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THE INDIVIDUAL STRIKES BACK

In this paper I address some of the points Saul Kripke makes in his treatment of the 'rule-following considerations' in the later Wittgenstein.[1] There are two different quarries to track down. There is the question of whether Kripke's exegesis of Wittgenstein is correct – whether KW is LW. And there is the distinct question of the real significance of the considerations, as they are put forward by KW. Kripke himself is carefully agnostic about this second issue.[2] KW is not Kripke *in propria persona*. And Kripke is also careful to distinguish the exegetical issue from the question of significance. The two issues only connect like this. If KW's arguments have some property which we are convinced cannot belong to any argument which LW would have used, we shall suppose that KW is not the real LW. And admirers of Wittgenstein will suppose that significance is such a property: if KW's considerations are faulty, then for that reason alone KW cannot be LW. LW would not have used faulty considerations. But without commenting on this optimism, I want to discuss two other properties which might distinguish KW from LW: KW's use of scepticism, and his attitude to facts. Each of these aspects may legitimately raise worries about his identity with LW. And I shall also offer some thoughts about the significance of KW's arguments for our conceptions of meaning.

Our topic is the fact that terms of a language are governed by rules that determine what constitutes correct and incorrect application of them. I intend no particular theoretical implications by talking of rules here. The topic is that there is such a thing as the correct and incorrect application of a term, and to say that there is such a thing is no more than to say that there is truth and falsity. I shall talk indifferently of there being correctness and incorrectness, of words being rule-governed, and of their obeying principles of application. Whatever this is, it is the fact that distinguishes the production of terms from mere noise, and turns utterance into assertion – into the making of judgement. It is

not seriously open to a philosopher to deny that, in this minimal sense, there is such a thing as correctness and incorrectness.[3] The entire question is the conception of it that we have.

KW pursues this issue by advancing a certain kind of scepticism. As Kripke is well aware, this might provoke immediate protest. Surely LW is consistently scornful of scepticism? But this reaction misunderstands the function of scepticism in a context such as this. The function is not to promote a conclusion about knowledge or certainty, but to force a reconsideration of the metaphysics of the issue. That is, we begin with a commonsense or unrefined conception of some kind of fact. We think we have an understanding of what that kind of fact consists in. The sceptic tries to show that on that conception we would have no way of distinguishing occasions when the fact obtains, from those when it does not. Now we might conclude from this that our conception was correct and that there is therefore a definite kind of proposition whose truth value we can never reliably judge. This would be a traditional sceptical conclusion. But we might alternatively conclude that since we do know the truth about the kind of thing in question, the conception was at fault. The things we know do not have the kind of truth condition we took them to have; the facts are not quite the kind of thing we took them to be. This is a metaphysical conclusion, and the sceptical dialogue is an instrument for reaching it. LW may have had no time for sceptical conclusions. But he may well have had thought processes which can be revealed by using a sceptical instrument to reach a metaphysical conclusion. This is what KW does. So, as far as the issue of using a sceptical weapon goes, KW may well be LW.

It is clear that on this account there are two parts to the business; attacking the old conception, and producing a replacement. The negative part might be successful, although the positive part is not. If LW was successful, then in the positive part he produced a conception on which public rule-following (in some sense of public) is possible, whereas private rule-following is not. I shall be arguing that KW is not successful in doing this. He does not succeed in describing what it is for there to be a rule in force, with the property that this can obtain in a public case, but not in the private case.

1. SCEPTICAL SOLUTIONS

Kripke describes KW as adopting a 'sceptical solution' to the sceptical

considerations, modelled upon Hume's sceptical solution to his own doubts. To assess this idea it is important to separate various strands in Hume's extremely complex position. If KW is understood to be taking over the wrong parts of Hume, he may too easily be rejected as a pretender. I suspect that parts of Kripke's presentation will encourage this – particularly those where he talks of the sceptical solution.

Hume calls Section V of the First Enquiry the 'Sceptical Solution of these Doubts'. The doubts in question were introduced in Section IV: they concern operations of the understanding. In particular they concern our ability to reason a priori about what must cause what, and the impossibility of justifying inductive reasoning. The sceptical solution of Section V consists in denying that processes of reasoning have the power and the place hitherto assigned to them. They are replaced by processes of custom. This is why we have a sceptical solution: Hume offers a view of ourselves which in part he shares with traditional sceptics. The shared part is the denial that we can justifiably reason to our beliefs. (Hume differs from tradition in his estimate of the consequences of that.) When Kripke introduces the analogy with Hume, this is what he first mentions. But this is not the aspect of Hume (nor the section of the Enquiry) that actually matters. What matters is his reinterpretation of the concept of causation – the topic of Section VII of the Enquiry.[4] It is here that Hume has a (fairly) pure example of the process I described: a sceptical argument forcing us to revise our conception of a kind of fact. It is here that he parallels KW. But the reinterpretation does not deserve to be called a 'sceptical solution' to anything, nor did Hume so call it. It is at most a proposal prompted by sceptical problems. But in principle it might have been prompted by other considerations altogether. And in fact Hume's reinterpretation of causation is only partly motivated by scepticism. It is at least as firmly seated in the theory of understanding: problems with our Idea of the causal nexus. In this part of Hume, scepticism is subsidiary, even as a tool.

Kripke can rejoin that Hume's reinterpretation of causation is, in itself, deservedly called sceptical for a further reason. It denies that there is a 'fact' whether there is a causal connexion between two events. At least, that is how Kripke takes Hume.[5] But here too there are subtleties in the offing, and they matter to the parallel with KW. This is because LW's attitude about 'facts' is going to be crucial, and crucial to many philosophers' belief that KW differs from him. The philosopher we have described ends up reinterpreting some kind of fact. This leaves

various options. The first might be called 'lowering the truth-condition'. This asserts that sentences in the area can only, legitimately, be given such-and-such a truth-condition. This can be combined with the view that in our ordinary thought we confusedly attempt to do more, or misunderstand what we are actually doing enough to make mistakes (although there is always a problem about how we can attempt to do more, if we are supposed to have no conception of anything more to do). Lowering the truth condition is then a reforming view, and entails an 'error' theory of ordinary thought. But it can be combined with the view that the lowering really reveals what we meant all along, and we have reductionism. Often it does not matter very much which combination is offered, and indeed, since a decision depends on a fine detection of ordinary meaning, we would expect some degree of indeterminacy.

Quite distinct from lowering the truth-condition, there is the option of denying one altogether. The sentences in question are given some other role than that of asserting that some fact obtains. This option is familiar from expressive theories of moral commitment, or from views that try to see arithmetical theses as rules rather than descriptions or propositions, and so on. Now I say that this option is distinct from lowering the truth-condition, and indeed in its initial stages it certainly is. It is a confusion, for instance, to muddle together expressive theories of ethics with naive subjective theories that give moral commitments a truth-condition, but make it into one about the speaker. Arguments against this latter view often have no force against the former. But Hume is responsible for the very complication that makes it so hard to keep these options properly separated. This is the view that the mind spreads itself on the world: the view I call projectivism. According to projectivism we speak and think 'as if' the world contained a certain kind of fact, whereas the true explanation of what we are doing is that we have certain reactions, habits or sentiments, which we voice and discuss by such talk. Hume was quite clearly a projectivist in moral philosophy, and it is plausible to see his metaphysics of causation as in essence identical.[6]

Like the option of lowering the truth-condition, the option of denying that there is one can be combined with either of two attitudes to our ordinary practice. One would be that it embodies error. Ordinary talk is conducted as if there were facts, when there are no such facts. The talk is 'fraudulent' or 'diseased'. The other option is less familiar, but much

more attractive. It holds that there is nothing illegitimate in our ordinary practice and thought. The respects in which we talk as if there are, for instance, moral facts, are legitimate. (I have called this view 'quasi-realism'.)[7] If LW were a projectivist, he would have to be this kind, for it preserves the doctrine that ordinary talk and thought, before we start to philosophize about the nature of our concepts, are in perfect order as they are.

Kripke acknowledges the strand in LW which matters here. He also realizes that it goes far – far enough to stop LW from endorsing any such judgment as this: 'there is no fact of the matter whether a term is rule-governed or not'. But KW expresses himself differently: KW believes that there is 'no such fact, no such condition in either the "internal" or the "external" world' (p. 69). This talk will outrage friends of LW. KW denies the existence of a certain kind of fact altogether; LW would never so express himself, *ergo* one is not the other. But now recall that Hume himself says that 'those who deny the reality of moral distinctions may be reckoned amongst the most disingenuous of disputants'.[8] Why? Because insisting on this reality is part of normal thinking. It is part of the way of life, or way of thought or talk, which quasi-realism can protect for us. So there must be room for a different version of LW. This one would abandon his hostility to facts. He should accept that talking of facts is part of our legitimate way of expressing ourselves on the difference between terms which are rule-governed, and terms which are not. He has to do this if he doubles for LW. For recall that the very passage (*Investigations* 137) that begins these considerations is a version of the redundancy theory of truth. And on that theory (whatever else it holds) there is no difference between saying that it is true that p and that p or between saying that it is a fact that p and that p. So anybody prepared to assert that terms are rule-governed – and as I explained initially, that must mean all of us – can equally be heard saying that there are facts, truths, states of affairs of just that kind.

Kripke says something strange about this. On p. 86 he imagines someone saying that it cannot be tolerable to concede to the sceptic that there are no truth-conditions or corresponding facts to make a statement about someone's meaning true: 'Can we not with propriety precede such assertions with "It is a fact that" or "It is not a fact that"?' But Kripke puts this complaint in the mouth of an *objector* to LW. He then reminds us that LW accepts the redundancy theory of truth, and

says that this gives him a short way with such objections. The dialectic seems to be the wrong way round. *Because* he accepts the redundancy theory, LW can assent to the locutions of fact and truth. They add nothing to the fact that we judge other people to be following rules, and applying terms in accordance with standards of correctness.

I don't know that the redundancy theory of truth should have this soothing power. It may be that there are explanations of why we make some judgements, and why we apply the calculus of truth-functions to the judgements we make, which still leave us queasy when we consider if there are facts in the case. The quasi-realist construction of ordinary moral discourse is a good example. Even if it protects everything we do, it can still leave us uneasy when we contemplate the question: 'Yes, but are there any moral facts on this account?' I shall not consider that question further in this paper. I just want to note that on a redundancy theory, it is a bad place to become puzzled, and that LW held a redundancy theory. Hence it seems that there is space for a *persona* who profits from KW's arguments, but draws a rather different conclusion from them. With due humility, I shall call this character BW. He is going to share a great deal of the argumentative strategy of KW. In part his difference is relatively cosmetic: the belief that scepticism is only in play, if at all, as an instrument, and that the eventual conception of rule-following that must emerge does not deserve to be called sceptical. But in part he differs more substantially. Because he hopes to preserve the implications of the redundancy theory in LW. And he hopes to cement a more particular relationship between LW and the real Hume, who matters to metaphysics. If he can preserve our right to talk of the fact that words obey principles of application, this may be as much because he forces us to revise our conception of a fact as anything else. Alas, however, BW has one radical flaw. On his philosophy, there is no particular reason to discriminate against the would-be private linguist. But before advertising his intended end-point further, it is necessary to review some of the arguments by which he gets there.

2. THE CRITIQUE OF RULE-FOLLOWING

It may seem outrageous to the touchy friends of LW that anything in Hume could be a model for LW's attitude to rule-following. But perhaps we can stem some of the outrage by reminding ourselves that it is an essentially normative judgement that we are chasing. It is the

judgement that something is correct or incorrect. When this fact proves fugitive, as KW shows that it is, its normative nature is largely the problem. So it cannot be that outrageous to apply our best explanations of value judgements to it, and this is what BW hopes to do. But why is the fact fugitive in the first place?

In Kripke's development, we start by considering the understanding I had of some term at some time in the past, which we can arbitrarily call 'yesterday'. Suppose the term is some arithmetical functor, 'plus' or ' + '. I understood it by grasping a principle of application. We then consider my position today. When I come to do a calculation, which we suppose I have never done before, I certainly believe myself to follow a principle. I believe myself to be *faithful* to yesterday's rule, by adopting the same procedure or principle in determining answers to problems expressed using the functor. Thus I believe that if I am faithful to yesterday's principle, I should say '57 + 68 is 125'. Notice that this is not quite the same as claiming that I should say this unconditionally. I may wish to change my allegiances. There is no impropriety in deciding that yesterday's principle of application is not the best one for this term, and to consciously start to use it according to different rules. It is just that *if* I am faithful, then I ought to give that answer. I most certainly should not say that 57 + 68 is 5. Nor of course should I say that there is more than one answer to that problem, or that the problem is indeterminate, so that there is no answer at all. The sceptical dialogue then commences. The sceptic asks me to point to the fact that I am being faithful to yesterday's rule only by saying one thing, and not these others. And this proves hard to do. For any fact which I tell him about myself seems compatible with the 'bent-rule' hypothesis, as I shall call it: the hypothesis that the rule that was really in force yesterday was a Goodman competitor. In other words, the kinds of fact I am apt to allege are compatible with a story in which I really understood by 'plus' a function with a particular singularity at $x = 57$ and $y = 68$. For example, I might yesterday have meant that we should now express by saying:

$$x + y = \text{the sum of } x, y, \text{ except when } x = 57 \text{ and } y = 68 \text{ and } 5 \text{ otherwise.}$$

This hypothesis is not refuted by my present staunch denial that I had any such thought in mind yesterday, or that if asked I would have used words like these to explain myself. For the sceptic will urge that as well

as having had a bent interpretation of ' + ' yesterday, I could have had a bent interpretation of these other terms as well. So pointing out that I would have presented no such explanation to myself does not refute the sceptic. It would really be a question of my using another rule to interpret the first (e.g., the rule for interpreting various synonyms for ' + ' or for interpreting terms that would have occurred in any explanation of the functor that I would have proffered). So the fact that yesterday I would have said, for instance '$x + y$ is always a number greater than either x or y, with $x = 57$ and $y = 68$ no exception' is consistent with my having been a secret bent rule user. The singularity, by current lights, would have been there in the way I took the words involved in such an affirmation. Perhaps 'exception' meant . . .

This argument (which is much more forcefully and thoroughly presented in Kripke) undoubtedly corresponds to a central negative point of LW's. The point is that taking a term in a certain way is something different from *presenting* anything as an aid to understanding it, or from *accepting* anything as aids to understanding it. He says in *201 that he has shown '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"'! The negative point, that we gain no approach to the required fact by embarking on a potential regress of interpretations, is quite clear. The more positive claim that the fact is exhibited in what we call obeying a rule, must wait.

When presenting the sceptical challenge this way, we should not lose sight of the fact that the case can be made without instancing a rival principle of application, a bent rule, at all. A sceptic might just doubt whether there was, yesterday or today, any principle at all behind my application of '+'. Perhaps all that happened was that I would look at things, such as triples of numbers, and after a process that was phenomenologically just like one of being guided by a rule, declare '$z = x + y$' or the reverse. I would be in the same case as a lunatic who thinks he is doing sums, when all that is happening is that he is covering pages with symbols. Or, I would be like the man whom Wittgenstein considers at *237 who with great deliberation follows a line with one leg of a pair of dividers, and lets the other leg trace a path, but one whose distance from the original line he varies in an intent but apparently random way. He might think he is tracing a path determined by a rule relating its course to the first line. But his thought that this is what he is doing does not make it true. In some ways this is the primary weapon

that LW uses against the private linguist. He forces him back to saying that he has only his own conviction that he is following a rule at all, and this private, phenomenological conviction that one is following a rule is not enough to make it true.

I have followed Kripke in concentrating upon the normative aspect of the fact we are looking for. So I agree with him that the answer to the problem is not going to be given just by talking of dispositions we actually have. However, and crucially for what follows subsequently, I do not think the dispositional account falls to all of Kripke's objections. The analysis he considers (p. 26) says that I mean some function ϕ by my functor if and only if I am disposed, whenever queried about the application of the functor to a pair of numbers, to give the answer that actually is that function, ϕ, of them. Kripke attacks this on the grounds that my dispositions are finite. 'It is not true, for instance, that if queried about the sum of any two numbers, no matter how large, I will reply with their actual sum. For some numbers are simply too large for my mind – or my brain – to grasp' (p. 26-27). So, according to Kripke, my dispositions fail to make it true that I mean addition by '+' and not quaddition – a function that gives different results just when x and y are so big that I cannot do sums involving them.

There are difficulties here. It is not obvious that dispositions in themselves are either finite or infinite. The brittleness of a glass is a respectable dispositional property. But there is an infinite number of places and times and strikings and surfaces on which it could be displayed. Does this glass have a disposition that covers, for example, the fact that it would break if banged on a rock on Alpha Centauri? What if scientists tell us that this glass couldn't get there, because it would have decayed within the time it takes to be transported there? Perhaps I am not disposed to give the answer faced with huge sums. But perhaps also I have dispositions that fix a sense for the expression 'the answer I would accept'. The answer I would accept is the one that *would* be given by reiterating procedures I *am* disposed to use, a number of times. (The notion is *doubly* dispositional.) The fact that I am not disposed to follow those procedures that number of times seems like the fact that the glass cannot get to Alpha Centauri. Now, a sceptic might maintain that we do not know of a dispositional fact about me that is described in this way. Perhaps I am only disposed to say that '3 + 5 = 8' when the calculation is not embedded in really huge calculations. But this is just scepticism about dispositions. It is like

supposing that the glass may be not brittle but 'shmittle', where x is shmittle if it breaks when struck except . . . In effect this is inductive scepticism about the concept of a disposition, querying whether we can legitimately take dispositions to cover what would have happened on unobserved occasions. So it cannot be used to argue that even if we accept the concept, it permits no answer to the problem of huge calculations. A similar complication might answer Kripke's second objection (p. 28-29). This is that what I mean cannot be read off from what I am disposed to do, since I may be disposed to make mistakes. The dispositionalist would have to read off what I meant from a table of answers I actually give, and this might involve saying that I was computing (correctly) a bent function – 'skaddition' – and not making a mistake in attempting to add. But this seems to ignore surrounding dispositions. Kripke rightly dismisses any view that simply takes for granted a notion of the function it was intended to compute, or which defines user's competence, since it presupposes the ideas we are looking for. But at least it is true that a calculator can have, in addition to dispositions to give answers, dispositions to withdraw them and substitute others. And it is possible that putting the errant disposition into a context of general dispositions of this sort supplies the criterion for which function is meant. The equation would be: By '+' I mean that function ϕ that accords with my extended dispositions. An answer $z = \phi(x, y)$ accords with my extended dispositions if and only if (i) it is the answer I am disposed to give and retain after investigation, or (ii) it is the answer I would accept if I repeated a number of times procedures I am disposed to use, this being independent of whether I am disposed to repeat those procedures that number of times.

Kripke's point about mistakes can be illustrated if we consider a calculating machine. There is no physical or dispositional difference between a machine that is 'supposed' to compute addition, but because of a mistake in the hardware computes a bent function, and one that is designed to compute the bent function in the first place. The two may be perfectly identical. This strongly suggests that the notion of correctness, the notion of *the* rule to which we are to be faithful, has to come from outside the thing itself. In the case of the calculator, it certainly does. But this need not entirely destroy a dispositional account, provided it can look for dispositions outside the simple disposition to give answers.

So is it a real truth that the right rule for ' + ' is in force amongst us?

My own answer would be that we do have dispositions that enforce this judgement. They make it the only possible judgement about ourselves, when we describe each other's thoughts. The concealed bent-rule follower is a theoretician's fiction. Whenever we try to fill out the story, of a person or a community that really adopts a bent rule, it turns out that the singularity in the rule (by our lights, of course) must affect the dispositions to behave that the community or individual shows. I have argued this elsewhere in connexion with Goodman's paradox.[8] The concealed bent-rule follower is often thought of as though nothing about him is different until the occasion of bent application arises. But this is wrong. Someone who has genuinely misunderstood a functor is different, and the difference can be displayed quite apart from occasions of application. Consider, for instance, the bricklayer told to add bricks to a stack two at a time. If this means to him 'add 2 up to 1000, and then 4' his reaction to the foreman may be quite different. Perhaps he cannot carry four bricks at a time.

However, I am not going to pursue this defence of dispositions. I share Kripke's view that whatever dispositions we succeed in identifying they could at most give standards for selection of a function which we mean. They couldn't provide us with an account of what it is to be faithful to a previous rule. It is just that, unlike Kripke, I do not think dispositions are inadequate to the task of providing standards. Indeed, I think they must be. For notice that the problem of finitude applies just as much to any community as to any individual. If the finiteness of an individual's dispositions leaves it indeterminate whether he means one function or another by some functor, then so must the finiteness of community disposition. So although communities induct their members into ' + ' using practices and go through all the corrections and imitations that constitute community use, still all that is consistent with the 'skaddition' hypothesis too. We don't find communities disposed to calculate numbers which are just too big. But prosecuting this point takes us into BW's divergence from KW.

3. THE COMMUNITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

The individual has a hard time against Kripke's sceptic. How does the public fare better? The individual couldn't make the sceptic appreciate the kind of fact it was, that he was being faithful to a principle, or rule or previous intention, when he gave some answer. The sceptic charges

that there is no fact of the matter whether the bent rule or the natural rule was the one intended, or whether one principle of application or another was in force yesterday. And if there is no fact of the matter of this sort, then there is really no fact of the matter that any principle at all was in force. Any answer to the new sum can be regarded as equally 'right' and that just means that we cannot talk about right. Faced with this impasse the individual thankfully turns to the community. He can point to his inculcation in a public practice, his gradual conformity to patterns of behaviour accepted by others, and his acceptance as a competent operator with ' + '.

The sceptic might allow all this to make the difference. But he has suddenly gone very soft if he does. He can easily specify bent principles, with points of singularity where neither I nor anybody else used the terms yesterday. If such points worried the individual, then they should equally worry the community. So how does mention of the community give us the determinate rule?

KW's answer is that in a sense it doesn't (see for instance p.111). The community is as much at a loss to identify the fugitive fact as the individual was. The position is supposed to be no different metaphysically. The difference is that the community endorses or accepts the competent operator. They or 'we' *allow* him to be using ' + ' to mean addition. He is 'seen' or *dignified* as a rule-follower. We, the community, have justification conditions for doing this. To gain the title, the individual's practice (on the finite number of occasions on which it will have been shown) must accord in some suitable way with the community practice (on the finite number of occasions on which *it* will have been shown).

Now, merely citing the fact that we 'see each other as' obeying the same principle of application makes no headway at all. Remember that the point of the original worries about rule-following was not epistemological. The aim was not to suggest that we cannot provide a foundation of some sort for the judgement that a rule is in force, or that we cannot provide principles for inferring such judgements from others more basic. If this were the aim, then replying that there is no inference and no foundation, but just a basic fact that we make such judgements of each other, 'seeing each other as' following principles, might be relevant – at any rate, as relevant as this move is in other areas of epistemology. But the point does nothing at all to suggest *how* we are seeing each other when we say such a thing. We know well enough what

it is to see something as a duck, because we know what ducks are. But we don't know what it is to see someone as obeying a principle of application, unless we know what it is to follow one, and this is the fact of which we still have, so far, no conception. To put it another way, we do not know what a community would be lacking if its members failed to see each other this way, or if they continually saw each other in the light of potential bent-rule followers.

So the sceptic is still liable to feel short-changed. He has pointed out bent rules which might have been in force yesterday, compatibly with all that the individual could point to. He has pointed out that for all that the individual could show, there might be nothing but his onward illusion that rules are in force, and that his dispositions to respond are correct or incorrect. The individual now links arms with others. The sceptic attempts to point out the same two things to them: for all they can describe about themselves, bent rules (and perhaps differently bent rules) might have been in force, underlying their fortuitous coincidence of behavior over the finite samples they have come across. Since this, means that any answer to a new problem might be as right as any other, the sceptic suggests that again there is just the onward illusion that there is correctness or incorrectness. The community replies that it 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.

We can see one way in which this could silence the sceptic. If the mutual support itself provides the standard of correctness, then a community can answer him. To understand this, consider the analogy with an orchestra. Suppose that there is no such thing as an individual playing in accord with instructions coming down from the past, by way of scores or memory. Suppose too that on an individual instrument there is no standard for the way a piece ought to go (all melodies are equally acceptable). Then an individual cannot play well or badly in isolation. Nevertheless, the orchestra may have standards of harmony across instruments. And if at a given time most instruments are playing, say, notes from the chord of C major, then the individual who hits a dissonant $C^\#$ is incorrect by the standards of the orchestra. They can turn on him. Unfortunately, this provides only a poor analogy for communities and their relations to their own rule-following. For in the orchestra, harmony with others provides a direct standard of correct-

ness. This is just not so with judgement. If my community all suddenly started saying that $57 + 68 = 5$, this fact does not make me wrong when I continue to assert that it is 125. I am correct today in saying that the sun is shining and daffodils are yellow, regardless of what the rest of the world says. Obviously any solution to these problems must avoid the disastrous conclusion that it is part of the truth-condition of any judgement that a community would make it (unless of course the judgement is itself not about the sun and daffodils and so on, but about the community).

If the community cannot turn to the orchestral metaphor then how have they answered the sceptic? And why cannot their answer be taken over by the isolated individual? Remember that there is a distinction between the overall practice of a community, thought of as something defined by principles and rules, and the exposed practice, thought of as only a partial, finite segment of applications. If a community practices addition, meaning one thing and not another by some functor ' + ', then the exposed practice will cover only a small proportion of the applications whose correctness follows from the overall practice. As the possibility of bent functions is supposed to show, the exposed practice does not logically determine the question of which overall practice is in force. Then we can imagine what we might call a 'thoroughly Good-manned community' in which people take explanations and exposure to small samples – yesterday's applications – in different ways. The sceptic who won against Kripke's individual will now win against a community, showing that they have no conception of the fact which makes it true that they do not form a thoroughly Goodmanned community.

It may be helpful to think of it like this. 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 same way. His doubts admit of the same projective solution. When LW denies that 'we have a model of this superlative fact' (*192) we can, as far as the metaphysics goes, shrug and say that this is how we see ourselves. Then, as I have already

explained, the entire problem is to explain how we are seeing ourselves when we go into this mode. In particular we need to cite some *standard* for saying this – and, if LW is to win through, a standard which separates the public from the individual. For when I write the sensation term in my diary I can and will see myself as being faithful to a previous intention to apply it only in a determinate range of circumstances. And, paying me the compliment as it were, you can do so too. It might be different if it somehow came naturally to us to dignify fellow members of the same public with the title of rule followers, and natural to hesitate over any purely private attempt at self-description. But generally speaking there is little difference in naturalness. Until LW supposedly argues that we shouldn't do so, most people would find it quite natural to believe that a putative private linguist might be following or failing to follow previously formed intentions to apply principles of application.

The dilemma so far is this. If the presence or potential presence of a community of persons practising the same way enters as part of the truth-conditions, part of the analysis, of what it is to follow a rule, the sceptic who won against the private individual looks equally set to win against a community which has the benefit of mutual support. But if mention of the community comes as part of a Humean or projective solution, allowing us to by-pass troubles over our conception of the superlative fact, then a similar side-step is in principle available to the individual. To split the individual from the public we need enough understanding of how we are regarding ourselves to be able to specify standards which need to be met by a candidate for rule-following, and we have not yet got this.

The simple move, endorsed by KW and, for instance, by Peacocke, is to say that in the case of the individual there is no distinction between it seeming to him that a rule is in force, and there being a rule in force. The trouble with this is that in any sense in which it is true (see next section), it is equally true that there is no distinction between a community being thoroughly Goodmanned, but seeming to itself to have a unified practice, and its actually having a unified practice. And when the community says 'well, we just see ourselves as agreeing (dignify, compliment ourselves as comprehending the same rule)' the individual just borrows the trick, and compliments himself on his rapport with his previous times. The community needs to say that the compliment is *empty* in the case of the individual but meaningful in the

case of a set of them. How is this to be argued?

4. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PRACTICE

Peacocke writes:

In the end, Wittgenstein holds, the only thing that must be true of someone who is trying to follow a rule, so long as we consider just the individual and not facts about some community, is that he is disposed to think that certain cases fall under the rule and others do not. But this is something which is also true of a person who falsely believes that he is conforming to a rule. His general argument is that only by appealing to the fact that the genuine rule-follower agrees in his reactions to examples with the members of some community can we say what distinguishes him from someone who falsely thinks he is following a rule.[10]

The lynch-pin of this interpretation is the absence of a 'distinction' in the case of an individual, between the case where he believes that there is a rule, when there is none, and where he believes it and there is one. And my question has been: do we think we have yet been given a 'distinction' between a thoroughly Goodmanned community, accidentally agreeing in exposed practice, and a real community of understanding? And then, if the distinction is given using materials from Hume – the projection upon one another of a dignity – I ask what the standards are whereby it takes several people to do this, when one cannot do it to himself. I shall now try to exhibit the force of this question, by considering the individual further. This is to illustrate the gap between anything that has happened in LW, at least as far as *202, and the application to exclude the private linguist.

Let us recall the basic point, that giving an explanation, either in words, or using other aids, such as pictures or models, does not logically determine the rule that governs one's understanding of a term: 'Any interpretation still hangs in the air along with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support' (*198). To avoid the threatening paradox, that nothing can accord nor conflict with a rule, because anything can be made out so to do, LW introduces the positive suggestion that our rules are anchored in practice. In the remainder of this paper I shall assume that this is along the right lines. That is, dignifying each other as rule-following is essentially connected with seeing each other as successfully using techniques or practices. This at least begins to isolate the nature of the judgement. It suggests a direction from which to find standards for making the judgement, and in my view it connects

interestingly with pragmatic and coherence aspects of judging. Now, having introduced the notion of a practice or technique, LW immediately goes on to draw two famous conclusions – that to think one is obeying a rule is not to do so, and that it is not possible to obey a rule privately. These are not the same, and the second is not warranted. The question is, what kind of thing does a practice have to be, if it is to block the sceptical paradox? Perhaps, for instance, the concept of a practice can include that of someone setting out to describe his mental life, even on a highly private conception of the mental. The basic negative point certainly does not rule that out. To do so we would need further thoughts about what a practice must be, and the connexion it is supposed to need with actual or possible publics. It is therefore a great pity that, with one eye cocked on the later applications, commentators simply assume that by *202 the publicity of practice has been satisfactorily argued (Peacocke for instance just announces that 'by "practice" he here means the practice of a community.' (p. 72)). Of course, many believe that the later discussion of sensation S and so on justifies the restriction. But that is another issue; to invoke those is to abandon the hope that the rule following considerations provide wider, more general thoughts from which the anti-private language conclusion independently emerges. To illustrate the gap we can consider the half-way house (to full privacy) provided by Robinson Crusoe cases.

Consider the example (due to Michael Dummett) of a born Crusoe who finds a Rubik's cube washed onto his island, and learns to solve it. The fact is that he does it. He certainly doesn't solve it randomly, for he can do it on demand. It is natural to say that he follows principles (when there is a last corner left to do . . .). Perhaps he has some rudimentary diagrams or other mnemonics which he consults. With these he can do it, and without them he cannot. Kripke considers what LW's attitude should be to such a case. The attitude he offers, on behalf of KW, is that we can think of Crusoe, in such a case as this, as following rules. But, 'If we think of Crusoe as following rules, we are taking him into our community and applying our criteria for rule following to him.' The sceptical considerations are supposed to show 'not 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'.[11] Again there is a nice parallel (although not quite the one Kripke makes) with Hume. One conclusion that might be drawn from Hume is not that a pair of events in a universe

with no others cannot be related causally (which is how Kripke takes Hume). Rather, if we suppose that they are, we are thinking of them as members of a (potential) family of other regularly related events. We are not considering them in isolation, but, for instance, are thinking of what would happen if there were others like them.

Still, it is not clear what the compromise is. Certainly I, or we, are doing the thought-experiment. I have to consider whether Crusoe is a rule follower by using the normal, community-wide way I make the judgement. But that would be true of any situation I seek to describe. And then, just as (contra Berkeley) I might conclude that an island considered in isolation has a tree on it, might I not conclude that Crusoe, considered in isolation, was following a rule? How does the phrase 'considered in isolation' bring the community further into the picture in this case than in the case of the tree? We are apt to retort that Crusoe would have been a rule-follower in this situation whatever I or we or any other community in the world had thought about it – just like the tree. And the reason is that all by himself he had a technique or practice.

Now reconsider the private linguist, meaning someone who believes that he has given an inner state a semantically essential role. Suppose he believes that yesterday, in the presence of the state, he defined for himself a qualitative similarity that other states might bear to it; that he is on the look-out for recurrence, and involved in the practice of judging if such a recurrence takes place. We seek to show that this is not a real practice. Let our private linguist accept the basic point, admitting that the mere offering of words, images and so on, does not determine a rule of application, or principle that is really in force. But he does not accept that his candidate practice is unsatisfactory. What has LW got to show him?

'Whatever is going to seem right is right' – there is no distinction between his seeming to himself to follow a rule, and his genuinely doing so. It has often been suggested that this charge is unargued, or, if argued, only supported by overtly verificationist considerations. My endeavour has been to show how difficult it is to release the public from its attack. In the light of this, let us reconsider the projective and naturalistic elements that assisted the public: the point that we naturally and perhaps usefully regard ourselves as mutual possessors of the same understanding. We see ourselves so, and this attitude is, in Humean vein, immune from sceptical destruction. Furthermore, there is no

lowering of the truth-condition of this judgement. It sits with its own vocabulary and scorns any 'account' of it in other terms. It is just that if a public failed to see itself in this light, it would mean that it could only see the ongoing patterns of noise and reaction, in which no principle, no genuine judgement, no truth and falsity, is visible.

My criticism of the flat reply to the sceptical problem ('this is how we see ourselves') was, in effect, that it gave no account of what a community would be missing if it failed to see itself in this light. Following LW we have accepted that the clue to what is missing is to come from the notion of a practice. BW therefore uses this thought, and the fact that dispositions provide satisfactory standards for the making of the judgement. Like other judgements with normative elements, there is no attempt to make a lowering of the truth-condition. The judgement can perfectly well be seen in terms of the projection of an attitude (this cannot be uncongenial to LW). But that left us unclear about the standards for applying it. BW therefore accepts most of what emerges from LW, doing less violence to the redundancy theory and to the preparedness to talk of facts, even when the underlying metaphysic is not what that might suggest. But however well BW matches LW, Blackburn insists on asking: is there any reason why the private linguist should not so regard himself? And in that case *whose* is the attitude 'whatever is going to seem right is right'? Not the subject's own, for he dignifies himself as a genuine believer, as having a principle of application and making a judgement with it. In doing so he *allows* the possibility of mistake (it is not something there in the things going on in his head or in his behaviour: it is something arising as a projection from an attitude he takes up to his own projects). It is a component of his attitude that a particular judgement might turn out better regarded as mistaken.

How can this attitude be appropriate? A technique is something that can be followed well or badly; a practice is something in which success *matters*. Now in the usual scenario, the correctness or incorrectness of the private linguist's classification is given no consequence at all. It has no use. He writes in his diary, and so far as we are told, forgets it. So when LW imagines a use made of the report (e.g., to indicate the rise of the manometer) he immediately hypothesizes a public use. He thereby skips the intermediate case where the classification is given a putative private use. It fits into a project – a practice or technique – of ordering the expectation of recurrence of sensation, with an aim at prediction,

explanation, systematization, or simple maximizing of desirable sen-
sation. To someone engaged on this project, the attitude that whatever
seems right is right is ludicrous. System soon enforces recognition of
fallibility.

I conclude then that it is no mistake to see the later sections, from
*240 onwards, as integral to the anti-private language polemic. BW
simply cannot separate the private from the public with any con-
siderations that are in force earlier on. But I have tried to suggest other
things as well. Following through the problem of answering the paradox
leads to sympathy with a basically 'anti-metaphysical' conception of
rule-following. We simply cannot deliver, in other terms, accounts of
what constitutes shared following of a rule, or what the fact of a rule
being in force 'consists in'. In my view this invites a projectivist
explanation of these kinds of judgement, although also in my view we
cannot conclude that it is improper to talk of facts of the case. In any
event, we are left searching for standards whereby to make the
judgement. It is possible that those standards should exactly separate
the public from the private (on some vulnerable conception of the pri-
vate, of course). But there is no particular reason to expect them to do
so. The problems with dispositions, either as giving us the missing kind
of fact, or as providing standards for allowing that a rule is in force,
failed to separate the public and the individual. So we cannot now
simply *demand* from the putative private-linguist an 'account of what
the distinction' (between genuinely following a rule, and only seeming
to himself to do so) amounts to. He can reply. It amounts to all that it
does in the case of the public. Just as a public dignifies itself as
producing more than an interminable flood of words and noise, and sees
itself as making mutually comprehensible judgements, capable of truth
and falsity – so does he. The public doubtless has a purpose in doing
this, and is right to do it. When his putative discriminations are part of a
practice – so does he.

NOTES

[1] Saul A. Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford,
1982. All page references are to this work. Paragraph references in the text are to the
Philosophical Investigations
[2] P. 5.
[3] Crispin Wright comes close to denying it in *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of
Mathematics*, e.g., pp. 21–22, where he seems to attribute to Wittgenstein an error theory

of determinacy in the correctness of saying anything.

[4] Similarly in the *Treatise*, esp. Bk I, Pt III, §14.

[5] Pp. 68, 69.

[6] For typical statements compare Appendix to *Enquiry*, also *Treatise*, p. 167 (Selby Bigge). Projectivism is widely misunderstood even today, and its true resources are not easily recognized.

[7] See my 'Truth, Realism and the Regulation of Theory', in French, Uehling, and Wettstein (eds.), *Mid-West Studies in Philosophy*, Vol V.

[8] *Reason and Prediction*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1973, Ch. 4; and *Spreading the Word*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1984, Ch. 3.

[9] D. Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Section I.

[10] C. Peacocke, 'Rule Following: The Nature of Wittgenstein's Arguments', in Holtzman and Leich (eds.), *Wittgenstein: To Follow a Rule*, p. 73.

[11] Kripke says useful things about this, p. 90ff.

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