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MEANINGFUL CONSEQUENCES

RUPERT READ AND JAMES GUETTI

"Meaning," Wittgenstein says, "is not a process which accompanies a word. For no process could have the consequences of meaning."[1] He is most interested here, of course, in ruling out the notion that meaning is a "mental process," a matter of the allegedly mysteriously and ineluctably "inward" lives of language users. But even if one were inclined to accept such an exclusion, the breadth of the claim that urges it might seem puzzling. "Processes" in general surely have results, effects, even products; why should these be held distinct from the kind of "consequences" that *meaning* has? What makes the action of meaningful expression—as opposed to that of "processes"—*distinctively* consequential?[2]

Part of the difficulty of this question stems from what can seem to be the infrequency and inconclusiveness of Wittgenstein's explicit attentions to it:

> Why can't my right hand give my left hand money?—My right hand can put a deed of gift into my left hand. My right hand can write a deed of gift and my left hand a receipt.—But the further practical consequences would not be those of a gift. When the left hand has taken the money from the right, etc., we shall ask: "Well, and what of it?" And the same could be asked if a person had given himself a private definition of a word; I mean, if he has said the word to himself and at the same time has directed his attention to a sensation. (*PI* 268)

But even if the force of "Well, and what of it?" is evident, and one understands that such a question might often effectively expose the meaninglessness not only of "private ostensive definitions" but also of other varieties of pseudo-linguistic behaviour, it may not be entirely clear why it should do so. The criterion of "consequences" is not articulated but presupposed here; and because these consequences are said to be "further" and "practical," it might be inferred here that they occur only after the fact of a meaningful expression and even that their "practicality" is somehow "un-linguistic," so that the proof of language's meaning might have to be sought, somehow, "outside language." The first inference, we shall show, is true in a way but apt to be misleading,

especially if it were taken to imply the second; for nothing is ultimately more contrary to Wittgenstein's thinking than an appeal to any such "outside," any such notion of non-linguistic activity as disjoint from linguistic activity (see *PI* 7, 23).

But therefore it may seem puzzling that no more explicit treatment of these consequences—preventive of this misunderstanding—is apparently offered in Wittgenstein's later work. Yet this, we shall argue, is because of the magnitude or, perhaps better, the "depth" of his conception of them: because such consequences are fundamentally *"presumptive"* both to Wittgenstein's descriptions of meaningful linguistic practice and to that practice itself, any general account of them has quite literally gone without saying.[3] But when one wants to articulate it—as one may want to in doing philosophy—what one is wanting to do is to elicit a justification for or an elucidation of perhaps the most famous sentence in his work: "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* 43).[4]

What do we mean, though, by "presumptive"? This term, which we have explained and utilized in detail elsewhere,[5] is intended to bring into prominence that there are "assumptions," which must be made in the course of language-use, which are so fundamental that the very word "assumption" starts to risk misleading, with its connotations (perhaps) of "whatever one can assume, one can also not assume." We are speaking rather of "necessary presupposition"—of *presumption.*We are suggesting that one try to see "(meaningful) consequences" as indissoluble from, and presumptive for, further linguistic behaviour.[6]

Wittgenstein's famous sentence (*PI* 43) itself has tended to be treated rather differently in the literature. It has been by some too easily—and sloganistically— adopted; and by others too quickly—and equally uncomprehendingly—rejected.[7] "Use in the language" has, by both admirers and rejecters, tended to be read as amounting to just the emplacement of a word among others in keeping with grammatical propriety; and "meaning" is then conceived—as it often is in linguistics, for example—to be merely a matter of sensefully combined strings of words.[8] Now, in work prior to the *Investigations*—especially, we believe, at certain moments in his "middle period" (e.g., in the "Big Typescript")— Wittgenstein *was* himself at some moments inclined, as Garth Hallett has suggested, to equate "meanings" with such purely grammatical regularity. Wittgenstein responded to the ghost of the *Tractatus* (*TL-P*),[9] to its purported logical atomism, with (at first) a fairly static, linguisticist notion of usage. Here is Hallett: "having dropped atomic meanings, [Wittgenstein] did not immediately shift to use, but instead gave the following definition: the meaning of a word is its 'place' in a 'grammatical system.'"[10] But the eventual shift to "use," as Hallett observes later, presses the concept of meaning beyond the limits

of any purely grammatical or logical accord. Thus in a sense it radicalises "the principle of the *Tractatus* . . . that a word has meaning only in a verbal context. But [this appeal to "use"] might be worded just the same way. . . . It must be understood that [the "context" in question] is a vital context. . . . 'Only in the stream of life does a word have a meaning.'"[11]

It is worth noting that Hallett explicitly remarks that we might use the very same words to refer to what the *Tractatus* is about as to what the *Investigations*, etc., is about, with regard to "use." The final (nested) quotation here is from Malcolm. He and Hallett are commentators who have recognized the difficulty in the static "place in a grammatical system" model of meaning—but in attempting to render the "position" that Wittgenstein ends up in in the *Investigations* as an advance on the *Tractatus* "position," they find themsleves having to resort to vague metaphors, to gestures at the ineffable. But, famously, *that is exactly where these same commentators (among others) accuse the Tractatus of having ended up* (rather than simply in silence)! Malcolm and Hallett thus oscillate uneasily between taking a theoretistic "positivist" line on Wittgenstein on use, and making gestures towards something more than than that—but *gestures* that appear to be: only that.

Our fear, and our polemical contention, is that in fact hardly any of Wittgenstein's commentators and followers (Hallett included) have actually managed to make the leap to Wittgenstein's concept of "use," the concept implicit in *Philosophical Investigations* (*PI*), etc., which Hallett envisages. In the *name* of use, instead, they mostly remain with at best a notion of "usage"—with a picture of the record of use of a linguistic community, or, what is relevantly similiar in terms of its philosophical problematicalness and limitations here, of place in a *Satzsystem.* Instead of having a concept of use that can do justice to Wittgenstein's remarks in the *Investigations*, they are stuck with a relatively static version of language, of context,[12] and of use. Our contention will be that only a genuinely dynamic conception of use, which we will detail below, enables one properly to understand the meaning of the remarks of Wittgenstein (on the consequences of meaning) with which we opened this paper.

As we have intimated, Malcolm's metaphor of "the stream of *life*" does at least suggest a rather interesting and different reaction (different from the reaction, outlined above, of Wittgenstein's "followers" and "opponents," including at times Malcolm himself,[13] who take Wittgenstein to have had a "use-theory of meaning") to *PI* 43. Malcolm's "gesture" here perhaps implies that the "use" which constitutes meaning is not merely beyond grammar but beyond any intelligence that could be considered properly linguistic, something mysteriously integrated into "*life*." And thus the problem is polarized: if meaning is not a matter of the word's "place in a grammatical system"—not a matter of purely intra-grammatical

relations or connections—then it is a matter of putative "vitality," which may seem entirely beyond grammar's reach, and beyond unmetaphorical description as well. Again, we find Malcolm and company oscillating uneasily and often unconciously across these two polarized (and clearly incompatible) possibilities.

I

These two possibilities are what one tends to find, similarly, in the huge amount of talk about "*form of life*" that goes on among "Wittgensteinians" (and also among some of Wittgenstein's critics).

In other words, "form of life" is often taken to be theorisable (e.g., to be the basis for a sociological theory), to be the keystone to unlocking the secrets of Wittgenstein's philosophy. To treat the term "form of life" in this way, as a quasi-technical term, as part of a theory, is manifestly to go against Wittgenstein's intentions; and moreover, one should bear in mind that the expression "form of life" occurs only five times in *PI*, and less often than that in the entire remainder of his now-published works. The volume of the secondary literature on "forms of life" is out of all proportion to what would appear to be its importance in Wittgenstein's actual work.

Less commonly, "form of life" is taken not as a technical term, but as a quasi-mystical marker, a name for something which cannot be theorised. This, while it cannot be ultimately satisfactory, is in *some* ways preferable to the theorization of the term; we will explain why, shortly.

In any case, the point is that we have on the one hand a popular project of integrating Wittgenstein with mainstream philosophy, a project of facilitating the treatment of his "cryptic" turns of phrase as simply the clothing of a theory. This in practice licenses a "positivistic" construal of Wittgenstein on non-linguistic and linguistic practice, including on the use of language. On the other hand, we have those who would gesture at something ineffable by means of using the term "form of life," and would have our use of language and our practices generally thus be for principled reasons both efficacious and mysterious.

Thus while the way that Wittgenstein is usually taken on the question of "use" might be said, not unilluminatingly, to be Positivistic in nature—to be an Anti-Realist would-be reduction of meaning to use, where use is understood as place in a substantial and static grammar (even if it is allowed, as Pragmatist readers of Wittgenstein for example allow, that this grammar itself may change, such that different meanings become possible at different times), this rarer alternative to such a conception could not unreasonably be construed as Ineffabilistic—holding that there is a Truth to what use is, but a Truth that we can only gesture at, or perhaps think but not say. Interestingly enough, "Positivism" and "Ineffabilism" are, as hinted above, precisely the options usually

presented to readers of Wittgenstein's early masterpiece, the *Tractatus*, for how to understand that work and its conceptions of "sense." Many commentators on the *Tractatus* take the "ineffabilist" reading of that work to represent an important advance of the "positivist" reading of it, even if they often still (rightly) take "ineffabilism" to have a troublingly paradoxical or contradictory character. Yet many of those same commentators, who normally present themselves as admirers above all of Wittgenstein's later work, taking Wittgenstein in it to have advanced upon the conceptions of meaning etc. they locate in the *Tractatus*, prefer what we have polemically characterized here as "positivistic" renditions of his later work. We take this as evidence that something is seriously awry in the reception of Wittgenstein's work. If most of the commentators on the *Tractatus* are not completely wrong, then it follows that what they say about Wittgenstein's later work has that work be in certain important respects a *backsliding from* the insights of his early work (those insights being, furthermore, so they say, beset themselves by a flaw, a paradox)![14]

We have argued this case elsewhere with regard to Wittgenstein's most scholarly exegetes, Baker and Hacker.[15] We will prosecute the general argument a little further here.

We believe that it is true to say that, its metaphorical character and vagueness notwithstanding, the mysterious suggestion of Malcolm's—ineffabilism, applied to Wittgenstein's later work, to action, to the use of language—must indeed be somewhat preferable to the more mainstream view. For Wittgenstein was almost always clear, even from his earliest notes, that "meaning" was not just a matter of grammar in the above sense. In the *Notebooks 1914–1916* Wittgenstein discusses a sketch of two figures fencing:

> If the right-hand figure in this picture represents the man A, and the left-hand one stands for the man B, then the whole might assert, e.g.: "A is fencing with B." The proposition in picture-writing can be true and false. It has a sense independent of its truth or falsehood.[16]

We take it as obvious that the truth or falsehood of the "proposition in picture writing" is something that would be discovered in its use or application, in its representation of some actual state of affairs, in which case it would be *either* true *or* false. But, as this "proposition" is unapplied, it has, independently of any such use, a more neutral "sense," which one might conceive of as its purely grammatical "form," that we might say *can* be both true *and* false. This is to say that the "proposition in picture writing" is not truly a proposition at all, but is instead an example, an exposed and exhibited expression that *would* be a proposition only if and when it *were* applied to or held to represent something.

Our discussion of this passage from the *Notebooks* should indicate clearly that Wittgenstein was never a positivist about "use"—unless one does take the uncomfortable line that he actually did backslide in his later work,[17] and even perhaps that *PI* is a retreat from, a flawed and inferior version of, *T L-P.*

Was Wittgenstein then an ineffabilist about use? The hazards of ineffabilism are clear: a severe risk of obscurantism; a terribly ironic movement away from the very concretion [emphasis on actual examples of practice(s)] that concepts like "use" were supposed to yield for us; above all, an unavoidable paradox in the pronouncements of the "ineffabilist"—the necessarily unsatisfactory nature of any *philosophical* mysticism. What we will now seek to show is that *one need not read Wittgenstein that way either.* There is a way to understand his remarks on logic, grammar, use, etc., such that, in the later work perhaps still more decisively than in the early work, he rejected not just the substantial theorisable notion of "sense" which most commentators attribute to him, but also the particular substantial conception of nonsense—"meaningful" nonsense, nonsense "gesturing at" a sense—which "ineffabilism" argues for. We will look not just at the pull towards staticist theorisation of use, but also *at the real attractions of ineffabilism* with regard to (reading) his later work, and see where they *actually* lead us.

II

The distinction between the merely formal "sense" of expressions and the "meaning" of their actual uses made in the *Notebooks* was maintained throughout Wittgenstein's career. Even if one looks for instance at some of Wittgenstein's reachings and graspings in the "middle" period, one still sees him recovering himself. For instance, the following remark in the *Philosophical Grammar* risks confusing static grammatical relations with meaning: "I want to say the place of a word in grammar is its meaning." But Wittgenstein follows up that expression of his inclination directly with this remark, which remedies the matter: "The use of a word in the language is its meaning."[18] As we have argued elsewhere,[19] from around this point in his work onward, Wittgenstein was progressively more and more inclined to conceive "meaning" as a matter of the actual and dynamic application (and even (re)construction) of (local) grammar; whereas any more static recognition of purely grammatical relations, of senses, became merely what was liable to be mistaken for meaning: "The confusions which occupy us arise when language is like an engine idling, not when it is doing work" (*PI* 132).[20]

In the *Investigations*, the denial that language in such an "idly" senseful (rather than actually meaningful) condition might give one any intelligence of how it actually might mean begins early; for it is at least implicit in the rejection

of the "Augustinian picture" of language-learning, where the recognition of isolated *names* plays so foundational a part:

> One thinks that learning language consists in giving names to objects. Viz. to human beings, to shapes, to colours, to pains, to moods, to numbers, etc. To repeat—naming is something like attaching a label to a thing. One can say that this is preparatory to the use of a word. But what is it a preparation *for?* (*PI* 26)

The act of giving or knowing names may appear so "fundamental" to learning and even to using language just because it is transparently an example of a "purely grammatical" linguistic condition, with all the apparent flexibility or capacity (to be "true *and* false," for example) of expressions in that condition. Naming is through-and-through "grammatical" because it is about language, rather than yet being language-in-action. As Wittgenstein says, it is a preparation (much as one sometimes prepares the ground in a pedagogical situation by telling one's audience how one will name certain things unfamiliar to them, how one will use certain terms). Wittgenstein not only considers such business merely "preparatory" but also, a little later, clarifies his point by saying that "naming is so far not a move in the language-game—any more than putting a piece in its place on the board is a move in chess. We may say: *nothing* has so far been done, when a thing has been named" (*PI* 49).

But if this diminishment of the role of purely senseful or grammatical relations and rules—of mere linguistic preparation, or of a *Satzsystem* (or somewhat similarly of Saussure's *langue*, or Chomsky's "grammar")—is so necessary, according to Wittgenstein, to an investigation of meaning, what is it about such inactive grammar that continues to tempt many philosophers and linguists, even supposed Wittgensteinians, to insist upon the central importance of our grasp of it? It is the fact, we believe, that such grammar is so evidently something that one *can* "grasp"; and so it may be conceived as a stable prop for one's linguistic behaviour. Otherwise, one fears that one will be lost in the seas of language in action without a rudder. (And the theorisers of language have perhaps just this fear.)

One is tempted, then, to say that the meanings of the words, phrases, and sentences of one's language are something that one *knows* (or "cognizes") independently of one's using them. But although one may commonly use the expressions "knowing what *X* means" and "knowing the meaning of *X*," their form may distract one along a line against which Wittgenstein warned in *The Blue Book:*

> The questions "What is length?", "What is meaning?", "What is the number one?", etc., produce in us a mental cramp. We feel that we can't point to anything in reply to them and yet ought to point to something. (We are up against one of the great sources of philosophical bewilderment: a

> substantive makes us look for a thing that corresponds to it.) . . . The mistake we are liable to make could be expressed thus: We are looking for the use of a sign, but we look for it as though it were an object co-existing with the sign. (One of the reasons for this mistake is again that we are looking for a "thing corresponding to a substantive.")[21]

Thus expressions like "knowing the meaning of *X*," involving a "substantive," may fool one into looking for a "substance," and meanings may then seem static objects or contents. Hence for some philosophers and more linguists—many of them again following Chomsky's lead—the knowledge of these "meaning-objects" is itself hypostatized into a kind of "possession" of them, characterized as a mental—or some relevantly similar kind of—"state."[22]

Of course, some meditation upon linguistic expressions as if these were objects in space is reasonably normal in our experience of language; it is something that we often practice, for example, in reading poetry. But one goes quite wrong if one supposes that the evident substance of such objectified expressions is an answer to the question, "What is the meaning?": if one mistakes a real "language object" for an unreal "meaning object" and confuses one's relatively static "knowing" of such an object with understanding of how it actively might mean.

In this connection, Hacker has shown—in what for us is an entirely convincing rebuttal of the relevant Chomskyan positions—that knowing the meaning of a linguistic expression is best regarded as a knowledge not of *what something is* but of *how to do something*, of a technique, and so it should be considered an *ability* rather than a "state."[23] And the grammar of abilities is altogether different from that of the mental (e.g., "depression") or physical (e.g., "headache") states of a person. The criteria for a person's "states" are different from the criteria for their "abilities": the former, for instance, are much more subject to temporary variation, or have a different sort of "duration" than do abilities, and the latter tend to be more strongly dependent upon the behaviours that manifest them than are states, and so on.

But the distinction that Hacker draws, though we think it is in the final analysis accurate, is more problematic than he suggests, for the difference between "abilities" and "states" may often be difficult to mark, and this difficulty is significant, in our view. It signifies the hard-to-grasp and easy-to-mistake nature of ability-concepts more generally, and it instances the inevitable absence of a proprietary philosophical vocabulary with which to describe language.

"Knowing what 'hammer' means," for example, properly—i.e., if one is to maximize one's chances of avoiding serious philosophic confusion—should be considered an ability, and thus equivalent to "knowing how to use the word 'hammer.'" But even if abilities would seem obviously more "active" than states, the ability to use language is nonetheless "static" when compared to its actual manifestations or exercises.

We have brought "knowing meaning" a little closer to Wittgenstein's conception of meaningful linguistic behaviour. But we have not reached it; for again, meaning something, or understanding someone to mean something, involves action/activity, in comparison with which "knowing how" to do those things may well continue to seem quite "static."

But not—and this is why at bottom we agree with Hacker's distinction—"simply" static, in the way of a depression or a headache. Underlying states of the organism for sure are in some sense a necessary condition of the kinds of abilities in which we are interested in the present paper—a human being cannot use meaningful language unless it has a nervous system (and indeed, a digestive system) in one of a certain range of states—but linguistic ability nevertheless is not identical with any of those underlying states. For a better understanding of how an ability may be a "state" but not an mental *or* a physical state,[24] we may consider one of Wittgenstein's most interesting remarks concerning "aspects": "The expression of the aspect is the expression of a way of taking (hence a way-of-dealing-with, of a technique); but used as a description of a state."[25] We would propose the following analogical "model," which we hope will lessen one's mental cramps hereabouts: *an ability is a description of an action used as a description of a state.* Of course this does not rule out the consideration that some person, after all, or some living thing, is implicated in both the action and the state! But it indicates that the attributed ability is a hypostatized action presented as ("used as") a description of a person, rather than simply a description of the states of that person. Wittgenstein proposes that the "logical form" of the "expressions of aspects"—and, we are adding, the logical form of the attribution of abilities as well—finds "room" in another "dimension": "In this sense there is also no room for imaginary numbers in the number-line. And that surely means: the application of the concept of an imaginary number is radically different from that of, say a cardinal number. . . ."[26] And while that thought deserves much more explication than we can give it at present, at the least one may infer from it that, like imaginary numbers, attributions of ability do not simply apply to any empirical state of affairs, but have a special "grammatical role" in the language. Or, to take a further step, these expressions might be said to have a role which is perhaps surprisingly *strongly* grammatical (or logical) rather than empirical. Attributions of abilities amount to logical projections from and to actions, rather than to descriptions of facts about individuals' states.

"Knowing a meaning" (or "knowing a language") may seem more "active" than any mental or physical state when one considers it as an ability: "knowing how to mean" (or "knowing how to use a language"). But this only shows, once more, that meaning is something "known" (or linguistic ability something "possessed")

only by virtue of the hypostatization of *an action.* Thus it is toward that action that any investigation of meaning must inevitably turn.

III

The general conception that Wittgenstein offers to indicate the activity of meaning, as is well known, is to be found under the heading of "language-game." "The language" in which a word is used (*PI* 43) is not simply our grammar at large, but is always both locally and dynamically constituted. By which we mean that one is least likely to be confused if one thinks of language-games as occurring always in some specific though not static situation in which there is the inclination to activity, to *doing something* with words.[27] As Hallett has at least said, such local limits therefore comprise not merely a "verbal context" but an actual set of living circumstances in which the "use" of words often exceeds their "correct" and even their quite specifically defined senses.

This must be stressed: it is the action, the dynamics, of meaning that the concept of "language-game" is meant to illustrate. To take any such game merely as a particular "context" would be to remain within the narrow "grammatical relations" construal of "use" which we earlier raised serious questions about. Language-games are not occasions merely for the specification or refinement of more general rules of grammar. And even when such grammatical specification is in place—as a set of particular senses for certain "syntaxes," for example—it is still just a set of rules. Such rules must be "applied," must be acted on or from. Before that, one does not as yet even have a language-game, but only the preparation for such a game. Any meaning that might occur with the putting to use of such preparation will not yet then have occurred.

However, there will be nothing wrong with conceiving a particular language-game as a sort of "local grammar" so long as we understand that, in any actual language-game, grammar is complicit with its application, complicit with the activity of its use. As hinted earlier, this is of course to suggest that the move to a genuinely dynamic, action-oriented conception of "use," via thinking of "language-games" as genuine and unclosed interweavings of actions and words, may suggest a dynamicised version of "grammar," too. Rather than grammar that at least at any particular moment is conceived of as stable, such that the "language-game" involves always the work that language does (that actors do with language) *beyond* its grammar, no matter how particularly that grammar has been specified, one may wish to think of the "language-game" instead as a term partially replacing and *radicalising* the earlier terms, "calculus" *and "grammar.*" Such that the grammar/the language-game would, like an ability, be always an idealisation: in this case, *a description of our interleaved linguistic*

and nonlinguistic actions in all their dynamism, used—presented—as a description of a set of inter-relations of the sentences, etc., in question.

But even if this is right, we are again confronted by what may be beginning to seem an unresolvable dilemma, a dilemma which may pull one toward "ineffabilism." For no matter how particularly one conceives the rules of a language-game, its meaningfulness seems to be something further, something beyond it, which no grammatical considerations—and even no linguistic ones, no descriptive ones—could illuminate. Something of this predicament was evident in Wittgenstein's own handling of the language-game "model":

> It is a rule of grammar dealing with symbols alone, it is a rule of a game. Its importance lies in its application; we use it in our language. . . . We can only prepare language for its usage; we can only describe it as long as we do not *regard* it as language. The rules prepare for the game which may *afterwards* be used as language.[28]

Here once more is revealed Wittgenstein's acute distrust of "idling language" in which even the description of language—to say nothing of more emphatic modes of its exposure, such as citation—creates a picture so misleading that with what some might see as logical awkwardness he must insist that to "describe" language is not to "regard" it *as* language.[29] But such insistence is of course exactly what we have been suggesting—again here, we feel the pull toward "ineffabilism" concerning language and what can be said about it. And "ineffabilism" has at least this much right about it: it is at best very difficult even for Wittgenstein's acute remarks to "capture" language in its lived activity. "Language-game" and the other words he coins apparently to help him to do so can seem destined to fail, if this is Wittgenstein's task.

When the rules of the game and their actual use are considered so divided as in the above quote from Wittgenstein, then that use must of course seem to occur "afterwards"; as if the *employment* of grammar, once more, were always something further, something beyond, and even as if that employment were somehow separable from what it employed.

This is not—we want to emphasize—the way Wittgenstein mostly treats of "language-games" later, in the *Investigations*, where their rules have usually to be conceived to be *already in action* in order for them to be "language-games." But the difficulty remains of how we are to understand just what is being described by Wittgenstein when he describes such "games," and of whether there can *be* a description which "captures" language in action. We believe that Wittgenstein's mature conception of "language-games"—where a grammatical rule that is not "in action" is not functioning as a rule, and therefore is not so much as a rule at all—is more likely to cure one of delusions of staticity and of determinacy of sense than his earlier use of the concept (and of the concepts of

"grammar," "calculus," "satzsystem"). But even in this later treatment, where rules and their applications may begin to seem inseparable, the most important questions must remain: What is the action that these rules govern or in which they participate? If grammar is to be read now as complicit with its use, what and where is that use? (And, how exactly can one hope for these questions truly to be understood and answered?)

IV

Cora Diamond's work provides, we believe, the essence of an answer to these questions.[30] She has something to say about them which manages to be less merely metaphorical and gestural than Malcolm's "stream of *life*," while energetically and convincingly avoiding producing a philosophical theory. In pursuing Rush Rhees's directive to "show how rules of grammar are rules of the lives in which there is language,"[31] she initially appeals to the particular: "[Wittgenstein] thinks that, when we raise philosophical questions about meaning, we are for various reasons inclined not to attend to the place words have in our lives: to the very particular places."[32] If these "particular places" still sound too much like "contexts," like specific grammars statically conceived, which may constitute or invite local theorisation (of "usage"), it nevertheless soon becomes clear that Diamond has something else in mind, for the "place" of a word in a people's language is a matter of what they *do* with that word. Examining an imaginary tribe of language-users in relation to "private language" type examples, she writes that

> we may say that they have a word which is, in a sense, a word "for pain," but what kind of public character their word has is seen in such things as the place that different people's remarks about someone's pain are given in the commerce with the word in question. In the commerce with the word, we see what it is that "publicity" of sensation language comes to in the particular case of this concept.[33]

This conception of "the commerce with the word" may seem at first to have certain disadvantages. "Commerce," as a name for linguistic behaviour, remains here a metaphor; will Diamond turn out to be just an ineffabilist, a "mystic," about language and its use? And though "commerce" does at least seem a more practical metaphor than Malcolm's "stream," it may continue to suggest that the meaningful use of language is something that one does *with* it, some activity whose description must be separate from a description of language itself. If it is, again we ask whether it will be describable at all? And may this not leave too much of a gap ultimately between language as such and (language-in-)action?

It soon becomes clear, however, how "commerce" and "linguistic behaviour" may be names for the same activity. "It is only in the give and take of language,

the relation between what one person says and what others say, that you see the kind of public character that different sorts of concepts in it have."[34] In this way Diamond appears to conceive the "commerce" with language, and the meaningful use of language, as *dialogical*. The difference that meaningful use makes, the way that such use matters, may in a sense be discovered in how people subsequently *respond* to their own and to others' "sayings":

> How do we tell that some people distant from ourselves are telling the time? It is not a matter of their glancing at the sun and saying something; rather, on the supposition that they glance at the sun and say things, it is telling time if they coordinate their activities by such means, or refer to such matters in their narratives in certain ways. Or they say such things as "he left at dawn, it is half a day's trip; he should be back by now," and then they begin to prepare a meal for him, or start worrying about why he is so late.[35]

We want to narrow the focus of these last remarks even further: to try to show that, however widely (or narrowly) one might conceive the consequences of meaningful linguistic use, certain consequences still should be observable just in the "give and take" of speaking itself. Diamond's "commerce" is not only what occurs *with* one's expressions; it occurs *within* expressions. Whatever consequences accrue from language use, there occur also, and in the first place, consequences to language as it is used. And so when Wittgenstein says that the meaning of a word is its use "in the language," we take him to be pointing away *both* from standing grammatical considerations and from any merely pragmatic utility to which meaningful expression might after the fact be put; and *toward* what actually happens to meaningful expressions in their dialogic and sequential development.

V

We must now endeavour to be more concrete in setting out exactly what this means.[36] Let us start by returning to "description," via "names" again.

Having asked of the "preparatory" act of "naming," "but *what* is it a preparation *for*?" Wittgenstein several sections later at last answers, "naming is a preparation for description" (*PI* 49). And the most obvious examples for an investigation of how meaningful language works would perhaps seem to be such descriptions: empirical observations of facts. But it is both odd and important, we think—and we think that Wittgenstein's philosophical development after his return to Cambridge centrally involved an ever-increasing estimation of this importance—that this mode of expression is not so obviously amenable to the criterion of "consequentialness" as certain other modes. It may often be easy to see the actual changes in situations made by "performative" or by "imperative" utterances, for example; but what difference does a description of fact make?

Having made such a description, one may use it to do something further, of course; this is often the sense of "use" upon which Wittgenstein seems to rely: "What we call '*descriptions*' are instruments for particular purposes" (*PI* 291). But that important remark should not give us to suppose that the meaningfulness of descriptions depends upon the realisations of their instrumentality. The blueprints for a building or for a new machine do not *become meaningless* or fail to achieve meaningfulness if we do not set to work upon construction *the moment* they are drawn (though it is important to see that this might happen after a sufficiently long interval!). So the way in which descriptions "work" does not have to be immediately "actual" in some concrete or physical way. But what then is to distinguish such "plans" from idle grammatical "sense," from any "description" composed according to the rules of grammar but which in a given set of circumstances has *no* application?[37]

What we are suggesting is that whatever is "done" by operatively useful descriptions should *not* be limited to the alterations they might accomplish upon a physical world (which might seem an "extra-linguistic" sort of "use").[38] Such descriptions of course *may* be extended to further, and more evidently practical, activities than they themselves constitute, but their meaningfulness, if it is indeed in a sense an active "intra-linguistic" (where this would mean "intra-grammatical" only on the genuinely action-including dynamic version of "grammar" that we sketched above and will detail below) meaningfulness, must be discoverable in another, prior, and more constant sort of "operation." We are looking, then, for a sense of meaningfulness, of "use," which is immanent to language-in-action, to language interwoven with non-linguistic action and with the world, but *not*, in either case—and this is crucial—as any kind of outside to that language.

We may begin to understand what this operation that we are looking for must be by insisting again upon Wittgenstein's phrasing: "'descriptions' are instruments for particular uses," rather than "*in* particular uses." A meaningful description is thus one that has the capacity *for* some particular use; and this particular capacity must somehow have been achieved just in the development of the description itself. Now this may seem dangerously close to saying, "meaningful descriptions operate on themselves," and so be troubling to those who rightly distrust the all-too-frequent appeals to language's "self- reflexivity" in contemporary language studies.[39] But these appeals—and the problems they are meant to solve—would seem, at least in large part, once more to be the result of a too static view of linguistic behaviour, in which everything is imagined quite literally to be surveyable, or is imagined to happen "all at once." Yet this is not how language, in the most obvious way, works. And if the differences that meaningful descriptions make—the consequences they have—*may* be said to be changes in themselves, these changes must occur as and where all descriptions operate: in some linguistic sequence.

Such a sequence, once more, is most easily and probably least misleadingly imagined as a dialogue. For example, someone ("A") comes into the house from a walk and says, "The leaves have begun to change."[40] In these circumstances, this remark would in all probability count as an "empirical proposition." By virtue of its timeliness—which is signalled by its following upon one's change of position (and the position of one's co-conversationalist), and by the tense of the verb, and so on—it marks a difference: a difference from what one had been saying lately, or could have said, especially about the leaves. And a listener ("B") *could* respond to such a difference with further (non-verbal) action. "B" might look out the window, for instance, or look at the calendar, or recall what the weather of the past few weeks had been like, or go out for a walk him- or herself, and so on. Some of these responses might amount to tests of that initial utterance; for empirical expressions are potentially both confirmable and doubtable. But whether they are in fact tested or not, or stimulate any obvious sort of action, they also virtually always allow for additional discourse, for *further description.*

The initial speaker, "A," can for instance now add, "The maples, especially on high ground, are changing more than the oaks." Of course, "A" might have said just that upon walking in, without first declaring that the leaves had begun to change; but he would have done so with rather less probability of being understood, at least without pause or surprise. Thus an empirical observation—"the leaves have begun to change"—may come to function *in relation to the expressions that follow it* as, roughly, a *grammatical stipulation*. In this development the role of such expressions changes "dialectically" from active to "static," from a temporarily descriptive and even "referential" functioning to a new and undoubted grammatical establishment, a background or "foundation" against which one can make another testable observation.[41] Expressions that serve initially as descriptions of fact are transformed, evidently just by the onward sequencing of the discourses in which they occur, into *presumptions* that make the next description assertable; and each presumption amounts to a further articulation of the grammatical rules of the sequence, a determination of the logical "range" appropriate for subsequent empirical expression, and hence a modification of the grammar of the entire discourse to that point.[42]

This is what we have meant by a dynamic conception of grammar: a conception such that the grammar of a sequence is to a certain degree being generated as one goes along, and in which a speaker's responsive linguistic (re)action toward a previous speaker is understood not as determined, nor as arbitrary, but as interleaved, in a less or more seamless fashion.[43]

So when Wittgenstein says, famously, that "the same proposition may get treated at one time as something to test by experience, at another as a rule of

testing,"[44] we would amplify by claiming that the sequential progress of speech from "one time" to "another" constantly *produces* a change in linguistic status similiar to the one he describes. What becomes presumed can be rendered genuinely empirical—genuinely questionable—again, only through losing its status as "presumed."

It may be that, in the original context, the segments of time Wittgenstein's remark envisages for such alterations of status are longer than those of the individual discursive sequences with which we are concerned, such that our remarks look more counter-intuitive than Wittgenstein's, which apply in the first instance to how propositions may change their status on a large historical scale. But even if the linguistic changes of state that occur in the smaller or narrower "histories" of ordinary, particular verbal sequences are less memorable and monumental than those which Wittgenstein mentions, nevertheless in their very dynamicity they are perhaps even closer to what Wittgenstein most frequently means by "grammar" in his properly *later* work. And he seems to allow for this particular and temporary sort of grammatical development and for individual agency in it when he says, "It is clear that our empirical propositions do not all have the same status, since one can lay down such a proposition and turn it from an empirical proposition into a norm of description."[45]

Just as the transformational "laying down" of empirical propositions is not confined only to large-scale changes in what comes to be deemed "logical" or "presumptive" in linguistic activity, neither is such "grammatical stipulation" confined to what is preliminarily or peremptorily logical to any discourse. Specific and functional grammatical foundations are of course often "laid" in that formal or deliberate way, which is analogous to naming the game—or reading out its rules—before one plays it. But what more particularly and temporarily can *then* appropriately be said—like what more particular and temporary moves can appropriately be made—may be discovered only as the sequence of the discourse or game develops, as empirical propositions or actual moves one by one become syntactic history, morphing into grammatical bases for those that follow.[46]

If these observations seem accurate, then empirical expressions have at least two sorts of "consequences."[47] One of these may be conceived as an *action from words*: someone says something and we may look somewhere, or do something, or think something.[48] But this momentary action may sometimes be in practice somewhat difficult to distinguish from various non-communicative, non-meaningful effects that words may have on us: for example, effects of nuance and connotation consequent upon non-communicative particularities of expression in poetry.[49] (For present purposes, we want to reserve the word "effects" for "consequences" such as this latter type.)

"Action from words" (and its meaningful consequences) may *seem* remarkably evanescent, since the "syntactic" onwardness of our verbal behaviour may very quickly transform what were cues for action into the foundations or backgrounds for further cues. But the obvious, measurable, and special "consequences" of meaningful linguistic developments—what such developments always accomplish, unless there is some drastic failure in communication—is a continuing change of grammar. We may see, think, and act from these expressions; but as we do so they work to adjust what *might* always be said anywhere to what *may*—what properly can—be said here and now. So when Wittgenstein insists that meaningful expressions must make a "difference," we should understand that this difference is initially and always indicated in the development of our empirical assertions *into local and timely* presumptions *that enable further assertion*. The consequences that meaningful developments have—which no "process" could have because, be it as "dynamic" as one cares, still it cannot "process" its own rules as language-in-action continually does—are in this sense well described as *grammatical* consequences. (And such grammatical consequences—meaningful consequences—must, we repeat, be distinguished from the "grammatical effects" and the mere psychological associations and effects which attend particular verbal formulations, and which are so vital in literature, and in relation to the difficulty of adequately translating one natural language to another.)

VI

That Wittgenstein never himself explicitly made such a "claim" in the *Investigations* may seem reason to doubt the accuracy of attributing it to him. But we think it may be justly inferred that he would not have thought our suggestion in the least wrong-headed from this remark in the *Blue Book*:

> I want to play chess, and a man gives the white king a paper crown, leaving the use of the piece unaltered, but telling me that the crown has a meaning to him in the game, which he can't express by rules. I say: "as long as it doesn't alter the use of the piece, it hasn't what I call a meaning."[50]

We may allow that the crown may have had a "meaning" to the man, in the same kind of way that (say) the word "crown" may have a "meaning" to someone—or less misleadingly, a grammatical or psychological effect; perhaps it "means" "authority and wonder," or perhaps it "means"—systematically reminds one of—some particular person (e.g., the reigning monarch). To this man, the crown may have been of immense personal significance. It may have "meant" a lot to him in the kind of way that (say) the words "America" or "Great Britain" or

"Britannia" mean an awful lot to some people. (But the answer to the question, "What does America mean to you?" is nevertheless very different from—both much more than and much less precisely—what even a good dictionary will give as the meaning—the use—of the word "America." In the dictionary sense, and in use, "America" is meaningful; in answer to the question, "What does America mean to you?" it is (only) "meaning-full," i.e., full of strong associations, etc.)

What the crown did not have—and this is Wittgenstein's point—is a meaning *in the game.* Wittgenstein's imaginary opponent appears to mis-conceive as a "meaning" some strictly personal—and therefore indubitably communicatively and practically non-functional—quasi-grammatical apprehension, which we have suggested should at most be characterized as an "effect." For Wittgenstein the "alteration" accomplished by a *meaningful* gesture either with or in regard to the king would be altogether different: it would amount to a change not simply, as we might have expected, in the facts of the situation—for example, in how the chess game might stand at any moment after the king had been moved—but in the "(permitted) use of the piece," in its very capacity for further movement.

The paper crown would have been meaningful in just this way right from the outset, of course, if the changes it was to make (e.g., changes in the king's powers of movement) had been preliminarily posed and accepted. And we might, once more, want to discriminate between that sort of use-altering redefinition of the king's capacities and those that occur subsequently in virtue of the actual moves of the piece in some actual playing(s) of the game: to say, for instance, that the former would comprehend the "whole game," and thus comprehend the more specific "grammatical modifications" that were produced by the actual and particular development occuring in each playing of the game.[51] But those subsequent occurences/developments are just as grammatically consequential as any preliminary considerations. What is "presuppositional" with regard to any language-game, in other words, is only so since the particular grammar of that game must continue to develop with its progress. And each of these developments is as "comprehensive" as the grammatical "stipulations" with which one began, just because it governs the entire range of what moves can next be made.

The grammar of an actual language-game, then, is necessarily dynamic. Grammar is not maintained by fixating on what seems obviously general or permanent—or even (for those Pragmatically inclined) particularly central or determinative at any one time—about it. And our employment of it is not like looking again at a picture on the wall, nor like meditating over a poem, nor like our attention to any other sort of exhibit. Nor is it—and nor are we humans—usefully-analogised to a machine, with mechanical processes at the forefront. The better analogy is perhaps *our behaviour with* machines: with an

automobile, for example, which cannot be maintained unless it is used. Thus we should measure a grammar—any particular set of linguistic rules—by the same strict criterion by which, as we have seen, Wittgenstein identifies a language as a language: What is a grammar that is not used, that does nothing? It is not "nothing," to be sure, in its effects and static implications, in how one may experience it; but neither is it a grammar.

VII

To sum up: we are suggesting that it will most likely be useful—philosophically illuminating—to see things as follows: Processes have *effects*—including "grammatical effects," effects upon us resulting from systematic elements of the language, such as we are much subject to in the operation of good poetry, and these effects can be more than mere individual psychological associations—but it is meaning—it is actual use—which has consequences, which is *consequential.*

Wittgenstein does not have a Positivist conception of "use." The trouble with the work of many of his admirers, as of many of his detractors, is that this fact is obscured from view if one thinks of Wittgenstein as having a "use theory" or "pragmatic theory" of meaning. That is the trouble with many moments in the work of such diverse admirers of Wittgenstein as Stephen Hilmy, Norman Malcolm, Richard Rorty, Stanley Fish, J. C. Nyiri, and even, despite appearances, in Baker and Hacker.[52]

Even the Pragmatist version—which appears to allow, indeed to pride itself on, conceptual change—remains "Positivistic" at heart. For the change is conceived of as a change in something definite and quasi-scientically theorisable. The Pragmatist version of dynamicity in "use" retains a notion of there being at least notionally/momentarily stabilisable and theorisable meanings or uses or "vocabularies."[53] Whereas we have intimated that even the very idea of "language-game" ought to be recognized as itself an idealisation, a quasi-technical term which Wittgenstein hopes we will be able to lay aside, to be silent about, eventually. Use, one then perhaps feels inclined to say, "goes beyond" anything which one can say about it, or philosophically account for, even in allegedly "Wittgensteinian" terms.

But the reaction away from a Positivistic conception of "use" toward an Ineffabilistic conception—a conception that makes of use literally a mystery, by placing it within "the stream of life" (a faraway so close "beyond") in a manner defying further description—while a reaction with its heart in the right place, nevertheless does not actually *succeed* in looking in the right place for rules, meaning, use. Ineffabilism is right to think that there cannot be any effective theorisation of "use," be it Verificationist, Pragmatist, or whatever. It is wrong

however to think that then there must be profound Truths about "use" which are hidden from us but which we can gesture at. The opportunity that the work of Diamond, Conant, and their followers offers is the opportunity to see this clearly. They lead one beyond the ineffabilist moments in Malcolm and others. They seek instead not to have *any* "substantial" conception of use at all. This is the difficult thing: really to have and give no theory at all, to make no claims. And to see that it is enough, rather, to make "transitional" remarks such as we have essayed here, remarks which seek only, as we have done, therapeutically to suggest and enact certain ways of thinking and of not thinking about meaning. Specifically, we have suggested that it will cause least confusion to reckon meaningful consequences as part of grammar only upon a genuinely dynamic conception of "grammar," and to distinguish rigourously between meaningful consequences on the one hand and "grammatical effects" and "psychological effects" on the other. (Meaning is not a process, but "it" is dynamic, and does have consequences, we are suggesting.)

Such a suggestion is not a theory, or even a thesis. Nor is it merely a gesture at an ineffable "beyond," to a fantasized God's-eye view. Again, it is a suggestion articulated primarily for negative purposes, a suggestion that we hope will "self-deconstruct" rather than be read as having a "substantial" character. If our remarks serve their purpose, we will happily then give them up; we hope that they will be transitional, in just that sense. We would be happy indeed then for them to go without saying—the way Wittgenstein very largely went without saying them.[54]

VIII

So our conception here should not be mistaken for a post-positivist (and post-ineffabilist) "*theory* of meaning." The trouble with theories about language's "general form"—as we may now understand from Wittgenstein's work—is that there is no such thing, that nothing about how language generally *is* can be said. (As Conant and Diamond have argued, this was established by Wittgenstein at least as early as the *Tractatus*.) Relatively abstract descriptions about how language characteristically behaves or acts are not inexpressible, as ineffabilism would have us believe, but *redundant*. We have not offered such abstract descriptions, only specific exemplifications (and prophylactics against theorisation)—and such exemplifications we in any case do not intend as the basis for a theory, but as the basis for their own redundancy. As soon as they have served their purpose, we give them up, as nonsense or trivially obvious.

"If one tried to advance theses in philosophy," Wittgenstein says, "it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree to them" (*PI* 128). One can understand this now as follows: because such a "thesis" ought to

be a general description, or even one of a bunch of specific descriptions, of how our language works, it would simply amount at best to an exposure of something that—as competent language-users—we all already "know." And "know" must be placed firmly within quotation marks here just because our purchase on such fundamental "rules" ("proceedures," and "norms," might be better) for linguistic activity goes much "deeper" than anything one might, ordinarily, empirically, have "knowledge" of.[55] Much "deeper," that is, than anything one might be said to observe or doubt. As deep, and as utterly everyday and ready-to-hand, one might say, as most human practices and actions.[56]

Along these lines, we would say that "Meaning makes a difference in what next can be said"—which might seem a laborious philosophical "theory"—is, rather, no less (and no more) an elementary grammatical "rule"—citable when someone is in the grip of some very particular confusion (and otherwise quite nonsensical)—than "Red is a colour." A young acquaintance of ours is learning the language, and one of his temporary modes of action is to insist on what he learns, or even, one might say, on "definitions." A vehicle approaches on a deserted stretch of road and he says, "That's a truck!" And we nod; and then he says, "That's a truck" again, and again. And sooner or later someone has to say, "Yes?" or "And?" or Wittgenstein's own, "Well, and what of it?" Just to show him, as it were, that it doesn't matter when the right hand gives the left hand money.

This, then, is the status we would claim for our "thesis," our (we hope) redundant non-thesis, here. The "proposition" that meaning should be in the first place conceived neither as merely senseful grammatical relation nor as some "extra-linguistic" use of language nor as a complete mystery, but as the use of language in and for particular "grammatical developments"—speaking in the service of speaking—is nothing more than a fundamental "rule" of linguistic behaviour that should go without saying. It is "learned" and presumed and needs no saying: save sometimes to children, and, sometimes, to (us) philosophers. Sometimes, occasionally, transitionally.

University of East Anglia, U.K. (Read)
and Rutgers University, U.S.A. (Guetti)

NOTES

Our deep thanks go to Alice Crary and to an anonymous referee for detailed readings of earlier drafts of this paper.

1 L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1953, 1958), 218. Henceforth *PI*, with the section number or, for Part II, the page number.

2 Distinctively, and—in terms of our interests in this paper—*especially* consequential.

3 We mean here to allude here to Cora Diamond's and James Conant's important and influential picture of the methods of Wittgenstein's philosophizing. (We trust that our intellectual debt in this essay to their work is obvious, and does not require—nor could it be given—full, explicit acknowledgment. Such acknowledgment must go without saying.) See for example Diamond's "Throwing Away the Ladder: How to Read the *Tractatus*," in Cora Diamond, *The Realistic Spirit* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1991), and Conant's "Elucidation and Nonsense in Frege and Wittgenstein," in *The New Wittgenstein*, ed. Alice Crary and Rupert Read (London: Routledge, forthcoming). Diamond and Conant emphasize that what can seem most essential in order for a philosophical account of something to be able to be given must go without saying (be "presumed"). But not because it is truly ineffable—rather, because the philosophical account of it can itself at best be "transitional," a means of dealing with confusions, not a thesis (for example a positive assertion of conditions of possibility of such and such). Our account here too is intended to be transitional: we are not laying down timeless philosophical truths, but only working to eliminate certain powerful philosophical illusions and delusions.

4 Of course, to say that this is perhaps Wittgenstein's most famous remark does not imply either of the following: (1) That people usually give it in its full form, as here. On the contrary, it is usually reduced to the far less subtle and in fact dangerously misleading slogan, "Meaning is use." (2) That this sentence is rightly read as a claim, a thesis, or even a proposition. It may, rather, be best understood as a recommendation, a methodological prophylactic, or at most a grammatical reminder.

5 On pp.51ff of our essay, "Acting from Rules: 'Internal Relations' *versus* 'Logical Existentialism,'" International Studies in Philosophy 28, no. 2 (1996), 43–62. See also the Afterword to James Guetti's *Wittgenstein and the Grammar of Literary Experience* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1993).

6 That our talk of "presumptions" is decidedly not to be equated with the assertion of transcendental conditions of possibility (see n.3, above) will, we hope, become very evident as the reader follows our argument.

7 Wittgenstein's proviso, "for a *large* class," should give one pause with regard to either reaction. It could also be cited as a reason for doubting any argument against *PI* 43 in the service of an alternative "thesis." For it is an initial indication that no "thesis" is intended here. (See also n.4, above.)

8 Let us note here that for the "new" Wittgenstein of Conant and Diamond, nonsense does not consist in strings of words with "illicit senses," strings combined such as to generate substantial items of nonsense (see also *PI* 499–502, and n.49, below), but rather of combinations of words for which there are, as yet, no use. Thus the "idea" that the meaning of sentences in real contexts is literally generated by combining together the meanings of individual words is itself nonsense, a non-starter. Individual words have only what we are calling "senses"; they do not yet have use, and thus they are not yet meaningful.

9 *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge, 1922). Here we allude to Tony Kenny's useful pioneering paper on Wittgenstein's middle and later misprision of his own work: "The Ghost of the *Tractatus*," reprinted in Kenny, *The Legacy of Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1984). We take it that such an overly harsh attitude on Wittgenstein's part to the dubious and misleading impressions he thought his early work *could* foster, and to its lack of breadth of view in certain respects, facilitates understanding of how the Conant/Diamond reading of the *Tractatus* can avoid being impaled upon the horns of an apparent dilemma: either Wittgenstein was wrong (in a "positivist" or an "ineffabilist" fashion) in his early work, or he was wrong in his later assessment of his early work.The first horn of the dilemma, we suspect, only looks plausible if one doesn't take full account of Wittgenstein's excessive uncharity toward his earlier self. For more on Wittgenstein's middle and later harshness toward his earlier work,

see the close of Read's "Is Forgiveness Possible? The Cases of Thoreau and Rushdie (on) (Writing) the Unforgivable," *Reason Papers* 21 (1996), 15–35, and his "Book Review: D. Stern's Wittgenstein: Mind and Language," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 35, no. 1 (1996), 145–47.

10 Garth Hallett, *Wittgenstein's Definition of Meaning as Use* (New York: Orestes Brownson, 1967), 77. (Henceforth Hallett.) We focus somewhat on Hallett, as a commentator who has devoted particularly detailed attention to Wittgenstein on use—though it is implicit in what we have already said that this book-title must already give one serious pause. For example, was Wittgenstein really giving us a *definition?* Could a definition solve (dissolve) the problems Wittgenstein was interested in helping people with? Is a definition not the initial movement in a theorisation of something?

11 Hallett, 102.

12 The problem with such a version of "context," as will be seen below when we bring Diamond on rules into our argument, is in brief that "contexts" often sound or act too much like specific grammars statically conceived, which may constitute or invite local theorisation (of "usage"—on which, see n.28, below).

13 See some of the essays in Norman Malcolm's *Thought and Language* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977). Other influential "use-theorists" of Wittgenstein include Ernest Gellner, Stephen Hilmy, and (famously) Saul Kripke.

14 To put the point rather more bluntly, though of course we cannot establish this in the compass of the present essay: we suspect that most philosophers have no right to see Wittgenstein's later work as an advance on his early work, and that actually what one gets as renditions of his later work is typically a type of "position" that he had already largely successfully overcome *prior* to the close of the *Tractatus*. We take neither positivistic nor ineffabilistic accounts of Wittgenstein's work and methods to be adequate to the *Tractatus*, nor (*a fortiori*) to *PI.*

15 In our "Acting from Rules," esp. 44f. See also the criticisms of Baker and Hacker in the essays by E. Witherspoon and J. Conant in *The New Wittgenstein*, ed. Read and Crary.

16 L. Wittgenstein, *Notebooks* 1914–1916, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1961, 1979), 7.

17 To be completely accurate, we do accept that Wittgenstein did "backslide" a little up until about 1930; but we think that this backsliding was *thoroughly* reversed after the *Philosophical Grammar* stage.

18 L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar*, ed. R. Rhees, trans. Tony Kenny (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1974), 59 and 60. For argument as to the limitations and inadequacy of conceptions of use that reduce it to static grammatical relations—or to usage—see our "Acting from Rules."

19 See Read's "The Career of 'Internal Relations' in Wittgenstein's Thought," *Wittgenstein Studies* (1997), diskette 2, 22–2–97.TXT, and our "Acting from Rules," where we look at how one ought to understand the notions of "static" and "dynamic" here.

20 For detailed exposition of what exactly we mean by "idling language," consult Guetti's "Idling Rules," *Philosophical Investigations* 16 (1993): 179–97. Here is the conclusion: "A figure or an image "with aspects" is analogous to an isolated and inactive concept—like "reading" or "love"—with its plurality of possible meanings" (197). Such concepts, such language, is, as Guetti puts it, "meaning-full," rather than "meaningful." "Sense" is just such *possible* meaning. Meaning is not actually meaning until it is actual—until it is language applied, until it has "consequences." And though we see clear intimations of this in Wittgenstein's early writing, we see it most fully, we are claiming, only after the "Big Typescript."

21 L. Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1958, 1975), 1, 5.

22 For a clear and full view—and a more thorough critique—of the powerful role of these meaning-objects in those thought-systems that we are raising questions for, see Ian Niles, "Wittgenstein

and Infinite Linguistic Competance," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. 17, *The Wittgenstein Legacy* (1992), esp. 202–03.

23 P. M. S. Hacker, "Chomsky's Problems," *Language and Communication* 10:2 (1990), 127–48. See also Read's "What Is Chomskyism? Or, 'Chomsky against Chomsky,'" forthcoming in *The Raven*.

24 See the notes on p. 59, and also on p. 18, of *PI*.

25 L. Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1980), para. 1025.

26 Ibid., para 1027.

27 How this "doing" proceeds, and how it has to do with language itself and "as such," is examined in detail in our "Acting from Rules."

28 Desmond Lee, ed., *Wittgenstein's Lectures 1930–32* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 57, emphasis added. These are of course not Wittgenstein's own words but Lee's notes upon them. Still—except for the word "usage" in the third sentence, which surely, in accord with what precedes it, would be less liable to mislead if rendered as "use"—we think their direction entirely consistent with Wittgenstein's attitudes throughout his later philosophy, even when he is sharply conscious, as he is especially in Part II of *PI*, of the apparent weight and substance of inactive linguistic expressions and of the temptations to regard them as meaningful language. Incidentally, our differentiation between "use" and "usage" echoes Vassiliki Kindi's argument against sociological theorizations of Wittgenstein's invocation of "use," in his "Wittgenstein's Resort to Ordinary Language," *Metaphilosophy* 29 (1998), 298–305. Kindi takes the distinction in the first instance of Ryle's essay on "Ordinary Language," in *Philosophy and Ordinary Language*, ed. C. Caton (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963).

29 One must not lose sight of the difference, crucial to Wittgenstein, between language in use and "language" in citation, exemplification (see *PI* 16), grammatical description, etc. And we must insist that the transformation of linguistic expressions effected by citation of all varieties continues to be woefully misconceived and underestimated in language studies. In significant part due to the impact of some of Derrida's writing—and especially to his inflationary conceptions of the flexible play (through "grafting," etc.) of cited (or "decontextualized") expressions—one loses sight not only of what might in actual use separate one mode of discourse from another but also, and more important for our purposes, of what might separate discourse from *non-discourse* from isolated and exposed linguistic forms that do no communicative work (though this is not to say, of course, that such idling forms have no "effects"—on their manifold and in many cases pleasurable or striking effects, see Guetti, "Wittgenstein and the Grammar of Literary Experience." Here, even if one cannot through Wittgenstein's various admonitions and proposals understand the seductive weight and intractableness of countless expressions "freed" or set loose by all manner of citation, we must at the very least consider that at these points he was very worried about *something*. In this respect if in no other—and contrary to the current views of some philosophers and "literary theorists"—his thinking must be distinguished from Derrida's entirely.

30 We are thinking particularly of Cora Diamond's "Rules: Looking in the Right Place," in *Wittgenstein: Attention to Particulars*, ed. D. Z. Phillips and Peter Winch (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).

31 Ibid., 12.

32 Ibid., 15.

33 Ibid., 23.

34 Ibid., 24.

35 Ibid., 17.

36 In other words, we want to see how we can succeed in finding a Wittgensteinian (Diamondian) post-ineffabilist way of taking use, of understanding meaningful linguistic development.

37 This is roughly the same question that Hallett addresses with his distinction between "operative use" and "formal use" (Hallett, 103ff.), which corresponds more or less to what we described earlier as the difference between the actual employment of words to do things and their mere "form" or "sense." Hallett unfortunately does not make sufficiently clear that "formal use" is not really *use* at all.

38 To avoid confusion here, it helps to recall that Wittgenstein of course considered the idea of language as something that connects self or mind and world as a nonsense. See for instance para. 16 of *PI*, which deflates the whole supposed issue of the "hook-up," or "reference" of words to the world.

39 See n.29, above. We are thinking particularly here of appeals to "self-reflexivity" in literary studies; but also in philosophy (around Gödel, "paradoxes," etc.), and even in sociology and psychology (around a supposed "coming to an (infinitely deferred and self-annihilating) self-consciousness" of language and of subjects in "Post-Modern times", and so on.

40 Guetti has employed some of the following examples, in more or less different ways, in his book, *Wittgenstein and the Grammar of Literary Experience*. The Afterword particularly amplifies the case we are arguing here.

41 In this interleaving of speech acts with one another, and with (other) actions, we have then a dynamicity in language, but one which involves expressions changing roles from active to stably presumptive, and so on. The relations between these expressions, these linguistic moves, are less likely to be misconstrued, we think, if they are called "presumptive," rather than "internal," as Baker and Hacker would have it (see n.15 and n.19, above). Baker's and Hacker's over-estimation of the utility of "internal relations" way of putting things, a way of putting things virtually never used by Wittgenstein himself after his middle period, runs the risk again of obscuring the strong sense in which rules have normally to be *already in action* in order for there to even be a "language-game."

42 Compare Cora Diamond's remark that "the kind of public-ness a term has is part of its grammar," and that this public-ness may be seen in "the commerce with the word." (Diamond, "Rules," 23). What we are suggesting here is that this "public-ness" is *continually established and re-established* in the "commerce" of ordinary "syntactic"—linguistic—developments. Perhaps we need not add here that these "developments" seem reciprocal, or all of a piece. At any rate, it is neither because one makes a subsequent observation that a prior one turns "grammatical" nor vice versa. One might want to say instead that the "causing" goes both ways; but that would just mean that we cannot talk about causing here. Nor should it be inferred that these adjustments of grammar by discursive sequencing are simply restrictive, as from the leaves of trees more generally to those particularly of maples or oaks, or from all the land to a hill or a valley: as if the work of any descriptive sequence were always to narrow one's "focus," to zoom in on smaller and smaller logical "parts." For this conception may encourage one of the most misleading estimations in language studies: that abstract or general grammar is somehow constant through the development of a discourse even while it is redefined by that development. No; what we are putting forward here *is* precisely a dynamic (dialogical) vision of grammar. Rather than imagining sequential grammatical adjustment as the progressive refinement or restriction of some general concept, one might consider it as a series of choices, each one from the specific set of options immediately preceding. More metaphorically, we might risk saying that each "step" in a descriptive sequence is potentially not so much a narrowing or pointing of the same logical "track" as a sidestep onto another, usually "near" one. As Wittgenstein says in exactly a context such as this, "a multitude of familiar paths lead off from these words in every direction" (*PI* 525). And we think it more helpful to conceive, for example, "the leaves are changing" as an aggregation of such paths—of various, possible, particular expressions with "family resemblances" to each other—than (as both "meaning-change" theorists of "use" and Pragmatist

theorists of "use" usually do) as some general concept that paradoxically is modified but maintained as the discourse in which it occurs progresses.

43 In "Acting from Rules," we describe this as follows: the "bridge" between moments in a linguistic interaction is "*footed in grammar on both sides*" (49). Again this will obviously not be sufficient *if* one sticks to thinking of grammar as (say) Chomsky does.

44 L. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1979), para. 98.

45 Ibid., para. 167.

46 Hilary Putnam may be seen to take a similiar view of how grammatical "situations" are constituted by the progress of linguistic sequences: "It is quite true that understanding sentences does involve being able to use the right sentences in the right situations . . . but mostly the 'situations' are defined by what had been *said* previously. . . ." Putnam, *Mind, Language and Reality, Philosophical Papers*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 4. Compare also Ian Hacking's "Rules, Scepticism, Proof, Wittgenstein," in *Exercises in Analysis*, ed. Ian Hacking (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), which looks at an actual example of the application of a rule "constructing" it, and "reconstructing" the game of which it was a part; and Hacking's "The Parody of Conversation," in *Truth and Interpretation*, ed. E. Lepore (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1986), which rebuts Davidson when the latter goes too far, *abolishing* grammar and language, and leaving in its place an ubiquitous "interpretivism," much like the Deconstructivists do.

47 Here, as earlier, we are indebted to the great pioneering ideas of J. L. Austin, especially his rich classificatory scheme in *How to Do Things with Words*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975). But we think that the distinctions we are making are *both* a little more apposite *and* a little less likely to be misread as an attempt at a theorisation of language than were Austin's.

48 *How* such actions might themselves "follow" from linguistic expressions is—especially after Saul Kripke's work—a controversial question. We have given our answer to it in "Acting from Rules."

49 All too often, students of language are not clear on the difference between effects and meanings, as Guetti has shown with regard to literary examples in *Wittgenstein and the Grammar of Literary Experience*. The great passage regarding the distinction between communicated meanings and produced effects, in our view, is *PI* 498: "When I say that the orders 'Bring me sugar' and 'Bring me milk' make sense, but not the combination 'Milk me sugar,' that does not mean that the utterance of this combination of words has no effect. And if its effect is that the other person stares at me and gapes, I don't on that account call it the order to stare and gape, even if that was the effect that I wanted to produce."

50 Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books*, 65.

51 Max Black, for example, would probably have said that the kind of adjustment to which the paper crown amounts is more like the laying out of the pieces for a game of chess than like any subsequent move in the game. And these sorts of useful gestures in his thinking toward Wittgensteinian "stage-setting" considerations are, just because of their "presuppositional" cast, not unreasonably conceived as (in Black's terms) "dummy moves" or "secondary assertions." Max Black, *Models and Metaphors* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962). But let us add that the logical tension *within* those last two phrases exposes a difficulty that is unavoidable unless one considers how any expression's status depends upon how one estimates its position *in a sequence or a set of sequences*, in action. In relation to the first actual move on the chess-board, both the laying out of it and the paper crown might be thought of as preliminary, and perhaps as "dummy" moves (though we should not lose sight of the sense in which they have ceased then to be "moves" at all). Before any move on the board has been made, however, the game's "preliminaries" might, in their own eventuation from some previous discursive sequence, appear more like "assertions"—as actual moves themselves—that followed upon

prior presumptions (though now we would see no reason to think of them as "secondary"). In this way, even such an expressly or obviously "grammatical" directive as "Now we can play a game of chess" might amount to a particular "empirical" development from a grammar established by some preceding sequence.

52 See E. Witherspoon's critique of Baker and Hacker (and of Marie McGinn) as in practice positivistic—Carnapian—readers of Wittgenstein: "Conceptions of Nonsense in Carnap and Wittgenstein," forthcoming in *The New Wittgenstein*, ed. Read and Crary.

53 Except where—as in recent Davidson—it abolishes language altogether; see n.46, above.

54 Once one can understand this in practice, one can leave behind *PI* p. 218, *PI* 268, and the rest—including this essay—at least a little like the way one leaves behind earlier parts of a conversational sequence.

55 See also Nigel Pleasants's very thought-provoking attack on the very idea of "tacit knowledge," as incoherent and un-Wittgensteinian, in "Nothing is Concealed: De-Centring Tacit Knowledge and Rules from Social Theory," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 26 (1996): 233–56.

56 Though again, against "ineffabilism," that is not actually a "depth" *containing* anything, least of all a bunch of "unfathomable" and "profound" Truths, the kinds of "Truths" that some misguided Heideggerians (for example) try to "excavate" for us.