

KRIPKE ON WITTGENSTEIN

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GAMES & RULES

- Wittgenstein refers to language-games to emphasize that language is part of an activity
 - Social, shareable
 - Various forms with nothing in common
- No common thread unites usages of language, constitutes 'essence' of language
- Functions of language are all related loosely
 - Family relations
- To play a language game, there are rules, though rules aren't uniform

NUMBERS

- Game 2: A language with words that refer to objects (slab, pillar, block) and ones used for counting (a, b, c)
 - “One can say that the signs “a”, “b”, etc. signify numbers; when for example this removes the mistaken idea that “a”, “b”, “c”, play the part actually played in language by “block”, “slab”, “pillar”. And one can also say that “c” means this number and not that one; when for example this serves to explain that the letters are to be used in the order a, b, c, d, etc. and not in the order a, b, d, c” (Wittgenstein *Meaning and Use*, §10)
 - Different loosely-related functions
- Number terms don’t stand for objects, they are rules for how to proceed
- We need to know how the terms function
 - How do we count using these terms?
 - Meanings of terms consist in their rules of use

DEVIANT MATHEMATICS

- Consider the sequence: 0, 3, 4, 2, 5, 1
- We say the counter made an error because he did not abide by normal counting rules
 - Can we say why?
 - Numbers don't function like objects we can point to
 - "The definition of the number two, "That is called 'two'" - pointing to two nuts - is perfectly exact. - But how can two be defined like that? The person one gives the definition to doesn't know what one wants to call "two"; he will suppose that "two" is the name given to this groups of nuts!" (Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations*, §29)
- Numbers are directions for how to proceed; how we understand these terms depends on how we analyze their function
- If we analyze the function differently, we have different rules for counting & won't understand one another

RULES & MEANINGS

- Mathematics supposed to be transcendent, not influenced by linguistic subjectivity
- Wittgenstein: words have no transcendent meaning other than how they are used
- Uses aren't determined independent of our practices
 - 'The steps are determined by the formula' ≠ 'The way the formula is meant determines what steps will be taken'
 - "Your idea was that that act of meaning the order had in its own way already traversed all those steps: meaning that when you meant it your mind as it were flew ahead and took all the steps before you physically arrived at this or that one" (§188)
 - We make rules by decisions, not by universal, transcendent meanings that appear to us through intuition

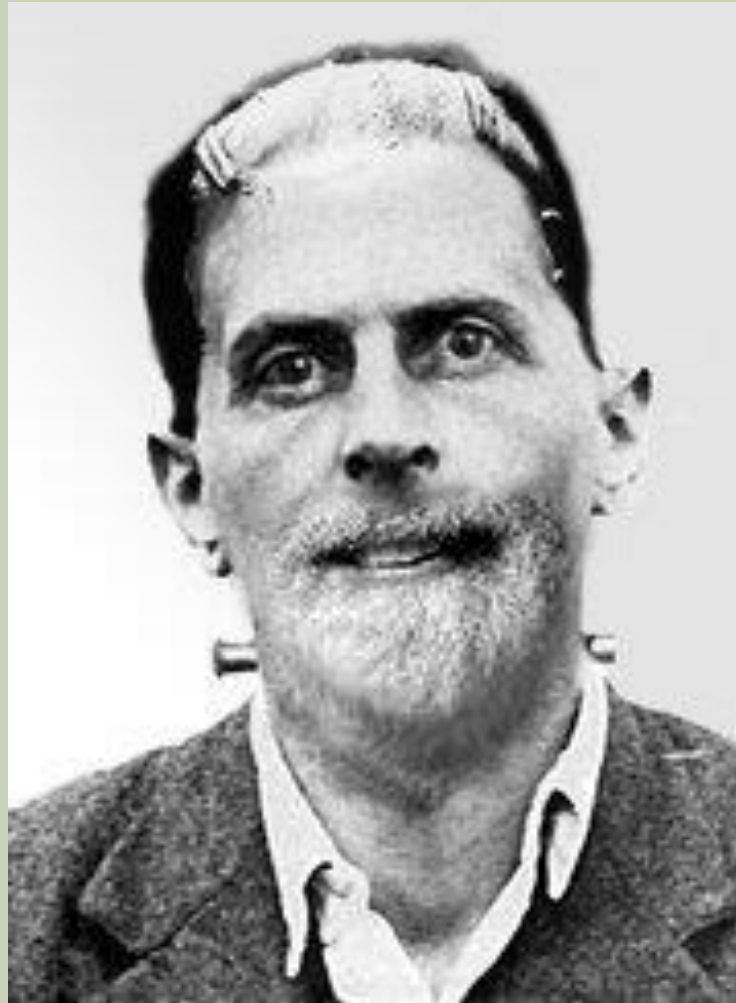
RULES & MEANINGS CONT.

- Numbers & mathematics not free from subjectivity of use
 - Ex. Woodcutter who measures and prices wood by surface area and not square footage
- Deviant uses can still be following rules, the best we can say is that they don't follow our rules
 - We're in language communities that use terms in particular ways
 - Normative conventions aren't universals
- Is there a rule to govern the administration of rules?
 - Infinite regress

WITTGENSTEIN'S PARADOX

- “This was out paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if everything can be made out , to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here” (§201)
- “And hence also '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” (§201)

KRIPKENSTEIN!



ENTER KRIPKE

- Let's say we have never added any terms greater than 57
- “By means of my external symbolic representation and my internal mental representation, I 'grasp' the rule for addition. One point is crucial to my 'grasp' of this rule. Although I myself have computed only finitely many sums in the past, the rule determines my answer for indefinitely many new sums that I have never previously considered” (Kripke *On Rules and Private Language*, 628)
- Consider the mathematical operation ‘quus’
 - X quus Y is the same as $X+Y$, provided X and Y are less than 57
 - X quus Y equals 5 if either X or Y is greater than 57
- We add $68+57$ and get 125
- Could anyone know that when I thought I meant plus, I actually meant quus?
 - An extreme skeptic could say that there are no facts about our past that would determine how to proceed
 - There are no past instructions that compel or justify the answer 125 & no explicit instructions that preclude the quus-function
 - When did we make a decision or agree to use the language this way?
 - “Wittgenstein's challenge can be presented to me as a question about myself: was there some past fact about me-what I 'meant' by plus-that mandates what I should do now?” (Kripke 630)
 - In absence of any fact about us and in light of the fact that we've never added numbers greater than 57, it is perfectly consistent with our previous use of plus that we really meant quus
 - Our past usages of plus is subject to an infinite number of quus-like interpretations

QUUS

- We are confident that we *meant* plus, not quus
 - The mistake isn't with our computations of plus/quus, nor with our memory of having used plus in the past
 - The problem is with our meaning
- What does the fact that I meant plus consist in?
 - Such a fact has to explain why we are justified in answering 125, it has to contain the 'directions' that brought us to the answer 125
- “[T]here is no 'superlative fact' (§ 192) about my mind that constitutes my meaning addition by "plus" and determines in advance what I should do to accord with this meaning... Wittgenstein thinks that any construal that looks for something in my present mental state to differentiate between my meaning addition or quaddition, or that will consequently show that in the future I should say '125' when asked about '68 + 57', is a misconstrual and attributes to the ordinary man a notion of meaning that is refuted by the sceptical argument” (Kripke 632)

MATH & THE MIND

- Kripke argues that Wittgenstein didn't see philosophy of math and being divorced from philosophy of mind
- Both contain same basic material on rules
- In fact, Wittgenstein's answer to the skeptic contains the real PLA
 - So far, everyone has asked "How do we show private language is impossible?" but Kripke says the real question is "How do we show that language at all is possible?"
- Wittgenstein & Kripke don't try to prove the skeptic wrong by giving a 'straight' solution
 - Two failed examples of straight solutions are intent and pointing
 - Both beg the question: I have to have some mental representation of the rules and in cases of deviation that is impossible *ex hypothesi*
- If the only thing justifying plus and not quus is that I was thinking about plus, then we have a problem because there are no previous thoughts justifying one over the other

KRIPKE ON THE PLA

- “What is really denied is 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... The impossibility of a private language...does indeed follow from the incorrectness of the private model for language and rules, since the rule following in a ‘private language’ could only be analyzed by a private model, but the incorrectness of the private model is more basic, since it applies to all rules” (Kripke, 635)