he is following certain **rules**, it excludes him from various transactions such as the one between the grocer and the customer. It indicates that it cannot rely on his behaviour in such **transactions**.<sup>4</sup>

Thus the **communitarian** view entails that **rule-following** is necessarily patterned on the actual communal practices. These practices have a stable existence in so far as the routine **rule-following** is concerned.

Does this social character of **rule-following** determine the truth of our **rule-following** behaviour? For the **communitarian** the answer is yes, because for him, the communal practice provides the needed **justification** conditions for following the rule. That is, the communal agreement is the sole condition as to why a particular **rule-follower** follows the rule of addition and not that of quaddition. These **justification** conditions, according to Kripke, coincide with the actual agreement of the community on what the rule is and what are to **applications**. So, in Kripke's words, "**the community attributes a concept to an individual so long as he exhibits sufficient conformity, under test circumstances, to the behaviour of the community**".<sup>5</sup> This shows that the **ascribability** of a concept to an individual is derived from the prior social agreement. Thus the underlying argument of the **communitarian** view is that the individual's deviance in **rule-following** can be effectively checked by the community in view of the **latter's** normative authority over the former. The normative

authority issues from the fact that nothing in the community can pass as a rule if that is not obeyed in the actually endorsed way. As Kripke puts it, "what follows from these **assertibility** conditions is *not* that the answer everyone gives to an addition problem is, by definition, the correct one, but rather the platitude that, if everyone agrees upon a certain answer, then no one will feel justified in calling the answer wrong".<sup>6</sup> That is, there is no other normative dimension to **rule-following** than the one commonly agreed by the members of the community as part of its form of **life**. Thus, according to Kripke's Wittgenstein, when one encounters the question; why is a **language-game** played or a set of rules obeyed? I can only say; "This is simply what I do" (PI sect, 217) because "what has to be accepted, the given, is - so one could say - *forms of life*" (PI, II, P. 226). The **communitarian** position thus commits us to a consensus<sup>7</sup>-based doctrine of rules and language which entails that there is nothing to **rule-following** and language-use that is not agreed upon and endorsed by the community of the **rule-followers**.

## 2. 'The Individual Strikes Back'

The **communitarian** view, as it can be seen, is heavily weighted against the individual. Two features of the individual's concern for **rule-following** which are not taken care of by the **communitarian** are worth emphasizing, viz (a) the individual's *creative* responses to a **rule-following** situation, and (b) his **self-corrective** moves to improve upon his previous records in **rule-following**. The individual's creative concern is

a fact of language-use and language-learning and cannot be termed "blind" in Kripke's way. Secondly, self-correction is a basic feature of all self-conscious language-mastery. These two features adorn every linguistic move by an individual under the given normative conditions. The abolition of them by the communitarian seems to threaten the possibility of language use and rule-following.

Kripke supposes that in a community the individual rule-follower is predisposed to follow the rule of addition by '+' since that is how he is trained and conditioned to follow the rule. Hence his response is conditioned to fall in line with those of others. This, however, does not account for the creativity in the rule-follower's responses. Kripke calls this an automatic and 'blind' response - a response that is contingent on how we are trained in the community. This interpretation of the normative response robs rule-following of its creativity and spontaneity. McGinn has rightly observed that the individual's response is 'natural' since the basis of the normative is the natural.<sup>6</sup> McGinn aptly puts it as follows:

It is our nature that (partly) determines what we mean by our words and which plays an inalienable role in our learning language. Given that this is so, Wittgenstein sees no real substance to the question whether what we are naturally inclined to do really conforms with the meaning of our sign; such a question must be futile, since what we are by nature inclined to do is what it is that constitutes what we mean.

What is called natural by McGinn coincides with what I call creative and spontaneous. This emphasises the fact that normativity of rule-following would have been contentless had it not been rooted in our nature or what Wittgenstein calls our

'natural history'.

The second feature pertains to the method of self-correction involved in all rule-following situations. When an individual commits a mistake in following a rule, he corrects himself and follows the rule correctly. This follows from his self-awareness that he has violated the rule. This self-awareness is not dissociated from his normative training. Therefore, each individual is responsible for his own acts of commission and omission.

Simon Blackburn<sup>10</sup> has argued that Kripke's sceptical attack on the individual's rule-following is counterproductive since the community is equally vulnerable to the same attack. According to him, Kripke's interpretation faces a dilemma; either the problem that arises for the individual arises equally for the community, or the solution that works for the community works equally for the individual. Either way, there will be no significant distinction between individual (private) and communal (non-private) language. Kripke's argument rejecting a solitary language developed by a single person in social isolation keeps open the question that there can be social privacy in a larger communal scale where inter-communal understanding totally breaks down. That is to say, if individuals cannot follow a rule in privacy from other individuals, communities also cannot follow rules in isolation from other communities. In that sense, social privacy<sup>11</sup> is no better than personal (individual) privacy. McDowell aptly puts the parallel between the individual's and community's predicament in the following way :

The trouble is that there is a precise parallel between the community's supposed grasp of the patterns that it has communally committed itself to and the individual's supposed grasp of his idiolectic commitments.<sup>12</sup>

This parallel invites the possibility that matching the personal privacy (isolation) there can be social privacy.

Blackburn focuses on the fact that both community and individual are metaphysically in the same position. According to Kripke, there are no facts of the matter that can justify that one follows a rule and hence "no course of action is determined by a rule" (PI, sect. 201). This fact is not only not available, according to Blackburn, in the case of individual, but also in the case of the community. Therefore if sceptical problem arises for the individual's rule-following, this equally arises for the community.<sup>13</sup> The paradox which allegedly arises for the individual's rule-following arises for the community as well. Why can it not be the case, then, that the community fumbles for the fact which justifies communal practices as the individual does while searching for justification? The community is in no unenviable position than the individual, so far as the ultimate justification is concerned. So the communitarian justification is lacking in content in so far as the distinction between right and wrong application of a rule is concerned. For the community also what seems to be right may be right, thus abolishing the concept of right altogether. What is socially called 'right'<sup>1</sup> may turn out to be a misnomer. Society fails wherever the individual also fails. Blackburn characterises Kripke's communitarian view as entailing that the community "has a

practice of dignifying **its** members as saying things correctly or **incorrectly**, and in the **light** of this practice it says that **all** its members do mean the **same**, and **that** what they mean provides a principle of application of a **term**".<sup>14</sup> He then argues that if this solution works for the community, it **will** also work for the individual.<sup>15</sup> Like Blackburn, Paul Hoffman suggests that "if a public language is possible so **long** as it seems to us **that** our responses agree, then by the same token, the mere fact that one's present responses seem to be in accord with his past responses should be sufficient to insure the possibility of a private language".<sup>16</sup> Thus, it is argued, if Kripke's sceptical solution works for the community, it works **equally** for the individual. But the fact is that it does not work for the community or for the individual.

### **3. The Individual Vs the Community**

Now the question arises: is the individual capable of following a rule **independently** of the community? Kripke's negative answer to this question is not adequate as shown by Blackburn and others. Kripke's community is supposedly capable of "**dignifying** its member as saying things correctly or **incorrectly**", of "**seeing** each other as successfully using techniques or practices". Besides, as Blackburn puts it:

The members of a community stand to each other as the momentary time-slices of an individual do. So just as the original sceptic queries what it is for one person-time to be faithful to a rule adopted by a previous **person-time**, so the public sceptic queries **what** it is for one person to be faithful to the same rule as that adopted by another. Now if the **public** sceptic can be by-passed by, in **effect, saying that** this is what we do - we see each other as mutually



understanding the same rule, or dignify or compliment each other as so doing, provided the exposed practice agrees well enough, then the private sceptic can be by-passed in the game way. His doubts admit of the same projective solution. <sup>18</sup>

Thus the sceptic whether in the private or public sense overwhelms the so-called guarantees that are provided by the sceptical solution. The sceptical solution tries to save rule-following by bringing the community into the picture. But, as we have seen, the communitarian defence falls a prey to the overwhelming sceptical onslaught.

As Hoffman has rightly pointed out, an individual may react to a sign in a way that appears to agree with the same individual's previous uses of signs. Now the crucial question is whether the 'regular use' of signs on the part of an individual will allow a distinction between correct and incorrect uses of signs. Wittgenstein does not deny the case of an individual in physical isolation, who follows rules though differently from us. According to him an individual like Crusoe might have invented rules and followed them as we do though in relative isolation. That entails the possibility of "solitary language" <sup>19</sup> though not of a private language. A solitary language does not deny the possibility of rule-following, though private language does, according to Wittgenstein. An individual in solitary existence does not shy away from the responsibility of correct rule-following behaviour because what makes behaviour on the part of an individual in isolation "characteristic" of mistake-making is presumably that people in general display such behaviour under similar (isolation) circumstances. At *Investigations* sect. 206 Wittgenstein says that "the common behaviour of mankind is the

system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language". Since there is an agreement in people's responses (i.e. either conflict or accord with a rule) even though among people who speak different natural languages, it is possible to recognise response on the part of a speaker even without knowing that speaker's particular natural language. There is no problem here to understand or to translate what a speaker thinks and talks even when he is the only speaker of his language. Thus we can allow that the behaviour of an individual in isolation could display characteristic signs of mistake-making and also other normative attitudes to rule-following as such.

However, the so-called isolated individual's solitary language must be distinguished from the private language as defined by Wittgenstein at PI sect, 243. The private language defined therein is the one that abolishes the very notion of rule-following, as in it the distinction between 'following a rule' and 'to think one is following a rule' breaks down. The normative basis of language is denied in a private language, Wittgenstein, therefore, argues that a private language cannot coincide with any conceivable language.

This argument, however, is not a communitarian argument, nor does it sympathize with the communitarian presuppositions. The question of impossibility of private language does not follow from the so-called social or communal character of language. The role of community in the making or constituting of language is not denied by Wittgenstein, but it itself presupposes the

grammaticality or normativity of language. The community as an accidental group of individuals cannot make a distinction between seeming correctness and actual correctness in rule-following. For, the community will be no more able than an individual to find out such difference. The communitarian's claim for standard of correctness that entails the social authority is thus logically unwarranted. After all, there will be no distinction between the way in which we all go on and the way in which we all ought to go on. Normative question is as pressing for the individual as for the community. Just as the individual in isolation physical as well as social cannot afford not to meet the demands of normative behaviour; so the community cannot escape its responsible commitments to standards or norms of language. This, therefore, can only mean that Wittgenstein's private language argument<sup>20</sup> cannot be dovetailed into a communitarian argument. Hence the concept of "privately" in PI sect. 202 ("Hence it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately'") cannot be contrasted with the use of 'socially' or 'communally'. The notion of privacy in Wittgenstein has no contrast, since the alternative to private language is not our natural (public, of course) language. Private language is no language at all. McGinn<sup>21</sup> while criticising Kripke's interpretation of so-called private language (i.e. a language developed by a single person in social or linguistic isolation) has suggested that the word 'privately' be contrasted with the use of 'publicly' or 'overtly' i.e. as relating to what. "transpires covertly within consciousness"<sup>22</sup> rather than with that. of 'socially' or 'communally'. McGinn takes the word 'privately' to mean that "if

rule-following were private ... then self-ascriptions of rule-following would be infalliable". " He argues that his sense of 'private' fits better with what Wittgenstein elsewhere uses the word to mean that the 'private' suggests a condition of consciousness, and also the unknowability by another (<PI, sect. 251, 272). Therefore, McGinn claims against Kripke that the so-called private language argument has nothing to do with communitarianism. At least it cannot be cited to establish communitarianism.<sup>24</sup>

#### 4. *Many Men Vrs Many Occasions*

The central focus of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language is rule-following and therefore, it is the grammar of language that matters most. Grammar in a sense raises the question as to the possibility of rule-following and this is focussed at PI sect. 199: "Is what we call" obeying a rule "something that it would be possible for only one man to do, and to do only once in his life? - This is of course a note on the grammar of the expression "to obey a rule". This passage intends to tell us that the question in grammar is not primarily about how many people follow a rule, but about whether one man can choose to follow the rule only once in his life time. If we say that only one man cannot follow a rule independently of the community, then, of course, a solitary individual's rule-following will not be possible. But if we say that a single man cannot follow the rule only once in his life time, we will say with McGinn that what is at issue is the multiple applications of a rule on

multiple occasions. <sup>25</sup> The emphasis on many occasions is crucial to Wittgenstein's notion of 'practice' and 'custom'. That is because custom implies regularity and rule-following is a matter of 'regular use' of language. Hence, as McGinn rightly claims, the question cannot be primarily about many men (i.e. the community) though secondarily it can be. This can be confirmed in the following passage from the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*:

In the same way it cannot be said either that just once in the history of mankind did someone follow a sign-post. Whereas it can be said that just once in the history of mankind did someone walk parallel with the board. And that first impossibility is again not a psychological one.

The words "language", "propositions", "order", "rule", "calculation", "experiment", "following a rule" relate to a technique, a custom (RFM, VI, 43).

What is suggested here is that following a sign-post is no more a matter of majority concern or decision. The regularity needed for the rule-following is the normative need of multiple application. If a sign-post is followed only *once* it cannot be a normatively definable activity. It becomes an accidental event like walking 'parallel to the board' or walking on the moon. Rule-following is a 'technique' in Wittgenstein's sense of the word. It is a norm or practice.

The many men/many occasions question brings into focus whether communitarianism can be sustained. McGinn claims that it cannot. He says:

There is no suggestion ... that solitary rule-following is impossible; for this is not ruled out by the claim that sign-posts have to be obeyed more than once. <sup>26</sup>

That **communitarianism** does not follow as a matter of course is pointed out by Wittgenstein when he claims that **rule-following** is basically a practice and that practices are **paradigms**.<sup>27</sup> Practices are not necessarily communitarian. They could equally be individualistic in the sense that one individual can establish regularity in the practices of rule-following. At least the individual (not the private-linguist) is not exonerated from the regularity - commitment. He or she is equally accountable for his or her serious rule-following activity.

This is, however, not to condemn communitarianism as such but to curb the communitarian's desire to paint all rule-following commitments in terms of a communal brush. Normative practices do not depend so much on being communal as on being the grammatical or logical. Pettit's following remark may show how far the communitarian can be optimistic:

Rule-following as such requires interaction .... But that interaction can be provided in principle by oneself at other times as well as by other persons. Interaction with other persons only gets to be required if the rule is to be public: if it is to be a rule while another person can know you follow.<sup>28</sup>

## 5. *Agreement and Forms of life*

Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations duly focus on the complexity of the fabric of language use and rule-applications. Language is a complex phenomenon enmeshed with life. "Language just is a phenomenon of human life" (RFM, VI, sect. 47). It is associated with practices customs, and habits. It is, besides, rich with rules, conventions and paradigms. But

the communitarians, following Kripke, put a wrong stamp on these facts of language. According to them a community as a whole alone can provide the agreed norms. These communal norms (rules) are entrenched in language and all our thoughts are channelized through these conventional principles. All human linguistic communications are grounded on socio-communal agreements and do show certain degree of regularity in meaning-ascriptions and linguistic understanding. The communitarian view thus involves significantly two assumptions viz (i) language is based on agreement and (ii) the standard of correctness is communally agreed and sanctioned. According to first assumption, there is no language which is not based on agreement in the community of language-users. That is to say, agreement is the hallmark of language-use. The second states that linguistic rules are based on communal agreement. They are shaped by what we, the speakers, have come to agree to. Thus it is argued that language and rule-following are social<sup>29</sup> in nature. Norman Malcolm, representing the communitarian view, writes:

To speak a language is to participate in a way of living in which many people are engaged. The language I speak gets its meaning from the common ways of acting and responding of many people.

What is this communal agreement which is taken to be constitutive of language and rule-following? Wittgenstein himself explains this concept of agreement in the following way:

The word 'agreement' and the word 'rule' are related, they are *cousins*. The phenomenon of agreement and of acting according to rule hang together. There might be a cave-man who produced a regular sequences of marks for himself. He amused himself, e.g., by drawing on the wall of the cave:

---.---.---.---.---.---.---

Or ---.---.---.---.---.---. But he is not following the general expression of a rule. And when we say that he is acting in a regular way that is not because we can form such an expression (RFM, VI, sect. 41, cf PJ, sect. 224).

The notion of 'agreement' is built into the notion of 'rule' logically. That is because in a logical (grammatical) sense to follow a rule is to agree not only with one's regular practice but also the practice of others. Here the question is not about the communal agreement but the agreement enjoined by grammar. The caveman in Wittgenstein's example fails to follow a rule not because he is alone but because there is nothing analogous to what is called following a rule. Making dashes on the wall in an irregular way is not a case of rule-following. Wittgenstein further adds:

Only in the practice of a language can a word have meaning. Certainly I can give myself a rule and then follow it. But is it not a rule only for this reason, that it is analogous to what is called 'rule' in human dealings? (RFM, VI, sect. 41).

The question of regularity in the setting of rule-following form of life alone can show whether the caveman is following a rule or not.

However, there is no suggestion here that only the social or communitarian setting can justify rule-following. It is because even if the community of cavemen engage themselves in the irregular fashion in the dash-making, there will be no rule-following. Malcolm,<sup>31</sup> therefore, is wrong in concluding that rule-following is out and out a communal affair and that language must be a shared practice. In his response to Baker and Hacker's idea that Wittgenstein takes of a shareable<sup>32</sup> language



and not a shared one, Malcolm puts a high premium on the notion of agreement and shows that rules are the products of agreement. Malcolm writes:

Baker and Hacker think that without agreement there could be concepts but not common concepts, rules but not shared rules, language but not shared language.<sup>33</sup>

In his rejoinder Malcolm<sup>34</sup> writes that Wittgenstein is concerned with language and not shared language, and agreement must constitute language. He writes:

Quiet agreement. 'belongs to the framework in which our language works' - our *language*, not our 'shared' language. 'The phenomenon of language rests on regularity, on agreement in action' - no 'shared' here. The phenomena of agreement and acting according to rule, are interconnected - rule, not \*shared' rule.<sup>35</sup>

Thus Malcolm defends the consensual or *agreemental* view of rule-following, according to which all that matters for the possibility of rule-following is the communal ratification.

Now the question arises; can agreement be the necessary and sufficient condition of rule-following? If the answer is yes, then rule and consensus collapse into each other, since there is no rule-content beyond what is communally conferred on a rule. That reduces rule-following into a sheer communal response or communal disposition. Wittgenstein does not seem to have allowed language and rule-following to hang so precariously on the communal agreements. As Baker and Hacker remark:

... Wittgenstein argued, and argued correctly, that agreement in judgements and in definitions, community consensus on what counts as doing the same and as applying a rule correctly, is presupposed by a *shared* language, *common*

concepts, and *community* rules. But concept possession, following a rule, mastery of a language presuppose not that these are shared with other people, but, rather that they can be shared, that it must wake *sense* for others to understand, agree on what counts as doing the same relative to a rule, follow the rule in the same way (*italic original*).<sup>36</sup>

Thus Baker and Hacker rightly point out that communitarianism in the crude sense is not Wittgenstein's solution of the rule-following problem. The agreement Wittgenstein talks about is not the agreement in the sense people come to agree to share a attitude or value. Linguistic agreement is part of the grammar of an expression. It is an agreement that needs no justification or prior affirmation. It belongs to the way we think and act, and thus use language, Wittgenstein puts this point in the following way:

So you are saying that human **agreement** decides what is true and what is false?" - It is what human being *say* that is true and false; and they agree in the *Janguage* they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life (PI, sect. 241).

It is an agreement in form of life; so there is agreement "not only in definitions but also ... in judgements" PI, sect. 242). Such agreement cannot be dissociated from language in any case, and cannot be taken as the conditions of language in the empirical sense. So the communal interpretation of agreement must be taken as inadequate so far as the understanding of the grammar of language is concerned. Wittgenstein says:

The agreement of humans that is a presupposition of logic is not an agreement in opinions, much less in opinions on questions of logic (RFM, VI, Sect. 49).

This argument about agreement shows that it is a grammatical fact. that we all agree in using language and having a common

form of life. (I shall again take up the nature of this argument in the last chapter).

## 6. *Against Idiolectic Understanding of Rules*

Communitarianism is basically a revolt against the so-called idiolectic understanding of language and rules. An idiolect provides a privileged position to the first-person perspective such that it accords a solipsistic understanding of language. That is, an idiolectic understanding of a concept is a kind of private language. This is resisted by the communitarian, since language transcends an idiolect. Wright,<sup>37</sup> for example, contends that it is the community, not the individual to whom one looks for language-use, rules, and criteria for rule-following, according to Wittgenstein. Wright holds that the anti-idiolectic position alone can account for the possibility of rule-following.

Now the problem is : Does this anti-idiolectic understanding of the notion of 'following a rule' explain the objectivity of one's following a rule ? Does it establish the 'truth' of his following a particular rule in all the cases? How does one know it? What evidential supports are there in which one can justify the truth of his rule-abidingness? These questions are about the objectivity and rationality of our rule-following activities i.e. our linguistic uses. Wright canvasses for an anti-realist view of objectivity in this respect. According to him, objectivity cannot be decided in an investigation-independent manner, since it is associated with the way we, the language-

users, follow a rule. The status of one's following a rule is dependent on the collective support it gets from the community of rule-followers. There is therefore, nothing called an absolute and transcendental ground of rule-following vouchsafing for its objective truth. Realism, according to Wright, falls back on "determinate facts" to which we can have no cognitive access. But these facts are postulated in such a way that we cannot provide any guarantee for them. Hence realism cannot satisfactorily explain objectivity. For Wright, however, objectivity is based on social agreement such that "we are inclined to give new linguistic responses on which there is communal consensus the dignity of 'objective correctness'".<sup>39</sup>

There are two components in Wright's anti-idiolectic view of rule-following, namely, that (1) the communal consensus is the built-in mechanism of assuring objectivity and that (2) the normativity is decided by the regular practice in the community. Both are social concepts and lack any investigation-transcendent truth-value. Falling back on Wittgenstein's later doctrine of use, Wright comes to argue that meaning and understanding are not facts of a Platonist kind. From this point of view, because of the impossibility of ratifying facts or uses of words individually on any objective basis there is no objectivity of meaning (i.e., there is no case of rules determining the meaning of the expressions). So there is no guarantee that what one takes to be facts or truths has any significance if these facts or truths are independent of our use of language. Anti-realism thus rejects the realist's assumption that we have a cognitive

grasp of transcendent facts. All facts are social and are left open to communal inspection.

Wright is balancing between the realist conception of investigation-independent meaning and the sceptic's absolute rejection of facts of any kind. This leads him to say that "we move towards the idea that understanding an expression is a kind of 'cottoning on'; that is, a leap, an inspired guess at the pattern of application which an instructor is trying to get across".<sup>40</sup> Thus there is nothing to understanding which we have not collectively agreed to call meaningful and correct in rule-following. Thus, "assuredly, there is truth in the idea that it is a community of assent which supplies the essential background against which alone it makes sense to think of individual's response as correct or incorrect".<sup>41</sup> This entails the indeterminate nature of rule - following since social agreement itself is based merely on consensus from habit rather than on any independent grounds of 'objective correctness'.

Wright's anti-idiolectism is thus a counter argument to those who are inclined to believe that each person has a privileged (if not private) access to meaning and truth. An idiolect is the last refuge of the solipsist, the private linguist and also the idealist metaphysician. Communitarianism is thought to be the right alternative to this false picture of meaning. Considered from this point of view, Wright's systematic argument against Platonism does bear the consequence that language must be considered more socially rather than individually. But does this refute our earlier suggestion that

the individual's perspective is not so precarious as is suggested by the communitarian? Wright's lukewarm attitude to the individual creates the suspicion that he not only sacrifices the transcendent facts for the sake of social consensus but also sacrifices the individual in the name of the community as a whole. So now the question arises: can meaning and understanding survive if the rule - follower is systematically marginalized? So we must turn to the next section for an answer.

### 7. *Defeasibilism : The Promise of Objectivity*

In this connection Wright's principle of defeasibility can be discussed as a semantical thesis that largely supports the communitarian view. The defeasibility principle, as Gerald Vision explicitly states, is "one that forms a *reasonably sufficient* ground for something, but which can be overridden by further evidence favouring a contrary judgement".<sup>43</sup> According to this doctrine, all meaningful statements are *decidable* in the sense that their truth or falsity can be ratified or verified under accessible circumstances. Defeasibility accrues to the ratification-conditions. Therefore, all decidable statements are defeasibly true or false, in the sense that the evidence that support their truth-value can be defeated, that is, their counter instances can easily be presented. However, the defeasible statement does not lack either truth-value or meaning. Defeasibilism pertains only to the method of verification. As Wright himself puts:

A recognitional grasp of truth-conditions ought to be

testable; and it is testable only by assessment of the agent's responses to situations whereby the truth-conditions are, or are not realized. But now it is unclear whether that is something which we can ever, strictly speaking, do. All we can do is test his responses to situations in which our best but *defeasible* opinion is that the truth-conditions are, or are not, realized. So his performance is assessed in relation not to how things are but to how we take them to be; and it is in the agent's ability to bear up favourably under this comparison that his understanding of the statement in question resides.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, according to the principle of *defeasibility*, meaning and understanding reside in the agent's ability to respond to the semantic situations and not in the truth-conditions as such. Defeasibilism is, therefore, a relentless struggle against truth-conditional semantics. So far as the rule-following practices are concerned, according to Wright, they do not conform to investigation-independent facts, but are based on social consensus. However, these practices are, in a way, without a solid foundation. They just happen to be what they are. Therefore, according to him, one cannot describe a practice systematically because "at any particular stage (a practice) may go in any direction without betrayal of its character. There is simply nothing there systematically to be described".<sup>45</sup>

The defeasibilist interpretation of Wittgenstein has two implications. First, though communal practices make language what it is, those practices themselves cannot be called right or wrong. One cannot say "a community goes right or wrong in accepting a particular verdict on a particular decidable question rather it just goes".<sup>46</sup> Because linguistic practices are based on community assent and agreement one cannot evaluate the agreement itself. Secondly, the communitarian does not rule out that the

social consensus may itself be subjected to doubt. Thus defeasibilism makes room for scepticism even if it succeeds in defeating the private linguist.

Thus if defeasibilism is true, Wittgenstein can be held to repudiate the "objectivity of sameness of use" and the objectivity of meaning. The social setting provides the background against which the objectivity of meaning can be secured. So one cannot peep beyond social agreement into any bedrock of objective truth. Therefore, the assumption that the social objectivity is a faithful reflection of the world is ungrounded and unverifiable. This is to acknowledge that objectivity is a feature of our collective response to the world, and not a transcendent feature of the world.

Arguing against Wright's position McDowell<sup>47</sup> argues that Wright's communitarian understanding of Wittgenstein amounts to the abolition of the normality of meaning and the elimination of the notion of understanding as a grasp of rules and patterns. McDowell assumes the existence of rules. As he puts it, "the rules mark out rails along which correct activity within the practice must run. These rails are there anyway, independently of the responses and reactions a propensity to which one acquires when one learns the practice itself.... Acquiring mastery of the practice is pictured as something like engaging mental wheels with these objectively existing rails".<sup>48</sup> In view of this, McDowell points out that communitarianism of Kripke's and Wright's variety, abolishes the reality of rules altogether and makes room for anti-realist conventionalism that reduces rules to



conventions communally agreed. The notion of linguistic community does not explain how meaning is possible nor does it explain the normativity of rule-following.<sup>49</sup>

McDowell does not wish to deny that it is a fact that there is a linguistic community of which we are all members. Besides, he agrees that all rule-following practices are social practices. But, according to him, from this it does not follow that meaning and rule-following are constituted by these practices. The real logical import of these concepts is their normative embedding in language and not their interpretation, communal or otherwise. As McDowell points out, "it would be a serious error . . . not to make a radical distinction between the significance of, say 'This is yellow' and the significance of, say, 'this would be called "yellow"' by (most) speakers of English".<sup>50</sup> If McDowell is right, Wittgenstein cannot be said to be committed to an identification of meaning with social agreement or social assent, or to a communitarian interpretation of rule-following.

McDowell, however, does not, as it seems, rule out the social element completely from the understanding of rule-following. Rather he accepts the fact that human beings do share practices. The shared linguistic practices entail a social bond that is constituted "not by a match in merely externals (facts accessible to just anyone), but by a capacity for a meeting of

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minds". But whether these practices can be taken as the 'bed-rock' or the foundations or not is an open question. For the matter is not so easy to decide as it seems to be. They (the

so-called' social practices) do not determine truths about the world because we attempt to understand them through the truths about the world, and also because we interpret and evaluate these practices themselves.

One cannot, thus, attribute to Wittgenstein semantic anti-realism even conceding Wittgenstein's non-realist position on rules and language. This is because, as McDowell argues consistently, Wittgenstein's rejection of ratification independent truths need not lead to a anti-realist communitarianism according to which one simply follows social conventions or habits 'blindly'. But Wright's (or, so to say, Kripke's) communitarian understanding commits Wittgenstein to the debatable thesis that all rule-following is an interpretation where "for the community there is no authority, so no standard to meet".<sup>52</sup> However, a proper reading of PI, sect. 201 need not attribute to Wittgenstein a communitarian way of solving problems about rule-following. One can very well dispute an idiolectic understanding (i.e, understanding of something in one's own case) and deny the logical privacy of rules and rule-following without adopting an anti-realist point of view. This does not, however, imply that Wittgenstein is not an anti-realist either, but rather that neither communitarianism nor anti-realism is foremost in his philosophical thinking. Nor does his attack on idiolectic understanding or the private-language lead necessarily to anti-realism of the communitarian type.

## 8. *The Impossibility of the Anti-Realist Way Out*

The most disputable claim of communitarians is that all human linguistic communications are based on agreement in or acceptance of social conventions. But now the problem is; since the agreement is a contingent fact about human form of life, will human communication not be in constant danger of breaking down? Michael Dummett<sup>53</sup> acknowledges that the later Wittgenstein does allow for such a break down. According to this interpretation, Wittgenstein provides an anti-realist theory of meaning, truth, understanding, and rules in general which says that there is nothing to language except the communal form of life. Dummett maintains that Wittgenstein has rejected the Platonist notion of truth and meaning and has told that the assertion of a proposition has to be justified at each step since there is no transcendent truth which is objectively there independent of our cognition.<sup>54</sup> Thus, Dummett says, assertibility-conditions of the propositions come to the focus of semantics,<sup>55</sup> In support of this view, Joseph L. Cowan has gone to the extent of saying; " There is no foundation for human communication. Disagreement is possible at any point. This is what Wittgenstein presumably means when he says that if language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also in judgements. In other words, only agreement can guarantee agreement. There is no foundation for this agreement".~ Cowan also seems to mean, like Kripke, that there are nothing called objectively real rules and that there is no foundation for communication; the only fact is that we act in this way.<sup>57</sup>

Neither Dummett nor Cowan nor Kripke represents Wittgenstein's views adequately. They misconstrue the idea of agreement and think that it is the result of human decision in a community.<sup>58</sup> Though Kripke has appreciated the centrality of the notion of agreement for Wittgenstein, he has limited it to communal agreement alone. Kripke, as we have discussed already, conceives of agreement as constitutive of the concept of rule-following in a community. Someone in a community is said to follow a rule "as long as he agrees in his responses with the ... responses produced by members of that community".<sup>59</sup> But this idea of agreement is too weak a concept to carry the burden of rule-following.

Kripke, while considering such a foundational concept as agreement, has ignored Wittgenstein's insistence on the idea that "following according to the rule is FUNDAMENTAL to our language-game. It characterizes what we call description" (RFM, VI, 23). Kripke, in his interpretation, tries to go behind rule-following to agreement. But there is nothing behind rule-following as such. As Wittgenstein puts it; "It is no use, for example, going back to the concept of agreement, because it is no more certain that one proceeding is in agreement with another, than that it has happened in accordance with rule. Admittedly, going according to a rule is also founded on agreement" (RFM VII, 26). Any attempt to go behind rule-following which constitutes the framework of language-use results in dispensing with the grammar of language which ensures the agreement in rule-

following. Agreement is not the ground on which rule-following is founded, according to Wittgenstein. Agreement and rule-following are logically related~~ (they are logically cousins).

It is thus difficult to agree with the anti-realist that human communication is in the constant danger of breaking down. Besides, it is difficult to imagine that logic (grammar) is impossible. In the absence of grammar, what will be left are only empirical facts about our uses of language. Logic as well as grammar states the conceptual conditions (rules) of the possibility of empirical facts about our use of language. So logic must be pre-linguistic and *a priori*. Wittgenstein says:

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 by measurement. But what we call "measuring" is partly determined by a certain constancy in results of measurement (PI, sect. 242).

This means that logic is not concerned with empirical facts. Rather, logic determines the grammatical conditions, i.e., the conceptual patterns of the facts. That is, logic provides 'forms of representation' which make the facts possible.<sup>101</sup> So the agreement presupposed by logic (RFM, VI, 49) is not an extra-logical entity. It is, to say the least, not a contingent matter to be secured in an extra-grammatical way.

If logic and grammar are secure against the communitarian descriptions of language, one may ask: does anti-realism survive? The question, in short, is: do the justification-conditions of

meaning and rules provide needed foundations for language? Anti-realism stands on the premise that justification is still possible even if the realm of facts of the transcendent kind is denied. That is, the withdrawal of Platonism is no threat to serious rule-following. But, this premise itself is unwarranted, according to Wittgenstein, since we need provide no justification at all, Wittgenstein tells this in the following passages:

The rule of grammar cannot be justified by shewing that their application makes a representation agrees with reality. For this justification would itself have to describe what is represented (PG, I, 134).

There danger here, I believe, is one of giving a justification of our procedure where there is no such thing as a justification and we ought simply to have said ; that's how we do it (RFM, III, 74).

The question is not one of justification but are of acceptance.<sup>62</sup>  
It is one of describing what we do and say. That is to describe the limits of all language and descriptions. This passes into the business of grammar. But, according to Wittgenstein, rules cannot be justified because all justifications presuppose grammar and grammar, therefore, is autonomous.<sup>63</sup> It explains everything but is not explained by anything beyond it. All justifications come to an end in grammar.

Anti-realism is an impossible way out since there is no escape from the reality of rules and grammar that explains meaning and rule-following. If language is in need of clarification, especially when the sceptic challenges its

possibility, the only recourse could be to invoke grammar as Wittgenstein does in all such cases. After all philosophy is a grammatical investigation.

## NOTES

1. See Crispin Wright, "Does *Philosophical Investigations*, I. 258-60 suggest a Cogent Argument against Private Language?" in *Subject, Thought and Context* eds. P. Pettit and J. McDowell, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1986), pp. 209-66. Also see C. Wright, *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics* (Duckworth, London, 1980), Chapt. I.
2. WRPL, pp. 91-92.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
7. See Wright, *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics* chapt. I.
8. Cf. McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, p. 86.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 85 - 86.
10. See S. Blackburn, "The Individual Strikes Back", *Synthese*, 58 (1984), pp. 281 - 301.
11. For this argument on social privacy see P.H. Werhane, "Some Paradoxes in Kripke's Interpretation of Wittgenstein" *Synthese*, 73 (1987), pp. 253-73. Also J. McDowell, "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule," *Synthese*, 58(1984), pp. 325-63.
12. McDowell, "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule," p. 328.
13. cf. Blackburn, "The Individual strikes Back," pp. 293-94. See also P. Hoffman, "Kripke on Private Language," *Philosophical Studies*, 47 (1985), pp. 23-28.



14. Blackburn, p. 293.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 294.
16. Hoffman, p. 26.
17. Blackburn, p. 294.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 294.
19. See Warren Goldfarb, "Kripke on Wittgenstein on Rules," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 82(1985), pp. 471-88.
20. Wright, "Does Philosophical Investigations I. 258-60 suggest a Cogent Argument against Private Language?", pp. 209-66.
21. See McGinn, *Wittgensteinian Meaning*, chapt. 11.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
24. cf. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
25. cf. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
27. See Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, (Blackwell, Oxford 1986), chapt. IV.
28. F. Pettit, "The Reality of Rule-Following," *Mind*, 99 (1990), p. 21.
29. See P. Winch, *The Idea of Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy*, for a fully argued view that rule-following is basically dependent on social consensus, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1958).
30. N. Malcolm, "Wittgenstein on Language and Rules," *Philosophy*, 64(1989), p. 22.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
32. See Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*. See also Baker and Hacker, *Scepticism, Rules and*

Language (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1984). Also their "Malcolm on Language and Rules," *Philosophy*, 65(1990), pp. 167-77.

33. Malcolm, "Wittgenstein on Language and Rules", p. 12
34. cf. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
36. Baker and Hacker, "Malcolm on Language and Rules", p. 171.
37. See C. Wright, "Rule-Following, Objectivity and the Theory of Meaning", in *Wittgenstein : To Follow a Rule*, eds. Steven H. Holtzman and CM. Leich, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1981), pp. 98-114.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
42. See C. Wright, "Anti-realist Semantics: The Role of Criteria," in *Idealism : Past and Present*, ed. G. Vesey (University Press, Cambridge, 1982), pp. 225-248.
43. See G. Vision, *Modern Anti-Realism and Manufactured Truth*, (Rutledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1988), p. 184.
44. Wright, "Anti-Realist semantics: The Role of Criteria", p. 246.
45. Wright, "Rule - Following, Objectivity and the Theory of Meaning", p. 114.
46. *Ibid*, p. 114.
47. J. McDowell, "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule", *Synthese*, 58 (1984), pp. 325-363.

48. J. McDowell, "Non-cognitivism, and Rule-Following" in *Wittgenstein : To Follow a Rule*, eds. Holtzman and Leich, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1981), pp. 145-46.
49. Cf. McDowell, "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule", pp. 325-363.
50. *Ibid*, p. 335.
51. *Ibid*, p. 351.
52. Wright, *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics*, p. 220.
53. See M. Dummett, "Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mathematics", in *Wittgenstein : The Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G. Pitcher, (Macmillan, London, 1966), pp. 420-48.
54. *Ibid*.
55. See Dummett, "Truth" in *Philosophical Logic*, ed. P.F. Strawson, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1967).
56. J.L. Cowan, "Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Logic", *The Philosophical Review*, Lxx(1961), p. 373.
57. *Ibid*. p. 372.
58. For detailed discussion on this point see R.C. Pradhan, *Language and Experience: An Interpretation of the Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, (Anu Prakashan, Meerut, 1981), chapt.V.
59. WRPL, p. 96.
60. See Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein : Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, chapt. v.
61. Cf. Pradhan, *op. cit*, chapt. v.

62. This point is deeply laid in Wittgenstein remarks:

What has to be accepted, the given, is - so one could say - forms of life.

Does it make sense to say that people generally agree in their judgements of colour ? What would it like for them not to? . . . (PI, II, p. 226) .

63. cf. Z, sect. 20. Also PI, sect. 497. Wittgenstein is concerned with the autonomy of grammar and therefore the question of its justifications does not arise. See P.M.S. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1972), pp. 145-76, and also see Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, chapt. VI.

## CHAPTER V

### MEANING, TRUTH CONDITIONS AND THE **KRIPKEAN** ANTI-REALISM

In this chapter I will re-examine the Kripkean attribution of meaning-scepticism to Wittgenstein. I shall show that the communitarian theory misrepresents Wittgenstein's theory of meaning. Meaning is a stable and inalienable feature of language, according to Wittgenstein. It is, therefore, imperative that we develop Wittgenstein's theory in a non-communitarian way.

#### 1. *Against Meaning-Scepticism*

Could a systematic theory of meaning and understanding for the natural language be possible at all? This is a general issue which concerns the semantics of language. Semantics is concerned with the meaning and understanding of the language. A theory of meaning and understanding of language always takes account of how language is related to reality. In other words, meaning of language is meaning in language in relation to the world. In philosophy of language we see many models of semantics like logical and possible world semantics, truth-conditional semantics, and speech-act theories, etc. This diversity of models reveals the continuing depth of interest in a theory of meaning. However, Kripke's sceptical interpretation of Wittgenstein has brought out a kind of meaning-scepticism which makes a theory of meaning impossible. As we saw in chapter III, rule-scepticism entails meaning-scepticism and both assault the

relation between language and reality. In the preceding chapter we saw that a communitarian view of language fails to meet the sceptic challenge. Besides, it is semantically inadequate to hold that language is primarily communal. An attempt is made here to find out a holistic account of meaning and understanding of language from Wittgenstein's perspective. This will be an alternative to Kripke's sceptical account of rules, meaning and language. Moreover, in this holistic view of meaning and understanding, the unsettled realist - anti-realist controversy in Wittgenstein's theory of meaning and understanding can be taken due care of. A holistic theory of meaning will emphasize meaning not as partitioned to individual sentences, but as characterizable of the whole language. Language is a system and must, therefore, be treated as such while its meaning or any other semantic concepts of that sort is being considered. The point being argued here is that the structure of meaning and language is dependent on the rule-structure which is embedded in language. Meaning and understanding are not mental processes. Meaning can plausibly be claimed as the internal feature of language. Therefore, if rule-scepticism is not possible, meaning-scepticism can also be easily refuted.

Kripke's meaning-scepticism is based on the argument that there is no fact of the matter as to what one means by a word or sentence. Meaning is, therefore, a vanishing phenomenon if the sceptic is right. Kripke writes:

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.<sup>1</sup>

There are two points here to be noted, viz (i) according to the sceptic meaning is based on certain semantic facts which may be concerning the mental history or the external behaviour and (ii) in the absence of such facts, there is nothing that one can mean or that one can mean anything by the use of expressions. Meaning scepticism, thus follows from the premise that meaning is factual<sup>2</sup> or fact-based and that there must be a determinate set of facts to determine meaning. This is related with the further premise that semantics is a science of facts that could be discovered either through experience or intuition. This prompts to Kripkean sceptic to say:

... there is no fact about me that distinguishes between my meaning plus and my meaning quits. 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.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, it is presumed by the sceptic that meaning is a contingent matter that is derived from some prior facts that are themselves non-semantic. The latter may be ontological or metaphysical. They are presumably in the mind or in behaviour, or if one is a Platonist, in the realm of Platonic forms. Thus scepticism allows for a full-fledged realism of meaning, mental contents and behavioural inputs. Only he (the sceptic) himself finds no reason to accept realism and jettisons the talk of meaning as unfounded. As Kripke has made it clear, scepticism is the enemy of realism about meaning, rules and rule-following.

That is, he is the one opposed to any kind of insinuation to facts, hidden or otherwise. Scepticism is anti-factualism, or to be precise, anti-truth-ism. So as a matter of fact, he is bitterly opposed to foundationalism of the realist kind. Kripke's Wittgenstein is held to share all these sceptic's beliefs, Kripke's insistent attribution of the sceptic's beliefs to Wittgenstein is quite revealing in the following way:

I have said that Wittgenstein's solution to his problem is sceptical one. He does not give a 'straight' solution, pointing out to the silly sceptic a hidden fact he overlooked, a condition in the world which constitutes my meaning addition by 'plus'. In fact, he agrees with his own hypothetical sceptic that there is no such fact, on such condition in either the 'internal' or the 'external' world.<sup>4</sup>

Further, Kripke continues;

... Wittgenstein holds, with the sceptic, that there is no fact as to whether I mean plus or quus. But if this is to be conceded to the sceptic, is this not the end of the matter? What can be said on behalf of our ordinary attributions of meaningful language to ourselves and to others? Has not the incredible and self-defeating conclusion, that all language is meaningless, already been drawn?<sup>5</sup>

Kripke's Wittgenstein is thus led to believe that it is inevitable under sceptical premises that meaning vanishes and that we are left with no choice but to accept that since there are no necessary facts to vouchsafe for meaning, we are left with no solution except a sceptical one.

Meaning-scepticism is a wholesale condemnation of semantic realism<sup>6</sup> and the associated idea that language allows for meaningful expressions under only grammatical or logical conditions. Scepticism mixes up the semantical issues with the epistemological and ontological, and thus comes to the conclusion



(realization) that meaning is not possible if there are no *ontologically* available facts. Since our knowledge of facts is itself subjected to doubt, meaning ever remains a contestable concept.<sup>7</sup>

## **Z. Semantic Realism and Truth-Conditions**

Kripke's strategy as discussed above involves a repudiation of semantic realism which he identifies as the mainstay of meaning-scepticism. There is, therefore, the strategic need to focus on realism that adheres to the Frege-Tractarian commitments to the reality of sense.<sup>8</sup> Kripke does his spadework on Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* semantics which is based on the strong notions of truth and facts. He writes,

The simplest, most basic idea of the *Tractatus* can hardly be dismissed: a declarative sentence gets its meaning by virtue of its *truth conditions*, by virtue of its *correspondence* to facts that *must* obtain if it is true.

Thus, put succinctly, semantic realism of the Tractarian kind is committed to (1) the truth-conditional theory of meaning and (2) the ontological category of facts. Both together constitute what Kripke calls the factual semantics.

In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein's concern for meaning is framed within the general Fregean perspective.<sup>10</sup> In his views on language and understanding, Wittgenstein seems to accept Frege's model of logical language and the ontological reality of *sense*. The concept of truth is primitive in Frege's<sup>11</sup> semantics and so it is given an independent status along with other semantic concepts. Being influenced by this **approach**, **Wittgenstein**

maintains that only a formal truth-functional logic can provide the necessary logical device for ascertaining the depth-grammar of language. Frege's thesis of ~~sense-reference~~ distinction is the underlying ingredient in Wittgenstein's theory of meaning in the

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*Tractatus*. According to this formalistic contention, the ordinary language has an underlying logical order according to which language is analyzable into certain basic components viz names and elementary **propositions**. On account of this **consideration** Wittgenstein is much concerned with the meaning (sense) of the propositions *vis-a-vis* their truth about the world. The meaning (sense) of a proposition is thus linked to its truth-conditions.

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Truth-conditions are meant to specify only those conditions under which the propositions is true. Consequently the absence of these conditions will make the entire proposition **meaningless**.

According to the *Tractatus*, elementary propositions which constitute the base of the hierarchy of the **propositional** calculus can be true only when they truly depict the reality. That is, an **elemantary** proposition is true only when it correctly represents the state of affairs in the **world**. Logically propositions are indentical with the **state-of-affairs** so far as their logical form is concerned,<sup>14</sup> A proposition, therefore, is said to be true only if it represents the fact as it is. True propositions are true pictures of the **world**. This implies that the **concatenation** of names in the elementary propositions must mirror the structural arrangement of objects in the **state-of-affairs**. But this is a minimum logical condition of there being true propostions at all.

This logical condition is the sense the propositions must exhibit in its structure as a concatenation of names - a structure representing some possible state-of-affairs. The notion of sense in this approach is essentially related to the concept of picture. A picture is related to a possible state of affairs. Therefore sense expresses a possible situation<sup>15</sup> in the world.

The concept of sense in the *Tractatus* is such that for a proposition to have sense, there must be a possible situation independent of that proposition. So the sense of the proposition lies in the possible situation which it logically must picture. Sense is the possible situation. Wittgenstein writes: "A proposition must use old expressions to communicate a new sense. A proposition communicates a situation to us, and so it must be essentially connected with the situation. And the connexion is precisely that it is its logical picture. A proposition states<sup>16</sup>

something only in so far as it is a picture". This is a realistic conception of the sense of propositions. The sense of a proposition is specified by its truth-conditions which are completely independent of our grasp of them. Thus, the basic assumption of Tractarian realism is that to understand the sense of a proposition is to grasp its truth-conditions. That is, understanding of the proposition entails that we must understand it as a true or false picture of reality.

The semantic realism of the *Tractatus* thus brings into focus the fact that sense is not a transcendent entity like Frege's sense (*Sinn*). Frege<sup>17</sup> was obliged to view sense as an independent entity that would be expressed in language. Frege

writes, "the thought is itself imperceptible by the senses, gets clothed in the perceptible garb of a sentence, and thereby we are  
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enabled to grasp it. We say a sentence expresses a thought".

- Frege's Platonism as reflected here does not cut off the basic unity between thought (sense) and language. However, the fact remains that for Frege, thought (sense) is eternal and timeless, and hence it is verification/judgement-transcendent. Dummett has characterized Frege as a realist in this latter sense. The Tractarian realism is in consonance with the Fregean realism to the extent that Wittgenstein does not disown the semantic reality of the sense or thought. He takes it as logically real and shown or expressed in the sentence-pictures. Thus we can view sense as internally related to the possible situation in the world. Sense is real and revealing about the world. Wittgenstein writes:

A proposition shows its sense. A proposition shows how things stand if it is true (TLP, 4,022).

Kripke has viewed the *Tractatus* realism in the same light as Frege's. He has bracketed them as holding the factual semantics that relies on a strong sense of fact and correspondence between sentence and fact. However, he considers this doctrine an anathema to a proper analysis of language. Taking its metaphysical implications as the subject matter of his criticism, Kripke writes,

Wittgenstein suggests that such an expression as 'stands for a number' is in order, but is dangerous if it is taken to make a certain metaphysical suggestion. In the sense this is intended by 'Platonists', one suspects him of denying that

numerals stand for entities called 'numbers'. Most important for the present purpose, the case exemplifies the central questions he wishes to ask about the use of language.<sup>20</sup>

But these central questions which concern language in general and mathematics in particular, tend to give the impression that they are meant to deny that there are any such metaphysical entities. Kripke thinks the *Tractatus* has totally gone wrong in answering these questions. Instead, according to him, the answers should have been:

Do not look for 'entities' and 'facts' corresponding to numerical assertions, but look at the circumstances under which utterances involving numerals are made, and the utility of making them under these circumstances."<sup>21</sup>

### **3. The New Semantical Strategy ; Replacement of Truth-conditions**

Kripke's new semantical strategy to suit his sceptical interpretation claims that Wittgenstein has abandoned the realistic conception of meaning of the *Tractatus* in his *Philosophical Investigations*. Kripke quotes with approval the claim of Dummett's that "... the *Philosophical Investigations* contains implicitly a rejection of the classical (realist) Frege-*Tractatus* view that the general form of explanation of meaning is a statement of the truth-conditions".<sup>22</sup> Wittgenstein, as Dummett claims, has brought about a revolutionary change in the analysis of language and meaning; that is, he has replaced truth-conditions by assertion-conditions as central to the conception of meaning. As Dummett writes:

We no longer explain the sense of a statement by stipulating

*its truth-value in terms of the truth-values of its constituents, but by stipulating when it may be asserted in terms of the conditions under which its constituents may be asserted. The justification for this change is that this is how we in fact learn to use these statements; furthermore, the notions of truth and falsity cannot be satisfactorily explained so as to form a basis for an account of meaning once we leave the realm of effectively decidable statements*<sup>20</sup> *(italics original)*.

According to this view, Wittgenstein is no longer interested in the truth-conditions of sentences. He is interested in the variety and multiplicity of uses of language. That is, he is concerned with the justification conditions under which the uses of expressions are made. In this new approach, meaning is neither thought in terms of truth-conditions nor in terms of certain evidence-independent truths (facts). The conditions for meaningful use of language, on the other hand, are thought to be given by the "contextual settings" of language-use.

These conditions for "contextual setting" constitute the operation-conditions in which language is used to get its *significance*. Meaning of an expression is completely dependent upon its use and is identified with its use. This is enshrined in Wittgenstein's slogan: "meaning is use". Wittgenstein writes:

For a large class of cases-though not for all - in which we employ the word "meaning" it can be defined thus; the meaning of a word is its use in the language (PI, sect. 43).

Wittgenstein's theory of meaning as use has widely been received as a total *rejection* of the Tractarian concept of sense. This is believed to be the reason for Wittgenstein's rejection of the notion of picture and his being non-committal to the idea of truth. Both have contributed to the impression that- Wittgenstein

has totally jettisoned the notion of **truth-conditions** as central to the meaning of a sentence. Kripke has expressed this point in the following way:

Wittgenstein replaces the question, "what must be the case for this sentence to be true?" by two others: first, "Under what conditions may this form of words be **appropriately** asserted (or denied)?"; Second, given an answer to the first question, "What is the role, and the utility, in our lives of our practice of **asserting** (or denying) the form of words under **these conditions**?"<sup>24</sup>

This puts the new semantical perspective as demanding a total reversal of the strategy of meaning **analysis**. That means a total change of our conception of language according to which the function of language is not to state or picture facts but to constitute them. That is to say, language is a way of acting on reality rather than **representing** it.

As Kripke, following Dummett, views it the actual practice of language, that is, the language-use is the central concern of **semantics**. The primary semantic concern is not assertion or judgement, but **language-games**.<sup>25</sup> This fits in with Kripke-Dummettian anti-realist interpretation of Wittgenstein's later philosophy. Thus, according to this anti-realist stand, Wittgenstein in his early philosophy indentified meaning with **truth-conditions** whereas in his later philosophy he indentified meaning with use. This picture of language which is **predominantly** anti-realist is concerned, in Kripke's words, with the "**assertibility** conditions or **justification** conditions" of the sentences, that is, with the **circumstances** under which assertions are made. This, therefore, may be called the semantics of **justification** or in Dummett's terminology, the **verificationist**<sup>26</sup>

semantics. The primary presupposition is that it is no more truth which is the central concern but the circumstances under which truth-ascription can ever be made. The circumstances include the context of the use, the speaker's intentions and also its role in our lives. As Kripke puts it,

All that is needed to legitimize assertions that someone means something is that there be roughly specifiable circumstances under which they are legitimately assertible, and that the game of asserting them under such conditions has a role in our lives. No supposition that 'facts correspond' to those assertion is needed.<sup>21</sup>

Anti-realism as developed by Dummett and Kripke does not preclude the notion of truth.<sup>20</sup> It only rejects that truth is verification-transcendent. The only difference is that the notion of truth is expressed in a variety of language-games and it is ascribed to assertions under cognizable circumstances. Therefore, truth does not transcend the statement; it is embedded in the actuality of a linguistic practice. The meaning of an expression, on this account, is determined by what possible operation or procedure would establish its truth. Dummett calls this set of possible conditions the assertibility-conditions of the expressions. Hence to know the meaning of a sentence is to know its use which is really to know its assertibility condition. As Dummett explains this as follows:

The strongest arguments come from the insistence that the general form of explanation of meaning, and hence of the logical operators in particular, is a statement not of the truth-conditions but of the assertibility-conditions. We learn the meaning of the logical operators by being trained in their use, and this means being trained<sup>30</sup> to assert complex statements in certain kinds of situation.



Thus anti-realism brings into the focus the much neglected concept of assertibility-conditions which consists in the verification-conditions of statements. This entails that assertions are possible because of the practice or training in use and mastery of language. This shows that there is nothing like knowing the meaning of a statement independently of its use. Wittgenstein, as Dummett claims, has conceded the idea of how the use of an expression determines its meaning. Meaning, thus, is conventionally constituted in language, since use is a matter of linguistic conventions. The truth-condition of a proposition is itself determined by its use i.e. by its assertibility conditions.

Understanding, according to this view, involves a grasp of assertibility-conditions. To the extent we have access to the complete mastery of the use of an expression, we have achieved understanding of it. To put it in Wittgenstein's words: "To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master of a technique" (PI, sect. 199). Understanding involves assertibility-conditions of the statements we make since we have access to these conditions, and even to their truth-conditions. Understanding, however, is no more merely an intellectual grasp of truth-conditions, but an actual control over the practices of the statement-making and other related practices. Wittgenstein thus has two theses to offer, namely, (i) the replacement of truth-conditions of sentences by their assertibility conditions and (ii) meanings and rules being made matter of conventions which are themselves based

on practices and common agreement. The Kripke-Dummettian anti-realist argument begins with the assumption that meaning is exhaustively determined by use, and so by the justification-conditions of the use of the expressions. Thus anti-realism ends up with the assertion that the later Wittgensteinian semantics has for all time to come undermined the Frege-Tractarian semantics of truth-conditions. It is the new semantics<sup>31</sup> of linguistic practice, criteria and conventions which explains meaning and truth in a new way. Outlining the broad contours of the new semantics Dummett writes;

To grasp the meaning of an expression is to understand its role in the language: a complete theory of meaning for a language is, therefore, ~~a~~<sup>32</sup> complete theory of how the language functions as a language.

Furthermore he says:

... it is the job of a theory of meaning for a language to give an account of how that language works, that is, how its speakers ~~communicate~~ by means of it: ... a theory of meaning is a theory of understanding; that is, what a theory of meaning has to give an account of is what it is that someone knows when he knows the language, that is, when he knows the meanings of the expressions and sentences of the language.<sup>33</sup>

The anti-realist semantics provides a new picture of language and meaning that places a high premium on what we do and know in language. Therefore, for the anti-realist, meaning involves knowledge and mastery of language. That is, to know a language is to be able to employ it. Therefore, if a person is said to know the meaning of a particular word, e.g. 'love', he is to know the assertibility-conditions under which the word is to be used i.e., love-affairs. Summing up the anti-realist stand on

meaning and understanding, Crispin Wright writes:

The thought is, in short, that understanding a statement is essentially a practical, discriminatory skill of which knowledge of assertibility-conditions is always, while knowledge of truth-conditions is at most sometimes, a satisfactory interpretation.<sup>34</sup>

#### 4. *Truth-conditions Vrs. Assertibility-conditions: An Untenable Dualism*

The conflict between realist and anti-realist account of meaning is based on the contrast between truth-conditions and assertibility-conditions. As we have seen earlier, Kripke and Dummett have made this into a conflict between Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and *Investigations*. In a similar anti-realistic spirit Kripke has also pointed out that Wittgenstein's solution to sceptical paradox characterizes a sceptical solution so far as "Wittgenstein thinks that these observations about sufficient conditions for justified assertion are enough to illuminate the role and utility in our lives of assertion about meaning....".<sup>35</sup> And as Kripke says, "Wittgenstein does not analyze a form of language in terms of truth-conditions, but rather asks under what circumstances the form is introduced into discourse, and what role, what utility, the practice of so introducing it has".<sup>36</sup> Kripke contends that the replacement of truth-condition by justification conditions has dual role in the *Investigations*. Firstly, it explains meaning in terms of the assertibility-conditions of the sentence in contrast with the truth-conditional theory of meaning in the *Tractatus*. Secondly, the same assertibility approach is applied to the assertions about meaning

themselves,<sup>37</sup> thus making the **assertion-conditions** available at all levels of language use.

The contrast between **truth-conditions** and **assertion-conditions**, however, raises some fundamental questions regarding the concept of truth and meaning. The first question is: Is the concept of truth made redundant in the new anti-realist semantics? If not, how is truth accounted for given that truth is not **cognition-transcendent**? Besides, how are **assertibility-conditions** related to **truth-conditions** considered in the **verification-immanent** sense? Ultimately, one can raise the question: is there a fundamental dualism between **truth-conditions** and **assertibility-conditions** in Wittgenstein's account of meaning? I shall deal with these questions **subsequently**.

According to the classical (realist) semantics, it is only the declarative sentences which are said to be either true or false. These **statements** are made in order to **state** or report something and to communicate it to **others**. So in a fact-stating and **communicative** language statements carry meaning and are also capable of being true or false. Thus truth is a primary concept in the classical semantics since the sentences **that** matter so far as our **representation** of the world is concerned are having truth-values **i.e.** truth and falsity. This is the reason why not only Frege and the early Wittgenstein but also contemporary **semanticists** like Davidson, take truth as a primary category,<sup>38</sup>

Wittgenstein has been concerned with language and its functions in his early and later philosophy. There has been a

strong notion of language being about the world in his both philosophies. Whereas in the *Tractatus* the central concern is how sense of a sentence is linked with the pictorial representation of the world, in his *Investigations* the central idea is as to how language gets meaning or sense not so much from a predetermined world but from the use which we make of it vis-a-vis the world that we encounter in our language. The change of strategy is significant, but it is not a total reversal of philosophy of language. Meaning being the focus, emphasis has varied from pictoriality to functionality, from truth-conditions to use-conditions.<sup>39</sup>

Now against this background, the role of the concept of truth and truth-conditions can be discussed in Wittgenstein's semantics. As it is clear, a statement is always about the world and so it says something about the world whether or not it is a logical picture in the Tractarian sense.<sup>40</sup> For example, the statement 'The paper is white', states that the paper is white and thus it says something about a situation. Here the statement, when true, states or represents the world as it is. Truth, thus, is linked with the world. A successful representation of the world is all that matters for truth of the statement.

The truth-ascription to a statement, according to Wittgenstein, seems to be based on the simple ground of successful representational function of a statement. But how does a truth-ascription arise at all? Statements are not.

isolated expressions; they are part of a discourse. A discourse is a **language-game** that not only marks a system of statements but also the relevance of the system. In this sense, we have to look into the 'use' of the statements in our language and life. Here the concept of 'use' has the **legacy** of a rule since every linguistic use presupposes rules which determine the semantic value of the expressions used. That is, we see the **language-game** in which the statement has been occasioned. A statement is assertible only within a **language-game**, if by the latter we mean the whole set. of operational conditions in which a form of language comes into use.<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, according to **Wittgenstein**, the truth of the statements cannot be ascertained by the simple **representational** function. For the simple **representation** or **correspondence** between a statement and a fact becomes contingent on how we relate the two, and there may be the possibility of breaking down of the relationship between language and what the language describes. So the truth of statement is now relative to the kind of use or operational methods laid down for it. Without going into the conditions in which the **statement** is to be asserted the truth-claim of a statement cannot be determined by its successful **representational** function alone. Since the statement is embedded in a framework, it has to be conceded that its entire use will be dependent on the modes of operation of the **framework**.<sup>42</sup> That is to say, the **truth-conditions** of the statement given must be guaranteed by the operational conditions of the framework itself. These operational conditions themselves are what may be called

the assertibility-conditions of the statements, since the very possibility of a statement being made is determined by the language-game. "The truth of certain empirical propositions belong to our frame of reference" says Wittgenstein (OC, sect. 83).

Now the question arises: are the assertibility-conditions different from the truth-conditions of a statement according to Wittgenstein? To this question, it may be pointed out that assertion-conditions are the necessary conditions for truth-ascription, that is, they provide the occasion for the rise of truth-conditions at all. The true statement is necessarily *assertible* in a language-game and so must conform to the rules of the game. The rules themselves are responsible for the intelligibility of the statement, and the form of life associated with it is the ultimate frame of reference, which must guarantee the asserted move of the statement. "The truth of my statements is test of my understanding of these statements" (OC, sect. 83). And "that is to say: if I make false statements, it becomes uncertain whether I understand them" (OC, sect. 81). Thus Wittgenstein makes the truth of a statement linked with its intelligibility since truth is the mark of a statement being in the right relation to the world.

Wittgenstein's later thought does not disallow the truth-ascription as important so far as the assertions in language-games are concerned. Truth is still the semantic category of revealing the nature of statements in relation to the world.

This truth-component needs analysis as it has been a source of puzzle for philosophers. Now the question arises: how shall we take this reference to the world at all? Austin<sup>43</sup> and Quine,<sup>44</sup> for example, have unquestioningly accepted this reference to the world as the tacit mode of operation of any fact-stating language, Austin writes that "when a statement is true, there is, of course, a state-of-affairs which makes it true".<sup>45</sup> That is to say, the minimum requirement for truth-ascription is that there must be fact in the world that is revealed by the truth-predicate, Wittgenstein has put this point in the following way:

At bottom, giving "This is how things are" as the general form of proposition is the same as giving the definition: a proposition is whatever can be true or false. For instead of "This is how they are" [I could have said "This is true", (Or again "This is false").

But we have 'P' is true = P  
               'P' is false = not - P (PI, sect, 136).

This is how a true proposition states the world as it is. Thus, for Wittgenstein, truth is the simple predicate telling us what the world really is. However, it is believed by philosophers that there is a gulf between statement or proposition and the fact it represents. So there is a suggestion that there is a

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correspondence or agreement between statement and fact. Austin has argued that there is an agreement between statement and the fact, Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is generally conceived to be supporting this view of correspondence. But we can hardly find such a definition of truth in the *Tractatus*. Though the notion of picture plays a crucial role, it does not entail the correspondence theory of truth. Like Frege, Wittgenstein



believes that truth is a logical or formal concept and cannot be defined explicitly.<sup>47</sup> Wittgenstein seems to be against the notion of correspondence in his later writings. It is because the "correspondence" does not say more than what is said in saying that a proposition is true. It is in a way misleading to say that a statement 'represents' a fact and that its truth lies in the statements being in 'agreement' with the latter. As Wittgenstein writes, "the reason why the use of the expression 'true or false' has something misleading about it is that it is like saying "it tallied with the facts or it does not" and the very thing that is in question is what "tallying is here" "<OC, sect. 199). In Wittgenstein's method of analysis the concept of reality or world is such that it does not stand apart from language, because reality is found in our language and is itself a move in our language-game. So there cannot be any extra-linguistic reality since such a concept is totally unintelligible.<sup>48</sup> Now if the reality or the world is itself a move in the language-game, there cannot be any sensible agreement or fitting of language and reality or of proposition and fact. As we have already seen, the assertion-conditions of a statement are necessary for the statement being true; now we see that the assertion-conditions themselves are sufficient to guarantee the truth-conditions of the statement. This being so we see no difference between the assertion-conditions and the truth-conditions. So the agreement, though true, cannot be said. It is all revealed in the language-game. "What does this agreement consist in if not in the fact that what is evidence in these language-games speaks for our proposition?" says Wittgenstein

(OC, sect. 203). That is, the very fact that our language-game speaks for a proposition, and nothing goes against it, suffices to establish that the proposition is true. Thus, according to Wittgenstein, the assertion-condition and truth-conditions converge in the language-game. This tells us why there is no antagonism between the assertibility-conditions and truth-conditions in Wittgenstein's philosophy.

The result of the above analysis is that truth lies in the identity between the assertion-conditions and truth-conditions of a statement. This disproves the Kripkean thesis that assertibility-conditions replace truth-conditions. The latter thesis derives from the unwittgensteinian thesis that language and reality are set apart and are only contingently related. Quine's concept of semantic ascent which shows that the truth-predicate serves, as it were, to point through the sentences to the reality is the thesis that may be committed to the duality between truth-conditions and assertion-conditions. Quine believes that language is inessential to reality and language use is meant for 'semantic-ascent' - which is a temporary retreat from the world to the language. Truth-predication, according to him, is the process of cancellation of this temporary retreat, and an affirmation of the non-linguistic world. However, for Wittgenstein, the reverse is true as here language is inextricably involved in reality, and truth-predication is an affirmation of the logical identity between language and reality. By saying that a statement is true, we do not affirm an extra-linguistic world, but affirm that the world is really a

world as constituted in our language sharing a common structure with the latter.

Truth, thus, is an internal feature of language to be decided by the availability of the assertion-conditions of the language-game. So it cannot be discussed as an external<sup>50</sup> question to language, Austin, however, in a different way comes closer to Quine when he says that truth-predication is a conventional method of characterising statements referring to an objective world. Besides, according to him, language is only conventionally related to the world without having any essential relation to it. Thus truth-predication is bound to be external in this theory.

Wittgenstein admits the 'logical superfluity'<sup>51</sup> view of the truth-predication not because it is cancellatory or conventional but because truth is one of the essential conditions of a statement being assertible and intelligible in language. Wittgenstein always held that our intelligible language consists of true statements. In the *Tractatus*<sup>52</sup> he had held that our science and knowledge consists of true propositions. This shows only that truth is internal to language as such. In view of these observations it can be seen that truth-predication of statements is logically superfluous if truth is internally guaranteed by the language-game. The addition of the predicate "is true" to the a statement is redundant and is logically dispensable. "Is there a truth here which I know? - I cannot depart from this judgement without toppling all other judgements

with it?', says Wittgenstein (OC, sect. 419). That is to say, truth is so fundamental to a statement that we cannot deny it without denying a host of other statements. And if so, where is **the** warrant for reasserting that statement is true?

Truth, thus, is immanent in language-use because to use language is to make true statements. From these observations we can conclude that there is no fundamental gap between truth-conditions of a statement and its **assertion-conditions**. Truth-conditions are **assertibility-conditions**, since truth is an internal and immanent feature of a statement. Kripke's idea that **assertibility-conditions** as justification-conditions go against the realist notion of truth-conditions fails to grasp Wittgenstein's idea that truth is never a transcendent concept. There is no cognition-transcendence involved in Wittgenstein's concept of truth, Kripke-Dummettian thesis that realism is committed to investigation-independence category of truth and truth-conditions cannot hold good in case of Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein has **abolished** the duality between assertion and its justification. Justifications are only based on internal evidence, and besides they are contained within the self-complete **and** autonomous language-game. Truth is as much autonomous as the language-game.

##### **5. The Autonomy of /leaning**

Wittgenstein's approach to the **problem** of **meaning** is not riddled with the tension **between** whether **meaning** is **determined by** truth-conditions or by **assertibility-conditions**. We have seen so

far that the supposition of this duality is due to a wrong perception that meaning is reducible either to **truth-conditions** or to the **assertibility-conditions**. This reductionist bias is discernible in Kripke-Dummettian anti-realism. It is not that such a duality cannot be entertained in semantics but Wittgenstein may not have directly entertained such a duality. We shall see that Wittgenstein was more concerned with the grammar of language and the resulting autonomy<sup>54</sup> of language, grammar and meaning, Kripke has completely left these issues out of consideration in his communitarian interpretation of meaning.

The doctrine of autonomy of meaning entails that meaning is a primary concept. The autonomy of meaning can be explained only by not reducing meaning either to cognition-transcendent **truth-conditions** or to the cognition-dependent **mental contents**. That is, according to this doctrine, meaning theory is neither a theory of knowledge or a theory of content, Meaning is presupposed by cognition and mental content, Davidson has tried to set the autonomy issue straight by posing the entire problem in a different perspective. Writing on the autonomy of meaning he writes, "... autonomy of meaning is essential to language; it is largely this that explains why linguistic meaning cannot be defined or analysed on the basis of **extra-linguistic** intentions and beliefs".<sup>55</sup> Davidson has, therefore, tried to explain meaning in terms of **truth-conditions** of sentences, without appealing to the speaker's intentions. Davidson's objective is to explain meaning as a purely semantic notion and to do so in terms of truth-conditions. Without proposing meaning theory as a theory

of truth, he maintains, however, that to give truth-conditions of a sentence in language is to determine its meaning.<sup>56</sup>

Davidson's theory of meaning, while being considered as a part of a formal semantics, based on Tarski's theory indeed does not rest there. The notion of truth, being a basic concept in his semantics, brings him to reckon with the empirical source of all semantic notions. This is part of a broader reckoning of the empirical foundations of language. Davidson believes that communication in language depends on maximized or weighted "agreement"<sup>57</sup> and this agreement is secured through the common understanding of the truth-conditions of sentences. The notions of meaning and truth themselves form a part of general frame of agreement which is the basis of membership of the linguistic community. But this agreement on framing the notion of truth requires our shared information about the world. Hence he has come to the conclusion that his theory of meaning, though in a broader sense, an empirical theory which aims at accounting for a natural language, preserves the autonomy of meaning.<sup>58</sup>

The autonomy question thus outlined with reference to Davidson shows that the meaning of a statement could be pinned down to the semantic framework itself and made internal to it. Meaning though associated logically with truth-conditions is not thereby reduced to them. Davidson has argued against the reductionist programme by making meaning semantically autonomous. Therefore, there is no trace of the Platonist transcendentalism in Davidson's truth-conditional theory, nor does it rule out the so-called assertibility-conditions which the anti-realists have

propped up as th@ mainstay of th@ meaning theory.

The autonomy question, however, rightly originates from Wittgenstein's programme of defining meaning - meaning as use - in the framework of language itself. This way of situating meaning in language, and not in the experience or mental content, starts with Wittgenstein's realization that meaning or sense is shown<sup>59</sup> in language and is, therefore, internal to the very functioning of language. Wittgenstein's doctrine of meaning as use can best be interpreted as seeing meaning as being revealed in what we do with language. As A.W. Moore puts it, "... the kind of thing we want to say on any interpretation of 'show' which can be appropriate to fit in with the later work, provided that it rests on a genuine analogy with the *Tractatus*, is that meanings of our words are shown in how we use them or that the meaning of a mathematical sentence is shown in how it is proved".

This way of seeing meaning in use fits with the *Tractatus* scheme of meaning analysis - meaning being associated with representationality - but also with the later theory of meaning as use. The notion of use is too broad to accommodate both representational and non-representational function of language. What matters is the fact that language works - perhaps autonomously - in telling us what all the linguistic symbols mean while they are in the operational setting of language-games.

It is well known that Wittgenstein has never been inclined to construct any theory of meaning. He believes that everything is open to view and philosophy can only describe them (PI sect.

124, 126). This attitude reflects his concern to allow autonomy to language and meaning and leave everything to themselves. As we have already discussed, rules enjoy autonomy as they are self-explainable and non-justifiable being part of the language-games. For Wittgenstein, language takes care of itself and is not accountable by a pre-existent set of facts. So language is autonomous.<sup>61</sup> This explains why meaning is autonomous (or should be autonomous) according to Wittgenstein. Meaning is never an entity either in the mind or in the external world according to him. Meaning is internal to the language-game. It is unfolded in the rule-structure of the language-game. Thus meaning is revealed in the use of the word or expression which is governed by the rules. Meaning, rules and the practice of the language-games constitute one semantic framework which explains how language is possible. Meaning, like rules, is, therefore, the core component of a language-game. As A.W. Moore puts it,

On a later Wittgensteinian view, any expression in our language means what it does, in the last analysis, because of our continuing linguistic and non-linguistic practices.<sup>62</sup>

This is true not only of the later works but also the early work where Wittgenstein is concerned with the use of language for representing the world. It is the unique function of language to talk about the world. So meaning is a *sine qua non* of the function of language. Picturing is no less a language-game than naming or describing or telling a story (cf. PL, sect. 23). For Wittgenstein meaning is never a matter to be founded on something basic<sup>63</sup> and more fundamental. Meaning is that which is basic and



fundamental. So there is no question of meaning presupposing an antecedent. fact. Thus meaning autonomy is the Wittgensteinian rejoinder to those who locate meaning in mental history or the history of the natural behaviour. Both alternatives are against Wittgenstein's theory of meaning-autonomy.

The argument for Wittgenstein's theory of meaning-autonomy could be substantiated with his well suggestive exhortation: "Don't ask for meaning of a word; look at how they are being used in actual cases" Moreover, as Wittgenstein says, "a main source of our failure to understand is that we do not command a clear view of the use of our words. ... Our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity. A perspicuous representation produces just that understanding which consists in 'seeing connexions'. Hence the importance of finding and inventing intermediate cases. The concept of perspicuous representation is of fundamental significance for us. It earmarks the form of account we give, the way we look at things" (PI, sect. 122). What this suggests is that. the perspicuous representation of language necessitates a clear view of the grammatical rules, and the meaning of our uses of language. We see meaning as it is revealed in language. We have nothing more to search for. It is only to note the facts of meaning as spread in the continuously overlapping uses of language. Meaning, therefore, is the physiognomy of language (PI, sect. 568) with its exterior structure visible in the perspicuous representation. Meaning thus is the integral feature of language in whatever way we may see it. «

Autonomy of meaning suggests the fact that meaning cannot

be interpreted in terms of other concepts so that meaning can be revealed through rules of applications that define the semantical context within the surroundings of language-games. As rules govern uses of linguistic expressions, meaning emerges naturally along with them. A mutually acknowledged meaning emerges because the customary ways of doing things on agreed rules are being followed in practice. The meaning is present in particular use of words, that is, in particular circumstances in which customary guidelines are being followed. For this reason language is essentially public, so that so far as we need a theory of meaning the meaning must be self-explained.

In view of the above discussion, it can be argued that Kripke's anti-realism fails to account for Wittgenstein's concept of meaning. Meaning cannot be a matter of social agreement nor can it be explained by extra-linguistic experience. Even it cannot be justified either by experience, or cumulative social decisions; meaning remains a fundamental semantical fact. Meaning-facts<sup>64</sup> remain irreducible as the ultimate facts about language. Meaning must be revealed in the structure of language i.e. the rules that constitute the use of a particular language. That is why Wittgenstein says; "One can not guess how a word functions. One has to look at its use and learn from that" (Pl, sect. 340). What Wittgenstein suggests is that it is our forms of life that constitute the basic criterial foundations of meaning, rules, and rule-following. Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* puts the autonomy of meaning more substantially as it is revealed in the remark; "Philosophy may in no way

interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describes it. For it cannot give any foundation either. It leaves everything as it is" (PI, sect. 124). And more essentially he continues to say "Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain. For what is hidden, for example, is of no interest to us" (PI, sect. 126). Moreover, "if one tried to advance *thesis* in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree to them" (PI, sect. 128). The implication involved in these remarks is that language remains what it essentially is in proportion as it functions with the grammar reaching far back into the stream of human life and transcending all extra-linguistic barriers. Words and expressions get meaning in the stream of life. For semantic determinations life-reference is presupposed.

#### **6. Meaning Holism: Wittgenstein's Alternative to Communitarianism,**

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Anti-realism presupposes an atomistic theory of language. Kripke adheres to this model of language in his interpretation of language. He takes it for granted that language consists of discrete semantic acts such as the language-games. Therefore, the communitarian interpretation of meaning becomes relevant. If rules are ways of practising patterns of linguistic use, then meaning becomes a contingent phenomenon of community acceptance. Thus Kripke makes a common cause with those who prefer to leave meaning unsupported by any fact of the semantic nature. Meaning thus becomes a shadow of communal practices.

Wittgenstein stoutly defends meaning against the communalist and so contingentist assault. The meaning autonomy is the direct attack on the meaning-sceptics and defeasibilists. According to Wittgenstein, meaning, if left hanging onto communal practices, must prove itself dispensable and must lend itself to semantic disappearance. Kripke, therefore, must take note of the other dimension of meaning - the meaning-holism-in addition to meaning-atomism.

A holistic theory of meaning available in a linguistic discourse emphasizes meaning not as partitioned to single isola-

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ted sentences, but as characterizable of the whole language. Language is a system and must, therefore, be treated as such while its meaning is being considered. According to Wittgenstein language is a system of propositions and therefore, meaning cannot be an isolated phenomenon. Either it is pertaining to

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the whole of language or it is nothing. Though Quine and Davidson, for example have espoused holism, they have remained short of radical holism. They have still pursued the theory as applicable only to an empirical language, or at best to a formalized part of it. Quine, for example sees the theoretical structure as an organic system; so his holism is a theory-holism. This falls short of linguistic holism which Wittgenstein espouses in a thoroughgoing fashion.

Language as a whole is a system of linguistic uses according to Wittgenstein. The underlying rule-structure of language is its necessary and universal form as reflected in the universally shared forms of life of human beings. In view of the underlying

unity of language, there are no discontinuities between the language-games. All language-games form a family and share a family resemblance (PI sect. 65-67). Thus all language-games share an organic unity. In view of this, meaning cannot be local and discontinuous. Though each language-game has its local context meaning must be global and pertain to the shareable structure of the language-games. Meaning, thus, according to Wittgenstein, must be shareable and be embedded in the trans-language-game unity.

The necessity of a holistic theory accrue from the globality of truth and meaning. It makes a direct approach to the understanding of the universal structure of language, and presupposes a connected language system. The holistic theory is a restatement of the systematicity of language as a natural phenomenon. This restatement amounts to the maximization of surveyability of our linguistic uses so that meaning is revealed in the organic structure of linguistic uses without any ambiguity. To comprehend language is to have a comprehension of the working of the system. It means the mastery of the rules of language use, for to understand is to master a technique, to command a system of operational signs. Dummett<sup>70</sup> has held the view that the theory of meaning is a theory of understanding of the language concerned. Therefore, a complete theory of meaning is a complete theory of how language functions, or of what roles the linguistic expressions play in a language system. So interest in meaning is an interest in commanding a 'perspicuous representation' of the workings of the natural language. Of

course, Dummett himself is not a holist, but the theory of meaning, according to him, must show how to understand the whole language taking each linguistic unit (atom) into consideration. Language is molecular according to Dummett,<sup>71</sup>

Wittgenstein has always opted for a non-molecular view of language. Language is a system of propositions or uses of expressions. This ensures for him the globality of language as a form of life. If language-games would have been discontinuous sectors of language-use, or if the forms of life would have been without family resemblance, then no concept of meaning would have been possible, Wittgenstein makes room for a global syntax of language-games with an underlying rule-structure. So a semantics of language-use and rules is presupposed. Semantics, of course, remains inexpressible and so ineffable.<sup>72</sup> The ineffability of semantics results in Wittgenstein's commitment to language as a universal medium. All semantic determinations are made within language. As a matter of fact, semantic relations are the underlying conditions which make language possible. Language does not say that semantic relations are established or semantic values are manufactured<sup>73</sup>, it only shows them,

Wittgenstein's linguistic holism does not shy away from the ultimate ineffability of meaning, though it is a safeguard against meaning being local and discontinuous. Globality and continuity are the twin features of the semantic cover which clothes language with sense. This would not have been possible if meaning would have been relative to language-games.

Wittgenstein overcomes the temptation of the empiricist meaning theory, e.g., Quine's and Davidson's theory of holism, because it is neither global nor continuous, Quine fails to explain how the theoretical structure is integrated in the absence of meaning since meaning is allegedly lacking a foundation. Davidson equally fails to make sure how meaning would be formed in the absence of a developed notion of truth. Wittgenstein's holism overcomes these difficulties by taking language as a universal medium - as the total form of life with an integrated scheme of rule - system (grammar). Grammar, for him, is the mainstay of the linguistic holism because everything is surveyable in grammar. Grammar is not dependent on a narrow notion of truth and also on the formal (ideal) structure of language,<sup>74</sup>

#### ***7. Kripkean Anti-realism and Wittgenstein's Grammatical Compromise***

Now the question arises: does anti-realism of Kripke correctly represent Wittgenstein's approach to meaning? Kripke has shown that if meaning has to survive, it must hinge on community-justification and ratification. That is, meaning has to be a continuous process of ratification. Needless to say, this has broken the necessary bond between language and meaning; this has alienated meaning from the linguistic uses, Wittgenstein's grammatical compromise consists in keeping language and meaning as grammatically bound up together since neither of them is conceivable without the other. That is, semantic values presupposes grammar and grammar makes them explicit in actual uses of language.

"Essence is expressed by grammar" (P<sub>L</sub>, sect. 371). And 'the meaning of a word is its use in the language' is meant to highlight the grammar that shows that use is the mark of the sense given to linguistic expressions. The meaning theory represents the internal rules which constitute the essence of language. In view of this any theory of meaning-contingency like Kripke's is threatened and has no necessary foundation from the grammatical point of view. The anti-realist stand that meaning must be shared and so mutually ratified involves semantic instability and uncertainty. Moreover, shareability is a consequential feature of meaning and thus it cannot be viewed as its essence. The essence must be grammatical which is expressed in language itself. The importance of grammar lies in the significance of language and *vice versa*. So the external requirement of ratification must be discarded as an unwarranted semantic proposal. The grammatical compromise does not rule out such ratifications in semantic assessment, but it only transcends them to bring out the semantic fact that meaning is an irreducible feature of language and is completely surveyable in the conceptual structure (grammar) of the language. Meaning realism even in the minimal sense<sup>75</sup> is in perfect order. Grammar does not rule out realism if it is perfectly in order. I, therefore, suggest that Kripke's sceptical model fails to capture Wittgenstein's real intention.



## NOTES

1. WRPL, p. 13,
2. See J. Heal, *Fact and Meaning : Quine and Wittgenstein on Philosophy of Language* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1989), chapt. 11.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.
6. For detailed discussion on semantic realism, see J. Heal, *Fact and Meaning*, Chapt. 11. See also Dummett, "Realism", *Synthese*, 52(1989), pp. 55-112, for the classic statement on semantic realism.
7. For a detailed account of meaning-scepticism as projected by Kripke, see Paul Boghossian, "The Rule-Following Considerations", *Mind*, 98(1989), pp. 507-49.
8. See Dummett, "Realism", *Synthese*, 52(1989), pp. 55-112.
9. WRPL, p. 72.
10. Cf. Dummett, *Frege: Philosophy of Language*, (Duckworth, London, 1973, second ed. 1981).
11. See Frege, "Logic" in *Posthumous Writings* ed. H. Hermes et al (Blackwell, Oxford, 1979), pp. 126-51.
12. See P. Carruthers, *Tractarian Semantics*, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1989).
13. Cf. TLF, 4.024.
14. *Ibid.*, 2.17, 4.12.

15. *Ibid.* , 4.021, 4.023.
16. *Ibid.*,, 4.03.
17. See Frege, "On Sense and Reference" in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, Ed. P.T. Geach and M. Black, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1960).
18. See Frege, "Thoughts", in *Logical Investigations*, ed. P.T. Geach, (Black well, Oxford, 1977), p. 5.
19. See Dummett, *Frege; Philosophy of Language*, pp. 152-203.
20. WRPL, p. 77.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
22. Dummett, "Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mathematics" in *Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G. Pitcher, (Macmillan, London, 1966), pp. 446-7.
23. Dummett, "Truth" in *Truth and Other Enigmas*, (Duckworth, London, 1978), pp. 17-18.
24. WRPL, p. 73.
25. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
26. See Dummett, "Truth" in *Truth and Other Enigmas*, pp. 1-23.
27. WRPL, pp. 77-78.
28. See Dummett, "Truth" in *Truth and Other Enigmas*, pp. 1-23.
29. *Ibid.*,
30. See Dummett, "Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mathematics" in *Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G. Pitcher, (Macmillan, London, 1966), p. 446.

31. For full discussion on the new semantics see C. Wright, "Anti-realist Semantics : The Role of Criteria" in *Idealism-Fast and Present*, ed.. G. Vesey, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1982), pp. 225-48. See also G. Baker "Criteria: A New Foundations for Semantics", *Ratio*, 16(1974), pp. 194-225.
32. Dummett, "What is a Theory of Meaning?" in *Mind and Language*, ed. S. Guttenplan, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1975), p.99.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
34. Wright, "Anti-realist Semantics: The Role of Criteria", p. 226
35. WRFL, p. 112.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
37. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
38. See D. Davidson, "Truth and Meaning" in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1984)
39. For discussion on the continuity theme see Merrill B. and Jaakko Hintikka, *Investigating Wittgenstein* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1986). See also B. Williams, "Wittgenstein and Idealism" in *Nora] Luck* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981).
40. The Tractarian sense of picture must be interpreted in the logical sense and not in the literal sense. A logical picture is so-called because of its formal affinity with what is pictured rather than any material identity. See

TLP, 2.16-2.17.

41. Cf. R.C. Pradhan, "Truth and Language", *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. v (1978), pp. 29-39.
42. *Ibid.*
43. J.L. Austin, "Truth" in *Philosophical Papers*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1970).
44. W.V. Quine, *Philosophy of Logic*, (Prentice Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1970).
45. Austin, "Truth" in *Philosophical Papers* P. 123.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Explicit truth-definitions are provided by the semanticists like Tarski. See Alfred Tarski, "The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. IV (1943-44), pp. 341-375.
48. See R.C. Pradhan, "Truth and Language", pp. 29-30.
49. See W.V. Quine, *Philosophy of Logic*, p. 12.
50. For Quine, truth is an external semantic device that treat sentences as referring to the world. There is no such externalism in Wittgenstein's treatment of truth.
51. The logical superfluity view is also known as the deflationary view of truth according to which 'P is true' and 'P' are indetical or equivalent. This is the view advocated by P.F. Ramsey and shared by Frege and Wittgenstein. See P. F. Ramsey, *The Foundations of*

- Mathematics and other Logical Essays*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1931).
52. TLP, 6.34, 6.341, 6.342 and 6.343. See G.E.M. Anscombe, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, (Hutchinson, London, 1959, 2nd ed. 1963).
  53. For detailed and more insightful discussion on this point see G. Vision, *Modern Anti-Realism and Manufactured Truth*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1988), chapt. VIII.
  54. For discussion on autonomy of language see Bernard Harrison, *An Introduction to Philosophy of Language*, (Macmillan, London, 1979), chapt. I.
  55. See Davidson "Thought and Talk", in *Mind and Language*, ed S. Guttenplan, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1975), p. 17.
  56. See Davidson, "Truth and Meaning" in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, pp. 23-24.
  57. *Ibid*,
  58. Cf. R.C. Pradhan, "Meaning, Experience and Understanding", *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII (1983), pp. 291-302.
  59. This point is highlighted by A.W. Moore in his paper "Transcendental Idealism in Wittgenstein and Theories of Meaning", *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 35 (1985), pp. 134-155.
  60. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
  61. See N. Malcolm, *Nothing is Hidden*, (Blackwell, Oxford,

1986), p.20.

62. A.W. Moore, "Transcendental Idealism in Wittgenstein and Theories of Meaning", p. 144.
63. See Richard McDonough, "Towards a Non-Mechanistic Theory of Meaning", *Mind*, xcvi(1989), pp. 1-21.
64. See. J. Heal, *Fact and Meaning*, chapt. 9.
65. See Dummett, "What is a Theory of Meaning?" in *Mind and Language*, ed. S. Guttenplan and "What is a Theory of Meaning? II" in *Truth and Meaning*, ed. Evans and McDowell, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1976).
66. See R.C. Pradhan, "Meaning, Experience and Understanding", pp. 291-302.
67. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" in *From a Logical Point of View*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1953).
68. Davidson, "Truth and Meaning" in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, pp. 18-36.
69. See Quine, *Theories and Things*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass, 1981), pp. 1-23.
70. Dummett, "What is a Theory of Meaning?" in *Mind and Language*, ed. S. Guttenplan, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975), pp. 97-122.
71. *Ibid.*
72. See Merrill B. and Jaakko Hintikka, *Investigating*

*Wittgenstein*, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1986), chapt. 1.

73. See G. Vision, *Modern Anti - Realism and Manufactured Truth*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1988).
74. This does not imply that Davidson's holism is wrong or logically inadequate. It only shows that Wittgenstein takes holism as the very nature of language. Davidson is closer to Wittgenstein than Quine so far as holism is concerned.
75. See J. Heal, *Fact and Meaning*, chapt, I, see also McDowell, "Anti-realism and the Epistemology of Understanding" in *Meaning and Understanding* eds. Herman Parret and J. Bouveress, (Walter de Gruyter, Berlin and Newyork, 1981), pp. 225-48.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE STRAIGHT SOLUTION: WITTGENSTEIN'S SEARCH FOR AN ALTERNATIVE

In this final chapter my effort is to search for a **non-sceptical** alternative to Kripke's sceptical solution. The solution to the **rule-following** paradox suggested here will be called the straight solution.<sup>1</sup> This solution consists in showing that there is an irreducible grammatical core that supplies the foundation for rule-following. The argument of this kind will be called a transcendental argument<sup>2</sup> of the grammatical variety propounded by Wittgenstein.

#### 1. *Humean Scepticism and the Availability of a Straight Solution*

Kripke's sceptical argument, as we have seen so far, is modelled on Hume's scepticism. Hume is well known as a consistent sceptic and to a large extent a naturalist of a very consistent kind. Kripke concedes the fact that Hume's **consideration** of causation and induction leads him to the sceptical problem.<sup>4</sup> According to Kripke, Hume gives a sceptical solution to the sceptical problem of causation and induction in terms of '**custom**' and '**habit**' without having any rational justification for them. Kripke argues that Wittgenstein analogously endorses the Humean sceptical problem in the discussion of **rule-following** and offers a sceptical solution to it by committing himself to a **communitarian** view of rules and language. How does Hume then conceive of the problem of causation and induction? Why is his solution to the problem of



causation and induction to be called sceptical? I shall enquire into these before outlining the straight solutions offered to Hume's sceptical problem.

Hume belongs to the empiricist tradition of Locke and Berkeley. As an empiricist he accepts **sense-impressions** as the primary source of human knowledge. Hume **distinguishes** between ideas and impressions and treats ideas as the copy of impressions. Impressions are all our immediate "lively perceptions, we hear, or see, or feel, or love, or hate, or desire or will".<sup>5</sup> These impressions do not come from '**reason**' but originate directly through **sense-contact** with external objects. These lively impressions constitute the stuff of our knowledge of the external world. Dissolving the <sup>c</sup>Lockean distinction of simple and complex ideas by pointing out the **contradictory**, relativistic and corrigible nature of our ideas, he arrives at the conclusion that "all impressions, that is, all sensations, either outward or inward, are strong and vivid; the limits between them are more exactly determined: nor is it easy to fall into any error or mistake with regard to them". The principles of association of ideas, namely, **resemb** lance, contiguity and cause and effect, enable us to organise discrete ideas (**impressions**) into a systematic manner in order to constitute knowledge. These principles, for Hume, are final and they constitute the foundations of human knowledge. Hume categorizes the objects of human **understanding** and belief into two kinds - relation of ideas and matters of fact. Knowledge of necessary truth e.g. truths of logic and mathematics are acquired in the scheme of relations of

ideas and only these **formal** truths are **demonstratively** certain and 'are discoverable by the mere operation of thought.'<sup>1</sup> Our beliefs and impressions obtained through **sense-experience**, on the other hand, constitute the scheme of matter of fact. All our beliefs constituting matters of fact are probable in nature-probable in the fact that the contrary of every matter of fact is still possible. All truths concerning matters of fact are founded on the relation of cause and effects; so they lack certainty. Hume, on the basis of our common experiences, views that there is a connexion between observed facts and unobserved facts.<sup>7</sup> All the probable inferences of matters of fact reveal the causal nexus between events experienced and event inferred from them; and this causal relation "is either near or remote, direct or collateral".<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Hume insists that "the knowledge of this relation is not, in any instance, attained by reasonings *a priori*; but arises entirely from experience, when we find that any particular objects are constantly conjoined with each other".<sup>9</sup> This thought establishes Hume's theory of causation according to which the causal nexus is a product of **sense-experience** but not of reason. Our reason, 'unassisted by experience', cannot draw any inference concerning real existence and matters of fact so that "causes and effects are discoverable not by reason but by experience".<sup>10</sup> Reason is passive and experience alone activates it. Thus the causal relation cannot be conceived *a priori*.

The fundamental question that Hume raises regarding the nature of the relation between cause and effect is; what is the

rational foundations of all our reasonings concerning matters of fact which include all our knowledge concerning the external world? That is, what is the foundation of all conclusions (truths) from experience? This is Hume's famous sceptical question which questions the very rational justification of our knowledge of the external world. Hume's sceptical answer regarding causation is: "We know nothing farther of causation of any kind than merely the *constant conjunction* of objects, and the consequent *inference* of the mind from one to another".<sup>11</sup> The following passage throws light on Hume's sceptical thesis on causation in a more revealing way:

The authority of the will over its own faculties and ideas is not a whit more *comprehensible*: So that, upon the whole, there appear not, throughout all nature, any one instance of connexion which is conceivable by us. All events seem entirely loose and separate. One event follows another; but we never can observe any tie between them. They seem *conjoined*, but never *connected*. And as we can have no idea of anything which never appeared to our outward sense or inward sentiment, the necessary conclusion seems to be that we have no idea of connexion or power at all, and that these words are absolutely without any meaning when employed either in philosophical reasonings or common life.

Hume's sceptical solution thus consists in showing that the causal nexus is a constant conjunction of our impressions i.e. experiences. There is no rational justification as to why we find causal relations among events. Events in the nature occur arbitrarily and are so capricious that "we are not entitled to form a general rule or foretell what will happen in like cases".<sup>13</sup>

The causal relation, therefore, is "a customary transition of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant"<sup>14</sup> and "to believe that it will exist".<sup>15</sup> The cause-effect relationship

is thus only 'carried out by habit', that is, is based on the principle of custom. The principle of custom consists in the connexion (the customary transition of imagination) which is "the **sentiment** or impression from which we form the idea of power, or  
16  
necessary connexion. Nothing farther is in the case". Therefore, the relationship between cause and effect is a contingent fact about our experience and so there is nothing necessary about it. It is, in short, not founded on reason. Hume thus does not deny the existence of either cause or effect or their relationship. He only shows that there are no *a priori* rational ground (sufficient rational evidence) for them except our impressions. "This transition of<sup>17</sup> thought from the cause to the effect proceeds not from reason". The causal relationship is only defined by regularities and contiguous successive association of our impressions of occurring events. There is nothing beyond other than this. So, as a matter of fact there is no absolute nor metaphysical necessity.<sup>18</sup> Hume, thus, ends up with a **sceptical** note: "The Cartesian doubt, therefore, were it ever possible to be attained by any human creature (as it plainly is not) would be entirely incurable; and no reasoning could ever bring us to a state of assurance and conviction upon any subject .

Now the question arises: why could Hume not **avail** a straight solution to the sceptical problem he encountered? That is, why is it that he discovered no rational foundation for our causal experience? Hume does not suggest that the truths we acquire through experience are themselves **unreasonable**. Nor does he

suggest that they are **infalliable**. What he does show is that the process of inferring effects or causes of observed phenomena is not itself based on any *prior rational justification*. We have no reason to believe that the pattern of events in the future will in any way resemble the patterns of events in the present or past. There is no prior reason that our future experiences will take place in the same manner as in the past. We have, therefore, no reason to believe that the future will resemble the past. Hume writes:

It is impossible, therefore, that any arguments from experience can prove this **resembalance** of the past to the future; since all these arguments are founded on the supposition of that **resemb\_lance**.<sup>20</sup>

It is a fact about us that we expect the future to be similar to our past and present. This fact that we always suppose that **like** causes have like effects is not a logical truth. Rather, it is an empirically (*inductively*) established true **generalization** about a certain human practice (belief). What Hume is intending is a non-rational **understanding** of this practice (as effect of regularity, **continguity**). That is, the ground that permits us to accept inductive **generalizations** is based on human custom. As he puts it "Custom is the great guide of human life. It is that principle alone which renders our experience useful to us, and makes us expect, for the future, a similar train of events with those which have appeared in the **past**".<sup>21</sup>

Hume's **philosophical** enquiry is thus **anti-rationalistic** in not accepting any rational **justification** for our inductive **beliefs**. According to him, we cannot find necessary connexion

between cause and effect and also we cannot provide any justification as to why the future resembles the past. The only principle that he accepts is, "that instances of which we have had no experience, must resemble those, of which we have had experience, and that the course of nature continues always the same". This continuity principle is itself a product of experience. Thus our experience is justified by itself and not by anything non-experiential.

How could this continuity of nature be ascertained on rational grounds? How could we say that nature will behave uniformly in all cases? First, it is obvious that in many cases this principle does not operate and 'no such principle occurs to us'. In some cases nature completely behaves mechanically e.g. breeding of animals, birds hatching eggs in season, etc. But what guarantee is there that nature will ever behave uniformly in all cases? One cannot formulate such a reflective principle (i.e. the uniformity of nature) to guide inferences from past or present experiences to future states. And, secondly, we could not, in advance of engaging in the practice of inductions, provide a reason to believe in uniformity of nature (the principle). For, as Hume insists, the truth of inductive generalizations cannot be ascertained in terms of the relations of ideas (*a priori*). And nor can they simply be observed to be true (*a posteriori*). Thus it is useless to attempt to give a non-sceptical account of inductions by saying that they result from employing a principle of uniformity of nature that is itself established by inductions (observed

regularities of nature). This centre piece of Hume's thought is simply a sceptical **argument** showing that any attempt to provide rational **justification** for our beliefs in matters of fact that go beyond the scope of senses and memory must be circular (*pettio principii*). That is, Hume's sceptical doubt is based on the fact that inductive inferences are supposed to proceed from a hypothesis for which it is impossible to give either *a priori* or *a posteriori* reasons. Thus, as Russell puts it, "if the inductive principles cannot be proved or justified, we have no reason to expect the sun to rise tomorrow, to expect bread to be more nourishing than a stone, or to expect that if we throw ourselves off the roof we shall **fall**".<sup>24</sup> According to Russell unless the inductive principle can be justified it will be irrational to put one's trust in the past **experience**. However, whereas Russell says that "our instincts cause us to believe that the sun will rise tomorrow"<sup>24</sup> Hume says that "all inferences from experiences are effects of **custom**".<sup>25</sup>

Barry Stroud in his *Hume* rightly points out that this part of Hume's discussion is sceptical, and establishes merely a '**negative result**'.<sup>26</sup> Thus when Hume says that what he is showing is that causal inference is not a process "**determined**" by reason, Stroud endorses this as the claim that none of our inferences from causes or effects is "**ever** reasonable or rationally **justified**".<sup>27</sup> It is now obvious that, for Hume, no *a priori* rational **justification** can be given for our practice of induction. However, in the absence of any rational evidence, he does not say that the beliefs we acquire about matters of fact

and existence are **unreasonable**. On the contrary, he contrasts favourably beliefs we acquire in this regard with the 'fancies and whimsies' created by emotion and imagination. Our causal beliefs are justified by the practice in which they find a prominent role. Therefore, scepticism does not entail disbanding causal beliefs altogether. However, there are no metaphysical **justifications** for them. Causality and inductions are matters of practice. We thus accept the truth of causation and induction because we are convinced (impressed) by them. Our conviction or impression is something that can be explained within the *theory of human nature*, in terms of principles that reveal that our ordinary conviction is neither arbitrary nor absurd. According to him, the human mind is such that it draws **inferences** from past experience without presupposing any pattern or employing any process of reasoning. This is purely a result of "custom operating upon the **imagination**".<sup>29</sup> This account of the sceptical problem of causation and induction does not undermine our faith in inductions, but simply allows us to convince that it is the *nature*, not *reason*, that is the foundation of all our empirical knowledge. This account of causation and induction is based on custom and constitutes a part of Hume's **naturalistic** account of human **understanding** and belief.<sup>29</sup>

Then, could we call Hume's so-called solution a straight solution? Or is it a sceptical one? It is obvious that Hume's solution cannot be called a straight solution because the necessity that is involved in our beliefs does not come from reason.<sup>30</sup> And on the contrary, it can be called a sceptical **one**



according to Hume's ontological **commitments**. Hume's admission that our causal beliefs as well as beliefs in the existence of bodies are without any rational support results in what may be called a sceptical **solution**. The fact remains that this lack of rational support does not bring down the edifice of our cognitive beliefs. So the sceptical solution consists in admitting the practicality of our cognitive needs even without any theoretical (i.e. doctrinal) **justification**. That **is**, our ordinary beliefs of external objects (and their existence) are alright so far as they meet our practical needs. But nothing more can be expected about their theoretical character. There remains an unresolvable conflict between scepticism and everyday **conviction** (naturalism).<sup>31</sup>

Hume's failure to arrive at a straight solution does not lie in anything inherent to his naturalistic project. Rather it lies in his theory of human nature itself. The failure to achieve at a satisfactory **non-sceptical** account of our **belief** lies in his **commitment** to the view "that everything which appears to the mind, is nothing but a perception, and is interrupted and dependent on the **mind**".<sup>32</sup> It is this view that makes our natural disposition "to attribute a distinct continued existence to the very things [we] feel and **see**,"<sup>33</sup> absurd and manifestly false. Hume's ontological commitments thus bring him to this uncompromisingly paradoxical position. For him every empirical knowledge is based on knowledge of cause and effect which in turn is dependent on experience of constant conjunctions. Hume's empiricism (**impressionism**) renders him

unable to provide a rational justification of our belief in the external world. And he paradoxically suggests that "we may well ask. *what causes induce us to believe in the existence of body?* but 't is vain to ask; *whether there be body or not?* That is a point, which we must take for granted in all our reasoning".<sup>34</sup> To this extent, therefore, Hume's scepticism pulls against his naturalistic hopes and deprives him of arriving at a non-sceptical assessment of our belief in an external world.

## 2. *Descartes' Straight Solution: The Quest for Certainty*

Humean scepticism was anticipated by **Descartes** in his method of universal doubt. He struggled to show that universal doubt is impossible. His method, known as the geometrical method, was to demonstrate that there are basic principles of human knowledge. So he aimed "to reject as absolutely false everything as to which I could imagine the least ground of doubt, in order to see if afterwards there remained anything in my belief that was entirely certain".<sup>35</sup> Descartes' purpose was thus to sweep away all his **dogmatic** beliefs which do not 'conform to the uniformity of a rational **scheme**'. And as he confesses "it will be sufficient to justify the rejection of the whole if I shall find in each some ground for doubt. Nor for this purpose will it be necessary even to deal with each belief **individually**, which would be truly an endless labour; but, as the removal from below of the foundation necessarily involves the **downfall** of the whole edifice, I will at once approach the criticism of the principles on which all my former beliefs **rested**."<sup>36</sup>

By adopting the universal method of doubt **Descartes** claims that there is nothing at all that I formerly believed to be true of which it is impossible to doubt, and that not through thoughtlessness or levity, but from cogent and maturely considered reasons,... I ought not less carefully to refrain from assenting to those same opinions than to what might be shown to be manifestly false".<sup>37</sup> He doubts the **legitimacy** of senses since senses often deceive us. What seems to be right in normal perception later turns to be an event of dream. How can we trust our senses when we do not know that we may be deceived by a malignant Demon?<sup>38</sup> This possibility of being deceived extends to all knowledge including our mathematical knowledge and scientific **beliefs**. Thus Descartes asks "how, then, do I know that God has not arranged that there should be neither earth, nor sky, nor any extended thing, nor figure, nor magnitude, nor place, providing at the same time, however, for [the rise in me of the perceptions of all these objects, and] the pursuasion that these do not exist otherwise than as I perceive them?"<sup>39</sup> Moreover, we cannot be certain that God is supremely good because he may be an evil genius "exceedingly potent and deceitful".<sup>40</sup> Thus he argues that all things he experiences "are nothing better than the illusions of dreams".<sup>41</sup>

**Descartes'** search for a straight solution to the presumed sceptical doubt begins with the **establishment** of the indubitable truth about the thinking self: "I think, therefore, I am". Descartes argues that "I myself, am I not at least something? ... But I was persuaded that there was nothing in all the world, that

there was no heaven, no earth, that were no minds, nor any bodies: was I not then likewise persuaded that I did not exist? Not at all; of a surety I myself did exist since I persuaded myself of something. But there is some deceiver or other, very powerful and very cunning, who ever employs his ingenuity in deceiving me. Then without doubt I exist also if he deceives me, and let him deceive me as much as he will, he can never cause me to be nothing so long as I think I am something. So that after having reflected well and carefully examined all things, we must come to the definite conclusion that this position: I am, I exist, is necessarily true each time that I pronounce it, or that I **mentally** conceive it".<sup>42</sup> This argument establishes the existence of a doubter or thinking being. **Descartes** argues that the thinking self who doubts cannot but exist because to doubt there must be a **doubting** being who can entertain doubts. According to **Descartes** this first indubitable and axiomatic truth is derived from the perception of a **contradiction**: "That we cannot doubt our existence without existing while we doubt; and this is the first knowledge that we obtain when we philosophize in an ordinary way".<sup>43</sup> The contradiction is: I doubt, but I do not exist. So there must be a conscious being (i.e. ego) to doubt, to think and so its existence must be admitted as an undeniable **fact**.

With the *Cogito*, Descartes arrives at a straight solution to the sceptical problem as to how human knowledge can be **demonstrably** certain, i.e. can be secured against any possible doubt. The *Cogito* holds the key, according to Descartes, to the

system of intuitively true and absolutely certain knowledge, e.g. the knowledge of one's own existence, the knowledge of the external world, etc. This leads Descartes to ground all knowledge upon absolutely necessary truths. Indeed his metaphysics is based on the necessary truth, 'I think, therefore, I exist' which cannot be subverted by an all powerful God. God, according to Descartes', does not provide foundation for logical and metaphysical necessity. The necessity and certainty of our knowledge lies in the clearness and distinctness of the ideas in human reason. Reason is thus the foundation of the necessity embedded in our cognitive assertions.

Descartes' straight solution in the *Meditations* passes from the existence of self (ego) as the sole thinking being to God and then to the external world. Having established that he exists as a thinking being, and then that God exists, he in his sixth *Meditation* arrives at the view that the external world exists. He admits that there are corporeal (i.e physical) things which include his own body and numerous other physical objects all around him. As Descartes in the synopsis of the *Meditations* puts it "there is in reality a world, that men are possessed of bodies, and the like are ones which no one of sound mind ever seriously doubted".<sup>44</sup> This sets at rest all the sceptical doubts which Descartes himself had allowed to crop up as a preliminary to his enquiry into the foundation of human knowledge. Descartes' argument for the existence of the world is founded on his basic non-sceptical thesis that "there is in me a certain passive faculty of perception, that is, of receiving... the ideas

of sensible things".<sup>45</sup> That is to say, there is something that produces these ideas. And he believes that while it is **metaphysically** possible that the ideas can be produced directly by God himself or by some other cause other than a physical object, nevertheless God permits us 'a very strong inclination to believe that these ideas arise from corporeal objects\*. This idea leads Descartes to reach his final thesis "I do not see how God could be vindicated from the charge of deceit, if in truth they proceeded from any other sources, or were produced by any other causes, than corporeal things; and accordingly it must be concluded that corporeal objects exist".<sup>46</sup>

The basic principle of the Cartesian straight solution lies in the notion of truth which is ultimately embedded in the rational nature of our mind. The principle of truth is the principle of 'assent only to what is clearly and distinctly perceived by the light of **reason**'. He insists that "as often as I so restrain my will within the limits of my knowledge, that it forms no judgement except on matters which are clearly and distinctly represented to it by the **understanding**, I can never be deceived; for every clear and distinct perception is without doubt something... and consequently we must conclude that such a judgement is true".<sup>47</sup> According to Descartes, reason **is** the source of truth, knowledge and necessity. The reason enables us to perceive clearly and distinctly our **world-pictures** both internal and external so far as both can be interpreted in terms of pure mathematics. Descartes says that "I possess the means of acquiring a perfect knowledge respecting innumerable matters, as

well relative to God himself and other intellectual objects as to corporeal nature, in so far as it is the object of pure mathematics\*.<sup>48</sup> Mathematical truths are intuitively and directly accessible to reason and so they **paradigmatically (deductively)** function to determine 'clear and distinctness' of other ideas (truths).

The Cartesian solution thus outlined is a precursor of all possible "straight solutions" to the sceptical problem. If Hume despaired of a straight solution, **Descartes** arrived at it and laid the foundation of the metaphysics of certainty and necessity. **Kripke's** presentation of Humean scepticism and sketchy remarks on Descartes do necessitate an investigation into the structure of a straight solution. **Descartes** can be taken as the beacon light in the search for a non-sceptical alternative.

### 3. **Universality and Necessity: Kant's Transcendental Arguments**

**Descartes'** metaphysics of certainty is further deepened by Kant in his transcendental scheme of situating necessity in the structure of human reason. Whereas Descartes left certainty and necessity to lie in the clear and distinct ideas of the mind, Kant pursued them upto the structure of the cognitive reason as such. Kant located necessity in the constitutive structure of the synthetic *a priori* principles embedded in the rational understanding. Therefore, there is a bold scheme of transcendental straight solution in Kant's philosophy of categorial discourse.

Kant who begins as a rationalist thinker was aroused from

his 'dogmatic slumber'<sup>1</sup> by Hume who criticised and rejected the dogmatic presuppositions of human knowledge. Kant develops his critical investigations of the foundations of human knowledge in order to meet the sceptical challenge initiated by Hume to the possibility of human knowledge. He, therefore, aimed at investigating the sources and limits of human knowledge, that is, to examine the foundations of human knowledge.

Kant faced the basic problem: How are a priori synthetic judgements possible? According to him, a positive answer to this question will lead to an answer of the question: How is pure knowledge of the external world a priori possible? These questions, so formulated, bring out the fact that Kant's philosophy is concerned with the a priori modes or conditions of knowledge.<sup>49</sup> Indeed the central thesis of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is that human beings have a priori knowledge of the world. By a priori knowledge Kant means the knowledge which possesses necessity and universality as its criteria. As Kant puts it, "necessity and strict universality are thus sure criteria of a priori knowledge, and are inseparable from one another".<sup>50</sup> And the a prioricity of knowledge also shows the necessary and universal conditions of our experience of the world i.e. the a priori grounds of its possibility. Therefore, a priori knowledge is logically independent of experience in the sense that it is not derived from it. It shows the grounds of the possibility of experience itself; so experience cannot give rise to such knowledge.<sup>51</sup>

Kant takes the Humean sceptical challenge headon as the main



subject-matter of scrutiny. That is because *a priori* knowledge could be proved only if the sceptical challenge is met. For Kant our **knowledge-claims** in everyday life and in science cannot be threatened by sceptical doubt because they are certain and **unproblematic** as they stand. However, the **understanding** of the structure of our knowledge, an **understanding** of how any knowledge of the world around us is possible, does require that scepticism and dogmatic idealism should be refuted. Kant rightly **regards, it** is a '**scandal**' in philosophy that "**the** existence of things outside us . . . , must be accepted merely on faith",<sup>52</sup> but also that "**if** any one thinks good to doubt their existence **we** are **unable** to counter his doubts by any satisfactory **proof**".<sup>53</sup> This leads to scepticism, and leaves us unable to explain our knowledge of external things as anything other than an act of faith, and hence not as knowledge or reasonable belief at all. Kant seeks to change this scandalous state of things by proving that our knowledge of the external world has *a priori* principles underlying it. This he achieved by undertaking a critical analysis of the basic structure of human **knowledge**. He writes, "the new point of view enables us to explain how there can be knowledge *a priori*; and, in addition, to furnish satisfactory proofs of the laws which form the *a priori* basis of nature, regarded as the sum of the objects of experiences - neither achievement being possible on the procedure hitherto **followed**".<sup>54</sup>

Kant's new way of countering the sceptic's attack on knowledge proves that we have direct awareness only of what belongs to us and what is entirely dependent on our sensibility

and understanding. Kant thus brings about the *Copernican Revolution* in the philosophy of knowledge about the world by maintaining that our knowledge of the world is not possible on the assumption that our experience and knowledge of things simply conform to the objects experienced or known, but that "objects must conform to our knowledge" and to "the constitution of our faculty of intuition".<sup>56</sup> Thus, according to Kant, to avoid scepticism and thereby explain how scientific knowledge of things around us is possible (i.e. how synthetic *a priori* judgements are possible) we must view "all our perceptions, whether we call them inner or outer, as a consciousness only of what is dependent on our sensibility"<sup>57</sup> and all "the outer objects of these perceptions ... only as representations, of which ... we can become immediately conscious".<sup>58</sup> This leads Kant to accept a version of idealism called 'transcendental idealism' which is compatible with empirical realism. According to this view all our representations of the world are, though ideal in the transcendental sense, that is, are not things-in-themselves, are empirically real in a very robust sense. These representations constitute our real world - given to our sensibility and understanding. Kant puts this point in the following way:

If we treat outer objects as things in themselves, it is quite impossible to understand how we could arrive at knowledge of their reality outside us, since we have to rely merely on the representation which is in us ... Sceptical idealism thus constrains us to have recourse to the only refuge still open, namely, the ideality of all appearances...

The sceptic's problem lies in searching, though without

success, for a rational basis for our knowledge claim about the existence of the world. Kant provides a "straight solution" to the sceptical problem by discovering necessary conditions of our knowledge of the world. This he does, not by any empirical means, but by his transcendental method. The transcendental method consists in discovering the *a priori* grounds of knowledge which are not themselves derived from experience. As Kant puts it,

I entitle *transcendental* all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects <sup>in</sup>so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible *a priori*.

Experience, Kant says, can teach us 'that a thing is so and so, but not that it can not be otherwise'. Therefore, the empiricist method cannot provide us with the *a priori* and necessary principles of our knowledge. Transcendental way of thinking alone can reveal the *a priori*, i.e., the universal and necessary structure of human knowledge. Thus those conditions which are necessary for any empirical knowledge of objects to be possible, cannot themselves be empirical and so must be *a priori*. The transcendental investigation of the constitutive conditions of our knowledge is Kant's straight solution to scepticism. This entails that the sceptic's demand for rational guarantee of knowledge can be fulfilled. Transcendental philosophy is, therefore, Kant's alternative to Descartes' metaphysics of certainty as discussed earlier. Like Descartes, Kant meets the sceptic headon by showing, though in a different way, that our grasp of necessity in knowledge is securable on the rationally

indefeasible grounds.

Kant's transcendental philosophy is concerned with the *a priori* conditions of our knowledge of the world, and not with the world itself. In other words, it is concerned with the "*a priori* possibility of knowledge" or experience of the world. On this account transcendental enquiry differs from empirical investigation into the nature of knowledge and experience, since the latter is concerned with the factual conditions of experience, while the former is concerned with logical or formal conditions of knowledge. These logical conditions constitute the indefeasible grounds of knowledge, according to Kant. The basic subject-matter in Kant's transcendental philosophy is to present a critique of reason and its pure *a priori* forms (i.e. categories of understanding). These *a priori* forms are the principles which make our knowledge possible. Determination of the laws of reason (categories of understanding) amounts to the determination of the foundations and limits of our sense experience. The categories of understanding have their application only to **sense-manifolds** (intuitions) and cannot be applied beyond them. Kant calls this way of establishing the limits of knowledge the 'new method of thought' which proves that our knowledge is constituted by the *a priori* principles of reason.

Kant's transcendental philosophy thus has two significant results, namely, (1) it provides a new **method-transcendental method-of** justifying human knowledge and (2) it provides a scheme of categories that constitutes the foundations of knowledge. The method consists, as discussed already, in **investigation** into

the *a priori* conditions of the possibility of scientific knowledge. The **transcendental** proofs or arguments for the possibility of human knowledge constitute the surest guarantee against any sceptical challenge. This is what is most relevant in our endeavour to find out Kant's so-called straight solution.

The categorial scheme deduced **transcendentally** offers the clearest account ever of the *a priori* principles of reason which constitute the structure of human knowledge. The *a priori* concepts are embedded in the human **understanding** and are not derived from experience. The basic tenets of Kant's critique of human knowledge in his **transcendental** scheme are; (1) human knowledge is thoroughly **conceptualized** and so judgemental, that is, knowledge is possible through synthesis of the **sense-manifold** by means of the categories of **understanding**; (2) percepts are given in the *a priori* forms of sensibility (i.e. space and time); (3) the *a priori* forms of reasoning, i.e., the categories are discovered **transcendentally** by showing them to be the *a priori* conditions of the possibility of our experience of the world (the **transcendental** deduction of categories) and (4) our conceptual scheme involves certain synthetic *a priori* principles e.g. **principles** of mathematics and the natural science which constitute the foundation of our knowledge. Thus Kant's **transcendental** scheme provides the rules of **concept-formation** and their application in the universally given structure of experience.

By studying the general structure of knowledge Kant

maintains that the objective experience is possible only in a unified system of space and time. Without presupposing space and time and the objective world no knowledge will be made possible. Kant avoids two metaphysical doctrine such as subjective idealism and **phenomenalism**. Both are committed to the idea that we know the world as a matter of chance and there is no necessary co-relation between the world and our cognitive conditions. Kant, to the contrary, has shown that knowledge of the world is based on universal and necessary principles, and so it cannot be either subjective or phenomenal. Knowledge is universally and necessarily constituted. This is the essence of Kant's straight solution to the problems of scepticism, solipsism and **phenomenalism**.

#### **4. Wittgenstein's Straight Solution: The Anti-Cartesian Move**

It is now imperative to ask: Does Wittgenstein propose a straight solution either in the Cartesian form or in the Kantian form to the sceptical problem concerning **rule-following** and our **understanding** of the language? Or, does he simply accept, as Kripke argues, a Humean form of sceptical solution recommending a **communitarian** view of **rule-following**? It is now agreed that **Wittgenstein's** solution is not a sceptical solution. But whether he has a straight solution or not is a matter of debate. It has been my argument so far that Wittgenstein has a straight solution to the sceptical problem. The argument will **unfold further** as we go on.

**Wittgenstein's** straight solution cannot be cast either **in**

the Cartesian mould or in its Kantian form **straightaway**. As I shall argue, he differs both from Descartes and Kant on the method of refuting scepticism even if he agrees with them that certainty in **rule-following** and language-use is matter of internal structure of human thought.

Wittgenstein's break with the Cartesian tradition is marked in his rejection of the thinking Ego in the *Tractatus*. As Wittgenstein writes,

There is no such thing as the subject that thinks or **entertains** ideas.

If I wrote a book *The World as I found it*, I should have to include a report on my body, and should have to say which parts were subordinate to my **will**, and which were not, etc. This being a method of isolating the subject, or rather of showing that in an important sense there is no subject; for it alone could not be mentioned in that book (TLP, 5.631).

This cuts at the root of the Cartesian world-view for the reason that with the **disappearance** of a thinking 'Ego', or 'I', the contents of consciousness become less relevant for our understanding of the thoughts and their expressions in language. Wittgenstein's rejection of psychologism in his later works is directly consequent upon the **disappearance** of the thinking Ego. Wittgenstein has the oft-repeated argument that the mental processes or the contents of **consciousness** do not constitute meaning and **understanding** of language,<sup>64</sup>

Wittgenstein remarks,

Try not to think of **understanding** as a 'mental process' at all. - For *that* is the expression which confuses you. But ask yourself: in what sort of case, in what kind of **circumstances**, do we say, "**Now** I know how to go **on**," when, that is, the formula has occurred to me?

In the sense in which there are processes (including mental processes) which are characteristic of understanding, understanding is not a mental process.

(A pain's growing more and less; the hearing of a tune or a sentence: these are mental processes) (PI sect. 154).

What is remarkable here is Wittgenstein's refusal to entertain mind as a store house of ideas, concepts and meanings. That is to say, there is an inherent resistance to the suggestion that our thought expressed in language is a mental stuff in the Cartesian sense. As Wittgenstein writes,

Meaning is as little an experience as intending. But what distinguishes them from experience?— They have no experience-content. For the contents (images for instance) which accompany and illustrate them are not the meaning or intending (PI, Part II, p.217).

The problem for Wittgenstein is not whether there is a mind or not, but whether if there were a mind, its contents will account for our understanding and meaning, that is, whether our knowledge of the world is constituted by them. Wittgenstein's anti-Cartesian move is against the brand of Cartesian solution to the sceptical challenge regarding our knowledge of the world. It shows that the certainty accruing to our epistemic beliefs is not a subjective certainty or a metaphysical certainty in the Cartesian sense, that is, it is not a kind of certainty in the mind or Ego. In short, it is not the certainty in entertaining ideas however clear and distinct. Certainty is a matter of language and language-use. Wittgenstein puts it clearly in the following passage:

Am I less certain that this man is in pain than that twice two is four? — Does this shew the former to be mathematical certainty? — 'Mathematical certainty' is not a **psychological**



concept. The kind of certainty is the kind of **language-game**,  
(**PI**, part II, p. 224).

Do I want to say, then, that certainty resides in the nature  
of language-game? (**OC**, sect. 457).

**Wittgenstein's** rejection of the Cartesian straight solution  
presupposed by subjective certainty is not a refutation of  
Descartes' idea that philosophy ensures certainty in thought and  
language, but of the **predominantly** rationalist idea that clear  
and distinct ideas alone constitute truth. Wittgenstein gives a  
linguistic turn to the search for certainty and thus proves that  
**Descartes'** appeal to "light of **reason**" for certainty and  
necessity is based on an inadequate **understanding** of **the**  
structure of language and thought.

##### **5. Elements of Kantianism in Wittgenstein's Straight Solution**

**Wittgenstein's** solution to the problem of scepticism  
closely resembles Kant's<sup>65</sup>, though it is not exactly Kantian.  
**Wittgenstein** reiterates the Kantian idea that the certainty and  
necessity in human knowledge and language-use (so to say,  
application of concepts and **concept-formation**) are part of  
the basic structure of thought and life. That is to say, just as  
Kant took to the **transcendental** route to the necessary truths in  
human reason, **Wittgenstein** took to the grammatical route to the  
same. The difference is that while Kant offered a critique of  
pure reason, **Wittgenstein** offered a critique of **language**.<sup>fi.7</sup> Both  
are in a sense critical **philosophers**.

The similarity of argument between Kant and **Wittgenstein**  
goes deeper than **usually noticed**. Both had the sceptic in **mind**

while sharpening their critical **methods**. For Kant the bitterest **philosophical** enemy is a Humean sceptic and a dogmatic idealist both questioning our right to knowledge of the external world and **legitimacy** of certain established truths. For Wittgenstein also the empirical solipsist, the private linguist and the sceptic form the trinity of **philosophical** enemies to be curbed, refuted and ultimately their problems dissolved. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein resolved the problem of scepticism by saying that it is "not irrefutable, but obviously **nonsensical**" (6.51). He also demonstrated that solipsism in any form cannot be said and so must be nonsensical (cf. TLP, 5.62). The private language issue is totally non-existent in the *Tractatus* because language is universal and logical. The private language argument in the *Investigations* shows that language being **universally** and necessarily constituted (being **rule-structured**), the notion of private language is meaningless. The grammar of **rule-following** shows why a private language cannot be logically entertained. Therewith the **solipsist** and the sceptic about the universality of language get their problems dissolved. There is nothing in our language, that can justify a statement like "I follow my rule which none else can **follow**" or "I am alone **real**". All these are grammatical errors or confusions arising due to the **misinterpretation** of grammar, i.e., the logic of language. 'A whole **cloud** of philosophy condensed into a drop of grammar<sup>1</sup>, as Wittgenstein puts it (PI, II, p. 222). And more explicitly Wittgenstein writes,

The results of philosophy are the uncovering of one or

another piece of plain nonsense and of bumps that the understanding has got by running its head up against the limits of language. These bumps make us see the value of the discovery (PI sect. 119).

This passage could remind one of Kant's noted argument that philosophy must curb the tendency to cross the **limits** of experience lest the reason may fall into deep confusions. As Kant puts it, "... by this procedure reason precipitates itself into darkness and **contradictions** . . . ?

In spite of the similarity of aim and method, Wittgenstein charts a new course to situate necessity in grammar disowning the Kantian recourse to the transcendental subjectivity as the source of our rules and concepts, Wittgenstein could not have accepted the **subjectivist** root (mould) of necessity in view of his commitment to the universality of language and grammar. Besides, necessity cannot be an item of **consciousness**. Grammar replaces the **transcendental** subjectivity and thus there could be no tracing back of **rule-following** to the **extra-grammatical** source of human cognition,

Wittgenstein's major difference with Kant is on the availability of a transcendental deduction or **justification** of our categorial scheme embedded in our ordinary language. Kant went in for a wholesale **justification** of our right to **use**, that is, to apply the categories in the cognitive judgements. This he achieved through a rigorous and tortuous **proof-procedure** called **transcendental** deduction. Kant considered this essential in view of the sceptic's demand. However, Wittgenstein rejected the demand of **justification** as ill-advised because **justifications**

ultimately give way to sheer acceptance. That **is**, when the **justifications** come to an end, we have just to accept what is given. Wittgenstein very aptly remarks:

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, sect. 217).

What has to be accepted, the given, is - so one could say- **forms of life** - (PI, II, p. 226).

This forecloses the possibility of offering any **justification** of our concepts and **rules**. What we have to do is describe what is factually given as forms of life. That is, the truths that we claim to possess regarding language and the **world** are recorded in our grammar. So that **philosophical investigation** has to be grammatical (PI, sect. 90). That is, it has to bring out the perspicuous **representation** of the use of language. Wittgenstein writes,

A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not **command** a clear **view** of the use of our **words**-Our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity. A perspicuous **representatin** produces just that **understanding** which consists in '**seeing** connexions'. Hence the importance of finding and inventing *intermediate cases*.

The concept of a perspicuous **representation** is of fundamental significance for us. It earmarks the form of account we give, the way we look at things. (Is this a '**Weltanschauung**'?) < PI, sect. 122).

Wittgenstein's plea for grammar is his alternative to Kant's logic of transcendental **justification**. Kant's transcendental logic aims at **revealing** the necessary structure of our experience of the world. Kant considers the latter to be in need of a foundation. Wittgenstein's philosophical grammar, however, puts

everything as it is and does not try to go beyond the obvious, the plain and the general. As Wittgenstein puts it,

Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it. For it cannot give any foundation either. It leaves everything as it is (PI, sect. 124).

## 6. Grammar and *Necessity*

In view of the centrality of grammar in Wittgenstein's straight solution, it is imperative to investigate how the necessity of the concepts and rules is embedded in the **normativeness** of language and grammar. Since the conceptual forms represented by grammar are anchored in the very forms of our **understanding** of language, their **indispensability** cannot but be accepted for human **communication**. This **understanding** lies in the analysis of grammar itself. Wittgenstein suggests that there is a logical bond between language, grammar and the necessary structure of our **representations** of the world. The availability of rules in language explains the possibility of grammar. As we have **discussed** earlier, logical syntax is possible because the rules demand a perspicuous **representation**. Similarly in the context of the **language-games**, the syntax of a **language-game** is possible in so far as the **language-game** is rule-bound. In that sense, grammar providing a syntax assumes the role of "an account book of **language**" (PG, sect. 44) which shows the actual transaction of language. Grammar, therefore, is a rule-book representing its rules in a systematic manner; it consists of the conventions (PG, sect. 138) which determine what is sense and non-sense in the **language**. Grammar is the totality of rules

which state in which connections linguistic expressions have meaning and propositions make sense.

Wittgenstein's primary concern with grammar is not to explicate an account book of language in an empirical manner. He does not mean by grammar any grammatical system with a well-constructed syntax, semantics and phonology which the transformal grammar of the Chomskian<sup>70</sup> kind claims to have. For Wittgenstein, grammar in its widest sense is philosophical grammar<sup>71</sup> representing the language-use in our life and the rules which emerge from such uses. In this sense, grammar does not account for the empirical genesis of language; it investigates and describes the use of language and determines the necessary conditions of the possibility of language. Grammar thus does address itself to the universality of the ultimate rules of language. Grammar shows the place of linguistic signs in human life, since "to imagine a language is to imagine a form of life" (PI, sect. 19). However, in understanding the uses of signs, we are concerned with their grammatical conditions (rules) and not with their actual empirical functions. Wittgenstein maintains that:

What interests us in the sign, the meaning which matters for us, is what is embodied in the grammar of the sign. We ask "How do you use the word, what do you do with it?" - that will tell us how you understand it (PG, sect. 44).

Grammar comprises a set of rules which are not derived from a pre-grammatical mental structure<sup>72</sup> but are records of the ways in which language has been used. Grammar does not represent any

**system** of cognitive structures innately presented in the language-user's mind. Rather, grammar states rules and these rules (i.e. linguistic patterns) constitute the necessary structure of language. The necessary structure is the "depth-grammar" (PJ, sect. 664) which is different from the surface-structure that shows the contingent and changing features of language. Thus grammar is concerned with what is necessary, non-changing and universal in language. For **Wittgenstein**, the essences of language is represented in grammar. "Essence is expressed by grammar" (PI sect. 371). Besides, grammar shows not only what is essential (necessary) to language but also to the world. As Wittgenstein puts it,

Like everything metaphysical the harmony between thought and reality is to be found in the grammar of the language (2, sect. 55).

This implies that ontology is approached through **considerations** of the use of language. **Wittgenstein's** critique of grammar is not committed to the traditional ontological categories because the aim is a critique of the expression of thought in language in which ontological issues are not primary. What matters about reality - so far as it concerns grammar - is the role that it plays in the explanation of language. Thus, **Wittgenstein's** philosophy as a whole can be **characterized** as a critique of grammar of language.

## **7. The Empirical Vrs The Grammatical**

Wittgenstein has maintained the distinction between the grammatical (necessary) and the empirical (contingent) throughout

his writings. This is obvious from his demarcation of grammatical propositions as making the objective criteria of **language-use**, and laying down the conventions as the necessary principles of **concept-formation**. So grammar may be said to have immanent conceptual moulds in the form of grammatical propositions which provide the framework for **intelligibility** of language and reality. The sentences like "Every rod has a **length**" (PI, sect. 252), "Every body has extension" (PI, sect. 252), "An order orders its own **execution**" (PI, sect. 458), "I can't feel your **toothache**" (BB, p. 49), etc. are some instances of grammatical **propositions**. These **propositions**, for **Wittgenstein**, in fact, state rules of language and thus they embody the paradigm cases of **language-use**. For instance, the sentence "Every rod has **length**" expresses a necessary rule for the use of the concept 'rod' and of the **language-game** in which it occurs. These propositions present grammatical paradigms and are related to rules which constitute the intelligible conditions for language-use.

G.E. Moore in his "Wittgenstein's Lectures in 1930-1933"<sup>74</sup>, has discussed the concept of grammatical **rule** and the relationship between grammatical rules and grammatical **propositions**. According to Moore, a grammatical rule in one sense is used empirically to the effect that it will allow or forbid us to use certain expressions in a language and so can be valued as either true or false e.g. rules of English **grammar**. And in the second sense a grammatical rule is used to determine or specify the possible condition for a "**way** of using words or



forms of sentence in speaking and writing".<sup>75</sup> Though Moore has claimed that Wittgenstein has not explicitly mentioned in which of the senses the grammatical rules are to be taken, it is obvious that it is only in the second sense that they are to be taken. Grammatical propositions are themselves the rules of grammar determining the conditions of use of language. Grammatical propositions (rules) state the necessary conditions of true and false propositions, and so are not themselves true or false. Wittgenstein considers the grammatical propositions as *a priori*, necessary and analytically true. They constitute the grammatical truths.<sup>77</sup> Since the grammatical propositions are *a priori* and necessary, their opposite are inconceivable. Explaining this Wittgenstein writes.

But the picture attaching to the grammatical proposition could only shew, say, what is called the "length of a rod". And what should the opposite picture be? (Remarks about the negation of an *a priori* proposition) (PI, sect. 251).

Wittgenstein has thus considered grammatical propositions functioning as rules or paradigms, i.e., as objects of comparison (PI, sect. 50-53). Since paradigms furnish the standards of comparison he regards them as quite primitive and fundamental in any language-game in which they are employed. Indeed, many metaphors he uses in this connection drive home this point. For example, paradigms serve as 'roads' along which language-use can move; they are 'measures' or 'yardsticks', are 'bed-rock' or 'fossilized', are elements in one's 'frame of reference' and act as 'foundations', 'foundational walls' or 'hinges', etc. The grammatical propositions, thus, lay down the necessary conditions

for language-use and so constitute "the framework on which the working of our language is based" (PI, sect. 240).

Grammatical propositions in their nature and function have a role quite logically different from that of the experiential **propositions**. For, while the latter express matters of fact, and so are either true or false on their agreement or disagreement to reality, the former express the logical conditions of the **intelligibility** of reality and so they do not state anything about reality. Grammatical propositions thus are themselves neither true nor false, and cannot be **characterized** as either right or wrong, correct or **incorrect**. Just as the standard metre cannot be said to be one metre long, so too it is false to say that it is not a metre long (PI, sect. 50). Wittgenstein **characterizes** the grammatical propositions as "**arbitrary**" in the logical **sense**. This thought is **explicitly** expressed in the following passage:

The rules of grammar are arbitrary in the same sense as the choice of a unit of measurement. But that means no more than that the choice is independent of the length of the objects to be measured and that the choice of one unit is not '**true**' and of another '**false**' in the way that a statement of length is true or false. Of course that is only a remark on the grammar of the word '**unit of length**'<sup>1</sup> (PG, sect. 133).

Further he says:

To accept a proposition as unshakeably certain, I want to say - means to use it as a grammatical rule: this removes uncertainty from it (RFM, III, 39).

It follows that, unlike empirical **propositions**, grammatical propositions are "**unshakeable** truths". Acceptance of these **truths** ensures the acceptance of rules as the constitutive

grammatical necessities.<sup>79</sup>

The grammatical propositions determine the ways of looking at things and so constitute the forms of **representations**. One cannot visualise any mode of language-use which **does** not conform to these grammatical **propositions**. Language-games are the basic forms of our **understanding** of reality and since they themselves are conditioned by grammatical **propositions**, our **understanding** of the reality must conform to the conditions laid down by grammatical **propositions**. Every language-use not conforming to the established grammatical truth is not only not intelligible but also impossible for us. Grammatical **propositions**, in this sense, as Baker and Hacker have observed, constitute "the bounds of sense, delimiting what it makes to say".<sup>80</sup>

The grammatical propositions are accepted without any **justification**. Like grammar, the grammatical propositions cannot be justified by appeal to facts of experience, for experience cannot account for grammar as it is itself conditioned by the latter. Writing about grammar Wittgenstein says:

Grammar is not accountable to **reality**. It is grammatical rules that determine meaning (constitute it) and so they themselves are not answerable to any meaning and to that extent are arbitrary (PG, sect. 133).

And further he says:

The rules of grammar cannot be justified by showing that their application makes a **representation** agree with reality. For this **justification** would itself have to describe what is **representation** (PG, sect. 134).

What is true of grammar, and grammatical rules, is also true of grammatical propositions since latter cannot be justified by

or derived from reality (i.e. facts of experience). In this sense grammatical propositions are arbitrary<sup>01</sup>, but their arbitrariness shows their being autonomous and especially their experiential non-justifiability. Wittgenstein expresses this point in the following way:

The rules of grammar may be called "arbitrary", if that is to mean that the aim of the grammar is nothing but that of the language.

If someone says "If our language had not this grammar, it could not express these facts"-it should be asked what "could" means here (PI sect. 497).

There might, of course, be the possibility of justifying the grammatical propositions as necessary and constitutive of our language. The possibility of such a justification is only grammatical and does not appeal to extra-grammatical reality. Thus the autonomy of grammar entails that there are no pre-grammatical facts,<sup>02</sup> that can justify grammar.

#### **8. Logic, Mathematics and Grammar: Wittgenstein's Transcendental Framework**

In view of Wittgenstein's grammatical point of view outlined above, it is now clear that there is a deep grammatical foundation of language that needs further probing. This further reiterates our earlier stand that there is a straight solution in Wittgenstein's considerations of rule-following. This is indicated by Wittgenstein's allowance for the fact that logic and mathematics themselves are grammatical structures with deep facts to support them. It is not without reason, therefore, that Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations are part of his overall philosophy of logic and mathematics.

Now the question arises: are propositions of logic and mathematics **grammatical propositions**? Wittgenstein's answer to this question is in the positive. Wittgenstein has **characterized** the propositions of logic as grammatical propositions in view of the fact that logic is based on language. The logical propositions were called tautologies<sup>83</sup> in the *Tractatus* (5.142, 5.143) and treated as expressing rules of grammar. For example, the proposition that the same place in the visual field cannot **simultaneously** be both red and green is, according to Wittgenstein, a grammatical proposition. This proposition lays down the rule of usage of colour language. This states a rule (BB, p. 56) and so a logical truth. The propositions like "There is nothing called reddish-green" and " $a=a$ " and " $p \rightarrow p$ " (RFM, III, 39) are in essence grammatical propositions. These propositions are necessary stating the necessary conditions of meaningful usage of certain logical and non-logical concepts in language. These grammatical propositions **lay** down the logical limits of language determining the conditions of **intelligibility** of all what we can think and speak. They constitute **the non-contingent** and transcendental<sup>84</sup> framework of our language and thought.

These grammatical **propositions**, therefore, retain the character of being logical and *a priori* because they are not empirical by nature. These propositions are quite distinct from experiential propositions since while the latter are about the matters of fact, the **former tell** nothing about the matters of fact and state rules of our language which condition the **intelligibility** of the latter. Moore aptly points out that

these logical propositions are different from experiential propositions for two grounds; first they 'say nothing' about reality and secondly they are related to 'rules of grammar'. Experiential propositions can be compared with reality and can be said either true or false according to their agreement and disagreement with reality. However, logical propositions are being used as rules to state the conditions for the matter-of-fact statements in order to make any sense. These logical propositions, in this sense, set limit to the contingent statements themselves. Besides, these propositions have the character of being unconditionally true like the tautologies so that they cannot be said to be either true or false as contingent propositions. They, thus, are not accountable to reality and so are formal propositions of grammar without any factual content. Wittgenstein so states: "The philosophy of logic speaks of the sentences and words in exactly same sense in which we speak of them in ordinary life.. " (PI, sect. 108). This remark shows that logic is concerned with the actual use of our language and state the rules prevailing in such cases. Thus logic has, in the ultimate analysis, a normative application in language. The notion of normativity derives from the concept of rule in logic and grammar.

Now the question may arise; if logic has only norm-stating function, is it not a denial of logic so far as norm-stating is an empirical activity? If so, how can logical truth occupy a transcendental status (logic is transcendental)? Wittgenstein would have suggested that logic does not consist of empirical

statements about linguistic norms (**rules**). Logic represents norms which necessarily obtain in the functioning of language itself, that is, in the way they determine necessary conditions for language-use. The following passage from Wittgenstein is quite revealing:

The propositions of logic are Maws of thought', 'because they bring out the essence of human **thinking**' - to put it more correctly: because they bring out, or shew, the essence, the technique, of **thinking**. They shew what thinking is and also shew kinds of thinking (RFM, I, 133).

However, these *a priori* logical truths which logic shows are not *hidden* essences which language must have. They are, on the contrary, the necessary grammatical rules which are articulated by actual linguistic **transactions**. They justify the use of language but are not themselves justifiable. These necessary truths have no foundation in any objective **reality** outside language itself.<sup>88</sup> Wittgenstein has addressed himself to the problem of 'objective **status**' of these necessary truths and for that matter he has discarded the 'Platonic sense of objectivity'<sup>89</sup> of these truths concerned. He has brought them back to actual use of language. Wittgenstein's earlier conception that '**logic** must take care of **itself**' (NB, p.2) is reiterated in his emphasis on the **non-justifiability** of **grammar**.<sup>90</sup> Grammar and logic are taken to be autonomous and so independent of the **extra-linguistic** reality. The autonomy<sup>91</sup> of grammar is the result of its being necessary and transcendental in character.

Wittgenstein analogously treats mathematics as a normative

discourse in which **mathematical** propositions act **like** grammatical truths. Mathematics forms a net work of norms (RFM, VII, 67). All mathematical truths are formal essences of the language in which mathematics is expressed. The formal truths are placed in language as constituting its **transcendental** framework. Both logic and mathematics constitute the framework which consists in a **rule-structure** and so are embedded in language. This framework is the bed-rock<sup>92</sup> itself which needs no foundation. As Wittgenstein says,

What does mathematics need a foundation **for**? It no more needs one, I believe, than propositions about physical objects-or about sense impressions, need *analysis*. What mathematical propositions do stand in need of is a **clarification** of their grammar, just as do those other propositions (RFM, VII, 16).

And further he says:

Let us remember that in mathematics we are convinced of grammatical **propositions**; so the expression, the result, of our being convinced is that we accept a rule (RFM, III, 26).

This suggests that logical and mathematical propositions stand as paradigms in our language system and function as grammatical rules. A mathematical notation, for instance,  $2+2 = 4$  being expressed as a rule informs us of the fact that a grammatical proposition has twofold character of "**law and rule**" (RFM, V, 17). That is, every mathematical proposition not only functions as a rule but also a **law** of language. A mathematical proof is thus a paradigm, and so proofs themselves are expressions of laws. They constitute the mathematical **activity**. However, all mathematical laws are **self-contained** and autonomous like any grammatical rule containing their validity within themselves (PR, sect. 122). So



mathematical propositions are autonomous as rules of grammar and in any sense they do not express matter of facts and so are devoid of any contingent character. All mathematical propositions are proofs and function as measures (LFM, I-VIII); they constitute the limits of **all** mathematical concept-formation. They lay down the logical limits of all thinking and language-use. Wittgenstein puts this as follows:

What I want to talk about is: (1) In what sense can one say at **all** that logic is the foundation of **arithmetic**? (2) In what sense can one talk about "truths of logic"? My point in talking about **contradiction** was to show what sort of thing would happen if you neglected the truth of **logic**. This was to find out in what sense we can say that they are *a priori - the rock on which the whole thing rests* (LFM, xxvii, p, 229) (*italics mine*),

However, it has been claimed that Wittgenstein adopts an extreme **constructivism**<sup>93</sup> in mathematics according to which mathematical truths are human **constructions** and are, therefore, not laid in a Platonic realm. According to this view, the mathematical paradigms as rules are laid down in language. But **constructivism** fails to **account** for the necessity<sup>94</sup> of **mathematical** proofs and the mathematical **concept-formations**. For it is impossible to show in this account why these and only these concepts, and no others are formed and on what objective grounds they are accepted. **Constructivism** leads us to the view that concept-formation is based on human choice and there is no objective necessity so far as our concepts are concerned. All that **appropriately** follows from this is a deeper **form** of conventional **ism**.<sup>95</sup>

**Wittgenstein**, however, has not committed himself to such a

**conventionalism** though he has come dangerously closer to such a view in some passages in the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*.<sup>95</sup> According to him, to emphasize that mathematics creates concepts is not to mean that **concept-formation** or creation of a new proof is based on an arbitrary decision and so acceptance of a new proof is matter of human choice. But **concept-formation** or acceptance of any proof, according to **Wittgenstein**, is essentially involved in mathematical calculations and so in mathematical thinking. Acceptance of mathematical proof is not a matter of decision or convention; rather we accept these truths because they show the **ways** 'in which we make comparisons and in which we **act**' (RFM, III, 21). We accept them without rational **justifications** because there are no such **justifications** for them, since they form the bed-rock **concepts**.

Another argument which defies the **constructivist** and **conventionalist** account develops from the fact that mathematical propositions are like grammatical propositions which provide conditions for use of mathematical concepts. And their **"negation"** would be said to be, not merely false but **"impossible"**, **"unimaginable"**, **"unthinkable"**.<sup>97</sup> This necessity of mathematical propositions lies in the forms of calculating and inferring which actually represents our forms of life. No alternatives are open in calculation or inferring and 'if it should happen then we should declare him abnormal and take no further account of his **calculation**' (RFM, I, 112). Forms of calculating and inferring are inexorable for us not because they are imposed on us from

outside but because it is just this that is called 'thinking', 'speaking', 'inferring' 'arguing', etc (RFM, 1, 156). Each of these activities as linguistic activities represents a form of life and so our forms of life provide the frame of reference in which our ways of doing mathematics are necessary for us.<sup>98</sup> We have a common agreement in our basic forms of life, and that explains our acceptance of the mathematical truths. Baker and Hacker have expressed this point in the following way:

If Wittgenstein advanced a form of **conventionalism** then he is faced by a destructive dilemma. If **conventionalism** exploits the concept of logical consequence in specifying what is true by convention, it is bankrupt as a general explanation of necessary truth. If it does not, it makes nonsense of the deductive structure and **compelling** force of mathematical and logical systems. Both '**moderate**' and '**full-blooded**' **conventionalism** are absurd, and if these exhaust the possibilities, **conventionalism** tout court is **absurd**.<sup>99</sup>

The important consequence of **Wittgenstein's** account of the role of the grammatical propositions that constitute the framework of language-use is that it permits us to interpret the grammatical certainty concerning them **non-epistemically**. The certainty regarding these propositions represents '**the rock bottom of our convictions**' (OC sect. 248). We could not be more certain of anything than we are of **them**. However, this certainty is not to be understood as an epistemic certainty<sup>100</sup>, but as a grammatical **one**. This certainty consists in practical sureness that comes with mastery of the **language**. There is no space in which the question of **justification** can arise because **all justifications** come through **language**. No evidence or any fact is required of how the words of our language are used and how rules are to be followed. Each of us with the mastery of the language

is confident and competent to show how ~~the~~ words of language are used and how rules are followed.

According to Wittgenstein, the assumption that our **grammatical** framework which consists of grammatical propositions guarantees only epistemic certainty is based on a **misunderstanding** of the role of these grammatical propositions in our language-use as a whole. The grammatical propositions which constitute the background (i.e., rock-bottom) for our language-use are not to be considered as empirical propositions that we believe to be **true**. Rather these grammatical propositions are to be regarded as constitutive of our linguistic techniques for describing the world. Our acceptance of them is to be seen as the expression of our practical ability to use our **language**. At the bottom of language-use there lies, not knowledge or belief, but actual competence to employ those techniques of description in the ways we have been trained (OC, sect. 44). Our relation to the system of these grammatical propositions is, therefore, not completely epistemic. Rather the description of the world rests upon an actual use of this system of propositions which together determine our techniques for describing the world in **language**.

All rules, including logical and mathematical truths, **which** language embodies and which constitute the linguistic moves are not derived from experience or from our natural history. The rules are there unfolded in language and constitutive of our experience **itself**. Rules are manifested in our various linguistic activities that represent our natural activities i.e.

forms of life. The linguistic activities themselves are grounded in the rules in the sense that we are by nature **rule-followers**. And to follow a rule entails involvement in certain activity. That is to say, the rules are the internal constitutive conditions of **language-games**. Wittgenstein does not admit experience i.e, fact about our natural history as pre-**grammatical**. Experience therefore, does not justify grammar.

Wittgenstein's theses of 'autonomy of language', 'autonomy of grammar'<sup>1</sup>, 'autonomy of rules', **etc.**, can be seen as a philosophical move to disallow the possibility of causal and mentalistic account of grammar. Rules are neither **psychological** nor **dispositional**. They are autonomous and **non-derivable** conceptual necessities. Grammar has no mental or physical origin; it is the universal domain of possibility - the possibility of the language that we **generally** speak and the world that we **generally** talk about. Rules occupy the grammatical space constituting the unique realm of paradigms, and the methods of **descriptions**. The grammatical space itself is not accountable to any reality beyond itself since the reality, i.e., the world is accountable to grammar and is constituted by **it**. Hence rules are arbitrary and in a certain sense autonomous. The temptation to explain grammar or to justify it by what could or could not be without grammar is unwarranted and logically ungrounded. For grammar cannot be justified for the fact that rules are arbitrary (Z, sect. 331) and we can not use language to go outside language (PR, p. 54). As Finch explains:

It is not the phenomena which justify us in applying certain

concepts to the phenomena because **all** we know about the phenomena is already given just in terms of the application of these concepts. Hence the correctness of what we say about the phenomena cannot be decided by the phenomena since we have no other ways of dealing with them except just the ways in which we do deal with them. Therefore we must **look** elsewhere for the **justification** for using the concepts which we do. Whereelse would this be? Clearly only in language itself and whatever it is which underlies language.<sup>101</sup>

The fact of being arbitrary is a grammatical **fact**, a fact of grammatical necessity. It is concerned with the very possibility of **language-games**, and the **concept-formation** embedded in them. This is not an explanation but a description of a grammatical truth. This is therefore, the **limit** of all **explanations**.

#### 9. "**Limits of Empiricism**"

The distinction between empirical and grammatical propositions enables us to determine the limits of language, thought and reality. It is obvious from our previous discussion that these limits cannot be drawn by merely empirical or scientific description of what is given in language and the world. Our world of experience embodying our natural history cannot be the source of linguistic rules (or in broad sense, the grammar of language) because these facts are constituted and comprehended through these rules. Our grammatical framework consists of these rules which determine the limits of experience and also how the reality is objectively **comprehensible**. According to **Wittgenstein**,

The limits of empiricism are not assumptions unguaranteed, or intuitively known to be correct: they are ways in which we make comparisons and in which we act (**RFM**, VII, 22).

The limits of empiricism are the limits of experience. Therefore, they cannot be grounded in any experience. They are pre-

**experiential.** They are ultimately the ways in which we act. The ways we act, however, are shown in the practices that we follow. These practices are the rules which limit our experience of the world. These practices are, however, permitted by grammar and can be demarcated only within it. For beyond the limits of our grammar there is nothing that we can understand and make **intelligible.** What is **grammatically** permissible is also **intelligible.** So what is **grammatically** permissible determines what is possible in the world. Wittgenstein's straight solution as we have outlined earlier entails that there must be limits to factualism of the empiricist sort. If the empirical facts of language and meaning were there all that we need to provide a solution to the sceptical problem, then there can never be an end to the scepticism, since these facts themselves could be **questioned.** So it is not proper to suggest, as McGinn<sup>102</sup> does, that the only alternative to scepticism is naturalism about meaning and **rules.** According to naturalism, the facts which we encounter in our everyday experience of meaning and practice of **rule-following** constitute a **naturalistic** resistance to meaning and **rule-scepticism.** That is to say, all that we can gather about the rules and meaning are *facts*<sup>103</sup> of experience and they alone deny why scepticism is not **possible.** Thus, if McGinn is right, the naturalistic repertoire of the facts of causal as **well** as non-causal kind<sup>104</sup> can be taken a **straight-solution** to the sceptical problem. But naturalism must be inadequate as a defence of meaning and **rule-scepticism** in view of the fact that meaning and language is constituted by grammar and grammar itself

transcends experience. Grammar provides the limits of experience.

Wittgenstein's concept of *transcendental* or *a priori* grammar as constituting the basic framework of our **thought** and language does not **allow** for a **relativization** of our forms of life, language and our conceptual patterns. There is a tendency among some interpreters <sup>105</sup> to ascribe relativistic **implications** to Wittgenstein's concept of forms of life and natural history. According to this view this multiple natural histories i.e. the forms of life which are empirically available are relative to the specific linguistic communities and their cultures. Each community has its own cultural pattern of living which is quite distinct from the living pattern or cultural heritage of another community. Thus language and grammar are bound up with communities and cultures. This **anthropological interpretation** with its relativistic overtones entails that our linguistic usages and patterns are the outputs of cultural and social agreement. Moreover, this necessarily **results** in a kind of relativism with the attendant **conventionalist implications**. This view fits in with the **communitarian** view of language and rules.

Relativism in any form cannot be sustained since it denies the facts of our natural history which situate our forms of life in a unique and absolute sense. We do not inherit our forms of life and the attendant conceptual framework by education or training as a matter of choice. It is something which we could not have otherwise. Wittgenstein writes:



But I did not get my picture of the world by satisfying myself of its **correctness**; nor do I have it because I am satisfied of its correctness. No: it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false (OC, sect. 94).

It can, therefore, be argued that the so-called alternative forms of life (i.e. the ideal strategy of a relativist or **conventionalist**) could be *thought* or conceived so that we recognise the uniqueness of our forms of life. The following passages from Wittgenstein **well** suggest what forms of life other than ours could mean:

I want to **say**: an education quite different from ours might also be the foundation for quite different concepts (2, sect. 387).

For here life would run on differently, what interests us would not interest them. Here different concepts would no longer be **unimaginable**. In fact, this is the only way in which essentially different concepts are imaginable (2, sect. 388).

<sup>e</sup>  
**Wittgenst<sup>e</sup>in**, however, emphasizes in these passages that forms of life and conceptual patterns altogether inaccessible could be **imagined**. What impresses Wittgenstein in this **investigation** is not the reality as the **conceivability** of alternative forms of life. Because, on **Wittgenstein's** view, we cannot say (conceive) that ours is the only form of life, nor can we actually compare the different **world-pictures** (OC, sects. 94,95) as a matter of evaluating what is right or wrong in other world-pictures, all that we could conceive and talk about is the logical possibility  
10R

of forms of **life** different from ours. No reason can be given why a group of people acting very differently could not be imagined at all (OC sect. 609,612). However, this does not throw

any light on whether alternative forms of life, alternative conceptual schemes, are *in fact* available. Thus the so-called imaginable forms of life do not pose a serious threat to ours, and do not take away the uniqueness of our forms of **life**. As Williams aptly points out, "the imaginary alternatives are not **alternatives to** us; they are alternatives for us, markers of how far we might go and still remain within our world - a world leaving which would not mean that we saw something different, but that we ceased to see\*.<sup>107</sup> The forms of **life** we have and the concepts that we share remain absolute *facts* for us. And they determine what we can think and experience, at **all**. As Haller puts **it**, these "**facts** of our natural history **ultimately** constitute the foundation of human speech as **well** as of human  
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knowledge, a foundation that is not itself to be grounded".

However, the foundation Haller talks about is not an empirical one, but a **transcendental** one. The **facts** of natural history are not empirical but **grammatical**. They constitute the "**bed-rock**" or the "**common** behaviour of mankind" in a **transcendental** sense. That is, they constitute the "**limits** of empiricism". Wittgenstein indicates this in the following passages:

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**" (P1, sect. 217).

But the end [of **grounds-giving**] is not an ungrounded **presupposition**: it is an ungrounded way of acting (OC, sect. 110).

I mean this is simply what we **do**. This is use and custom among us, or a fact of our natural history (RFM. I, 63).

These passages point to the ultimate grounds of our thinking and acting. These grounds are found in the ways of acting themselves. This can very well be called a transcendental argument (move) without providing justification for our ways of acting and rule-followings i.e. our forms of life.

Wittgenstein's transcendental argument thus consist in a grammatical foundationalism that shows the transcendental limits of our language, thought and experience.<sup>109</sup> It shows that those limits are demonstrated in the very fact of our language and thought being what it is and not otherwise. Wittgenstein comes to the firm conclusion that if language could not be other than what it ultimately is, it could not be the case that there are no facts to demonstrate that scepticism about language, meaning and rule-following is not possible. The facts of natural history are, therefore, the facts of grammar themselves i.e. facts of our conceptual history. Both our natural history and grammar conspicuously stand as a guarantee against scepticism.

## NOTES

1. The distinction between the sceptical solution and the straight solution has been noted by Kripke himself. This distinction we have already introduced in chapter III.
2. More discussion on transcendental argument will follow in the sequel.
3. See F.F. Strawson, *Skepticism and Naturalism: Some Varieties*, (Methuen, London, 1985), pp. 11-14.
4. WRFL, pp. 63-69.
5. Hume, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principle of Morals*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975).
6. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

19. *Ibid*, , p. 150.
20. *Ibid*, , p, 38.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 44,
22. Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, (eds) L.A. Selby-Bigge  
(Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1978), p. 89.
23. See B. Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, (Oxford  
University Press, 1950), p. 68-69.
24. *Ibid.* , p. 63.
25. Hume, *Enqui ri es*, pp. 43-44.
26. B. Stroud, *Hume*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1977),  
p. 53.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
28. Hume, *The Treatise of Human Nature*, p. 103.
29. Cf. *Ibid.* , p. 97.
30. Hume, *Enquiries*, pp. 43-44.
31. Cf. Strawson, *Skepticism and Naturalism*, pp. 11-14.
32. Hume, *The Treatise of Human Nature*, p. 193.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 193.
34. *Ibid*, Book I, part IV, sect. II, p. 187 (in the Selby-Bigge  
Edition, Oxford, 1988).
35. Descartes, *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, Vol.1,  
trans. E.S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross, (Cambridge University  
Press, Cambridge, 1977), p. 101.
36. Descartes, *A Discourse On Method, Med i tat ions and Principles*,  
ed. John Veitch, (J.M. Dent & Son LTD, London, 1912), p.80.

37. *Ibid.* , p, 83.
38. *Ibid.* , p. 84.
39. *Ibid.* , p. 82.
40. *Ibid.* , p. 84.
41. *Ibid.* , p. 84.
42. Descartes, *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, Vol. I, trans. E.S. Haldance and G.R.T. Ross, p. 150.
43. *Ibid.* , p. 221.
44. Descartes, *A Discourse on Method, Meditations and Principles*, p. 78.
45. *Ibid.* , p. 133.
46. *Ibid.* , p. 134.
47. Descartes, *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, eds. Haldane & Ross, Vol. I. p. 178.
48. Descartes, *A Discourse on Method, Meditations and Principle*, p. 126.
49. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N.K. Smith, (Macmillan, London, 1929, Repnt. 1970), especially the Introduction.
50. *Ibid.* , p. 44.
51. *Ibid.* , p. 43.
52. *Ibid.* , p. 34.
53. *Ibid.* , p. 34.
54. *Ibid.* , p. 23.
55. *Ibid.* , p. 22.
56. *Ibid.* , p. 22.
57. *Ibid.* , p. 351.
58. *Ibid.* , p. 351.

59. *Ibid.* , p. 351.
60. *Ibid.* , p. 59.
61. *Ibid.* , p. 96.
62. See P.F. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, (Methuen, London, 1966).
63. See the discussions in *Wittgenstein: To Follow a Rule*, eds. Steven H. Holtzman and CM. Leich, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1981).
64. See Colin McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1984), chapt. I, for a detailed discussion on Wittgenstein's anti-psychologism and anti-intellectualism.
65. See D.F. Pears, *Wittgenstein*, (Fontana/Collins, 1972). Also his *The False Prison*, Vol. I & II (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987 & 1988). For a similar treatment of Kantian themes see P.M.S. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1972).
66. See R.C. Pradhan, *Language and Experience: An Interpretation of the Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, (Anu Prakashan, Meerut, 1981), for a discussion on the comparative similarity between Kant and Wittgenstein.
67. For a comparison of this kind in Wittgenstein early philosophy, see Erik Stenius, *Wittgenstein's Tractatus: A Critical Exposition of its Main Lines of Thought*, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1960).
68. Wittgenstein, "Note for Lectures on " Private Experience" and "Sense Data" ", ed. R. Rhees, *The Philosophical Review*, lxxvii(1968), pp. 275-320.

69. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 7.
70. See Noam Chomsky, *Aspects of a Theory of Syntax*, (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass, 1965). Also see his *Rules and Representations*, (Columbia University Press, New York, 1980). For Chomsky the description of a grammar for a natural language is a theory of cognitive structures. The basic tenets of Chomsky's cognitive generative programme consist in (a) that a grammar characterizes an internal structure of representations and a mechanism of rules, (b) that this structure belongs to the mind of the linguistic user, and (c) that the structure is the object of intentional attitudes on the part of the linguistic user, that is, the linguistic user knows the rules of grammar (universal or particular).
71. For a detailed discussion on grammar in Wittgenstein's philosophy, see Finch, *Wittgenstein: The Exposition of Philosophical Investigations*, (Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, 1977), chapt. 10. Also see Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, chapt. I & VI.
72. Wittgenstein rejects the mentalist hypothesis e.g. Chomsky's that grammar is built into the mental structure of the speaker. For Wittgenstein even the so-called mental representations are part of language.
73. For detailed discussion on the nature of grammatical propositions, see John V. Canfield, *Wittgenstein: Language and World*, (U-mass Press, 1981), chapt. 9 & 10.
74. G.E. Moore, "Wittgenstein's Lectures in 1930-1933", in *Classics of Analytic Philosophy*, ed. Robert R. Ammerman,



- (Tata McGraw - Hill, Bombay - New Delhi, 1965), pp. 233-284.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
76. *Ibid.*
- 11, cf. Canfield, *op. cit.*, p. 151-71.
78. See Debra Aidun, "Wittgenstein on Grammatical Propositions", in *Ludwig Wittgenstein - Critical Assessment*, ed. S. Shanker, Vol. 2, (Croom Helm, 1986), pp. 142-49. Also see W.D. Hudson, "Wittgenstein on Fundamental Propositions" in *Ludwig Wittgenstein - Critical Assessment*, ed. Shanker, Vol. 4, pp. 116-127.
79. cf. Canfield, *op. cit.*, chapt. 9.
80. Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, p. 271.
81. For further discussion on this see Hacker, *Insight and Illusion*, pp. 156-66.
82. Finch rightly points out that grammar precedes facts. See Finch, *op. cit.*, p.154. He writes: "Grammar is world-constituting, not of the existence of the world ... but of the world having any character at all which can be said" (p.154).
83. The notion of tautology plays a unique role in the logical grammar in the *Tractatus*. They, in fact, show the logical structure of language and the world and thus express rules of logical syntax. See TLP, 5.142, 5.143, 5.152, 5.525.
84. See D.S. Shyward, "Wittgenstein on Mathematics" in *Studies in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, ed. P. Winch (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1969), pp. 66-116 for a

transcendental (in the Kantian sense) view of logic and Mathematics.

85. Moore, *op. cit*, p. 245.
86. For the analysis of **normativeness** of logic and **mathematics**, see C. Wright, *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics*, part I, pp. 3-94, & part III, pp. 401 - 442.
87. Cf. TLF, 6.
88. D.F. Pears has argued extensively on this issue in his *Wittgenstein* (Fontana, 1971) but has **unfortunately** claimed that the lack of **non-linguistic** foundation of language leads to linguistic naturalism (pp. 127-41).
89. See Wright, *op. cit*, pp. 74-94.
90. Cf. A. Kenny, "The Ghost of the **Tractatus**" in *Understanding Wittgenstein*, (Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures, Vol. 7, 1972/73, (McMillan, 1974)), pp. 1-13.
91. For more discussion on the autonomy question see Hacker, *Insight and Illusion*, pp. 145-78 and also see Wright, *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics*, pp. 387-421. However, the autonomy of grammar has been so far taken as the sign of being **non-conditioned** by the world. I argue, on the contrary, that it is the index of the **transcendentality** of grammar. Grammar pervades the reality in the sense the latter derives **its intelligibility** from the former.
92. See Gertrude D. Conway, *Wittgenstein on Foundations*, (Humanities Press, Antiatlantic Highlands, N.J., 1989) and John McDowell, "Wittgenstein on Rule-Following". *Synthese*, 59 (1984), pp. 325-363, for **further discussion on the concepts of 'bedrock' and 'foundations.'**

93. See Charles S. Chihara, "Mathematical Discovery and Concept-formation" in *Wittgenstein: Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G. Pitcher, (Macmillan, London, 1966), pp. 448-68.
94. See B. Stroud, "Wittgenstein and Logical Necessity", in *Wittgenstein: Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G. Pitcher, pp. 477-497, for a non-constructivist view of mathematical and logical necessity.
95. See Dummett, "Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mathematics" in *Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G. Pitcher, pp. 420-448.
96. Dummett's conventionalist interpretation is based on such passages as RFM, II, sects. 21 and 30 which state "I want to say that the "must" corresponds to a track which I lay down in language "and" Why should I not say: in the proof I have won through a decision? The proof places this decision in a system of decisions", respectively. These passages support conventionalism as the view that the acceptance of a proof is a human decision.
97. Moore, *op. cit.* p. 244.
98. See Stroud, "Wittgenstein and Logical Necessity", pp. 477-496.
99. Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, p. 340. For detail discussion on this issue see Alice Ambrose "Mathematical Generality" in *Necessity and Language*, ed. S. Shanker, (Croom Helm, London, 1985), pp. 101-120.
100. By 'epistemic certainty' is meant the certainty accruing to

our knowledge. Grammatical certainty, on the contrary, is embedded in the grammatical propositions themselves and their role in language.

101. Finch, *op. cit.*, p. 194.
102. McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, pp. 139-200 and also see D.F. Pears, *Wittgenstein*, pp., 127-141.
103. *Ibid.*
104. *Ibid.*
105. See Jonathan Lear "Transcendental Anthropology" in *Subject, Thought and Context*, eds. P. Pettit and J. McDowell, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1986), p. 267-98, for full exposition of the relativist and anthropological view.
106. See. for detailed discussion on this Beranard Williams, "Wittgenstein and Idealism", pp. 76-95.
107. *Ibid.* pp. 92-93.
108. R. Haller, "The Common Behaviour of Mankind" in *Questions of Wittgenstein*, (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1988), pp. 114-128.
109. This thought in contemporary philosophy immensely impresses Strawson who propounds the doctrine of the "descriptive metaphysics" in his *Individuals* as a structural enquiry into human thought and language. See P.F. Strawson, *Individuals - An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*, (Methuen and Co. Ltd., London, 1959) .

## CONCLUSION

My essay has broadly two results viz (i) the methodological and (ii) the grammatical. The first result refers to the possibility of a transcendental account of language, meaning and rule-following. This leads to the second result concerning grammar of language and rule-following.

1\* The transcendental method against the sceptical argument is a time-tested one. It has the capacity to demonstrate that there are limits to scepticism itself. Scepticism of the universal kind is not only logically impossible but also meaningless. Universal doubt, as Wittgenstein claimed, has no place in our language-game. Thus the sceptic's claims about the impossibility of rule-following cannot be refuted by an empirical survey of what we do in practice but by showing the limits of our practices themselves. Hence Wittgenstein's emphasis on the limits of empiricism.

In this respect I have come to the conclusion that Wittgenstein could not have opted for a causal or empirical method of solving the sceptical problem. Therefore, there is no possibility of a Humean solution to the problems of language and meaning. On the contrary, true to his philosophical intentions, Wittgenstein opts for a descriptive method in philosophy. But philosophical descriptions must be grammatical in the sense that they are concerning the conceptual possibilities of phenomena rather than the phenomena themselves. Wittgenstein has declared repeatedly that his investigation is grammatical. Since it can

not be empirical, it must be transcendental in a Kantian sense. My methodological conclusion does not entail that Wittgenstein's philosophical grammar needs any of the Kantian props. It stands on its own independently of its family resemblance with the Kantian method. Wittgenstein has brought about the second Copernican Revolution in philosophy by turning the method of investigation around the central concept of human forms of life. Wittgenstein's method is, therefore, neither naturalistic nor empirical, but grammatical and transcendental.

2. The core of the Wittgensteinian philosophical investigations is grammar. This constitutes what Wittgenstein calls the perspicuous representation of language. It itself amounts to a Weltanschauung that presents the network of rules and their applications in the world. My conclusion in this regard is that rule-following is internally embedded in the total structure of grammar that integrates language and forms of life into one single logical or grammatical space. This space is the transcendental realm of logic that accounts for how rule-following is possible as a necessary feature of the human form of life.

Grammar has two dimensions, viz (a) non-communitarianness and (b) non-contingency. Grammar transcends the social agreement and preserves the continuity in rule-application by grammatical sanctions. Therefore the appearance of communitarianism perpetuated by Kripke is a misnomer. Besides, grammar preserves the necessity accruing to our being compelled in following the

rules as we do. The accidentality of rule-following made prominent by Kripke gives way to the necessitarianism in grammar made clear by Wittgenstein's slogan: "This is all that we do and no more, no less".

My main aim, to repeat, is to meet Kripke on his sceptical grounds. My argument has been to prove that Kripke's scepticism is misplaced and therefore, based on a wrong way of looking at language and grammar. My conclusion is that if we see rule-following as it is, that is, as reflected in our forms of life, it is revealed as of foundational character. To follow a rule is to be in a form of life, and to be in the form of life is to be in universal agreement with all. This embodies a happy harmony between language, world and the linguistic community. Scepticism results from breaking this pre-established harmony. I have tried to restore the harmony. In order to turn the table against Kripke's sceptic one has only to show that rules are what they are and could not be otherwise than they are.

To sum up : if language, meaning and rule-following are solidly founded in our forms of life, then Kripke's rule-scepticism must be proved impossible. I have tried to prove that rule-scepticism is impossible.

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