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Research article

Rule and Point: What function does the concept of “meaning” serve?

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Abstract:

To the later Wittgenstein, the meaning of a word was its use in a language. On the other hand, Wittgenstein also wrote, “The meaning: the point of words” (MS 130 43). The purpose of this paper is to present an interpretation of these two seemingly contradictory claims—that the meaning of a word is both the rules and the point (Witz)—in a consistent manner. We respond to this question by clarifying what Wittgenstein considers to be the function of the concept of “meaning.” “Meaning,” Wittgenstein believes, is precisely what is given through the explanation of meaning. By extracting the general features of the game of the explanation of meaning, in this paper, we show that the concept of “meaning” serves to distinguish between the uses of words. We argue that the concept of “meaning” has two aspects, rule and point, depending on how we distinguish between the uses of words.

Keywords:

Wittgenstein, Language-game, Rule, Point, Explanation of meaning

1. Introduction

According to the generally accepted interpretation, to the later Wittgenstein, the meaning of a word was its use in a language, i.e., the grammatical rules.¹ On the other hand, in his later

¹ There are various objections to the claim that Wittgenstein identifies the meaning of a word with its usage or rules of use (cf. Kuusela 2008, Chap. 4). In fact, there can be multiple ways of conceiving meaning, and we believe that rules and point, on which this paper focuses, are only two of the various ways of conceiving meaning.

years, Wittgenstein also wrote, “The meaning: the point of words” (MS 130 43).² However, herein, we do not consider Wittgenstein’s own inconsistency or change of position. The purpose of this paper is to present an interpretation of these two seemingly contradictory claims—that the meaning of a word is both the rules and the point (Witz)—in a consistent manner. We respond to this question by clarifying what Wittgenstein considers to be the function of the concept of “meaning.” According to him, the word “meaning” is usually used in the language game of the explanation of the meaning. This game is a particular language game that begins with a “misunderstanding” that interferes with the progress of the language game—but the misunderstanding Wittgenstein assumes is of a very particular type—and the game is played in order to resolve the misunderstanding. “Meaning,” Wittgenstein believes, is precisely what is given through this explanation of meaning. By extracting the general features of this game of the explanation of meaning, in this paper, we show that the concept of “meaning” serves to distinguish between the uses of words. We argue that the concept of “meaning” has two aspects, rule and point, depending on how we distinguish between the uses of words.

The flow of this paper is as follows. First, in Section 2, we clarify the general characteristics of the game of the explanation of meaning as a situation in which the word “meaning” is used. Players in this game aim to resolve misunderstandings by distinguishing between the uses of words in some way. The concept of “meaning” is shown here to function as a point of view to distinguish between various uses of words. In fact, however, the way in which words are distinguished from each other is not uniform. In Section 3, we see that the concept of “meaning” has two aspects, depending on how words are distinguished. The first is a rule. When notationally identical words are used differently, we ensure the distinction between their uses by appealing to the dimension of rules. A rule is a “meaning” insofar as it distinguishes between uses of a word. The second is a point. As discussed later, there are cases in which we must (or want to) say that we are still using different words even though we are following the same rules. In other words, it is possible for words to be embedded in and connected to daily life in different ways, even if they seem to share the same rules of use. The way words are embedded in our lives manifests itself as the order that is established between the uses of those words. This order can be, for example, a hierarchy of uses, or a way in which uses are united. This order established among multiple language uses is what Wittgenstein calls the “point” of

² All references to the material cited in the von Wright catalog (von Wright 1982) are by MS or TS number followed by page number, as they appear in the Bergen electronic edition of Wittgenstein’s *Nachlass*.

words. In this paper, it is concluded that Wittgenstein considers rules and points equally to be the “meaning” of words because they serve to distinguish between their uses.

2. What is the Game of the Explanation of Meaning?

2.1 Peculiarity of the game of semantic explanation

In this paper, the starting point in the exploration of the meaning of “meaning” is Wittgenstein’s basic stance that meaning is given by the explanation of meaning (cf. PG §23; BT 29–32).

What is the meaning of a word?

Let us tackle this question by asking, first, what is an explanation of the meaning of a word; what does the explanation of a word look like? (BB 1)

You in a sense bring the question “what is the meaning?” down to earth. For, surely, to understand the meaning of “meaning” you ought also to understand the meaning of “explanation of meaning”. Roughly: “let’s ask what the explanation of meaning is, for whatever, that explains will be the meaning.” (BB 1)

“The meaning of a word is what an explanation of its meaning explains.” That is, if you want to understand the use of the word “meaning”, look for what one calls “an explanation of meaning”. (PI §560)

In approaching the concept of “meaning,” Wittgenstein urges us to pay attention to the situation of the explanation of meaning. This means that the policy of “if you want to know the meaning of a word, look at how the word is used” applies to the word “meaning” itself. The word “meaning” is most often used in a game of the explanation of meaning, exactly as “ouch” is used in a language game of pain expression or “+” is used in a game of calculation. The function of the concept of meaning must be understood in the context of this game of the explanation of meaning.

This game, however, is distinguished from the usual language game in one important respect. It is played in a different phase than the usual language game. By language games, Wittgenstein has in mind a great variety of activities, such as giving orders, reporting a sequence of events, solving computational problems, creating stories, and making and testing hypotheses (cf. PI §23). However, not all language games are necessarily played on the same

dimensions. ter Hark (1990) organizes this situation as “vertical/horizontal” relationships between language games.³ For example, the language game of pretending to be in pain has a “horizontal” relationship to the language game of pretending to be happy. However, it stands in a “vertical” relationship to the language game of expressing genuine pain (ter Hark 1990, p. 34; cf. Schneider 1999, p. 148). This is because the former game cannot logically be established without the establishment of the latter.

To borrow ter Hark’s expression, the game of the explanation of meaning stands in a vertical relationship to some other language game. This is because the game of the explanation of meaning always starts with a disagreement, or “misunderstanding,” triggered by the use of a word within a particular language game.⁴ Therefore, players play the game of the explanation of meaning with the aim of resolving misunderstandings in the short term and returning to the original language game in the long term.⁵ Simply put, the game of the explanation of meaning is always parasitic on another language game in the sense that it is only played as a temporary departure from the other language game. Any everyday language game—insofar as it is open to the possibility of “misunderstanding”—can, in principle, have a game of the explanation of meaning that accompanies it. In contrast, there is no game of a bare explanation of meaning that does not accompany any language game. In other words, there is no such thing as a game of the explanation of meaning that is played for its own sake.⁶ Moreover, the game of the explanation of meaning is played in a different phase from the everyday language game in that it can only take the form of a temporary departure from the original language game.

³ ter Hark (1990) says that when one language game presupposes the other, they are in a “vertical” relationship. Unless the bottom language game has been mastered, one is not considered to be playing the language game at the upper level. Conversely, language games that can exist independently of each other have a “horizontal” relationship with each other. In this case, it is considered possible to play one language game without learning the other. We added the accompanying description of vertical and horizontal relationships.

⁴ Wittgenstein characterizes “explanation of meaning” as a correlate of “misunderstanding” as follows. “An explanation of meaning can remove every *disagreement* with regard to meaning” (PG §24). “The explanation of a sign can remove every disagreement about its meaning” (BT 30).

⁵ The transition from an ordinary language game to a language game of explanation of meaning corresponds, in terms of chess, to the process of stopping the game once and checking the usage of pieces among players when a discrepancy in the usage of pieces is discovered in the middle of a game.

⁶ Here, one might assume the objection that the game of the explanation of meaning is played even in situations where children are taught the meaning of words. However, Wittgenstein considers explanations of meaning to function effectively only for those who already know a lot about language, and that language is not acquired through explanations of meaning (MS 109 139; cf. Baker & Hacker 2005, p. 31). Therefore, it is important to note that what Wittgenstein has in mind by “explanation of meaning” is very narrow and specific.

2.2 What type of misunderstanding triggers the explanation of meaning?

How does the game of explaining meaning actually play out? To clarify this, it is necessary to understand correctly the “misunderstandings” that trigger the game of the explanation of meaning.

The misunderstanding we focus on is, of course, a misunderstanding about words. However, there are many types of misunderstandings about words. For example, it can easily be imagined that using unfamiliar words, such as jargon, obsolete phrases, and foreign words, can cause misunderstandings, but the misunderstandings thus caused are, in a sense, quite trivial and not at all of philosophical interest. What Wittgenstein focuses on as philosophically significant misunderstandings are those that stem from the fact that a single word can serve various functions.⁷

I said “words of ordinary everyday language”. Puzzles may arise out of words not ordinary and everyday technical mathematical terms. These misunderstandings don’t concern me. They don’t have the characteristic we are particularly interested in. They are not so tenacious, or difficult to get rid of.

Now you might think there is an easy way out—that misunderstandings about words could be got rid of by substituting new words for the old ones which were misunderstood. But it is not as simple as this. Though misunderstandings may sometimes be cleared up in this way.

What kind of misunderstandings am I talking about? They arise from a tendency to assimilate to each other expressions which have very different functions in the language. We use the word “number” in all sorts of different cases, guided by a certain analogy. We try to talk of very different things by means of the same schema. This is partly a matter of economy; and, like primitive peoples, we are much more inclined to say, “All these things, though looking the same, are really different.” Hence I will have to stress the differences between things, where ordinarily the similarities are stressed, though this, too, can lead to misunderstandings. (LFM, pp. 14–5)

⁷ There are two main types of sources of philosophical mistakes that Wittgenstein points to. The first is when a word has multiple meanings. The second is when two words have similar forms of expression. Important studies that have paid attention with respect to the latter are those of Lin (2019a; 2019b). Lin gives a very detailed analysis of how Wittgenstein attempted to resolve various philosophical misunderstandings caused by the fact that “thinking” has the same expressive form as words for physical actions such as “running,” “jumping,” and “throwing.” Of the two types of sources, this paper focuses on the former. In this sense, the issues addressed in this paper are very limited. However, both mistakes may be seen as being of the same kind in that they are so distracted by the notational identity (the first type) and similarity (the second type) of words that they fail to notice the differences between the uses. Therefore, at this point, we consider that the discussion in this study can also cover the second type of philosophical mistake.

Here, Wittgenstein believes that the misunderstanding results from “a tendency to assimilate to each other expressions that have very different functions in the language”; that is, they are “tenacious” and difficult to remove, and therefore a worthy philosophical undertaking. The misunderstanding caused by the use of the symbol “is” as both a copula and an equal sign (cf. TLP 3.323; AWL, pp. 98–9; PI §558; LWI §§305–7), or the misunderstanding caused by the use of the symbol “why” as both a question of the reason and a question of the cause (cf. BB 15; AWL, p. 4), is a typical example of this type of misunderstanding. In other words, the misunderstandings that Wittgenstein focuses on are those that can be resolved by pointing out that the same symbol is actually used in a different way. Also, the game of explaining meaning played to resolve this type of misunderstanding is within the realm of the concept of “meaning” we are now trying to extract.

2.3 What are we doing in the game of explaining meaning?

We have identified the types of misunderstanding that trigger the game of semantic explanation. Next, we elucidate the general structure of the game by identifying what players should do to resolve this type of misunderstanding, which stems from the fact that a word serves many different functions.

As an example, let us take the argument presented by Hermann Lotze (1817–1881) in his book *Logik*. According to Waismann, Lotze claimed that everything that a judgment represents is a partial identity, and he believed that the judgment “S is P” is impossible and must be rewritten as “S is S” and “P is P” (Lotze 1874 §54; cf. Waismann 1965, Chap. 2, Note 7). This may be a trivial metaphysical claim, but it provides a model of the misunderstanding of words that Wittgenstein has in mind (cf. TLP 3.323; AWL, pp. 98–9; PI §558; LWI §§305–7; Waismann 1965; Baker 2004). The background of Lotze’s argument is the two functions of the word “ist”: an equal sign and a copula.

In everyday language, there is a clear distinction between the two notions of “being the same as ...” and “being part of” Only with this knowledge can we speak of a relationship that is “not the same, but one is part of the other,” as in the case of “Volkswagen” and “car,” or of a relationship that is “the same, but one is not part of the other,” as in the case of the morning star and the evening star. However, we are led to a misunderstanding when the same symbol “ist” is used for the function of the two concepts that are distinguished in this manner. For example, compare the following two sentences.

A: The rose *is* red.

B: Two times two *is* four.

Here, “is (ist)” in A is used as “is part of...” and “is (ist)” in B is used as “is the same as...” However, when one is misled by this surface identity of symbols and equates the use of “ist” in A and B, one is tempted to say, as Lotze did, that everything that a judgment represents is a partial identity.

Then, what must players do to eliminate these misunderstandings? Or what can a therapist do for a sick person who has committed these misunderstandings? In this case, it is to make an appropriate distinction between the uses of “ist” in A and B. Also, a perspective that makes such a distinction possible should be offered, and order should be brought to the multiple uses of the word. For example, the simplest solution proposed by Wittgenstein is to show what can replace “ist” in A and “ist” in B.

We now change the aspect by putting others to the side of one system of expression. [...] And we resort to the notation that replaces the word “is” once by “ε”, once by “=”, and the problem of identity in diversity disappears. (Wir ändern nun den Aspekt, indem wir einem System des Ausdrucks andere an die Seite stellen. [...] Und wir greifen zu der Notation, die das Wort “ist” einmal durch “ε”, einmal durch “=” ersetzt und das Problem der Identität in der Verschiedenheit verschwindet.) (TS 220 79–80)

The “problem of identity in difference (*das Problem der Identität in der Verschiedenheit*)” in, for example, “The rose is red, but not red (*Die Rose ist rot, und ist doch wieder nicht rot*).” disappears by replacing “ist” with “=” and “ε,” respectively, and distinguishing the two uses of “ist.” Here, “=” and “ε” would be presented as “expressions” of the rules of use of “ist” in A and B.

Now, on the basis of the above considerations, let us generally characterize what we are doing in the game of the explanation of meaning. This game starts with a misunderstanding stemming from the fact that a single word can serve various functions. In moving into this game, the player—like setting up the pieces in their initial positions before commencing a game of chess—segments the use of the word into two dimensions: signs and rules. This work is necessary to make the conflict between the multiple uses of language substantive rather than formal. In other words, the conflict between the multiple uses of a word is seen as a situation in which the same sign is used under *different* rules. This process creates the conditions for examining where and how the rules of use of the *same* sign *differ*. The player then distinguishes

between the multiple uses by presenting the expression of the rules of each use (in this case, “=” and “ε”).

The later Wittgenstein, who wanted to leave everything as it is (cf. PI §124), believed that the solution was not to be found by touching the actual use of language, but by creating order between the uses.

We want to establish an order in our knowledge of the use of language: an order for a particular purpose, one out of many possible orders, not the order. For this purpose we shall again and again emphasize distinctions which our ordinary forms of language easily make us overlook. This may make it appear as if we saw it as our task to reform language. (PI §132)

In the game of the explanation of meaning, what we are doing is eliminating misunderstandings by highlighting “distinctions that our ordinary forms of language easily make us overlook.”

2.4 What are the rules of using the “meaning” of words?

Let us summarize our discussion up to this point. The starting point of our discussion was Wittgenstein’s insight that “meaning” is given by an explanation of meaning. Through the clarification of the structure of the game, it became clear that what is given by the explanation of meaning is the dimension for distinguishing between multiple uses of words. Therefore, the dimension required to distinguish between uses is the true nature of the concept of “meaning” as envisioned by Wittgenstein. Meaning, so to speak, is the unit that distinguishes between the uses of words.

If we can identify the function of the concept of “meaning” in this manner, we can give a coherent explanation for why Wittgenstein believed that the “meaning” of a word is the rule for its use. In the game of explaining meaning discussed in Section 2.3, the use of the notationally identical symbol “ist” was distinguished in terms of rules, such as its use as an equal sign, as in “=,” and, on the other hand, its use as a copula, as in “ε.” In other words, in this situation, the “meaning” that distinguishes the use of words from each other is, in effect, a rule. Wittgenstein regards the rules of use as the “meaning” of words because they distinguish between the uses of words.

3. Two Aspects of the Concept of “Meaning”: Rule and Point

In Section 2.4, we confirmed that the concept of “meaning” serves to distinguish between uses. However, there is no single way to distinguish between word uses. In fact, Wittgenstein distinguishes the multiple uses of a word not only horizontally, such as use 1 and use 2, but also vertically, such as primary/secondary use and essential/inessential use. Alternatively, a distinction may be given, such as unifying/nonunifying use. In this section, we point out that there are two aspects of the concept of “meaning” depending on the way the distinction of word use is made: rule and point.

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, Wittgenstein wrote in one of his later manuscripts that the meaning of a word is its point (MS 130 43). If we want to reconcile this remark with the claim that the meaning of a word is its use, i.e., the rules of its use, we should answer the following questions: Why is it inconvenient for rules alone to distinguish between the uses of words? When do we need a dimension other than rules to distinguish between the uses of words? In the process of responding to these questions, it should also become clear what Wittgenstein’s point is.

Let us outline in advance the direction of the discussion that follows. The reason why the dimension of point in addition to rules is called for is that there are cases in which people do not use words in the same manner even if they share the same rules of use. The concept of point is called for when we try to distinguish the use of words according to how they are connected to life or how they mesh with life. It is the rule that distinguishes between multiple uses that are already rooted and established in our lives, and the point that distinguishes our use of a word (rooted in our lives) from the use of a word connected to a different life. The concept of point, as called for in this context, can be interpreted as referring to the order obtained between multiple uses of a word, for example, which uses are essential and which uses are primitive. First, however, let us begin with the general context in which the use of words must have a dimension other than that of rules.

3.1 Hierarchy and logical precedence among uses

The first reason for the need for a dimension other than rules in distinguishing between uses of language is the existence of ordinal or (logical) antecedent relationships between the uses. Take Wittgenstein’s metaphor of the chess piece (PI §§563–8). The chess king is hidden in a fist of a player to decide who plays White and who plays Black, and it is also used to make certain moves on the board. However, these uses are not of equal importance to the king as a

piece. The former use is a trivial use to decide the color of each player's pieces, whereas the latter use is essential to the game of chess. However, the dimension of rules is useless when trying to distinguish these uses not simply from each other, but also from each other in a hierarchical manner. As we saw in Section 2.4, rules can only distinguish between uses horizontally, such as use 1 and use 2. Rules cannot provide criteria for which use is more important and which use is less important.

The same can be said of words. The claim that the meaning of a word is the same as its use is roughly called the use theory of meaning. It is well known that this theory has a serious problem. It is the question of "which aspects of use are relevant to meaning" (cf. Glock 1996, p. 378). For example, the difference between the present and past tenses of a verb may indeed be a difference in use (cf. RPPI §55). However, it is difficult to say whether this difference can be regarded as a difference in the meaning of words. What this suggests is that it is possible to distinguish between essential and inessential uses (cf. LWI §385) of words as well as chess pieces. In fact, Wittgenstein himself states, "Not every use is a meaning" (LWI §289), and he also recognizes various types of distinction in use other than essential/inessential use. For example, we often apply the concept of "pain" to living beings, but we also apply this concept to inanimate objects such as dolls. Both are valid uses of the concept of "pain," but the latter use cannot exist without the former. Wittgenstein distinguishes the former as a primary use and the latter as a secondary use (cf. PI §282; PPF §278). This logical antecedent relationship between uses also never emerges in terms of rules.

As we have seen, the existence of ordinal and antecedent relationships between uses implies that we need elements other than rules to distinguish between the uses of a word. In what context, then, do we need distinctions that include ordinal relationships between uses or logical antecedents between uses? In the following, we first see that Wittgenstein introduces the concept of point in the context of a discussion of the connection between the use of language and life (Section 3.2). We then look at how differences in the way words are connected to life manifest themselves as differences in use, in line with the distinctions between essential and nonessential, primary and secondary, and unified and nonunified uses. By doing so, we clarify what Wittgenstein's point is (Section 3.3).

3.2 In what context is the concept of point required?

Point is not a concept that has attracted the attention of Wittgenstein scholars as much as rule. However, in his later texts and lecture notes, it is clear that Wittgenstein attaches great importance to this concept. Some examples are given below.

The meaning: the point of words. (Die Bedeutung: der Witz des Wortes.) (MS 130 43)

A use of language has normally what we might call a point. This is immensely important. (LFM, p. 205)

In which case do we say that a sentence has a point? That comes to asking, “in which case do we call something a language game”. (CPE §11)

(The problem of philosophy is the problem of points.) ((Die Problematik der Philosophie ist die Problematik des Witzes.)) (MS 150 12)

From these remarks, it is easy to see that the concept of point is a first-class concept that is related to the meaning of words, the nature of language games, and, for Wittgenstein, the nature of philosophy. Nevertheless, the irony is that for a long time, no progress has been made in elucidating the concept in a manner that matches its importance.

The text in which Wittgenstein mentions the concept of point most frequently is *Wittgenstein's lectures on the foundations of mathematics, Cambridge 1939* (LFM). Here, he refers to the concept of point in the context of comparing games (or even the use of words) where “there would be a close analogy” but where “we would [...] see an entire discrepancy between what we do and what they do” (LFM, p. 203). The most famous example is the practice of people pricing firewood according to the base area.

Take this case: people buy firewood by the cubic foot. These people could learn a technique for calculating the price of wood. They stack the wood in parallelepipeds a foot high, measure the length and breadth of the parallelepiped, multiply, and take a shilling for each cubic foot. [...] But suppose we found people who pile up wood into heaps which are not necessarily a foot high. They measure the length and breadth but not the height, multiply, and say, “The rule is to pay according to the product of length and breadth.” (LFM, p. 202)

We think that it is plausible to price firewood according to its volume, since the larger the volume of firewood, the more firewood can be burned to heat the house. However, they set the price based on the base area (length \times width). Thus, for example, if a bundle of firewood priced at 3 shillings is re-stacked so that its height decreases and its base area increases, they will change the price to 4 shillings. Wittgenstein describes their game of calculation as “pointlessness” in comparison to our game, which has a proper point (LFM, p. 204).

Let us look at another example where what we call “calculation” is applied to the production of wallpaper.

Let’s suppose a tribe which liked to decorate their walls with calculations. (An analogy with music.) They learn a calculus like our mathematics in school, but they do the calculations much more slowly than we do—not in a slapdash way. They never write the sign \int without decorating it very carefully with different colors. And they use the calculus solely for the purpose of decorating walls. (LFM, pp. 39–40)

Whereas we use calculations, for example, to design a precise building, they use “calculations” to generate a particular pattern of wallpaper. We can understand the rules by which they determine prices by base area and use calculations to generate wallpaper. Furthermore, we are tempted to describe their practices using our word “calculation.” At the same time, however, their “calculations” seem to be completely at odds with ours.

Why would Wittgenstein make such a comparison? His reason is closely related to his philosophical method. As is well known, Wittgenstein’s philosophical method was to compare the subject game with another game as the “object of comparison” (PI §§130–1). “Through similarities and dissimilarities” (PI §130), he aimed to shed light on the “aspect” (PI §129) of the subject game and the language used in it, which is “hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity” (PI §130).

In these two examples, we and the tribesmen share the same rules of calculation. If we were instructed to determine the price of firewood by its base area, or if we were told to use calculations only to generate patterns, we would behave exactly as they do. What, then, is the difference between our use of games and their use of language?

The straightforward but somewhat ambiguous answer to this question is that our language and theirs are different in the way they are connected to life. In fact, Wittgenstein often appeals to the way words are connected to life when he emphasizes that the use of words is not a mere manipulation of symbols according to rules. Consider the following quote:

Do I *understand* the word just by describing its application? Do I understand its point? Haven’t I deluded myself about something important?

At present, say, I know only how men use this word. But it might be a game, or form of etiquette. I do not know why they behave in this way, how *language* meshes with their life.

Is meaning then really only the use of a word? Isn’t it the way this use meshes with our life?

But isn't its use a part of our life? (PG §29)

Here, Wittgenstein points out that even if we know how words are used, we can still misunderstand them if we fail to grasp how their use meshes with their lives. He refers to the point of language as the way in which life and use fit together.

Let us summarize the above discussion. The point is the dimension required to distinguish between our use of language and theirs as a difference in the way it is connected to life such that a complete discrepancy is found even though a close analogy is established. On this basis, the problem we must solve is to clarify what difference in the connection between use and life ultimately manifests itself as a difference in use. In the following, we look at specific examples to see how the use of words that are similar in terms of rules of use can be distinguished from each other.

3.3 Point is the order established between multiple uses

3.3.1 Essential/inessential use, primary/secondary use

In Section 3.1 we saw that Wittgenstein makes a distinction between uses that include ordinal and antecedent relationships, such as essential/inessential use and primary/secondary use. The reason such a distinction involving ordinal and antecedent relationships is necessary is that different ordinal and antecedent relationships can lead to completely different uses of words.

Let us consider again the two uses of the chess king mentioned earlier. The first is to decide the colors of the player's pieces and the second is to move one square vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. As a comparison, let us consider a fictional tribe that plays chess as a ritual (hereafter referred to as ritual chess).

Imagine the following. I have now been in Ruritania some time, and can speak the language tolerably well. One day I accompany my host with his family to a certain building, where a large number of people are sitting in a circle on the floor, murmuring among themselves agitatedly. In the center of the circle is a small table with two chairs, and on the table is a chessboard with chessmen arranged as for the beginning of a game. After a while, two men in elaborate clothes enter the room and seat themselves at opposite sides of the table; whereupon those sitting on the floor fall silent and watch intently. The men at the table then proceed, with what appears to be an air of great concentration, to move the chess pieces around on the board according to the rules of chess. It strikes me, however, that they play a rather wild game, and I can see no

consistent strategy in the moves of either player. The excitement mounts until, after an hour or so, white mates black. Then everyone present, including both men at the table, shows signs of extreme relief; they mop their brows, smile and congratulate one another. (Schwyzer 1969, p. 456)

In this case, the king used in our competitive chess and the king used in their ritual chess are indistinguishable in terms of rules of use. However, the king is used differently in the two games. Or so we are tempted to say. They are different in the way they are embedded in our lives, so to speak. The difference in the way the king is embedded in each of our lives is manifested in the difference in the ordering of the various uses. This is embodied in the ordering of uses, in which its use to decide who plays Black and who plays White, which is not directly related to the determination of intellectual excellence, is considered nonessential, while uses that are related to the determination of intellectual excellence are considered essential. In fact, if the rules were changed so that pawns rather than kings are used to determine plays Black and who plays White, we would not consider the chess game to have lost its identity, but if the rules were changed so that the king is moved like a pawn, we would consider the chess game to have become a different game than before. However, players of ritual chess may apply a different weight from us to the use of the king. For example, the use of the king to decide who plays with which color may be an essential use for them. In any case, how we play the game and how the pieces used in the game are embedded in our lives are expressed in the way the use of the pieces is ordered.

Let us now consider the above discussion in terms of language.

A: He bumped his leg and is *in pain*.

B: This doll is *in pain* because someone stepped on it.

We sometimes apply the concept of “pain” not only to living beings but also to inanimate objects such as dolls. This is not a problem. However, if someone (for example, a child) uses the concept of “pain” only for dolls and refuses to use it for living things, can we say that they are using the same concept of “pain” as we do (cf. PI §282; PPF §278) ?⁸

Let us look at another similar case of “nicht”(not), which is used to express negation, whether used alone or twice (cf. RFM-I Appendix I; PI §§554–7; LWI §§341, 344–6). Is this

⁸ Or, suppose there is a society in which all humans are controlled by robots. In this society, the mental concept of “pain” would be applied first to robots and derivatively to humans. Is the concept of “pain” used in this society the same as ours?

use of “nicht” really the same as our use of “nicht”? Again, if we want to say that there is a difference, we must somehow distinguish between the use of “nicht” alone, as in sentence A below, and the use of “nicht” twice, as in sentence B below.

A: *nicht* p

B: *nicht nicht* p

In these two examples, simply distinguishing between the use in sentence A and the use in sentence B does not indicate a deviation from our use of language. For although we and others differ in the use of “pain” for living beings and in the use of “nicht” twice, the others certainly agree with us in their use of “pain” for inanimate objects and in their use of “nicht” alone. Thus, if we were to distinguish between the uses of sentence A and sentence B, and if both uses had the same weighting for the sign, our use and theirs would be partly the same and partly different. However, what we want is a straightforward difference between our use and theirs. Thus, the distinction sought here is the distinction between uses that are more important to the sign and uses that are less important to the sign. It must also be shown that we and they differ in the more important uses. This brings up, for example, the hierarchy of essential/inessential or primary/secondary uses (cf. PPF §§276, 278; LWI §385). In other words, for our concept of “pain,” the application to living beings is primary, and the use on inanimate objects is secondary. In other words, for our concept of “nicht,” its single use is essential and its double use is nonessential. In this way, we create a perspective that vertically distinguishes the use in sentence A from that in sentence B.

As we have seen above, one way to distinguish between uses of a word that are indistinguishable from each other in terms of rules is to appeal to different ways of ordering the uses of the word. Which use is more important (more trivial) or primitive (derivative) is an expression of how the word is embedded in life.

3.3.2 Uniform and nonuniform use

What follows is a relatively minor distinction, presented by Wittgenstein himself, between unified and nonunified uses. To understand the significance of this distinction, we introduce the analogy between language and a utility knife. As the name suggests, a utility knife is an item that combines a knife, scissors, saw, can opener, bottle opener, and other tools into one item. We can use it to cut string (as a knife) or turn screws (as a screwdriver). However, it would not be essential for one tool to be used as a knife and another as a screwdriver. The utility knife is

merely a tool that is an arbitrary mishmash of a screwdriver and a knife. In other words, we do not see the utility knife as a single tool with a sense of unity. Therefore, if the utility knife were to disappear from the world and only knives and screwdrivers were to exist, we would probably experience no difficulties.

Let us suppose that there are people who claim that it is essential for a single tool to function as both a knife and a screwdriver. The “utility knife” they are using is the same in shape, material, and everything else as our utility knife. Moreover, when they use it to cut string (as a knife) or turn screws (as a screwdriver), they behave exactly as we do. Nevertheless, they seem to regard the utility knife not as a collection of tools including a knife and a screwdriver, as we can never quite seem to do, but as a single tool in which the two parts are indispensable to each other.

Let us ask the following question. Are our utility knives the same as theirs? Do we and they use the same utility knife in the same way? How should we respond to this question? The answer, of course, depends on the point of view one wants to take (cf. BB 58; LWI §§280, 284). If we want to say that their “utility knife” is different from ours, what exactly is the difference? The difference is the way they categorize its uses. The fact that they consider the two uses of the utility knife to be one use, whereas we consider them to be two different uses, is what makes their “utility knife” different from ours.

Wittgenstein introduces the distinction between unified and nonunified uses when he considers whether it is essential for a word to have multiple functions carried out by a single word.

Here it is important that a technique has a physiognomy for us. That we can speak, for example, of uniform and nonuniform uses. And what do “uniform” and “nonuniform” mean now? What do we communicate to one by these expressions? (Hier ist es nun freilich wichtig, daß eine Technik für uns eine Physiognomie hat. Daß wir z.B. von einer einheitlichen & einer uneinheitlichen Verwendung sprechen können. – Und was bedeutet nun “einheitlich” & “uneinheitlich”? Was teilen wir Einem durch diese Ausdrücke mit?) (MS 136 99a)

The two uses of “ist” that Wittgenstein has in mind as “nonuniform uses” are, for example, the two uses of “ist” that we saw earlier.

Now isn’t it remarkable that I say that the word “is” is used with two different meanings (as copula and as sign of equality), and wouldn’t want to say that its meaning is its use; its use, namely, as copula and as sign of equality?

One would like to say that these two kinds of use don't yield a single meaning; the union under one head, effected by the same word, is an inessential coincidence. (PI §561)

Even if others use "ist" as a copula or an equal sign in exactly the same way as we do, whether they use "ist" in a unified or nonunified way distinguishes their "ist" from ours. Simply put, where we draw the line, they do not. In this case, our use of "ist" is distinguished from their use of "ist" by the difference in the way they classify their use of "ist."

On the other hand, it is also possible to assume that people use words in a nonunified way that we use in a unified way. In other words, they draw a line where we do not. For example, we use the word "pain" not only in the context of physical injury but also in the context of psychological injury. Let us assume that they (e.g., adults trying to learn our language) are also able to use the concept of "pain," at least outwardly, for both physical and mental injuries. Thus, they would use "pain" in the same way as we do, as in sentences A and B below.

A: (Looking at his fresh injuries), one can only imagine his *pain*.

B: (Looking at a person who has suffered a tragic event), one can only imagine his emotional *pain*.

Strangely enough, however, they distinguish between "pain" in sentence A and "pain" in sentence B, exactly as we distinguish between conjunctions and equal signs in the "ist" case. In other words, they are ready to replace the "pain" in sentences A and B with the expressions "X" and "Y" in their native language whenever they are asked to do so. Let us use our imagination to look at our use of "pain" from their point of view. Their viewpoint is parallel to that of Lotze, who asserts that "all judgments are partial identities" in the "ist" case. In other words, just as we say, "Lotze has confused the use of '=' and 'epsilon' in 'ist,'" they say about us, "Their 'pain' has confused what we call 'X' and 'Y,' and they have mixed them up." However, the fact that the symbol "pain" is used for both the body and the mind in the same way, that is, the two uses are seamless, is essential to our concept of "pain" and is not the result of confusion. Thus, if they wish to acquire the same concept of "pain" as we do, they are only halfway there. They still misunderstand our use of the concept of "pain," even if they do not deviate from it in their use.

They do not make distinctions where we think they should, or they make distinctions where we think they should not. These differences in the way we categorize uses distinguish our use

of words from theirs. Similarly to the way we rank the uses of a word, the way we categorize the uses of a word is also an expression of how the word is embedded in our lives.

3.4 Technique has a physiognomy

In a previous quote, Wittgenstein said that technology has a physiognomy. By this remark, he is trying to say that words are not made up of a mishmash of different uses. The fact that words are not a collection of uses is truly parallel to the fact that pictures are not simply a collection of lines. The Jastrow figure, as a mishmash of lines, appears to one person as a duck and to another person as a rabbit. The difference between what two people see does not exist in the dimension of the mishmash of lines. The difference between what two people see is secured in the dimension of physiognomy, the dimension of the aspect. Furthermore, the difference in the aspect that the two are seeing is manifested by the difference in the way the order is given, such as which lines are essential and which are nonessential, and by the difference in the judgment about how the lines are delimited.

Likewise, words do not merely have various uses. There is a hierarchy, antecedent relationships, unity, and distinction among the various uses. Words can become different words when the order is reversed, or when the uses are differently grouped. In this sense, Wittgenstein is saying that word use has a face.

The uses of words can be distinguished from each other not only by rules but also by the various ways of ordering and classifying them. The order established among these multiple uses is what Wittgenstein called the “point” of words. How a word meshes with the life of the person who uses it is ultimately expressed entirely by the differences in the order of the uses.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, we have confirmed that the concept of “meaning” functions to thematize and evaluate the use of words themselves by focusing on situations in which the concept of “meaning” is used. More specifically, the concept of “meaning” fulfills the function of distinguishing between our uses of language. Depending on how we distinguish between uses, the concept of “meaning” has two aspects: rules and points. Both rules and points can be called “meaning” in that they distinguish between uses. Depending on the context in which we compare and distinguish between uses, we appeal to the dimension of rules or the dimension of points. We can summarize this in terms of “life” as follows. Rules are sought when we compare and distinguish multiple uses that have already taken root in our lives. Points, on the

other hand, are required to distinguish between uses that are rooted in our lives and those that are not, or to put it simply, between our use of words and the use of words by others with whom we do not share our lives. Along with rules, points are also an aspect of “meaning” in the philosophy of Wittgenstein.

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